

Four Romances of England

*King Horn, Havelok the Dane,
Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*

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Introduction

The English word “romance” has accrued multiple meanings over the centuries: the joys of private love, heroic adventure on land and sea, the choice of the risky and exotic over the mundane. Romance is also a generic term that has been applied to such disparate works as ancient Hellenistic and Latin narratives, twentieth-century novels by authors such as Barbara Cartland, and even the mass-produced fantasies of Harlequin. *Roman*, from which the word “romance” derives, is still the word used for “novel” in several modern European languages. The poems in this volume are also known as romances, a particular type of vernacular narrative which saw popularity in late medieval western Europe.

Of the four romances of England presented here, *King Horn* (c. 1225) is probably the earliest (other than, arguably, Layamon’s *Brut*, itself a translation of Wace’s twelfth-century Anglo-Norman poem on Arthurian themes).¹ *Havelok the Dane* is dated at approximately 1290, with *Bevis of Hampton* following shortly thereafter (about ten years before Dante began to write his *Divine Comedy*). *Athelston*, the latest of the four, was probably composed between 1355 and 1399; thus it was completed shortly after Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (1349–51) and around the time Chaucer was becoming the “father” of English poetry.

These were not the only English romances, of course. Romance was an extremely popular genre in medieval England; from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries dozens of English romances were produced, including, for example, *Guy of Warwick*, *Sir Perceval of Galles*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Octavian*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, *Sir Tryamour*, and *Ywain and Gawain*; numerous retellings of Trojan and Theban history, the deeds of Alexander the Great and Richard the Lionhearted as well as the exploits of Charlemagne and his followers exist in Middle English versions; the legends of King Arthur and his knights, originally in Latin, French, and Welsh narratives, experienced a flowering in England in such classics as the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (c. 1350–1400) and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. But the romances in this volume bring together some of the finest

¹ See Introduction to *King Horn* in this volume for an alternative dating of *King Horn* in the middle of the thirteenth century.

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imaginative work in what became known as the Matter of England, the non-Arthurian romances dealing largely with English subjects and locales. They stand out as well by their reduced interest in the nuances of courtly behavior so characteristic of French romance, as they pay more attention to the socio-political issues contained within folktale motifs. Manuscript evidence suggests that romance reading in England was hardly confined to the nobility but became part of the increasingly prosperous and literate middle classes' attempts to style themselves after the upper classes.²

Romance and the Epic

It was in the Middle Ages that the word "romanz" was first used to describe vernacular narratives as opposed to Latin poetry. But the meaning of the word narrowed to tales of knightly adventure and love together, linking the masculine, battlefield world of the *chanson de geste* with the increasing upper-class interest in what we would now call "romantic love." The idea of a personal love-interest between a man and woman, devoid of dynastic or financial concerns, had already taken root in the oral poetry of Provençal *trouvères* and the court of Marie, Countess of Champagne, which produced courtly love debates and nuanced descriptions of love-relationships set down by her chaplain, Andreas, in his *De Amore*. This combination of battlefield and boudoir, so to speak, is perhaps the chief way that romance diverges from epic. In the epic genre, an individual character of extraordinary strength demonstrates his martial skills and wisdom as he leads a nation or a group of comrades in great crisis — Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, Aeneas in the *Aeneid*, Beowulf in his eponymous epic. While love interests are of some concern to the protagonist, they are incidental to larger dynastic and foundational concerns. For example, Odysseus' return to Penelope is subordinated to his re-establishing the hereditary monarchy on Ithaca. Aeneas' dalliance with Dido delays him from his ultimate goal: to win Italy for the Trojans and to found a line through marriage with King Latinus' daughter, Lavinia. Indeed, Beowulf seems to have little intimacy beyond his band of warriors. Dynasty and glory are the point; love is not.

Romance itself can be distinguished in a number of other ways from epic. In the first place, it invests more heavily than epic in the personal story of the main character, in his response to challenges which test his strength, courage, and knightly courtesy. One can

² W. R. J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 54. See also Derek Pearsall, "The Development of Middle English Romance," *Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1965), 91–116; Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Harriet Hudson, "Middle English Popular Romances: The Manuscript Evidence," *Manuscripta* 28 (1984), 67–78.

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even argue that this happens in Arthurian legend, in which the dominance of the Round Table is eclipsed by the lonely quests for the Holy Grail or by the torn loyalties and madness of Lancelot or Tristan. At times, one may see, with Gabriel Josopovici, that fairy tale and romance "function in a timeless present in which the hero is the centre of the universe," a paradigm in which the nation takes second place.³ Another equally important component of the hero's development is the challenge of love, making women major players in the action, whereas in epic women more usually lure the hero with dilatory lusts, commune weirdly with dead spirits, or stay at home and weave. And this greater centrality of women reminds us of the social and political functions of romance, which to many critics display a class consciousness and a certain anxiety over the instability of feudal relationships.

Romances, especially in England, nevertheless combine social realism with superhuman or supernatural events. This lends a "mixed" quality to romance, the combination of the real and the ideal. As W. R. J. Barron argues, romance is less a genre than a mode of writing:

The expressive conventions of the literary form reflect in their antithetical nature — adventure and instruction, fantasy and idealism, symbolism and realism — the mixed nature of the romantic mode, poised between the mythic and the mimetic. The tension between the various expressive means reflects the paradox within the mixed mode, which in turn reflects the dual nature of man as sensualist and idealist, escapist and moralist. . . . Throughout the Middle Ages [this mode] was all-pervasive, showing itself not only in almost every literary genre, including the professedly mimetic categories of chronicle, history, and biography, but in the other arts and even the forms and ceremonies of courtly life.⁴

The protean nature of romance, poised as it is between binary oppositions, or existing within a "mixed mode," as Barron describes, renders a potentiality for expression and possibility for transformation that few other "modes of writing" can claim.⁵ Thus what appears in the beginning to offer dim prospects for the future for a disenfranchised hero may be transformed into success by the end. Perhaps this marks yet another distinction between epic and romance. While epics often conclude in tragedy — the deaths of Hector, Beowulf, and Arthur in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, even the "unfinished" twelfth book

³ Gabriel Josopovici, *The Book of God: A Response to the Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 199.

⁴ Barron, pp. 5–6.

⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the hybrid nature and transformative potential of romance see Kevin and Marina Scordilis Brownlee, *Romance: Generic Transformation from Chrétien de Troyes to Cervantes* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985).

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of the *Aeneid* which describes the death of Turnus but no actual wedding between Aeneas and Lavinia — romances are basically comic in structure. Life may be hard for Horn, Bevis, Havelok, or Athelston in the beginning, but by the end they receive rewards for their perseverance and valor: honor and glory for themselves, wedded bliss, and a restored kingdom to rule.

The Character of the Romance Hero

While romances have a similar paradigm of exile and return, the development of the hero's virtue through danger and hardship, there is no such singular scheme of romance composition. Sometimes, as in *King Horn* or *Athelston*, the structure is carefully symmetrical, while at other times it is more asymmetrical and episodic. The plot of *Bevis*, for instance, is far more complicated, switching from one location to another or adding new adventures that do not seem to build on earlier adventures as keenly as in these shorter, relatively simpler romances. Often, the plot of a romance moves from a position of high privilege to a loss of that privilege followed by subsequent recovery. Horn, for instance, becomes a child exile, serves two different foreign kings to prove himself, and eventually wins back his rightful kingdom from Saracen invaders. Bevis' mother sells him off to Armenian merchants; he later returns to oppose his stepfather and reclaim his patrimony.

This U-shaped motif (called the "monomyth" by such modern mythographers as Joseph Campbell)⁶ is common to most epic and romance, and especially in romance it helps focus attention on the development of the central hero. Romance follows a pattern of separation and reunion or, as Northrop Frye views it, a journey of descent followed by ascent and a corresponding resolution of the hero's purpose and place in the world.⁷ Because the very structure of such romances is the development of the hero towards maturity, achievement, and resumption of his rightful title, they often focus on questions of identity — as initial concealment followed by gradual revelation. Havelok conceals his identity as a fisherman; Bevis becomes, at various points in the narrative, a shepherd, messenger, and pilgrim; Athelston begins as a lowly messenger but gradually grows into his identity as king.

Inevitably, the hero will have to prove himself through his valor by some test, usually in warfare. Romance tends to zero in on individual combat more than the expansive and highly exaggerated battle scenes of epic. The chivalric code, not always explicitly spelled out in romance, is nevertheless implied in the bravery, justice, and glory of knightly

⁶ See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon, 1949).

⁷ Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

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combat — as, for instance, in the single combat between Yvor and Bevis on an island, and the bravery and triumph that the hero asserts throughout his life.

The Politics of Love and Class

A significant love-relationship, usually ending in marriage, is not only integral to romance as a genre but also to the hero's development. Typically, the hero will fall in love with a high-born woman, whom he marries only after significant obstacles impeding their union have been overcome. Both Horn and Bevis nearly lose their loved ones in marriage to an evil or unwanted man; a neat variation on the idea occurs in *Havelok*, as Goldeboru is forced to marry against her will a man she thinks is a vulgar peasant, only to discover by a sign from heaven that the peasant is Havelok, of royal lineage equal to her own. In *Bevis* Josian endures two forced marriages to unsavory men until she is finally wedded to her beloved. For Dame Edyff and Athelston's queen it is not marital union that is impeded, but reunion and reconciliation of family members brought about through their personal sufferings.

The reason these women figure so prominently, in fact, has mostly to do with heterosexual love and courtship. Yet the hero is not always the active pursuer and agent, nor is his female counterpart always the hapless damsel in distress. As if demonstrating the inherent power of transformation, gender roles can surprisingly reverse themselves in romance. Goldeboru, for example, often acts as an equal partner and companion to Havelok. Rymenhild — dismissed by some readers as a cardboard character known mostly for her overwhelming passions — takes the lead in wooing the gallant young Horn. Dame Edyff and Athelston's queen demonstrate an integrity and fortitude that set an example for the men around them, while Josian, one of the most active and well-developed of all medieval heroines, shows remarkable strength through a series of amazingly adverse situations. Medieval romance heroines, just as women in the real medieval world, are prohibited from participating in military combat, but they take an active role in personal relationships in these narratives. This may be in part because the relatively new concept of romantic love in companionate marriage was making its way into popular culture. Marriage was slowly moving away from being mostly an exchange of property (the woman and her dowry being the items of exchange) and towards a loving if not always socially equal partnership.⁸

⁸ For general discussions of medieval marriage, see Georges Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France*, trans. Elborg Forster (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), and Frances and Joseph Gies, *Marriage and the Family in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), especially pp. 141 ff. See also Christopher Brooke, *The*

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The importance of women to romance reminds us that issues of gender in these tales are intertwined with matters of class and the vicissitudes of political power in medieval England. Some political issues had already become ancient history: the attacks by the Saracens in *Horn* are probably memories of the Viking invasions that had plagued England in the ninth to eleventh centuries. A world that joined a son of Southampton with the daughter of the King of Armenia in *Bevis of Hampton* may have had its historical roots in England's active role in the Crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In *Athelston*, trial by ordeal recalls an already discarded practice. Yet the power struggle between the king and clergy in this romance was a continual reality in England. From the Crusades to the Barons' Revolts and the civil uprisings of 1381 to armed conflict with France in the Hundred Years' War, the unglamorous realities of war were well known to the English.

Besides conflict between royalty and clergy, English romance reveals the changing status of the nobility. Throughout the later Middle Ages, the nobility faced innovative legal arrangements and centralized royal power on the one hand and the growing power of the mercantile classes on the other. The increasing practice of primogeniture created an uneasy position for the younger sons of noble families with no inheritance and little else to do except take holy orders or fight. Stephen Knight argues that the figure of the solitary knight, who must prove himself in arms by winning back his patrimony, reflects this uneasy position in contemporary English life.⁹ In such "family romances" as *Amis and Amiloun*, *The Avowing of Arthur*, *King Horn*, and *Athelston*, Knight sees that "competitive assertiveness is the inner strain upon the fraternal bond [between knights]."¹⁰ But even in the imaginative world of romance, the solitary chivalric hero is sometimes overpowered by a dialectic of multiple interests — as Knight observes, *Havelok* "shows 'lower-class' features in its village games and physical work, royal myth in its hero and his revelation, urban connections in its links to an origin legend for Grimsby. This text is much broader than the specifically knightly and feudal world, being both older than and marginal to the main romance pattern."¹¹

A threat from below was imposing even more reality on English romance in the changing value of peasant labor in the fourteenth century and in an independent merchant class that would eventually replace feudal society with a dependence on money, capital, deeded property, and litigation. Indeed, congruent with a genre aware of the vicissitudes of contemporary daily life, there is an engaging realism in these romances. *Havelok*

Medieval Idea of Marriage (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁹ Stephen Knight, "The Social Function of the Middle English Romance." In *Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology, & History*, ed. David Aers (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1986), p. 107.

¹⁰ Knight, p. 113.

¹¹ Knight, pp. 109–10.

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features lists of particular fish on sale in Lincoln, and the hero engages in peasant wrestling contests. Horn is a convincing sooty beggar when he decides to approach Rymenhild in disguise. *Athelston's* four main characters are initially messengers before they acquire higher social status. Bevis plays various roles from the lower classes before regaining his patrimony. Furthermore, local colors in the form of place names and graphic descriptions of a variety of battles and methods of execution point to the realities of social and political discontent emanating from the lower classes. Even so, Barron's reading of the Matter of England romances suggests a caveat against universalizing class analysis. In comparison to the models of French Romance, "The struggles in which [English romance heroes] are caught up spring not from the internal contradictions of courtly codes but the oppressive forces of a wicked world."¹²

Everyday life in this wicked world nonetheless comes with eerie surprises. In the simple home of the fisherman Grim, Havelok is identified as a special figure by a mysterious light and a cross-shaped birthmark. Much of the plot of *Athelston* hangs on a miraculous outcome of a trial by ordeal; Bevis is often saved *deus-ex-machina* style from certain death. Such intrusions of the supernatural mark the romance hero's life as rather extraordinary. The very real and immediate body of the hero becomes the slate upon which the truth of God's will is indelibly and infallibly written. It is this combination of supernaturalism and a kind of homey realism that gives the Middle English romances in this volume the distinctive "mixed" quality so often seen as definitive of the notion of romance.

¹² Barron, p. 85.

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King Horn

Introduction

Written in the last part of the thirteenth century, *King Horn* is probably the oldest surviving Middle English romance.¹ While *Horn*'s meter may show some influence from the rhyming ballad meters of Anglo-Norman poetry, it is just as likely that the poem retains characteristics of Old English verse in a century when French-speaking Normans dominated English culture.² Like Old English verse, its meter depends on several heavy stresses per line, though rhymed couplets have overshadowed the alliteration common to earlier English poems. Even though an Anglo-Norman poem, *Horn et Rimenhild*, contains roughly the same plot, some scholars believe that the English poem derives from an earlier source.³ Both *Horn* and *Havelok the Dane* belong to a group of poems known as the Matter of England, late medieval romances based in part on the oral folk culture that survived the Norman Conquest. This category also usually includes *Athelston* and *Bevis of Hampton*.

King Horn begins with the death of the hero's father at the hands of the Saracens who send Horn and his companions into exile. The young Horn finds himself with his twelve companions abandoned in Westernesse (identified with the Wirral peninsula near modern-day Liverpool). There the king's daughter, Rymenhild, declares her passion for Horn, and persuades her father to make him a knight. But Horn will not marry her until he has proved his worthiness, which he does by killing some invading Saracens. Jealous of his exploits, Horn's companion Fikenhild tells the king that Horn plans to kill him. Horn goes into exile again, this time in Ireland where he proves his military skill further by killing yet more invading Saracens. Though King Thurston offers his daughter Reynild in marriage as a reward, Horn remains loyal to Rymenhild. He returns in disguise when she is about to be forced into marriage with one King Mody, but then goes off to defeat the Saracens who

¹ The date for the poem has been traditionally acknowledged as about 1225, but recent scholarship has challenged that date, placing it later in the thirteenth century. For a review of the arguments see Rosemund Allen, "Date and Provenance of *King Horn*: Some Interim Reassessments," *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph S. Wittig (Suffolk, England: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1988), 99–126.

² W. R. J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 223.

³ J. A. W. Bennett, *Middle English Literature*, edited and completed by Douglas Gray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 135.

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murdered his father. When he returns he discovers that the evil Fikenhild has just forced Rymenhild to marry him. Horn quickly kills the traitor comrade, and he and Rymenhild then marry. Reynild, Thurston's daughter, is given in marriage to Horn's faithful comrade, Athulf, and everyone lives happily ever after.

Unlike the loosely organized compositions of many French romances, *King Horn* uses repetition to create a rather tight, symmetrical structure. One may see this repetition on the simplest level, as in two-or-three word formulas, recaps of earlier parts of the story, and even large parallel portions of the plot. This structure of repetition and parallel helps underscore a major theme of the romance — the development of the hero towards maturity. Horn begins as a frightened noble child who develops a love life, achieves several military victories, becomes a sophisticated strategist with his use of disguises and coded statements to Rymenhild, and ultimately wins back his love and his kingdom, both of which have been taken away from him unjustly. Georgianna Ziegler identifies four distinct stages in this development: destruction (lines 1–152), learning (lines 153–756), initiation (757–1008) and reconstruction (1009–end).⁴ The three battles show Horn's increased skill and confidence, as do repetition of hunting and love motifs and dream symbolism, which mark a "change from boy to man, from innocence to self-assertion, from hunted to hunter. . . ."⁵

Another theme of the romance is the stark contrast of good and evil. *Horn*'s moral world divides distinctly between loyal friends and evil traitors — the never-failing Athulf vs. that "wurste moder sone" Fikenhild, who double-crosses Horn not once but twice. On a larger scale, Horn's Christian world is threatened by the Saracens — usually thought of as Muslims, yet also clearly representative of the Vikings; they are an abstract, thoroughly evil enemy that must be defeated.⁶ And, of course, Horn does; he beats back the threatening hordes, and brutally mows down Fikenhild, hewing him to pieces. As W. R. J. Barron observes, English romance heroes such as Bevis, Guy of Warwick, Horn, and Havelok are not dealing with a courtly code but "the oppressive forces of a wicked world."⁷

Indeed, the fine sentiments of the courtly love code so popular in late twelfth-century continental poetry is missing from *Horn*. Rather than putting the heroine on a pedestal and praising her virtues, Horn is pursued by her; his physical beauty sparks a passion for him that drives Rymenhild wild (lines 256, 300, 956). Nor does the poem contain much reference to the related code of chivalry, though Horn does think it unfair for three of King Thurston's men to fight one Saracen.

⁴ Georgianna Ziegler, "Structural Repetition in *King Horn*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 81 (1980), 403.

⁵ Ziegler, p. 406.

⁶ See Diane Speed, "The Saracens of *King Horn*," *Speculum* 65 (1990), 564–95.

⁷ Barron, p. 85.

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Many of *Horn*'s motifs — sea voyages, exile and return, revenge and marriage — do belong to romance tradition. The two near or broken-off weddings in the poem replay a timeless situation that not only appears in Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* or Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, but also in modern films such as *The Graduate* and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Some scholars see folk tale motifs as even more prominent: the voyages and exiles, yes, but as well *Horn*'s disguises, the symbols of rings and fish, the significance of dreams, even the simple but effective patterns of repetition themselves. All this is put together without the digressions and interlacing that typify continental romances of this period.

The streamlined, folksy directness of *King Horn* should not fool us, however. The story contains unexplained actions and situations that can only be explained because the poet is referring, sometimes incompletely, to folk tale sources. One "folk-tale non sequitur" Barron notes is that *Horn* gives no particular reason for hiding his true identity. And John Speirs sees misty connections to mythology in the symbol of *Horn* himself — to the Horn of Plenty and ultimately the Holy Grail.⁸

Horn is also an object lesson about loyalty and betrayal in a real-world political sense. For Lee C. Ramsay the poem "seems to say that internal dissension is the ultimate threat to a state."⁹ Yet *King Horn* is not as much a "mirror for princes" as is *Havelok the Dane*; rather, it is more a chronicle of martial and romantic achievement, a chronicle concerned with political gains.

Finally, the manuscripts in which *King Horn* appears say something about how it may have been viewed by contemporary readers and listeners. Both *Horn* and *Havelok* appear, for example, in a Bodleian Library manuscript (Laud Misc. 108) whose contents also include popularized saints' lives, scientific information, and current events; perhaps, as Barron observes, these romances along with the Reader's Digest version of contemporary knowledge "would appeal to an audience of limited sophistication anxious for instruction and moral edification."¹⁰ Cambridge Gg.4.27.2 (the manuscript on which our text is based) is an equally diverse anthology compiled in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. In it *Horn* appears with other romances, saints' lives, a collection of homilies, devotional works, didactic narratives, and several miscellaneous items. *Horn* also appears as the only romance in a third manuscript anthology — British Library MS Harley 2253 — this time, with Latin and French verse, religious material, and love poems.¹¹ These very different

⁸ John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 187.

⁹ Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romance: Popular Literature in Medieval England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 32.

¹⁰ Barron, p. 54.

¹¹ Barron, p. 233.

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locations for *Horn* suggest a complexity of attraction that modern readers need to know about.

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King Horn

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King Horn

	Alle beon he blithe That to my song lythe! A sang ich schal you singe Of Murry the Kinge.	<i>be happy</i> <i>[Who]; listen</i>
5	King he was biweste So longe so hit laste. Godhild het his quen; Faire ne mighte non ben.	<i>in the west</i> <i>it (i.e., his life)</i> <i>was called</i> <i>Fairer</i>
10	He hadde a sone that het Horn; Fairer ne mighte non beo born, Ne no rein upon birine, Ne sunne upon bischine.	<i>be</i> <i>rain fell upon</i> <i>or sun shone</i>
15	Fairer nis non thane he was: He was bright so the glas; He was whit so the flur; Rose red was his colur.	<i>as</i> <i>flower</i>
20	He was fayr and eke bold, And of fiftene winter hold. In none kinge riche Nas non his iliche.	<i>also</i> <i>old (see note)</i> <i>no other kingdom</i> <i>anyone like him</i>
25	Twelf feren he hadde That he alle with him ladde, Alle riche mannes sones, And alle hi were faire gomes,	<i>companions</i> <i>led</i> <i>they; good fellows</i>
30	With him for to pleie, And mest he luvede tweie; That on him het Hathulf child, And that other Fikenild.	<i>most</i> <i>one of them was called Athulf</i>
	Athulf was the beste, And Fikenyld the werste. Hit was upon a someres day, Also ich you telle may,	<i>As I</i>
	Murri, the gode King,	

King Horn

	Rod on his pleing	<i>Rode for sport</i>
35	Bi the se side, Ase he was woned ride.	<i>seaside used to</i>
	With him riden bote two —	<i>too; were they (see note)</i>
	Al to fewe ware tho!	<i>shore</i>
	He fond bi the stronde,	
40	Arived on his londe, Schipes fiftene	<i>Ships</i>
	With Sarazins kene	<i>Saracens bold</i>
	He axede what hi soghte	<i>asked; they sought</i>
	Other to londe broghte.	<i>Or</i>
45	A payn hit ofherde, And hym wel sone answarde:	<i>pagan heard it</i>
	"Thy lond folk we schulle slon,	<i>slay</i>
	And alle that Crist luveth upon	
	And the selve right anon.	
50	Ne shaltru todai henne gon."	<i>Nor shall you; hence</i>
	The king alighte of his stede,	<i>off</i>
	For tho he havede nede,	<i>then; had</i>
	And his gode knightes two;	
	Al to fewe he hadde tho.	<i>then</i>
55	Swerd hi gunne gripe	<i>they began</i>
	And togadere smite.	
	Hy smyten under schelde	
	That sume hit yfelde.	<i>So that; felt</i>
	The king hadde al to fewe	
60	Togenes so fele schrewe;	<i>Against so many villains</i>
	So wele mighten ythe	<i>easily; they</i>
	Bringe hem thre to dithe.	<i>death</i>
	The pains come to londe	<i>pagans came</i>
	And neme hit in here honde	<i>took it into their possession</i>
65	That folc hi gunne quelle,	<i>folk; kill</i>
	And churchen for to felle.	<i>churches to destroy</i>
	Ther ne moste libbe	<i>might not live</i>
	The fremde ne the sibbe.	<i>strangers; relatives</i>
	Bute hi here laye asoke,	<i>Unless they their religion forsook</i>
	And to here toke.	<i>theirs took</i>
70	Of alle wymmanne	
	Wurst was Godhild thanne.	<i>Most miserable</i>

King Horn

	For Murri heo weop sore And for Horn yute more.	<i>she wept yet (even)</i>
75	He wente ut of halle Fram hire maidenes alle Under a roche of stone Ther heo livede alone. Ther heo servede Gode	<i>out</i>
80	Aghenes the paynes forbode. Ther he servede Criste That no payn hit ne wiste. Evre heo bad for Horn child That Jesu Crist him beo myld.	<i>Against the pagans' injunction she So that no pagan knew it Ever she prayed</i>
85	Horn was in paynes honde With his feren of the londe. Muchel was his fairhede, For Jhesu Crist him makede.	<i>might be gracious to him hands of the pagans companions Great; beauty</i>
90	Payns him wolde slen, Other al quic flen, Yef his fairnesse nere: The children alle aslaye were.	<i>wanted to kill him Or slay him alive If it were not for slain</i>
95	Thanne spak on admirad — Of wordes he was bald, — “Horn, thu art well kene, And that is wel isene.	<i>one emir bold you; eager seen</i>
100	Thu art gret and strong, Fair and evene long; Thu schalt waxe more Bi fulle seve yere.	<i>quite tall grow bigger seven</i>
105	Yef thu mote to live go And thine feren also, Yef hit so bi falle, Ye scholde slen us alle:	<i>If: were to go away alive companions befall (happen) might; slay</i>
110	Tharvore thu most to stere, Thu and thine ifere; To schupe schulle ye funde, And sinke to the grunde. The se you schal adrenche, Ne schal hit us noght ofthinche. For if thou were alive,	<i>Therefore; must go; boat companions ship; hurry bottom [of the sea] drown in Nor shall [we] regret it</i>

King Horn

- With swerd other with knive,
We scholden alle deie,
And thi fader deth abeie." or
pay for
- 115 The children hi broghte to strande,
Wringinde here honde,
Into schupes borde
At the furste worde. *command*
Ofte hadde Horn beo wo,
120 Ac nevre wurs than him was tho.
The se bigan to flowe,
And Horn child to rowe;
The se that schup so fasste drof
The children dradde therof. *been woeful*
But; then
(see note)
rue (regret bitterly)
drove
were afraid
- 125 Hi wenden towisse
Of here lif to misse,
Al the day and al the night
Til hit sprang dailight,
Til Horn sagh on the strande *saw; shore*
- 130 Men gon in the londe.
"Feren," quath he, "yonge,
Ich telle you tithinge:
Ich here foyeles singe
And that gras him springe. *going about*
"Friends," said; young
news
hear; birds
- 135 Blithe beo we on lyve;
Ure schup is on ryve." *Let us be happy [to be] alive*
Of schup hi gunne funde,
And setten fout to grunde.
Bi the se side *Our ship; shore*
Off; they hasten
foot to ground
- 140 Hi leten that schup ride.
Thanne spak him child Horn,
In Suddene he was iborn:
"Schup bi the se flode,
Daiies have thu gode. *(see note)*
- 145 Bi the se brinke,
No water the nadrinke.
Yef thu cume to Suddene,
Gret thu wel of myne kenne,
Gret thu wel my moder,
Godhild, Quen the gode, *sea's edge*
have you to drink
Greet; family

King Horn

	And seie the paene king, Jesu Cristes withering, That ich am hol and fer On this lond arived her;	say to; pagan enemy sound; well here
155	And seie that hei schal fonde The dent of myne honde." The children yede to tune, Bi dales and bi dune.	they; experience blow went their way hills
160	Hy metten with Almair King, Crist yeven him His blessing King of Westernesse Crist yive him muchel blisse!	King Alymar give much spoke
	He him spac to Horn child Wordes that were mild:	soft
165	"Whannes beo ye, faire gumes, That her to londe beoth icume, Alle throttene, Of bodie swithe kene?	Whence (from where); young ones have come thirteen very bold
	Bi God that me makede, A swich fair verade	
170	Ne saugh ich in none stunde, Bi westene londe: Seie me wat ye seche." Horn spak here speche,	never land of the west Tell; seek
175	He spak for hem alle, Vor so hit moste bivalle: He was the faireste And of wit the beste.	For; befall
	"We beoth of Suddenne, Icome of gode kenne, Of Cristene blode,	intelligence are from family
180	And kynges swthe gode. Payns ther gunne arive And duden hem of lyve.	so very did arrive deprived; life
185	Hi sloghen and todroghe Cristene men inoghe. So Crist me mote rede, Us hi dude lede	tore apart enough So help me God
	Into a galeie,	galley

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 190 | With the se to pleie,
Dai hit is igon and other,
Withute sail and rother:
Ure schip bigan to swymme
To this londes brymme. | <i>On; sport</i>
<i>[One] day; another</i>
<i>Without; rudder</i>
<i>Our; drift</i>
<i>edge</i> |
| 195 | Nu thu might us slen and binde
Ore honde bihynde.
Bute yef hit beo thi wille,
Helpe that we ne spille."
Thanne spak the gode kyng | <i>Now; slay</i>
<i>Our; hands</i>
<i>die</i> |
| 200 | Iwis he nas no nithing
"Seie me, child, what is thi name?
Ne schaltu have bute game."
The child him answerde,
Sone so he hit herde: | <i>truly; villain</i>
<i>Tell</i>
<i>sport</i> |
| 205 | "Horn ich am ihote,
Icomen ut of the bote,
Fram the se side.
Kyng, wel mote thee tide." | <i>As soon as</i>
<i>called</i>
<i>Come out; boat</i> |
| 210 | Thanne hym spak the gode king,
"Well bruc thu thin evening.
Horn, thu go wel schulle
Bi dales and bi hulle; | <i>you prosper</i>
<i>bear; name</i> |
| | Horn, thu lude sune,
Bi dales and bi dune; | <i>hill</i>
<i>loudly shall sound</i> |
| 215 | So schal thi name springe
Fram kynge to kynge,
And thi fairnesse
Abute Westernesse, | <i>[All] about</i> |
| | The strengthe of thine honde
Into evrech londe. | |
| 220 | Horn, thu art so swete,
Ne may ich the forlete."
Hom rod Aylmar the Kyng | <i>each and every</i> |
| | And Horn mid him, his fundling, | |
| 225 | And alle his ifere,
That were him so dere.
The kyng com into halle
Among his knightes alle; | <i>not abandon you</i>
<i>homewards</i>
<i>with; foundling</i>
<i>companions</i> |

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 230 | Forth he clupede Athelbrus,
That was stiward of his hus.
"Stiward, tak nu here
My fundlyng for to lere
Of thine mestere,
Of wude and of rivere,
235 And tech him to harpe
With his nayles scharpe,
Bivore me to kerve,
And of the cupe serve.
Thu tech him of alle the liste
240 That thu evre of wiste,
And his feiren thou wise
In to othere servise.
Horn thu undervonge
And tech him of harpe and songe." | <i>called
steward
now
teach
occupation
hunting; hawking
fingernails
Before; carve [meat]
skills
knew about
companions; teach
take charge of
Athelbrus; teach
in his heart; understood
court; out
everywhere else
Rymenhild loved him the most
foremost in her thoughts
She
she nearly went crazy
dinner table
place
she could not speak
Her sorrow nor her pain
end</i> |
| 245 | Ailbrus gan lere
Horn and his yfere.
Horn in herte laghte
Al that he him taghte.
In the curt and ute,
250 And elles al abute
Luvede men Horn child,
And mest him luvede Rymenhild,
The kynges owene doghter.
He was mest in thoghte; | |
| 255 | Heo luvede so Horn child
That negh heo gan wexe wild:
For heo ne mighte at borde
With him speke no worde,
Ne noght in the halle | |
| 260 | Among the knightes alle,
Ne nowhar in non othere stede.
Of folk heo hadde drede;
Bi daie ne bi nighte
With him speke ne mighte. | |
| 265 | Hire soreghe ne hire pine
Ne mighte nevre fine.
In heorte heo hadde wo, | |

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 270 | And thus hire bithoghte tho:
Heo sende hire sonde
Athelbrus to honde,
That he come hire to,
And also scholde Horn do,
Al in to bure,
For heo gan to lure; | <i>decided then</i>
<i>She; her message</i>
<i>into Athelbrus' presence</i> |
| 275 | And the sonde seide
That sik lai that maide,
And bad him come swithe
For heo nas nothing blithe.
The stward was in herte wo,
For he nuste what to do. | <i>private chamber</i>
<i>appear downcast</i>
<i>message</i>
<i>sick</i>
<i>immediately</i>
<i>was not a bit well</i>
<i>pained in his heart</i>
<i>did not know</i> |
| 280 | Wat Rymenild hure thoghte
Gret wunder him thughte,
Abute Horn the yonge
To bure for to bringe. | <i>Seemed very strange to him</i> |
| 285 | He thoghte upon his mode
Hit nas for none gode:
He tok him another,
Athulf, Hornes brother. | <i>bower</i>
<i>mind</i>
<i>It was for no good</i> |
| 290 | "Athulf," he sede, "right anon
Thu schalt with me to bure gon
To speke with Rymenild stille
And witen hure wille.
In Hornes ilike | <i>immediately</i>
<i>bower</i>
<i>in private</i>
<i>know about her desire</i>
<i>Horn's likeness</i> |
| 295 | Thu schalt hure biswike:
Sore ich me ofdrede
Heo wolde Horn misrede."
Athelbrus gan Athulf lede,
And into bure with him yede: | <i>deceive</i>
<i>fear greatly</i>
<i>advise badly</i>
<i>went</i> |
| 300 | Anon upon Athulf child
Rymenild gan wexe wild:
Heo wende that Horn hit were
That heo havede there:
Heo sette him on bedde; | <i>grew very passionate</i>
<i>thought</i>
<i>had</i> |
| 305 | With Athulf child he wedde;
On hire armes tweie
Athulf heo gan leie. | <i>revealed passion</i>
<i>In; two</i>
<i>embrace</i> |

King Horn

- "Horn," quath heo, "wel longe
 Ich habbe thee lued stronge.
 Thu schalt thi trewthe pligte
 On myn hond her righte,
 Me to spuse holde,
 And ich thee lord to wolde."
 Athulf sede on hire ire
 So stille so hit were,
 310 "Thi tale nu thu lynne,
 For Horn nis noght her inne.
 Ne beo we noght iliche:
 Horn is fairer and riche,
 Fairer bi one ribbe
 315 Thane eni man that libbe:
 Thegh Horn were under molde
 Other elles wher he wolde
 Other henne a thousand mile,
 Ich nolde him ne thee bigile."
 320 Rymenhild hire biwente,
 And Athelbrus fule heo schente.
 "Hennes thu go, thu fule theof,
 Ne wurstu me nevre more leof;
 Went ut of my bur,
 325 With muchel mesaventur.
 Schame mote thu fonge
 And on highe rode anhonge.
 Ne spek ich noght with Horn:
 Nis he noght so unorn;
 330 Horn is fairer thane beo he:
 With muchel shame mote thou deie."
 Athelbrus in a stunde
 Fel anon to grunde.
 "Lefdi min oghe,
 335 Lithe me a litel throghe!
 Lust whi ich wonde
 Bringe thee Horn to honde.
 For Horn is fair and riche,
 Nis no whar his iliche.
 340 Aylmar, the gode Kyng,
 345
- said
swear fidelity
right here
to be a spouse
to have as lord
in her ear
As quietly as possible
finish
alike
lives
Even if; earth
Or wherever
from here
would not beguile him nor you
changed
fouly; denounced
From here; wicked thief
will you be; dear
Get out; bower
much bad luck
overtake you
gallows hang
ugly
he (i.e., Athulf)
die
right away
immediately
My own lady
Listen to me for a moment
Hear; hesitated
Nowhere; equal

King Horn

	Dude him on mi lokyng.	Placed; care
	Yef Horn were her abute,	If
	Sore I me dute	Greatly; fear
	With him ye wolden pleie	take pleasure
350	Bitwex you selve tweie.	beyond doubt
	Thanne scholde withuten othe	
	The kyng maken us wrothe.	angry
	Rymenhild, foryef me thi tene,	forgive; anger
	Lefdi, my quene,	
355	And Horn ich schal thee fecche,	<i>Whoever may care</i>
	Wham so hit recche."	<i>as much as she could</i>
	Rymenhild, yef he cuthe,	<i>keep quiet</i>
	Gan lynne with hire muthe.	<i>She made herself</i>
	Heo makede hire wel blithe;	<i>[It was] well with her; time</i>
360	Wel was hire that sithe.	<i>she said; soon</i>
	"Go nu," quath heo, "sone,	<i>noontime</i>
	And send him after none,	<i>dressed as a squire</i>
	On a squieres wise.	
	Whane the kyng arise	
365	To wude for to pleie,	<i>woods; sport</i>
	Nis non that him biwreie.	<i>No one; will betray</i>
	He schal with me bileve	<i>stay</i>
	Til hit beo nir eve,	<i>close to evening</i>
	To haven of him mi wille;	<i>desire</i>
370	After ne recche ich what me telle." ¹	
	Aylbrus wende hire fro;	<i>turned away from her</i>
	Horn in halle fond he tho	<i>then</i>
	Bifore the kyng on benche,	
	Wyn for to schenche.	<i>Wine; pour</i>
375	"Horn," quath he, "so hende,	<i>gracious</i>
	To bure nu thu wende,	<i>bedchamber; go</i>
	After mete stille,	<i>meal quietly</i>
	With Rymenhild to dwelle;	
	Wordes swthe bolde,	<i>very</i>
380	In herte thu hem holde.	<i>them keep (i.e., be quiet)</i>
	Horn, beo me wel trewe;	

¹ *Afterwards I do not care what people say*

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Ne schal hit thee nevre rewe." | <i>you will not regret it</i> |
| | Horn in herte leide | <i>took to heart</i> |
| | Al that he him seide; | |
| 385 | He yeode in wel righte | <i>went</i> |
| | To Rymenild the brighte. | <i>beautiful</i> |
| | On knes he him sette, | |
| | And sweteliche hure grette. | <i>sweetly greeted her</i> |
| | Of his feire sighte | <i>appearance</i> |
| 390 | Al the bur gan lighte. | <i>glow</i> |
| | He spac faire speche — | |
| | Ne dorte him noman teche. | <i>needed</i> |
| | "Wel thu sitte and softe, | |
| | Rymenild the brighte, | |
| 395 | With thine maidenes sixe | <i>sit next to you</i> |
| | That the sitteth nixte. | <i>our</i> |
| | Kinges stward ure | <i>Sent</i> |
| | Sende me in to bure; | |
| | With thee speke ich scholde. | |
| 400 | Seie me what thu woldest: | <i>Tell</i> |
| | Seie, and ich schal here | |
| | What thi wille were." | |
| | Rymenild up gan stonde | |
| | And tok him bi the honde; | |
| 405 | Heo sette him on pelle | <i>fur mantle</i> |
| | Of wyn to drinke his fulle: | |
| | Heo makede him faire chere | <i>She showed him</i> |
| | And tok him abute the swere. | <i>neck</i> |
| | Ofte heo him custe, | <i>kissed</i> |
| 410 | So wel so hire luste. | <i>as much as she liked</i> |
| | "Horn," heo sede, "withute strif, | <i>doubtless</i> |
| | Thu schalt have me to thi wif. | <i>for your wife</i> |
| | Horn, have of me rewthe, | <i>pity</i> |
| | And plist me thi trewthe. | <i>pledge: oath (fidelity)</i> |
| 415 | Horn tho him bithoghte | <i>thought to himself</i> |
| | What he speke mighte. | |
| | "Crist," quath he, "thee wisse, | <i>guide</i> |
| | And yive thee hevene blisse | |
| | Of thine husebonde, | |
| 420 | Wher he beo in londe. | <i>Wherever</i> |

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | Ich am ibore to lowe
Such wimman to knowe.
Ich am icome of thralle
And fundling bifalle. | <i>born; too low</i>
<i>a serf</i>
<i>have become a foundling</i>
<i>Nor would it be natural</i> |
| 425 | Ne feolle hit the of cunde
To spuse beo me bunde.
Hit nere no fair wedding
Bitwexe a thral and a king." | <i>As a spouse; united</i>
<i>would be</i> |
| | Tho gan Rymenhild mislyke
And sore gan to sike:
Armes heo gan bughe;
Adun heo feol iswoghe. | <i>Then; be displeased</i>
<i>sigh</i>
<i>to bend (raise)</i>
<i>Down; fell unconscious</i> |
| 430 | Horn in herte was ful wo
And tok hire on his armes two. | <i>in much grief</i> |
| 435 | He gan hire for to kesse
Wel ofte mid ywisse.
"Lemman," he sede, "dere,
Thin herte nu thu stere. | <i>kiss</i>
<i>with certainty</i>
<i>Beloved</i>
<i>control</i> |
| | Help me to knighte
Bi al thine mighte, | <i>become a knight</i> |
| 440 | To my lord the king
That he me yive dubbing:
Thanne is mi thralhod
I went in to knighthod | <i>dub me</i>
<i>serf-like status</i>
<i>turned</i> |
| 445 | And I schal wexe more,
And do, leman, thi lore." | <i>grow</i>
<i>instruction</i> |
| | Rymenhild, that swete thing,
Wakede of hire swoghning. | <i>swoon</i> |
| 450 | "Horn," quath heo, "wel sone
That schal beon idone.
Thu schalt beo dubbed knight | |
| | Are come seve night.
Have her this cuppe | <i>Before a week is up</i>
<i>Take</i> |
| | And this ryng ther uppe
To Aylbrus the stuard, | <i>along with it</i> |
| 455 | And se he holde foreward.
Seie ich him biseche,
With loveliche speche,
That he adun falle | <i>see to it; keep the agreement</i>
<i>Say I ask him</i>
<i>fall down (humble himself)</i> |

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 460 | Bifore the king in halle,
And bidde the king arighte
Dubbe thee to knighte.
With selver and with golde
Hit wurth him wel iyolde. | <i>immediately</i> |
| 465 | Crist him lene spede
Thin erende to bede."
Horn tok his leve,
For hit was negh eve.
Athelbrus he soghte | <i>silver</i>
<i>He will be well-rewarded</i>
<i>grant success</i>
<i>Make known your business</i> |
| 470 | And yaf him that he broghte,
And tolde him ful yare
Hu he hadde ifare,
And sede him his nede,
And bihet him his mede. | <i>nearly evening</i>
<i>gave him what</i>
<i>quickly</i>
<i>How; fared</i>
<i>what he wanted</i>
<i>promised; reward</i>
<i>as soon as possible</i> |
| 475 | Athelbrus also swithe
Wente to halle blive.
"Kyng," he sede, "thu leste
A tale mid the beste.
Thu schalt bere crune | <i>listen</i>
<i>The best of all tales</i>
<i>crown</i> |
| 480 | Tomoreghe in this tune;
Tomoreghe is thi feste:
Ther bihoveth geste.
Hit nere noght for loren
For to knighti child Horn, | <i>Tomorrow; town</i>
<i>feast</i>
<i>It is fitting to have a good time</i>
<i>It is not a lost cause</i>
<i>young man</i> |
| 485 | Thine armes for to welde:
God knight he schal yelde."
The king sede sone,
"That is wel idone. | <i>bear</i>
<i>Good; turn out to be</i>
<i>good idea</i>
<i>pleases</i> |
| 490 | Horn me wel iquemeth;
God knight him bisemeth.
He schal have mi dubbing
And after wurth mi derling.
And alle his feren twelf | <i>seems</i>

<i>become; favorite</i>
<i>companions</i> |
| 495 | He schal knighten himself:
Alle he schal hem knighte
Bifore me this nighte."
Til the light of day sprang
Ailmor him thughte lang. | <i>them all</i>

<i>thought to himself</i> |

King Horn

	The day bigan to springe;	
500	Horn com bivore the kinge,	<i>before</i>
	Mid his twelf yfere,	<i>With; companions</i>
	Sume hi were luthere.	<i>Some of them; evil</i>
	Horn he dubbede to knigte	
	With swerd and spures brighte.	<i>spurs</i>
505	He sette him on a stede whit:	<i>white horse</i>
	Ther nas no knight hym ilik.	<i>was no; like him</i>
	He smot him a litel wight	<i>light blow</i>
	And bed him beon a god knight.	<i>ordered; good</i>
	Athulf fel aknes thar	<i>on his knees</i>
510	Bivore the King Aylmar.	
	“King,” he sede, “so kene	<i>bold</i>
	Grante me a bene:	<i>favor</i>
	Nu is knight Sire Horn	<i>Now as</i>
	That in Suddene was iboren;	
515	Lord he is of londe	
	Over us that bi him stonde;	
	Thin armes he hath and scheld	
	To fighte with upon the feld:	
	Let him us alle knighte	
520	For that is ure righte.”	<i>our</i>
	Aylmar sede sone ywis,	<i>responded quickly</i>
	“Do nu that thi wille is.”	<i>what</i>
	Horn adun lighte	<i>got down</i>
	And makede hem alle knightes.	
525	Murie was the feste	<i>Merry</i>
	Al of faire gestes:	<i>entertainments</i>
	Ac Rymenhild nas noght ther,	<i>But</i>
	And that hire thughte seve yer.	<i>she thought seven years</i>
	After Horn heo sente,	<i>sent for</i>
530	And he to bure wente.	<i>chamber</i>
	Nolde he noght go one;	<i>alone</i>
	Athulf was his mone.	<i>companion</i>
	Rymenhild on flore stod:	
	Hornes come hire thughte god:	<i>Horn's coming seemed good to her</i>
535	And sede, “Welcome, Sire Horn,	
	And Athulf knight the biforn.	<i>before you</i>
	Knight, nu is thi time	

King Horn

- For to sitte bī me.
 Do nu that thu er of spake:
 To thy wif thu me take.
 Ef thou art trewe of dedes,
 Do nu ase thu sedes.
 Nu thu hast wille thine,
 Unbind me of my pine."
- 540 "Rymenhild," quath he, "beo stille!
 Ich wulle don al thi wille,
 Also hit mot bitide.
 Mid spere I schal furst ride,
 And mi knighthod prove,
 Ar ich thee ginne to woghe.
 We beth knightes yonge,
 Of o dai al isprung;
 And of ure mestere
 So is the manere:
- 550 With sume othere knighte
 Wel for his leman fighte
 Or he eni wif take;
 Forthi me stondeth the more rape.
 Today, so Crist me blesse,
 Ich wulle do pruesse,
 For thi lufe in the felde
 Mid spere and mid schelde.
 If ich come to lyve,
 Ich schal thee take to wyve."
- 555 "Knight," quath heo, "trewe,
 Ich wene ich mai thee leve:
 Tak nu her this gold ring;
 God him is the dubbing;
 Ther is upon the ringe
- 560 Igrave "Rymenhild the yonge";
 Ther nis non betere anonder sunne
 That eni man of telle cunne.
 For my lufe thu hit were
 And on thi finger thu him bere.
- 565 The stones beoth of suche grace
 That thu ne schalt in none place
- spoke about before
i.e., a man of your word
said
Release; pain
When the time is right
With spear
Before; begin; woo
are
one; sprung up
our mastery
manner
lover
Before
For you; greater haste
I will do knightly deeds
With
return alive
she said
believe; love
Good; adornment
Engraved
under the sun
can tell of
power

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Of none duntes beon ofdrad, | <i>blows be afraid</i> |
| | Ne on bataille beon amad, | <i>battle; go crazy</i> |
| | Ef thu loke theran | <i>If; on it</i> |
| 580 | And thenke upon thi lemman. | |
| | And Sire Athulf, thi brother, | <i>[sworn] brother</i> |
| | He schal have another. | |
| | Horn, ich thee biseche | |
| | With loveliche speche, | |
| 585 | Crist yeve god ermdinge | <i>success</i> |
| | Thee aghen to bringe." | |
| | The knight hire gan kesse, | <i>kiss</i> |
| | And heo him to blesse. | |
| | Leve at hire he nam, | <i>He took leave of her</i> |
| 590 | And in to halle cam: | |
| | The knightes yeden to table, | <i>went</i> |
| | And Horne yede to stable: | |
| | Thar he tok his gode fole, | <i>horse</i> |
| | Also blak so eny cole. | <i>As black as</i> |
| 595 | The fole schok the brunie | <i>horse; armor</i> |
| | That al the curt gan denie. | <i>court; resounded</i> |
| | The fole bigan to springe, | <i>buck</i> |
| | And Horn murie to singe. | <i>merrily</i> |
| | Horn rod in a while | |
| 600 | More than a myle. | |
| | He fond o schup stonde | <i>a ship anchored</i> |
| | With hethene honde. | <i>heathen hounds</i> |
| | He axede what hi soghte | <i>they</i> |
| | Other to londe broghte. | <i>Or</i> |
| 605 | An hund him gan bihelde | <i>One heathen</i> |
| | That spac wordes belde: | <i>bold</i> |
| | "This lond we wullegh winne | <i>wish to conquer</i> |
| | And sle that ther is inne." | <i>[the inhabitants]</i> |
| | Horn gan his swerd gripe | |
| 610 | And on his arme wype. | |
| | The Sarazins he smatte | <i>hit</i> |
| | That his blod hatte; | <i>blood [grew] hot</i> |
| | At evreche dunte | <i>each and every blow</i> |
| | The heved of wente; | <i>head; off</i> |
| 615 | Tho gunne the hundes gone | <i>rush</i> |

King Horn

	Abute Horn a lone:	<i>Surround</i>
	He lokede on the ringe,	
	And thoghte on Rimenilde;	
	He slogh ther on haste	<i>killed; quickly</i>
620	On hundred bi the laste,	<i>One</i>
	Ne mighte noman telle	<i>count</i>
	That folc that he gan quelle.	<i>subdue</i>
	Of alle that were alive,	
	Ne mighte ther non thrive.	
625	Horn tok the maisteres heved,	<i>leader's head</i>
	That he hadde him bireved	<i>deprived of</i>
	And sette hit on his swerde,	
	Anoven at than orde.	<i>On top on the point</i>
	He verde hom into halle,	<i>went</i>
630	Among the knighthes alle.	
	"Kyng," he sede, "wel thu sitte,	<i>with you</i>
	And alle thine knightes mitte.	
	Today, after mi dubbing,	
	So I rod on my pleing	<i>As I rode for sport</i>
635	I fond o schup rowe	<i>row of ships</i>
	Mid watere al byflowe	<i>With water surrounded</i>
	Al with Sarazines kyn,	<i>kin</i>
	And none londisse men	<i>native</i>
	To dai for to pine	<i>torment</i>
640	Thee and alle thine.	
	Hi gonme me assaille:	<i>attack</i>
	Mi swerd me nolde faille:	<i>would not</i>
	I smot hem alle to grunde,	
	Other yaf hem dithes wunde.	<i>Or gave them deadly wounds</i>
645	That heved I thee bringe	<i>head</i>
	Of the maister kinge.	<i>principal</i>
	Nu is thi wile iyolde,	<i>trouble rewarded</i>
	King, that thu me knightly woldest."	
	A moreghe tho the day gan springe,	<i>In the morning when</i>
650	The king him rod an huntinge.	
	At hom lefte Fikenhild,	
	That was the wurste moder child.	<i>worst child of woman</i>
	Horn ferde into bure	<i>went; chamber</i>
	To sen aventurie.	<i>seek</i>

King Horn

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 655 | He saw Rymenild sitte
Also heo were of witte.
Heo sat on the sunne
With tieres al birunne.
Horn sede, "Lef, thin ore!
Wi wepestu so sore?" | <i>As if; out of her mind</i>
<i>i.e., at a sunny window</i>
<i>tears; covered</i>
<i>Beloved, grant me your favor</i> |
| 660 | Heo sede, "Noght I ne wepe,
Bute ase I lay aslepe
To the se my net I caste,
And hit nolde noght ilaste; | <i>I do not weep for nothing</i> |
| 665 | A gret fiss at the furste
Mi net he gan to berste.
Ich wene that ich schal leose
The fiss that ich wolde cheose."
"Crist," quath Horn, "and Seint Stevene | <i>sea</i>
<i>stay intact</i>
<i>fish; immediately</i>
<i>burst</i>
<i>know; lose</i> |
| 670 | Turne thine swevene.
Ne schal I thee biswike,
Ne do that thee mislike.
I schal me make thin owe
To holden and to knowe | <i>Interpret; dream</i>
<i>deceive</i>
<i>displease</i>
<i>own</i>
<i>keep</i> |
| 675 | For everech othere wighte,
And tharto mi treuthe I thee pligte."
Muchel was the ruthe
That was at thare truthe,
For Rymenhild weop ille, | <i>Above any other creature</i>
<i>oath; pledge</i>
<i>sadness</i>
<i>betrothal</i>
<i>bitterly</i> |
| 680 | And Horn let the tires stille.
"Lemman, quath he, "dere,
Thu schalt more ihere.
Thi sweven schal wende
Other sum man schal us schende. | <i>tears stop</i>
<i>my love</i>
<i>hear</i>
<i>dream; turn [favorably]</i>
<i>Or someone will harm us</i> |
| 685 | The fiss that brak the lyne,
Ywis he doth us pine.
That schal don us tene,
And wurth wel sone isene."
Aylmar rod bi Sture, | <i>Certainly; torment</i>
<i>cause us pain</i>
<i>will be seen</i>
<i>the Mersey</i> |
| 690 | And Horn lai in bure.
Fykenhild hadde envy'e
And sede thes folye:
"Aylmar, ich thee warne | <i>chamber</i>
<i>spoke these lies</i> |

King Horn

	Horn thee wule berne:	<i>destroy you</i>
695	Ich herde whar he sede, And his swerd forth leide, To bringe thee of lyve, And take Rymenhild to wyve.	<i>to kill you</i>
	He lith in bure	<i>lies; chamber</i>
700	Under coverture By Rymenhild thi doghter, And so he doth wel ofte. And thider thu go al right, Ther thu him finde might.	<i>the bedcovers</i>
705	Thu do him ut of londe, Other he doth thee schonde!"	<i>force him out</i> <i>Before; harm</i>
	Aylmar aghen gan turne Wel modi and wel murne.	<i>angry; sorrowful</i>
	He fond Horn in arme	<i>embrace</i>
710	On Rymenhilde barme. "Awey ut," he sede, "fule theof, Ne wurstu me nevremore leof! Wend ut of my bure With muchel messaventure.	<i>bosom</i> <i>out; foul thief</i> <i>Nor will you ever be dear to me</i> <i>Get out; bower</i> <i>bad luck</i>
715	Wel sone bute thu flitte, With swerde ich thee anhitte. Wend ut of my londe, Other thu schalt have schonde."	<i>Unless you flee at once</i> <i>hit</i> <i>injury</i>
	Horn sadelede his stede	
720	And his armes he gan sprede. His brunie he gan lace So he scholde in to place. His swerd he gan fonge: Nabod he noght to longe.	<i>armor; laid out</i> <i>chain mail tunic</i> <i>As if he; battle</i> <i>grab</i> <i>He wasted no time</i>
725	He yede forth blive To Rymenhild his wyve. He sede, "Lemman derling, Nu havestu thi svevening. The fiss that thi net rente,	<i>went; immediately</i> <i>betrothed</i> <i>dear love</i> <i>dream</i>
	Fram thee he me sente.	<i>tore</i>
730	Rymenhild, have wel godne day: No leng abiden I ne may.	<i>have a good day</i> <i>No longer; stay</i>

King Horn

	In to uncuthe londe, Wel more for to fonde;	unknown find
735	I schal wune there Fulle seve yere. At seve yeres ende, Yef I ne come ne sende,	live seven <i>If I do not return or send a message</i>
	Tak thee husebonde;	
740	For me thu ne wonde. In armes thu me fonge, And kes me wel longe."	wait take kiss
	Heo custe him wel a stunde And Rymenhild feol to grunde.	<i>kissed; a while</i> <i>swooned</i>
745	Horn tok his leve: Ne mighte he no leng bileve; He tok Athulf, his fere, Al abute the swere,	<i>longer stay</i> <i>companion</i> <i>neck</i>
	And sede, "Knight so trewe, Kep wel mi lufe newe.	
750	Thu nevre me ne forsoke: Rymenhild thu kep and loke. His stede he gan bistride, And forth he gan ride:	<i>Take care of</i> <i>look after</i> <i>mount</i>
755	To the havene he ferde, And a god schup he hurede, That him scholde londe In westene londe.	<i>harbor; went</i> <i>good; rented</i> <i>western</i>
	Athulf weop with ighe	<i>eyes</i>
760	And al that him isigne. The whyght him gan stonde, And drof til Hirelonde. To londe he him sette	<i>he saw all of that</i> <i>seabreeze sustained him</i> <i>drove; Ireland (see note)</i> <i>disembarked</i>
	And fot on stirop sette.	
765	He fond bi the weie Kynges sones tweie; That on him het Harild. And that other Berild.	<i>found</i> <i>two</i> <i>one called himself Harold</i>
	Berild gan him preie	<i>ask</i>
770	That he scholde him seie What his name were	

King Horn

- And what he wolde there.
 “Cutberd,” he sede, “ich hote,
 Icomen ut of the bote,
 775 Wel feor fram biweste
 To seche mine beste.”
 Berild gan him nier ride
 And tok him by the bridel:
 “Wel beo thu, knight, ifounde;
 780 With me thu lef a stunde.
 Also mote I sterfe,
 The king thu schalt serve.
 Ne sagh I nevre my lyve
 So fair knight aryve.”
 785 Cutberd heo ladde in to halle,
 And hi a kne gan falle:
 He sette him a knewelyng
 And grette wel the gode king.
 Thanne sede Berild sone:
 790 “Sire King, of him thu hast to done;
 Bitak him thi lond to werie;
 Ne schal hit noman derie,
 For he is the faireste man
 That evre yut on thi londe cam.”
 795 Thanne sede the king so dere,
 “Welcome beo thu here.
 Go nu, Berild, swithe,
 And make him ful blithe.
 And whan thu farst to woghe,
 800 Tak him thine glove:
 Iment thu havest to wyve,
 Awai he schal thee dryve;
 For Cutberdes fairhede
 Ne schal thee nevre wel spede.”
 805 Hit was at Cristemasse,
 Neither more ne lasse;
 Ther cam in at none
 A geaunt swthe sone,
 Iarmed fram paynyme
 810 And seide thes ryme:
- wanted
I am called
Come out; boat
From far away in the west
seek my fortune
nearer
- remain a while*
As surely as I must die
- in my life*
- they on their knees*
made them kneel
- do [business] with him*
Entrust; defend
harm
- yet*
- quickly*
- go wooing*
- [Whatever] intention; marry*
- for the sake of; beauty*
prosper
- giant very quickly*
non-Christian lands
rhyme

King Horn

- “Site stille, Sire Kyng,
And herkne this tything:
Her buth paens arived;
Wel mo thane five
815 Her beoth on the sonde,
King, upon thy londe;
On of hem wile fighte
Aghen thre knighthes.
Yef other thre selen ure,
820 Al this lond beo youre;
Yef ure on overcometh your threo,
Al this lond schal ure beo.
Tomoreghe be the fightinge,
Whane the light of daye springe.”
- 825 Thanne sede the Kyng Thurston,
“Cutberd schal beo that on;
Berild schal beo that other,
The thridde Alrid his brother;
For hi beoth the strengeste
830 And of armes the beste.
Bute what schal us to rede?
Ich wene we beth alle dede.”
 Cutberd sat at borde
 And sede thes wordes:
835 “Sire King, hit nis no righte
On with thre to fighte;
Aghen one hunde,
Thre Cristen men to fonde.
Sire, I schal alone,
840 Withute more ymone,
With mi swerd wel ethere
Bringe hem thre to dethe.”
 The king aros amoreghe,
 That hadde muchel sorghe;
845 And Cutberd ros of bedde,
With armes he him schredder,
Horn his brunie gan on caste,
And lacede hit wel faste,
And cam to the kinge
- listen to; message*
There are pagans
[knights]
There are; sand
- One*
Against
If your three slay our [one]
- our one; three*
ours
- one*
second
- they are*
- What advice shall we take*
believe
table
- One*
Against; heathen hound
attack
- companions*
easily
- the next morning*
sorrow
- equipped himself*
armored corselet put on
laced

King Horn

- 850 At his up risinge.
 "King," he sede, "cum to felde,
 For to bihelde
 Hu we fighte schulle,
 And togare go wulle."
 together will go
- 855 Right at prime tide
 Hi gunnen ut ride
 And funden on a grene
 A geaunt swthe kene,
 His feren him biside
 six a. m.
 They rode out
 found
 giant very bold
 companions beside him
- 860 Hore deth to abide.
 The ilke bataille
 Cutberd gan asaille:
 He yaf dentes inoghe;
 The knightes felle iswoghe.
 Their
 same battle
 wage
- 865 His dent he gan withdrawe,
 For hi were negh aslaghe;
 And sede, "Knights, nu ye reste
 One while ef you leste."
 Hi sede hi nevre nadde
 withhold
 they; nearly slain
 now
- 870 Of knighte dentes so harde,
 Bote of the King Murry,
 That wes swithe sturdy.
 He was of Hornes kunne,
 Iborn in Suddene.
 From a knight blows
 Except from
 Who was very (see note)
 family
- 875 Horn him gan to agrise,
 And his blod arise.
 Bivo him sagh he stonde
 That driven him of lond
 And that his fader slogh.
 shudder
- 880 To him his swerd he drogh.
 He lokede on his ryng
 And thoghte on Rymenhilde.
 He smot him thuregh the herte,
 That sore him gan to smerte.
 Before
 out of the land
 killed his father
 Against
- 885 The paens that er were so sturne
 Hi gunne awēi urne;
 Horn and his compaynye
 Gunne after hem wel swithe highe
 through
 sorely; hurt
 pagans; fierce
 run
 in great haste

King Horn

	And sloghen alle the hundes Er hi here schipes funde. To deth he hem alle broghte. His fader deth wel dere hi boghte. Of alle the kynges knights Ne scathede wer no wighte, Bute his sones tweie Bifore him he sagh deie. The king bigan to grete And teres for to lete. Me leiden hem in bare And burden hem ful yare.	killed; hounds <i>Before they their: found</i> <i>They paid dearly for his father's death</i> harmed; not a one <i>Except for; two die weep let [fall]</i> <i>Men; funeral bier buried them right away</i>
890	The king com into halle Among his knightes alle. “Horn,” he sede, “I seie thee, Do as I schal rede thee.	tell advise
895	Aslaghen beth mine heirs, And thu art knight of muchel pris, And of grete strengthe, And fair o bodie lengthe. Mi rengne thu schalt welde,	<i>Slain are great value</i> kingdom; rule
900	And to spuse helde Reynild, mi doghter, That sitteth on the lofte.”	receive
905	“O Sire King, with wronge Scholte ich hit underfonge.	<i>in the upper room (see note)</i>
910	Thi doghter, that ye me bede, Ower rengne for to lede. Wel more ich schal thee serve, Sire Kyng, or thu sterve.	accept offer realm; govern Better before you die
915	Thi sorwe schal wende Or seve yeres ende.	turn Before past
920	Whanne hit is wente, Sire King, yef me mi rente. Whanne I thi doghter yerne, Ne shal tu me hire werne.”	give; reward desire <i>Nor shall you refuse me</i>
925	Cutberd wonede there Fulle seve yere That to Rymenild he ne sente	lived <i>neither sent a message</i>

King Horn

	Ne him self ne wente.	<i>nor returned</i>
	Rymenild was in Westernesse	
930	With wel muchel sorinesse.	<i>great sorrow</i>
	A king ther gan arive	
	That wolde hire have to wyve;	<i>marry</i>
	Aton he was with the king	<i>Agreed</i>
	Of that ilke wedding.	<i>very</i>
935	The daies were schorte,	<i>dared</i>
	That Rimenhild ne dorste	
	Leten in none wise.	<i>Prevent [it]</i>
	A wrat he dude devise;	<i>she dictated</i>
	Athulf hit dude write,	<i>did</i>
940	That Horn ne luvede noght lite.	<i>Who loved Horn not a little</i>
	Heo sende hire sonde	<i>messenger</i>
	To evereche londe	<i>every</i>
	To seche Horn the knight	
	Ther me him finde mighte.	<i>Where; men</i>
945	Horn noght therof ne herde	
	Til o day that he ferde	<i>one; went</i>
	To wude for to schete.	<i>woods; shoot</i>
	A knave he gan imete.	<i>servant; met</i>
	Horn seden, "Leve fere,	<i>Dear friend</i>
950	What sehestu here?"	<i>do you seek</i>
	"Knight, if beo thi wille,	
	I mai thee sone telle.	<i>the west</i>
	I seche fram biweste	
	Horn of Westernesse	
955	For a maiden Rymenhild,	<i>On behalf of</i>
	That for him gan wexe wild.	<i>is going crazy</i>
	A king hire wile wedde	
	And bringe to his bedde,	
	King Modi of Reynes,	<i>(i.e., Furness in the northwest of England)</i>
960	On of Hornes enimis.	
	Ich habbe walke wide,	<i>far</i>
	Bi the se side;	
	Nis he nowar ifunde.	<i>He is not to be found anywhere</i>
	Walawai the stunde!	<i>Alas the hour</i>
965	Wailaway the while!	<i>time</i>
	Nu wurth Rymenild bigiled."	<i>is deceived</i>

King Horn

	Horn iherde with his ires, And spak with bidere tires: “Knav, wel thee bitide!	heard; ears bitter tears <i>good fortune upon you</i>
970	Horn stondeth thee biseide. Aghen to hure thu turne And seie that heo nu murne, For I schal beo ther bitime, A Soneday by prime.”	her; return not be sad be there forthwith <i>Sunday</i> glad
975	The knave was wel blithe And highede aghen blive. The se bigan to throghe Under hire woghe. The knave there gan adrinke:	<i>hurried [back] again quickly</i> sea; toss wall was drowned
980	Rymenhild hit mighte ofthinke. The see him con ded throwe Under hire chambre wowe. Rymenhild undude the durepin Of the hus ther heo was in,	regret did cast him dead wall (<i>see note</i>) door pin (bolt) house where she
985	To loke with hire ighe If heo oght of Horn isighe: Tho fond heo the knave advent, That heo hadde for Horn isent, And that scholde Horn bringe.	eyes anything; could see drowned
990	Hire fingres heo gan wringe. Horn cam to Thurston the King And tolde him this tithing.	
	Tho he was iknowe That Rimenhild was his oghe;	news
995	Of his gode kenne The King of Sudenne, And hu he slogh in felde That his fader quelde, And seide, “King the wise,	<i>Then he [Thurston] was made aware</i> [Horn's] own [Horn told him] of; kin
1000	Yeld me mi servise. Rymenhild help me winne, That thu noght ne linne: And I schal do to spuse Thi doghter wel to huse:	how; killed <i>The one who killed</i> Repay me
1005	Heo schal to spuse have	<i>may you not fail me</i> <i>bring about the marriage of</i> <i>i.e., into a good family</i> <i>for a husband</i>

King Horn

	Athulf, mi gode felaghe,	friend
	God knight mid the beste	<i>Good; among</i>
	And the treweste."	<i>most faithful</i>
	The king sede so stille,	<i>quietly</i>
1010	"Horn, have nu thi wille."	
	He dude writes sende	writs
	Into Yrlonde	<i>Ireland</i>
	After knightes lighte,	<i>agile</i>
	Irisse men to fighte.	<i>Irish</i>
1015	To Horn come inoghe	<i>enough</i>
	That to schupe droghe.	<i>got on board</i>
	Horn dude him in the weie	<i>got underway</i>
	On a god galeie.	<i>good galley</i>
	The wind him gan to blowe	
1020	In a litel throghe.	<i>little while</i>
	The se bigan to posse	<i>drive</i>
	Right in to Westernesse.	
	Hi strike seal and maste	<i>lower sail</i>
	And ankere gunne caste,	<i>anchor dropped</i>
1025	Or eny day was sprunge	<i>Before another</i>
	Other belle irunge.	<i>Or</i>
	The word bigan to springe	<i>spread</i>
	Of Rymenhilde weddinge.	
	Horn was in the watere,	
1030	Ne mighte he come no latere.	
	He let his schup stonde,	<i>ship</i>
	And yede to londe.	<i>went</i>
	His folk he dude abide	<i>caused to wait</i>
	Under wude side.	<i>At the edge of the woods</i>
1035	Horn him yede alone	<i>went</i>
	Also he sprunge of stone.	<i>As if; out of</i>
	A palmere he thar mette	<i>pilgrim</i>
	And faire hine grette:	<i>greeted him</i>
	"Palmere, thu schalt me telle	
1040	Al of thine spelle."	<i>news</i>
	He sede upon his tale,	
	"I come fram o brudale;	<i>bridal feast</i>
	Ich was at o wedding	
	Of a maide Rymenhild:	

King Horn

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1045 | Ne mighte heo adrighe
That heo ne weop with ighe.
Heo sede that heo nolde
Ben ispused with golde.
Heo hadde on husbonde
Thegh he were ut of londe.
And in strong halle,
Bithinne castel walle,
Ther I was atte yate,
Nolde hi me in late. | avoid
<i>wept; eyes</i> |
| 1050 | Modi ihote hadde
To bure that me hire ladde:
Away I gan glide:
That deol I nolde abide.
The bride weþeth sore, | <i>wedded; gold [ring]</i>
<i>one</i>
<i>Even if</i> |
| 1055 | And that is muche deole."
Quath Horn, "So Crist me rede,
We schulle chaungi wede.
Have her clothes myne
And tak me thi sclavyne, | <i>Within</i>
<i>at the gate</i>
<i>they; let</i>
<i>commanded</i> |
| 1060 | Today I schal ther drinke
That some hit schulle ofthinke."
His sclavyn he dude dun legge,
And tok hit on his rigge,
He tok Horn his clothes: | <i>To a chamber; men led her</i>
<i>I snuck away</i>
<i>sorrow; endure</i> |
| 1065 | That nere him noght lothe.
Horn tok burdon and scrippe
And wrong his lippe.
He makede him a ful chere,
And al bicolmede his swere. | <i>As Christ commands me</i>
<i>exchange clothing</i>
<i>here</i>
<i>give; cloak</i> |
| 1070 | He makede him unbicomelich
Hes he nas nevremore ilich.
He com to the gateward,
That him answerede hard:
Horn bad undo softe | <i>So that; regret</i>
<i>lay down</i>
<i>back</i>
<i>[Horn's]</i>
<i>were not displeasing to him</i>
<i>staff; bag</i>
<i>twisted</i> |
| 1075 | Mani tyme and ofte;
Ne mighte he awynne
That he come therinne.
Horn gan to the yate turne | <i>foul appearance</i>
<i>dirtied; neck</i>
<i>ugly</i>
<i>As; never before like that</i>
<i>gatekeeper (porter)</i>
<i>said no</i>
<i>ordered; quietly</i>
<i>succeed</i>
<i>gate</i> |

King Horn

	And that wicket unspurne.	wicket kicked
1085	The boye hit scholde abugge.	bastard; pay for it
	Horn threw him over the brigge	bridge
	That his ribbes him tobquake,	cracked
	And suthe com in atte gate.	afterwards
	He sette him wel loghe	low
1090	In beggeres rowe;	beggars' row (see note)
	He lokede him abute	around him
	With his colmie snute;	dirty nose
	He segh Rymenhild sitte	saw
	Ase heo were of witte,	out of her mind
1095	Sore wepinge and yerne;	deeply
	Ne mighty hure no man wurne.	her; stop
	He lokede in eche halke;	corner
	Ne segh he nowhar walke	Nor did he see
	Athulf his felawe,	
1100	That he cuthe knowe.	As far as he could tell
	Athulf was in the ture,	tower
	Abute for to pure	look
	After his comynge,	For
	Yef schup him wolde bringe.	If; ship
1105	He segh the se flowe	saw
	And Horn nowar rowe.	nowhere
	He sede upon his songe:	
	"Horn, nu thu ert wel longe.	now; slow [in coming]
	Rymenhild thu me toke	entrusted
1110	That I scholde loke;	look after [her]
	Ich habbe ikept hure evre;	
	Com nu other nevre:	now or
	I ne may no leng hure kepe.	longer; her
	For soreghe nu I wepe."	sorrow
1115	Rymenhild ros of benche,	off
	Wyn for to schenche,	Wine; pour
	After mete in sale,	meal; hall
	Bothe wyn and ale.	
	On horn heo bar anhone,	drinking horn; in her hand
1020	So laghe was in londe.	As was the law (custom)
	Knightes and squier	
	Alle dronken of the ber,	beer

King Horn

- Bute Horn alone
Nadde therof no mone.
had no share
1125 Horn sat upon the grunde;
Him thoughte he was ibunde.
ground
tied up [in emotion]
He sede, "Quen so hende,
To meward thu wende;
Queen; gracious
Thu yef us with the furste;
Towards me turn
The beggeres beoth ofthurste."
give; first
very thirsty
Hure horn heo leide adun,
And fulde him of a brun
His bolle of a galun;
For heo wende he were a glotoun.
Her vessel she laid down
1130 *filled; from a brown bowl*
believed; glutton
Heo seide, "Have this cuppe,
And this thing theruppe.
Ne sagh ich nevre, so ich wene,
Beggere that were so kene."
believe
bold
1135 to his companion
Horn tok hit his ifere
And sede, "Quen so dere,
Wyn nelle ich muche ne lite
But of cuppe white.
desire
Thu wenest I beo a beggere,
And ich am a fissere,
1140 You think
But; fisherman
Wel feor icome by este
Very far; east
For fissen at thi feste.
lies here at hand
Mi net lith her bi honde,
Bi a wel fair stronde.
shore
Hit hath ileie there
lain
1145 Fulle seve yere.
seven
Ich am icome to loke
Ef eni fiss hit toke.
Ich am icome to fissee:
Drynke null I of dyssh:
will not from
1150 Drink to Horn of horne.
Far; traveled
Feor ich am journe."
Rymenhild him gan bihelde;
Hire heorte bigan to chelde.
heart; grow cold
1155 Ne knew heo noght his fissing,
understood
Ne Horn hymselfe nothing.
did not recognize him
Ac wunder hire gan thinke
But strange she began to

King Horn

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Whi he bad to Horn drinke. | demanded |
| | Heo fulde hire horn with wyn | filled |
| | And dronk to the pilegrym. | |
| 1165 | Heo sede, "Drink thi fulle, | |
| | And suthe thu me telle | truth |
| | If thu evre isighe | saw |
| | Horn under wude lighe." | in the woods |
| | Horn dronk of horn a stunde | awhile |
| 1170 | And threu the ring to grunde. | threw; bottom [of the vessel] |
| | He seyde, "Quen, nou seche | look at |
| | Qwat is in thy drenche." | What; drink (see note) |
| | The Quen yede to bure | went; bower |
| | With hire maidenes foure. | |
| 1175 | Tho fond heo what heo wolde, | There |
| | A ring igraven of golde | engraved |
| | That Horn of hure hadde; | from her |
| | Sore hure dradde | Greatly she feared |
| | That Horn isterve were, | dead |
| 1180 | For the ring was there. | |
| | Tho sente heo a damesele | Then |
| | After the palmere; | pilgrim |
| | "Palmere," quath heo, "trewe, | faithful |
| | The ring that thou threwe, | |
| 1185 | Thu seie whar thou hit nome, | took |
| | And whi thou hider come." | here |
| | He sede, "Bi Seint Gile, | Giles |
| | Ich habbe go mani mile, | gone |
| | Wel feor by yonde weste | far beyond the west |
| 1190 | To seche my beste. | seek; fortune |
| | I fond Horn child stonde | |
| | To schupeward in londe. ¹ | try |
| | He sede he wolde agesse | |
| | To arive in Westernesse. | |
| 1195 | The schip nam to the flode | took to the water |
| | With me and Horn the gode; | |
| | Horn was sik and deide, | died |

Lines 1191–92: *I found Horn in a [certain] land about to go aboard ship*

King Horn

	And faire he me preide:	<i>requested</i>
	'Go with the ringe	
1200	To Rymenhild the yonge.'	<i>young</i>
	Ofte he hit custe,	<i>kissed</i>
	God yeve his saule reste!"	<i>give; soul</i>
	Rymenhild sede at the furste,	<i>right away</i>
	"Herte, nu thu berste,	<i>burst</i>
1205	For Horn nastu namore,	<i>you have no more</i>
	That thee hath pined so sore."	<i>grieved</i>
	Heo feol on hire bedde,	<i>fell</i>
	Ther heo knif hudde,	<i>Where; hid</i>
	To sle with king lothe	<i>slay the hateful king</i>
1210	And hureselv bothe	<i>herself</i>
	In that ulke nighte,	<i>same</i>
	If Horn come ne mighte.	<i>In case; might not</i>
	To herte knif heo sette,	
	Ac Horn anon hire kepte.	<i>But quickly caught her up</i>
1215	He wipede that blake of his swere,	<i>dirt; neck</i>
	And sede, "Quen, so swete and dere,	
	Ich am Horn thin oghe.	<i>own</i>
	Ne canstu me noght knowe?	<i>Cannot you recognize me</i>
	Ich am Horn of Westernesse;	
1220	In armes thu me cusse."	<i>kiss</i>
	Hi custe hem mid ywisse	<i>each other certainly</i>
	And makeden muche blisse.	
	"Rymenhild," he sede, "I wende	<i>will go</i>
	Adun to the wudes ende:	<i>down</i>
1225	Ther beth myne knightes	<i>are</i>
	Redi to fighte;	
	Iarmed under clothe,	<i>Armed; [their] clothing</i>
	Hi schulle make wrothe	<i>angry</i>
	The king and his geste	<i>guests</i>
1230	That come to the feste.	
	Today I schal hem teche	
	And sore hem areche."	<i>strike</i>
	Horn spong ut of halle	
	And let his sclavin falle.	<i>beggar's cloak</i>
1235	The quen yede to bure	<i>went; chamber</i>
	And fond Athulf in ture.	<i>[watch]tower</i>

King Horn

- "Athulf," heo sede, "be blithe
And to Horn thu go wel swithe.
He is under wude boghe
1240 And with him knightes inoghe."
Athulf bigan to springe
For the tithinge.
After Horn he arnde anon,
Also that hors mighte gon.
- 1245 He him overtok ywis;
Hi makede swithe muchel blis.
Horn tok his preie
And dude him in the weie.
He com in wel sone:
- 1250 The yates were undone.
Iarmed ful thikke
Fram fote to the nekke,
Alle that were therin
Bithute his twelf ferin
- 1255 And the King Aylmare,
He dude hem alle to kare,
That at the feste were;
Here lif hi lete there.
Horn ne dude no wunder
- 1260 Of Fikenhildes false tungē.
Hi sworen othes holde,
That nevre ne scholde
Horn nevre bitraie,
Thegh he at dithe laie.
- 1265 Hi runge the belle
The wedlak for to felle;
Horn him yede with his
To the kinges palais,
Ther was bridale swete,
- 1270 For riche men ther ete.
Telle ne mighte tungē
That gle that ther was sungē.
Horn sat on chaere,
And bad hem alle ihere.
- 1275 "King," he sede, "thu luste
- happy
quickly
forest glade
- Because of the news
ran as quickly
As
indeed
very much
company
set them on their way*
- gates
Armed; heavily
From foot
- Except for; companions
made them all sorry*
- They forfeited their lives
vengeance
On
oaths of allegiance
- betray
Even if; death
- wedding; carry out
went with his [men]*
- bridal [feast]
- joy
[the king's] chair
ordered; to hear
listen to

King Horn

- A tale mid the beste.
I ne seie hit for no blame:
Horn is mi name.
Thu me to knight hove,
1280 And knighthod have proved
To thee, king, men seide
That I thee bitraide;
Thu makedest me fleme,
And thi lond to reme;
1285 Thu wendest that I wroghte
That I nevre ne thoghte,
Bi Rymenhild for to ligge,
And that I withsegge.
Ne schal ich hit biginne,
1290 Til I Suddene winne.
Thu kep hure a stunde,
The while that I funde
In to min heritage,
And to mi baronage.
1295 That lond I schal ofreche
And do mi fader wreche.
I schal beo king of tune,
And bere kinges crune;
Thanne schal Rymenhilde
1300 Ligge bi the kinge."
 Horn gan to schupe draghe
 With his Irisse felaghes,
 Athulf with him, his brother:
 Nolde he non other,
1305 That schup began to crude;
 The wind him bleu lude;
 Bithinne daies five
 That schup gan arive
 Abute middelnichte.
1310 Horn him yede wel righte;
 He tok Athulf bi honde
 And up he yede to londe.
 Hi founde under schelde
 A knight hende in felde.
- among
blame [towards you]*
- raised up*
- betrayed
made me an outlaw
leave*
- lie
deny*
- stay; for a while
While I find my way*
- obtain
avenge my father
town
crown*
- Lie
went to the ship
Irish men*
- he wanted no other
ship; make its way
loudly
Within*
- went immediately*
- went*
- skilled*

King Horn

- 1315 Op the schelde was drawe
 A crowch of Jhesu Cristes lawe.
 The knight him aslepe lay
 Al biske the way.
 Horn him gan to take
 And sede, "Knight, awake!"
- Upon; was drawn
 cross; faith (see note)
- 1320 Seie what thu kepest?
 And whi thu her slepest?
 Me thinkth bi thine crois lighte,
 That thu longest to ure Drighte.
- seize
 guard
 here
 I think
 belong to our Lord
- 1325 Bute thu wule me schewe,
 I schal thee tohewe."
 The gode knight up aros;
 Of the wordes him gros.
- Unless; will
 hack to pieces
- 1330 He sede, "Ich serve aghenes my wille
 Payns ful ylle.
 Ich was Cristene a while:
 Tho icom to this ille
- he was terrified
 against
 Pagans very evil
 once
- 1335 Sarazins blake,
 That dude me forsake.
 On Crist ich wolde bileve.
 On him hi makede me reve
- made
 would
- 1340 To kepe this passage
 Fram Horn that is of age,
 That wunieth biweste,
 Knight with the beste;
- Against [Horn] they made me a guard
 protect
- Who lives in the west (see note)
- 1345 Hi sloghe with here honde
 The king of this londe,
 And with him fele hundred,
 That he ne cometh to fighte.
- best of knights
 They slew; their
- many hundreds
 a marvel
- 1350 And therof is wunder
 God sende him the righte,
 And wind him hidre drive
 To bringe hem of live.
- to here
 kill them
- He sloghen Kyng Murry,
 Hornes fader, king hendy.
 Horn hi ut of londe sente;
- They killed
 courteous
- Twelf felawes with him wente,
 Among hem Athulf the gode,
- They sent Horn out of the land

King Horn

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | Min owene child, my leve fode: | <i>My own; dear son</i> |
| 1355 | Ef Horn child is hol and sund,
And Athulf bithute wund,
He luveth him so dere,
And is him so stere. | <i>sound
without wound</i> |
| | Mighte I seon hem tweie, | <i>like a guardian to him</i> |
| 1360 | For joie I scholde deie." | <i>them both</i> |
| | "Knight, beo thanne blithe | |
| | Mest of alle sithe; | <i>Most; times</i> |
| | Horn and Athulf his fere | <i>companion</i> |
| | Bothe hi ben here." | |
| 1365 | To Horn he gan gon | |
| | And grette him anon. | <i>right away</i> |
| | Muche joie hi makede there | |
| | The while hi togadere were. | <i>together</i> |
| | "Childre," he sede, hu habbe ye fare? | <i>fared</i> |
| 1370 | That ich you segh, hit is ful yare. | <i>It has been a long time since I saw you</i> |
| | Wulle ye this lond winne | |
| | And sle that ther is inne?" | |
| | He sede, "Leve Horn child, | |
| | Yut lyveth thi moder Godhild: | <i>Yet lives</i> |
| 1375 | Of joie heo miste | <i>she might [have]</i> |
| | If heo thee alive wiste." | |
| | Horn sede on his rime, | <i>speech</i> |
| | "IblesSED beo the time | <i>Blessed</i> |
| | I com to Suddene | |
| 1380 | With mine Irisse menne: | |
| | We schulle the hundes teche | <i>hounds</i> |
| | To spoken ure speche. | <i>our</i> |
| | Alle we hem schulle sle, | |
| | And al quic hem fle." | <i>quickly; flay</i> |
| 1385 | Horn gan his horn to blowe; | |
| | His folk hit gan iknowe; | <i>knew it</i> |
| | Hi comen ut of stere, | <i>away from the stern (see note)</i> |
| | Fram Hornes banere; | <i>banner</i> |
| | Hi sloghen and fughten, | <i>killed and fought</i> |
| 1390 | The night and the ughten. | <i>early morning</i> |
| | The Sarazins cunde | <i>kind</i> |
| | Ne lefde ther non in th'ende. | <i>None remained in the end</i> |

King Horn

	Horn let wurche	ordered built
	Chapeles and chirche;	
1395	He let belles ringe	be rung
	And masses let singe.	
	He com to his moder halle	mother's
	In a roche walle.	rock
	Corn he let serie,	<i>Grain; be carried</i>
1400	And makede feste merie;	
	Murye lif he wroghte.	made
	Rymenhild hit dere boghte.	paid for it dearly
	Fikenhild was prut on herte,	arrogant
	And that him dude smerte.	caused him pain
1405	Yonge he yaf and elde	[To] young; gave [bribes]
	Mid him for to helde.	give allegiance
	Ston he dude lede,	Stone; had transported
	Ther he hopede spedē,	to succeed
	Strong castel he let sette,	had built
1410	Mid see him biflette;	<i>He filled the moat around the castle with sea water</i>
	Ther ne mighte lighte	none might land
	Bute foghel with flighte.	Except for birds
	Bute whanne the se withdrew,	drew back
	Mighte come men ynoghe,	enough
1415	Fikenhild gan wende	intended
	Rymenhild to schende.	harm
	To woghe he gan hure yerne;	<i>To woo her intensely he began</i>
	The kyng ne dorste him werne.	dared; refuse
	Rymenhild was ful of mode;	anxiety
1420	He wep teres of blode.	She
	That night Horn gan swete	began to sweat
	And hevie for to mete	heavily to dream
	Of Rymenhild, his make,	mate
	Into schupe was itake.	<i>Onto the ship [she]; taken</i>
1425	The schup bigan to blenche:	lurch
	His lemmian scholde adrenche.	was about to drown
	Rymenhild with hire honde	
	Wolde up to londe;	Wanted [to swim]
	Fikenhild aghen hire pelte	pushed her back
1430	With his swerdes hilte.	sword's hilt
	Horn him wok of slape	woke from sleep

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	So a man that hadde rape. “Athulf,” he sede, “felaghe, To schupe we mote draghe.	<i>Like a man in a hurry comrade ship; must go betrayed distress</i>
1435	Fikenhild me hath idon under And Rymenhild to do wunder. Crist, for his wundes five, Tonight me thuder drive.” Horn gan to schupe ride,	<i>there</i>
1440	His feren him biside. Fikenhild, or the dai gan springe, Al right he ferde to the kinge, After Rymenhild the brighte, To wedden hire bi nighte.	<i>companions beside him before; began Immediately; went wed</i>
1445	He ladde hure bi the derke Into his nywe werke. The feste hi bigunne, Er that ros the sunne. Er thane Horn hit wiste,	<i>led; at night new fortress festivities Before knew</i>
1450	Tofore the sunne upriste, His schup stod under ture At Rymenhilde bure. Rymenhild, litel weneth heo That Horn thanne alive beo.	<i>Before; rose ship; tower chamber realizes was alive</i>
1455	The castel thei ne knewe, For he was so nywe. Horn fond sittinde Arnoldin, That was Athulfes cosin, That ther was in that tide,	<i>it was so new [to them] found sitting Who; cousin time</i>
1460	Horn for tabide. “Horn knight,” he sede, “kinges sone, Wel beo thu to londe icome. Today hath ywedde Fikenhild Thi swete leman Rymenhild.	<i>to wait for come</i>
1465	Ne schal I thee lie: He hath giled thee twie. This tur he let make Al for thine sake. Ne mai ther come inne	<i>deceived; twice had built</i>
1470	Noman with none ginne.	<i>device</i>

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	Horn, nu Crist thee wisse, Of Rymenhild that thu ne misse."	guide lose knew; cunning knew of bring out
	Horn cuthe al the liste That eni man of wiste.	
1475	Harpe he gan schewe, And tok felawes fewe, Of knightes swithe snelle That schrudde hem at wille. ¹	bold
	Hi yeden bi the gravel	went; beach
1480	Toward the castel. Hi gunne murie singe And makede here gleowinge.	merry harping hear asked who they were
	Rymenhild hit gan ihere And axede what hi were.	
1485	Hi sede hi weren harpurs And sume were gigours. He dude Horn in late Right at halle gate.	fiddlers They let
	He sette him on the benche,	
1490	His harpe for to clenche. He makede Rymenhilde lay, And heo makede walaway. Rymenhild feol yswoghe	play a song made a lament fell swooning
	Ne was ther non that loughe.	laughed
1495	Hit smot to Hornes herte So bitere that hit smerte. He lokede on the ringe And thoghte on Rymenhilde:	hit
	He yede up to borde	went; table
1500	With gode swerdes orde: Fikenhildes crune Ther he fulde adune, And al his men a rowe,	edge crown (head) tumbled in order
	Hi dude adun throwe.	struck down
1505	Whanne hi weren aslaghe Fikenhild hi dude todraghe.	killed tear apart

Who dressed [i.e., disguised] themselves as they pleased

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- Horn makede Arnoldin thare
 King after King Aylmare
 Of al Westernesse
 1510 For his meoknesse. *meekness*
 The king and his homage
 Yeven Arnoldin trewage. *vassals*
 Horn tok Rymenhild bi the honde
 And ladde hure to the stronde, *shore*
 1515 And ladde with him Athelbrus,
 The gode stward of his hus.
 The se bigan to flowe,
 And Horn gan to rowe. *sail*
 Hi gunne for to arive *They arrived*
 1520 Ther King Modi was sire. *Where; lord*
 Athelbrus he makede ther king
 For his gode teching:
 He yaf alle the knightes ore *favor*
 For Horn knightes lore. *Because of knight Horn's advice*
 1525 Horn gan for to ride; *sail away*
 The wind him blew wel wide.
 He arivede in Yrlonde, *Ireland*
 Ther he wo fonde, *sorrow*
 Ther he dude Athulf child *caused Athulf the knight to*
 1530 Wedden maide Reynild.
 Horn com to Suddenne
 Among al his kenne; *family*
 Rymenhild he makede his quene;
 So hit mighte wel beon.
 1535 Al folk hem mighte rewe *grieve for*
 That loveden hem so trewe:
 Nu ben hi bothe dede — *Now; they*
 Crist to hevene hem lede!
 Her endeth the tale of Horn *Here*
 1540 That fair was and noght unorn. *ugly*
 Make we us glade evre among, *among us*
 For thus him endeth Hornes song. *Horn's song*
 Jesus, that is of hevene king,
 Yeve us alle His swete blessing. *give*
 Amen.

Notes

Abbreviations: C: Cambridge MS Gg.4.27.2; L: Laud Misc. MS 108; H: Harley MS 2253; F&H: French and Hale.

- 1–2 A conventional exhortation with strong connections to minstrelsy and oral traditions. Hall suggests that the poem “was apparently sung, or chanted, or recited . . . such a performance might have masked certain metrical irregularities that instantly become evident to a modern prosodist. . . .” (p. 33). Because nearly every line of the extant texts contains divergent readings, Allen posits an “exclusive common ancestor” from which all three derive. This ancestor was not the author’s version; it is just possible that it was not written down. She offers three reasons for variation in the MS tradition: “1) a later redaction by the author; 2) later additions by performers or unprofessional adaptors; and 3) scribal corruption” (p. 33). William A. Quinn in *Jongleur: A Modified Theory of Oral Improvisation and Its Effects on the Performance and Transmission of Middle English Romances* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982) agrees that *King Horn* and *Havelok* were both performed rather than read to an audience. As in all oral performances, variations occur while the story is being told and metrical irregularities are not as discernible to the ear when there are distractions for the eye.
- 3 *ich.* C: *ihe.* L: *ich:* H: *ychulle.* There are irregularities in the use of the first-person pronoun. Elsewhere in C it appears as *ich*, but more often as *ihe*. This may indicate a northern influence, perhaps imposed by the scribe. Because there are so many variations among the three MSS, we have been selective. Using C as our base text we have drawn from L and H where emendations seemed appropriate. Our emendations occur where there are omissions in the base text and where textual cruces have been noted by previous editors.

Hall suggests that *biweste* is a formality in romance discourse. Direction and precise location are problematic in this poem; among the MSS variation on direction is evident. See notes for lines 1145 and 1339.

So longe so hit laste. Allen: *Ther whiles that hit yleste.* Hall notes this as a “favorite formula of *Layamon*,” though it is also found in other romances.

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- 10 The description of Horn as “fair” is important. More frequently are found superlative descriptions of the romance heroine, though the Horn poet connects Horn with his mother’s good looks (lines 7–8). Havelok, too, is extraordinarily handsome.
- 14–16 *He was bright so the glas; / He was whit so the flur; / Rose red was his colur.* Heroes described this way include *Guy of Warwick* (line 132), *Bevis of Hampton* (line 2675), and *Ipomadon* (line 5021). Hall points out several passages like this used to praise the beauty of women, but has “not found anything quite like it used for a hero of romance” (p. 93). See note to line 319.
- 17–18 *He was fayr and eke bold, / And offistene winter hold.* Lines supplied by L.
- 27–28 Villains are often placed in opposition to the “good guys” in medieval romance. Thus Athulf is named just before Fikenhild whose name, deriving from OE *ficol*, means “deceitful.”
- 28 *Fikenild.* C: *ffikenheld*; L: *fokenhild*; H: *ffykenyld*. We have emended double f, which appears only occasionally in C.
- 34 *Rod on his pleing.* Hall notes that “to play almost regularly means to ride out by wood or water” (p. 96). But it could also suggest specific leisure time activities of the aristocracy such as hunting and hawking.
- 37–38 *With him riden bote two — / Al to fewe ware tho.* C omits these lines. They are supplied here by L.
- 41 Fifteen is a favorite number for romance writers and probably has numerological significance, i.e., the combination of seven (the number of completion) and eight (a number of new beginning). It could also be a division between stages of life as seems to be suggested by line 18 announcing Horn’s age.
- 42 *Sarazins.* This is a contested term that could apply to many groups of non-Christian invaders. See Diane Speed, “The Saracens of *King Horn*,” *Speculum* 65 (1990), 564–95.
- 43 *hi soght.* L: *isoghte.* We have followed F&H; n.b., similar locutions in lines 603–04
- 48 *Crist.* The first mention of the deity, unusual since more often Middle English romances begin with an invocation or prayer. According to Allen in “Some Textual

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Cruces in *King Horn*," *Medium Aevum* 53 (1984), 73–77, there are "twenty-seven instances where God or Christ is mentioned in one or more of the three manuscripts and in only five of them is there consensus of agreement in all three" (p. 73).

- 51 *The king alighte of his stede.* The king's dismounting is curious here. Considering the threat he has just heard, remaining on horseback in a state of combat readiness might be a prudent idea. In later romances hand-to-hand combat takes place only after an opponent is knocked off his horse. Hall thinks this episode harkens back to a pre-Conquest English custom.
- 68 *The fremde ne the sibbe.* This is a conventional phrase meaning "no manner of men."
- 77–78 Godhild's retreat under *a roche of stone* may be to a subterranean chamber or cave. Her desire to separate herself from the world is an act reminiscent of the desert saints but also could be an act of self defense. Godhild is an uncommon name in England and is probably derived from the German *Gundihildis*.
- 105 That Horn is not slain is quite extraordinary given his princely position and the possibility that revenge might occur. The Greeks did not hesitate to kill Hector's son during the Trojan War just for this reason.
- 115 The *children* (i.e., young knights or squires) are Horn and his companions. At this point, Horn is still considered a "child," not only because of his tender age, but because of his impending social, political, and military obligations. For this reason, Lee C. Ramsey, in *Chivalric Romance: Popular Literature in Medieval England*, classifies *King Horn* as a "child exile" narrative, a story about "growing up in a personal, military, social, and political sense" (p. 26). In line 1529 Athulf is called "child" not in the sense of immaturity, but rather as an indication of his chivalry.
- 117–30 The boat has been set adrift and becomes subject to the will of God. Tradition held that those exposed in such a manner, just as those subjected to trials by ordeal, would die if guilty of some crime or sin. It could also be construed as a test of faith. Other romance figures were tested in the same ways, most notably Emaré or Custance as she is known in Chaucer's The Man of Law's Tale and Crystabelle with her son Eglamour in the romance bearing his name. Saints were also tested in this way.

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- 120 L fills in four descriptive lines that H & C omit. They are as follows:

*Horn yede in to þe shipes bord
Sone at þe firste word
And alle hise feren
Pat ware him lef and dere*

- 121 *The se bigan to flowe.* “The sea reached high tide”; or “The sea began to rise, or surge.” See MED *flouen* v. 4a.

- 142 *Suddene* is a locale contested among scholars. It could be the Isle of Man, between Ireland and Britain, Sussex, Cornwall, South Devon, Roxburgh, and/or the land of Suðdene as in *Beowulf*.

- 152 *Jesu Cristes.* C: *Jhesucristes*; L: *Ihesu cristes*; H: *ihesu cristes*.

- 156 *The dent of myne honde.* This line is followed by a couplet in L and three lines in H both describing the weeping of the children as the ship embarks.

- 210 *Well bruc thu thin evening.* The sense is “bear your name well.” As Hall notes, “let your fame be spread wide as is the sound of a horn” (p. 107). Sands notes the puns on the name “Horn,” the instrument called a “horn” which resounds literally, just as fame does metaphorically, “Bi dales and bi dune” (p. 22).

- 212 *Bi dales and bi hulle.* This line is followed by a line describing a journey through each town in L.

- 224 *fundling.* C: *fundyng.* Horn and his companions are treated as orphans rather than enemies, a sign of their lack of martial prowess and the accoutrements of knighthood. Abandonment and orphanage were serious matters in the Middle Ages. See John Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

- 235 *And tech him to harpe.* C: *And tech him to harpe.* L: *Tech him of þe harpe.* H: *Ant toggen oþe harp.* Allen: *To tuchen upon.* Playing the harp with one’s fingernails (line 236) is rare in Middle English literature, though not as rare in modern harp playing. Sir Orfeo, for instance, plays with his “wits.”

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- 237–38 *Bivore me to kerve, / And of the cupe serve.* Serving at table was customary practice for young boys at court. It taught both courtesy and discipline.
- 241 *And his feiren.* C: *In his feiren.* L: *His feren.* H: *Ant his feren.* Allen: *And his ifeire.* McKnight: *In his feiren.*
- 256 *wexe wild.* C: *wexe wild.* L: *wex al wild.* H: line is omitted. Allen: *wexe wode.* The interchangeability of *wild* and *wode*, the Middle English term for “madness,” suggests an uncontrollable emotional dimension to love, which the poet emphasizes again in line 300.
- 258–61 Rymenhild’s speechlessness is a symptom of love sickness. Her tongue is “broken,” as Sappho might say.
- 288 Athulf is Horn’s sworn brother. The relationship is like that among the four men in *Athelston* and between Amis and Amiloun. In modern terms a sworn brother is synonymous with a “blood brother,” though there is usually no exchange of bodily fluid.
- 300 *wexe wild.* McKnight and Hall note the popularity of this expression. Here it is symptomatic of love sickness and its accompanying loss of reason and self-control. Swooning could also be a symptom of the condition.
- 303 F&H note that often “beds were the only furniture in most apartments, and hence served as chairs or benches.” A maiden’s wooing of a man is less usual but may be found in *Amis and Amiloun*, *Bevis of Hampton*, and *Sir Eglamour*.
- 318 *fairer.* A scribal error according to Hall, though it anticipates the next line quite well.
- 319 *Fairer bi one ribbe.* Having one more rib in the same way that (according to the creation story in Genesis) woman has one more rib than man and is also the “fairer” sex. Susan Dannebaum disagrees because “this interpretation has the disadvantage of paralleling Horn’s physical excellence to that of women rather than to some masculine ideal” (p. 116). She sees instead a parallel between Adam and Christ, who were conventionally thought by medieval commentators to have had perfect physical bodies. For example, Nicholas Love’s *Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* (a translation of St. Bonaventure’s *Meditationes Vitae Christi*) sees both Adam and Christ as paragons of masculine beauty. Dannenbaum believes a more typical (or at least male) medieval comparison would link Havelok to these male figures, who

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symbolize old and new creation, rather than to Eve, who symbolizes the fall of humanity. See also Liam Purdon, "King Horn and the Medieval Trope of Christ the Lover-Knight," *Proceedings of the PMR Conference at Villanova* 10 (1985), 137–47.

- 349 *With him ye wolden pleie.* *Pleie* has a range of meanings including those implicating innocent games of "merriment" and "pleasure" as well as more serious games of martial prowess and sexual intercourse. The context here seems to suggest a certain degree of intense sexual interest, something akin to the pleasure of foreplay.
- 363–64 *On a squieres wise. / Whane the kyng arise.* In C these two lines are reversed.
- 370 *recche.* C: *recchecche.* Hall and McKnight retain the C reading while F&H and Allen emend to *recche*.
- 386 Hall notes the paucity of description for Rymenhild. Horn's beauty does indeed seem of more interest. He, not she, illuminates the bedchamber.
- 403 *gan stonde.* "did stand." *Gan* is an auxiliary verb which simply intensifies the main verb and is indicative of past tense and causative aspect. The H scribe regularly substitutes *con* for *gan*.
- 405 *Heo sette him on pelle.* According to the MED, *pelle* has a range of meanings including "hide," "skin," "furred skin used as lining or trim on a garment"; it could also refer to a cloak or mantle or a piece of parchment. F&H gloss the term "rich coverlet" (p. 37), with which Hall seems to agree when he calls it the "rich cloth covering the bed" (p. 118). Hall bases his gloss on the use of the term in the *King of Tars*, "on bedde . . . that comelich was isprad with palle" (lines 781–83).
- 410 Hall detects a lacuna in C. The lines preceding Rymenhild's "are much too abrupt" Both H and L support this with more rhetorical foreplay.
- 423 *Ich am icome of thralle.* Hall's note illuminates Horn's motive for describing himself as the son of a thrall (peasant): "Horn's statement is dictated by caution and the desire not to compromise his master Athelbrus, who has told him to be careful and true to him" (p. 319).

Notes

- 427–28 The disparity in social status for a marriage alliance such as this in actual life would be subject to disapprobation. Being knighted raises Horn's apparent social status, however, and renders his marriage to a princess possible.
- 455 *To Aylbrus the stuard.* C: *To Aylbrus & stuard.* L reads *styward.* O: *And beryt houre styward.*
- 458 *With loveliche speche.* Allen notes that this reading "does not make sense since Rymenhild is begging Athelbrus (through Horn) to make a persuasive appeal to her father to knight her lover." Allen prefers *libeliche*, which she suggests adds the appropriate touch of graciousness and humility. But Hall's glossing of the term as "loving and affectionate" makes sense too since Rymenhild's appeal to her father is predicated upon a close personal relation (father/daughter) just as much as it is based upon the political relation of king and subject. As any daughter knows, a doting father is easily persuaded with *loveliche speche*.
- 492 *And after wurth.* C: *And afterward.* L: *And be ny nowne.* H: *Ant be myn oper.* Allen: *And after wurpe.* The emendation establishes value rather than time.
- 504–05 A sword, spurs, and a horse are essential items for a knight. Chivalry itself is derived etymologically from *cheval*, the French term for horse; a *chevalier* is one who rides a horse, i.e., a knight. Also, the dubbing signals a transformation in Horn's martial capability because as a thrall he cannot bear arms. Hall notes the oddity of the king's putting the boots and spurs on Horn, a practice usually enacted by knights rather than kings (p. 127).
- 512 The first request of a newly dubbed knight is usually granted.
- 524 According to custom, any knight could confer knighthood. Hall notes that "the knighting of Horn's comrades at the same time as himself is in accord with actual custom: the number of persons advanced with the distinguished personage varies with his rank" (p. 127).
- 548–58 A central requirement of chivalry is for a knight to prove himself worthy of his designated lady's love.
- 558 *Forthi me stondeth the more rape.* C: *For þe me stondeþ the more rape.* H: *Oper wyp wymmon forewart make.* L: *þerfore me have ich þe forsake.* Allen: *me stont forth rake.* *Rape* is not to be understood in modern terms, but rather as a ME verb

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meaning “haste,” “rush,” “speed.” It is on the basis of the relation of rape to rake that Allen makes her emendation.

- 567 Medieval romance is filled with magical rings. One of the most memorable is found in Chrétien de Troyes’ *Yvain*. Given to the hero by a woman named Lunette, the ring confers invisibility to its wearer, though its true power is to help a knight conquer his fear. Rings could also function as signs of recognition between lovers, as in *Erle of Tolous*, *Sir Eglamour*, *Ipomadon*, and *Floris and Blanchefleur*.
- 568 Dubbing as ornamentation is unique here. In addition to signifying a ritual conferring knighthood, “dubbing” could also mean “attire,” or “adornment,” or “finery” according to the MED.
- 595 The arming of horses seems to have developed in the late twelfth century. The first mention of it in literature is in Wace’s *Roman de Rou*. Hall dates the time when the usage became common in England by comparing the Statute of Winchester (1285) with the Statute of 27 Edward I (1298): “The former does not make any mention of armor for the horse, the latter makes it universally obligatory” (p. 132). This is Horn’s second steed; the first is white. It is not unusual for literary knights to have three horses of different colors, e.g., *Ipomadon* and *Sir Gowther*.
- 602 *hethene honde* is a frequently used expression of contempt. Saracens apply it to Christians just as Christians apply it to Saracens and other enemies. See *Sowdone of Babylone* (line 956).
- 613 *At evreche dunte*. C: *At evreche dunte*, followed by F&H. L: *At the furste dunte*, followed by Allen. Allen’s emendation perhaps emphasizes Horn’s prowess as he smites off the heads of his opponents at the first attempt. But perhaps he is even more powerful if he succeeds at every attempt.
- 625 The carrying of an enemy’s decapitated head on sword or spear point occurs not only in romance, but is a practice that carried over into real life. During the Rising of 1381, for instance, rebels paraded the heads of the Archbishop of Canterbury and several other government officials through the streets of London before piking them on the city gates. One of their leaders, Wat Tyler, suffered similar retaliatory treatment at the hands of the king’s men.
- 636 *Mid watere al byflowe*. C: *þo hit gan to flowe*. L: *Mid watere al by flowe*. H: *In þe found by flowen*. Allen: *Binne sund bi flowe*.

Notes

- 649 Hall notes the divergence of the MSS and surmises a lost passage in C that would describe Firkenhild's joining the hunting party. Both H and L indicate Firkenhild's presence at the hunt.
- 650 *The king him rod.* This is an example of a reflexive verb form (as if one were to say "the king took himself out riding").
- 652 *moder child.* Hall suggests that this use of the phrase in the popular sense, i.e., as every man alive, is comparatively rare in Middle English. Allen notes that *moder* was probably added by the scribe of the lost ancestor she dubs the "exclusive common."
- 653 *Horn ferde.* C: *Heo ferde.* L: *Horn wente.* H: *Ant to boure wes y gone.* Allen: *Horn wente.* The emendation clarifies this as Horn's action.
- 654 *To sen aventure.* F&H see *sen* as a blunder for *seie*, meaning recount (p. 44). Allen, on the other hand, emends *sen* to *sechen*, making possible another interpretation.
- 655 *He saw.* C: *Heo saw.* L and O: *He fond.*
- 669 *Seint Stevene.* This may refer to one of many saints by the name of Stephen, but a likely candidate would be the deacon and protomartyr whose life first appears in Acts of the Apostles. He was martyred by stoning.
- 689 *Sture.* Probably the River Mersey, near modern Liverpool.
- 696 F&H note this baring of the sword as a "magical act" accompanying an oath. Hall sees the practice as more akin to realism: "The practice was of the highest antiquity among all northern nations" (p. 137).
- 721 A *brunie* was an armored corselet secured to the body with laces.
- 726 *wyve.* "Wife" should be read as "woman" here. At this point, Horn and Rymenhild are betrothed, but not officially married.
- 736 Seven years is the regular probationary period for a lover in ballad and romance. It is the measure of apprenticeship. Rymenhild's earlier premonition is fulfilled as will be her dream.

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- 744 *feol to grunde*. The swoon is a trope of medieval romance, though Dante the Pilgrim does it frequently in the *Commedia*, a work not often considered part of the romance tradition. As Allen notes, the episode here is not connected with Rymenhild's previous faint (p. 301).
- 761–62 *The whyght him gan stonde; / And drof til Hirelonde*. These two lines are supplied by L.
- 792 *Ne schal hit*. C: *Ne schat hit*. L: *Ne schal hym*. H: *Ne shal be*. Allen: *Ne schal be*.
- 799–804 Editors disagree about the meaning of these lines. F&H think that the glove exchange is a way for Horn and Berild to pledge that they will not compete in love. Sands agrees with Hall when he suggests the following reading, which seems to make sense here: "When you [Berild] go a-wooing, entrust him [Horn] with your glove [i.e., as a symbol that he will not compete with you]; [but if] you intend to marry, he'll drive you away; because of Cutberd's handsomeness, assuredly you'll never succeed [in love]" (p. 36).
- 805 Exactly the 25th of December.
- 817–29 The contract made here Hall says is "primitive" in character but seems to represent trial by combat, a practice in which judgment is rendered by whoever wins the battle. Fighting a giant and defeating him is the stuff of which legendary kings are made. (The battle of David and Goliath is one outstanding Scriptural example.) There are many such contests in Arthurian romance, including King Arthur's confrontation with a giant at Mont St. Michel.
- 851 *cum to felde*. C: *cum to fel*. Both H and L: *felde*. Allen: *felde*. On the basis of this consensus, the emendation is made.
- 855 *Right at prime tide*. In its original sense, this means something like "6 a.m." and is a term borrowed from the monastic division of the day into seven prayer-periods (Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline). This comes to mean simply "early in the morning" in secular usage.
- 863 *He yaf dentes inoghe*. "He gave enough blows," a typical understatement in Old and Middle English battle descriptions.
- 871–72 *Bote of the King Murry, / That wes swithe sturdy*. These two lines are supplied by H

Notes

- 889 There are ten lines missing from C. L supplies the following account:

*And seyde, "kyng, so þou have reste,
Clep now forþ ofi þi beste.
And sle we þyse hounden,
Here we henne founden."
Þe houndes hye of laucte,
An strokes hye þere kaute.
Faste aȝen hye stode,
Aȝen duntes gode.
Help nauht here wonder;
Cubert hem broute al honder.*

- 894 *Ne scathede wer*, C: *Ne scapede þer*. L: *Þer nas bute few slawe*. Allen: *Ne schaped
bute fawe*.

- 900 *And burden hem ful yare*. L provides a couplet after this line that does not appear in C. *Into holy kyrke / So man schulde werke*. To leave unburied corpses on the battlefield is a sign of contempt for the enemy.

- 913 The wording of Horn's reply is confusing. He means something like the following: "Oh king, it would be wrong for me to accept what you are offering — your daughter [in marriage]."

- 948 *Knave* is often used less pejoratively in the Middle Ages, meaning "boy" or "servant" rather than in more modern usage where it connotes "rascal," "thief," or worse.

- 959 F&H identify Reynes as Furness, Lancashire (northwestern England).

- 974 Sunday at six a.m. is probably a significant time of arrival. It marks the sabbath [seventh] day in the Old Law and the first day of creation in the New. The seven-year pattern is thus archetypal.

- 981–82 *The see him con ded throwe / Under hire chambre wowe*. C: *Þe se bigan to þroghe / Under hire woȝe*. Two lines from H are added here. L omits the detail.

- 1036 *Also he sprunge of stone*. Sands suggests that this refers to a non-Christian belief that the first humans were fashioned out of stones, and this "stoniness" made them solitary (p. 42). In his *Metamorphoses*, the Roman poet Ovid depicts mythic creation

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as Pyrrha and Deucalion, the only couple left on earth, sow stones from which a new civilization arises. Hall's note emphasizes a psychosocial dimension of the phrase "which expresses the most complete isolation like that of one who, having come into the world without human parents, is devoid of relations or ties of any sort" (p. 152).

- 1062 A beggar's disguise is a favorite trope of medieval romance writers. Hall compares this to an episode in the *Gesta Herwardi*, which tells how Hereward on behalf of a friend rescues a Cornish princess. Also, there is a passage in Layamon's *Brut* (lines 30728–30827) which relates how Brian visited the court of Edwine. The motif also recalls Odysseus' entry into Ithaca in Homer's *Odyssey*.

- 1090 *beggeres rowe*. A place where poor folk were relegated and made to wait for charitable handouts. As a literary trope it appears in romances such as *Sir Gowther*.

- 1119 The use of an animal horn as a drinking cup is ancient. Pliny, the Roman writer, describes them as vessels of the "barbarians." Other authoritative texts were more favorably disposed, equating specific animal horns with humans of specific social ranks. The ancient Laws of Wales, for instance, relegates the horn of a wild ox to a king, while those of lesser beasts were appropriate for those of lower social status. The English drinking horn was much admired. Decorated drinking horns were prized by kings. Ordericus Vitalis' chronicle of an Easter feast held by William the Conqueror describes the French nobility's appreciation for a beautifully decorated English drinking horn. Henry I and Edward I were known to possess them. Hall finds it curious in light of these references that drinking horns are not mentioned frequently in Middle English literature, though Chaucer's allusion in The Franklin's Tale suggests its currency in the fourteenth century:

Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd,
And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn. (lines 1252–53)

- 1128–42 F&H note that a few beggars were customarily admitted to wedding feasts and served wine by the bride. Ancient Germanic custom, according to Hall, "required the lady or the daughter of the house to bear the drinking horn or cup round to the guests assembled at the greater feasts" (p. 159). Such is Weoltheow's duty in *Beowulf*.

- 1136–37 Resigned to what she perceives as the beggar's gluttony, Rymenhild offers him his original cup and the bowl she has just filled as well.

Notes

- 1142 Given the frequency with which the English decorated their drinking horns, the *cuppe white* is probably a horn mounted in silver. F&H disagree on the meaning of the vessel, however: "because drinking horns were made of horns of animals, they were white, while bowls and other pottery were brown" (p. 58).
- 1144 Horn's disguise is accompanied by his telling of a parable in which he restates Rymenhild's dream to her in an effort to reveal his true identity. The pun on "horn" in line 1155 and the preceding lack of protocol, i.e., his refusal to drink from anything other than the celebratory horn, is designed to spark her memory. He, as a fisherman, has returned to check his net to see whether she has remained true to him.
- 1145 *by este*. C: *bieste*. L: *by weste*. H: *by wester*. F&H: *bi este*. Allen: *bieste*. If Horn has traveled back to Westernesse from Ireland, east makes more sense geographically than west.
- 1154 *Drynke null I of dyssh*. C: *Drink to me of disse*. L: *Drynk to me of thy disse*. H: *Drynke null y of dyssh*. Our emendation allows Horn to reject the dish offered to him.
- 1162 *Whi he bad to Horn drinke*. F&H's capitalization of Horn in this line indicates a reading that explains why in disguise Horn commended Horn in line 1155. Such an expression of celebration would be decidedly inappropriate at a wedding feast acknowledging another man's marriage.
- 1171–72 *He seyde, "Quen, nou seche / Qwat is in thy drenche."* These two lines derive from L.
- 1179 *That Horn isterve were*. C: *Pat Horn isteve*. L: *Pat Horn child ded were*. H: *Pat Horn dede were*. Allen: *Pat Horn isterven were*.
- 1187 St. Giles (or Aegidius) was probably abbot of a Benedictine monastery on the Rhone in Provence; he died in approximately 710. He became very popular as the patron saint of the lame. There was an important shrine of St. Giles at Nimes in southern France. The St. Giles Fair still exists at Oxford.
- 1269 *Ther was bridale swete*. C: *brid and ale*. L: *bridal swete*. H: *brudale suete*. Allen: *bridale suete*.

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1315–16 *Op the schelde was drawe / A crowch of Jhesu Cristes lawe.* These two lines have been supplied by L.

- 1323 *bi thine crois lighte.* This is “a phrase without parallel” according to Hall, though he points to a similar phrase in *Havelok: On his right shuldre swithe brith, / Brithter than gold ageyn the lith* (lines 2140–41).
- 1329 *Ich serve aghenes my wille.* C: *ihc have ayenes my wille.* L: *hy serve ylle.* H: *Ich servy ille.* Allen: *Ihc serve ille.*
- 1339 *biweste,* C: *bieste.* This is probably scribal error since both L and H indicate west. L: *He woneþ alby weste.* H: *Pat woneþ her by weste.* Allen concurs with L and H as do we.
- 1387 *ut of stere.* C: *ut of stere.* H: *out of hurne.* L: *out of scyp sterne.* Allen: *out of herne.* F&H gloss *stere* simply as “boat” while Sands gives the following reading: “They went over the stern [lit. ‘rudder’] away from Horn’s banner” (p. 51). The other MS readings and Allen’s emendation illuminate the scene in greater detail and suggest a third reading. Since ME *hirne* means a corner, nook, or hiding place, it seems reasonable that the Irishmen Horn has brought with him have emerged from a specific place located at the stern of the boat.
- 1392 A touch of realism is operating in this scene since after foreign invasions, the countryside is left desolate; the native people are left to starve.
- 1475 Horn’s disguise as a minstrel is effective. Like a beggar’s disguise it allows him anonymity and freedom of movement through otherwise rigid social barriers.
- 1502 *he fulde.* C: *ifulde.* L: *leyde þere.* H: *fel þer.* Allen: *he felde.*
- 1519 *Hi gunne for to arive.* C: *Hi gunne for arive.* H: *eode to ryve.* Omitted in L. Allen. *yede to rive.*
- 1528 *Ther he wo fonde.* C: *þer he wo ifulde.* L: *he hadde woned.* H: *couth er fonde.* Allen. *he wonung fonde.*
- 1529 *Ther he dude Athulf child.* The designation given to Athulf does not suggest immaturity. Rather, he is a knight, having grown into his personal, military, social, and political identity.



The Seal of Grimsby:
HABLOC • GRYEM • GOLDBURGH

Havelok the Dane

Introduction

Most scholars place *Havelok the Dane* at the end of the thirteenth century, between 1280 and 1290, and see it as a reworking of Anglo-Norman sources.¹ *Havelok* opens with the unfortunate childhood of the English princess Goldeboru, Havelok's future wife, orphaned when her father, the good King Athelwold dies, leaving her inadvertently in the hands of a wicked foster parent and protector, Godrich. The scene then shifts to Havelok's own similar childhood in Denmark. When Havelok's father King Birkabein dies, he and his two sisters are left in the care of the treacherous usurper, Godard, who cuts the throats of the two young girls and threatens the life of Havelok. The little boy, in a demonstration of courage well beyond his years, negotiates a promise of fealty in exchange for his life. But instead of accepting Havelok's fealty, Godard hands the boy over to a fisherman, Grim, with instructions to kill him. Bound and gagged, the young prince is then transported to his would-be executioner's hut. Before the deed can be done, however, Grim and his wife see a mysterious light coming from the boy's mouth while he sleeps, and a "kynmerk," the cross-shaped birthmark of a king on his shoulder, which convinces them of Havelok's divinely appointed royal status. Then, in a manner reminiscent of fairy tales, Grim fakes the child's death and then takes his whole family along with the boy to England, where Havelok grows into a young man who earns his bread first as a fisherman and then as a porter.

At this point, Godrich forcibly marries Goldeboru to Havelok, thinking he is a commoner, a misidentification with which Goldeboru concurs until, on their wedding night, the "kynmerk" and the strange light reveal Havelok's true identity. Her misgivings about Havelok's nobility thus assuaged, soon thereafter Goldeboru and Havelok make their way to Denmark, where Havelok poses as a merchant while staying at the house of Ubbe, a Danish earl, only to have his identity as true king affirmed once again by the light

¹ The earliest version is Geoffrei Gaimar's *L'Estoire des Engleis* written around 1140; the *Lai d'Haveloc*, written anonymously, follows shortly thereafter. See Alexander Bell, ed., *L'Estoire des Engleis by Geoffrei Gaimar* (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1960); see also, Alexander Bell, ed., *Le Lai D'Haveloc and Gaimar's Haveloc Episode* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1925). Bell suggests that the writing of *Lai d'Haveloc* may coincide with the incorporation of Grimsby in 1201.

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and the birthmark. Havelok avenges the murder of his sisters and wins back the Danish throne from Godard and his forces. Havelok then returns to England with Goldeboru to regain her kingdom from Godrich (who is flayed and hanged at a slow, merciless rate); he arranges the marriages of Grim's two daughters to English noblemen (one of whom is newly elevated from his position as cook), distributes property to his Danish subalterns, and accepts the crown of England which he rules with Goldeboru. To Ubbe, he bequeaths the rulership of Denmark. Together Havelok and Goldeboru have fifteen children — queens and kings all — and live to a comfortable old age.

The Hero's Body

In *Havelok*, as in *Horn* we have another romance hero whose very body is central to the narrative. The most obvious recurring devices — the supernatural light shining from the sleeping hero's mouth, and the cross-shaped birthmark on his shoulder — appear three times at crucial moments in the story: when Grim is about to kill him as a boy; when he has been forcibly married to a very distressed Goldeboru; and when he is staying with Ubbe in Denmark at the commencement of his campaign to win back the land of his birth. Not only is Havelok's body marked by divine authority, but he is noticeably taller than the other men around him. Like the biblical King Saul, he stands out in a crowd: he has a royal bearing that separates him from the ordinary. Havelok also consumes more food than ordinary men, a fact that motivates the hero to seek employment and contribute to the support of his foster family. But in order to avoid calling attention to himself while working among the English locals, he shrouds his body in disguises: at Lincoln he dresses no more remarkably than his foster family in Grimsby does in order to apprentice as a cook. His disguise is akin to that of Sir Gareth, who serves as a "kitchen knave" in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*.² When Havelok arrives in Denmark to visit Ubbe, he presents himself as a merchant; by the end of the poem, he is wearing the crown of England. But whether his body is a *tabula rasa* for a heaven-sent sign, or a frame for clothing from every social stratum, his bodily strength is remarked on consistently throughout his story. He gains the respect of Lincoln locals by winning popular wrestling and stone-throwing contests. He is formidable in battle even when he wields unconventional weapons — from

² See Donald G. Hoffman, "Malory's Cinderella Knights and the Notion of Adventure," *Philological Quarterly* 67 (Spring 1988), 145–56. Havelok, as Malory's Gareth, is trained first as a kitchen knave, a lowly position he transcends just as Cinderella does her domestic enslavement. Like many of Malory's knights, Havelok has been recognized as a male Cinderella. See Russell A. Peck, *Cinderella Bibliography*, <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/cinder/cinintro.htm>, under male Cinderellas.

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an ax to a club or door bar — against opponents more conventionally armed. Just as Horn's beauty is constantly remarked upon and celebrated, so too is Havelok's extraordinary physique and prowess.³

Havelok and the Body Politic

If attention to Havelok's body literally underscores the hero's physical attributes and royal status then so too does it represent the political virtues of a potential king. Havelok is a walking metaphor for kingship, literally marked with a sign of royalty. Thus it is no coincidence that the poem begins with the death of the English king, Athelwold, with a description of his rule, followed shortly thereafter by the death of the Danish king, Birkabein, and a similar description. Athelwold, we are told, establishes peace and justice in a realm rife with treachery and violence, an accomplishment for which he is recognized by his subjects — young and old, from every estate — as a wise and effective monarch. Both loved and feared, Athelwold demonstrates compassion in his "gode werkes," while, at the same time, he adjudicates criminal acts to the fullest extent of medieval English law. When the scene shifts to Denmark, we discover that King Birkabein embodies similar personal and political virtues. He too renders equitable justice and secures peace and harmony in the kingdom of Denmark. Each king provides a model of rulership that fosters social and political stability in their respective realms and functions to assure the continuance of the "office" of monarch when the king dies. In this sense, the king has not one body but two: he represents both himself as individual, with a natural body subject to disease, decay, and death, while at the same time he represents the body politic.⁴

Made most famous by John of Salisbury in the *Policraticus*, a twelfth-century treatise on political philosophy, the body politic is a metaphor for hierarchical corporate entities organized with the "head" (the king or prince in this case) at its apex, governing the lower members, construed either as classes of society or particular groups. Each member of the corporate body in this system is expected to contribute to the welfare of the whole organism in order to enhance the quality of communal life. At the center of the body politic, or at its heart, reside the dual laws — divine and positive — by which the organism operates. Just as the king's subjects are obligated to submit to his authority, so too is he obligated by divine law to govern his subjects ethically. Should he fail to honor the

³ Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 36.

⁴ See Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), for a discussion of the separation between the "office" of monarch and the monarch himself.

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precepts under which he rules, the king ceases to function as the site of reason for the corporate body; he ceases to be a just king and instead becomes a tyrant. Given the paradigms of kingship established early in the poem, Havelok's ultimate destiny is to rule the corporate body so that all its members function in a state of health and well-being. His "kynmerk" represents his divinely ordained right to sovereignty.

Havelok and Social Class

While the expected romance love-interest appears in Havelok's relationship with Goldeboru, their marriage is born as much of necessity as romantic love; it creates a social and political alliance that confers legitimacy upon their dual cause to reclaim the rightful inheritance of each. In his battle against Godard and Godrich, Havelok exhibits courage and a sense of avenging justice. He dispatches Godard without second thoughts; Godrich requires another strategy, however, since he is an English nobleman given stewardship over Athelwold's daughter by the king himself. No doubt this factors into Havelok's offer of mercy. But when the unrepentant Godrich rejects the gift, he must face the legal consequences of his traitorous acts. Havelok's actions in this regard are not motivated by a romantic code of chivalry, but rather by a desire to protect the social order of his adopted land, and to uphold popular values of English society. This is one reason that the poem seems to express the desires of what J. Halverson calls the upward mobility "of the prosperous, hard-working middle class."⁵ Indeed, the work ethic, demonstrated by Havelok's desire to support not only himself, but also his foster family and, subsequently, the larger community, contributes to what Susan Crane describes as "an ideology of cohesion in which all people share an understanding of good and right, and each class' duties contribute to the common purpose of achieving and maintaining social order."⁶

Havelok, probably more than any poem of its time, moves easily from one social class to another, mixing themes of social idealism with the realities of everyday life. We should note here that "bourgeois realism" forms part of the mixed character of the romance mode. Like *King Horn*, *Havelok* shares with other romances the mixture of weird, supernatural events (the birthmark/light-from-the-mouth scenes) and very realistic, and often lower-class, detail: for instance, the dozen types of fish that Grim catches, or the peasant games at Lincoln. Havelok makes himself even lower than bourgeois, and both Godrich and

⁵ See J. Halverson in "Havelok the Dane and Society," *Chaucer Review* 6 (1971), 142–51. John C. Hirsch argues against this view in "Havelok 2933: A Problem in Medieval Literary History" *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78 (1977), 339–49.

⁶ Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 47.

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Goldeboru show their disdain for lowly status by their reactions to the prince whom they think to be a churl.⁷ These attitudes are not shared by Havelok, however, whose rewards to the loyal and disadvantaged at the end of the poem suggest a movement toward social amelioration. Characters who might otherwise be overlooked — Bertram the cook, the daughters of Grim the fisherman — thus attain noble status by the intervention of a king who has shared their experience.⁸ As David Staines so aptly puts it, "Havelok is the embodiment of the ideal king from the point of view of the lower classes."⁹ That this late thirteenth-century romance is socially ameliorative is crucial to its tone and uncommon fusion of class values.

Havelok as History and Myth

Havelok seemed as up-to-date and relevant as history to its early readers. Like many other medieval romances, it was even confused with history: one fourteenth-century Anglo-French chronicler, Peter de Langtoft, identifies Havelok with a Danish king named Gunter who made war on Alfred the Great.¹⁰ Another fourteenth-century chronicler, Robert Mannyng of Brunne, corroborates the account in English but stops short when it comes to the question of how Havelok won England for lack of written historical

⁷ Robert Levine rejects the view that assumes differing literary tastes between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. See "Who Composed *Havelok* for Whom?" *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992), 95–104. Levine also criticizes David Staines' "attempt to harmonize the implied political agenda of the poem with its popular appeal" and notes that "the lower classes had more to lose at the hands of a tyrant than the barons did. . . . During the Middle Ages, the nobility and the lower classes certainly found themselves from time to time on the same side, sometimes in opposition to the king, sometimes in opposition to ecclesiastical authority, but which group was more strongly committed to its position seems a moot question" (p. 99).

⁸ It is important to point out that the marriages which occur at the end of the poem are a feature only of the English version.

⁹ David Staines, in "Havelok the Dane: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes," *Speculum* 51 (1976), 602–23, especially p. 623, sees numerous parallels between Havelok and Edward I, as do Sheila Delany and Vahan Ishkanian. See "Theocratic and Contractual Kingship in *Havelok the Dane*," *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 22 (1974), 290–302.

¹⁰ According to W. W. Skeat, ed., *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, second ed., revised by Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), this appears in the Anglo-French Chronicle of Peter de Langtoft, "who died early in the reign of Edward II, and whose Chronicle closes with the death of Edward I. Here the only trace of the story is the mention of 'Gountere le pere Havelok, de Danays Ray clamez' — Gunter, father of Havelok, called king of the Danes. He identifies this Gunter with the Danish invader defeated by Alfred the Great, who in the A. S. Chronicle is called Godrum" (p. xlivi).

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documentation: "Bot I haf grete ferly that I fynd no man that has writen in story how Havelok this lond wan." Nonetheless, there appears what scholars surmise to be a late interpolation of Havelok's story in Mannyng's chronicle.¹¹ Mannyng himself points to other kinds of evidence which suggests the existence of a local legend — a stone in Lincoln castle which is said to be the very stone that Havelok threw farther than the other contestants, and a chapel in which Havelok and Goldeboru were married.¹²

There is yet another rather amazing piece of historical evidence to consider: the official thirteenth-century seal of the town of Grimsby, founded, the poem says, by Grim (lines 744–47). As if establishing its own claim to Havelok's fame, the seal of Grimsby depicts its founder along with the hero and his betrothed, Goldeboru (see p. 72 above). Grim's figure, wielding the accoutrements of battle — shield and sword — looms large at the seal's center, while Havelok is depicted in smaller proportions to the left, carrying a battle ax in one hand and a ring in the other; Goldeboru, also a smaller figure than the gigantic Grim, appears to the right, holding a scepter with one hand while her other is extended toward Havelok's ring. Royal diadems hover over the heads of both Havelok and Goldeboru, while a providential hand at the top of the outer circle gestures toward the figures in the center. The seal's inscription, which forms a circular frame for the three central figures, indicates the official status of the incorporation of Grimsby — *Sigillum Comunitatis Grimebye*; all three figures are identified by name. That the seal stands as an emblem of corporate identity is clear. What is less clear is what the seal represents as historical evidence for the existence of Havelok. Perhaps what it ultimately suggests is the less-than-precise boundaries between history and myth.

If the question of defining boundaries between history and myth remains unanswered so too does the question of what a Danish prince is doing in a very English romance. Many scholars suggest that the Anglo-Norman *Lai d'Haveloc* was probably composed in the Northeast Midlands (Lincolnshire/Humberside) where the Danes had once ruled and dominated linguistically. This would explain the persistence of a Danish legend if we assume a direct line of transmission between the Anglo-Norman poem and the English poem, an assumption that has met challenges in recent years. But even if *Havelok* derives from a local oral tradition, as Nancy Mason Bradbury cogently argues, evidence still points to a locale that would have retained Scandinavian linguistic traditions and folkloric

¹¹ See Idelle Sullens' edition of *Robert Mannyng of Brunne: The Chronicle* (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), p. 499. This is known as the Lambeth interpolation.

¹² Other evidence includes a reference to a boundary marker appropriately dubbed "Havelock's Stone," located near Grimsby. See W. W. Skeat, p. lii.

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elements well into the late Middle Ages.¹³

In fact, Piero Boitani calls *Havelok* "a folk-tale thinly disguised as a romance." Both W. R. J. Barron and Donald Sands describe the hero as a "male Cinderella."¹⁴ The themes of exile and return, taking revenge, and taking a bride recall similar folktale motifs. To probe a little deeper, a residue of mythology may lie behind certain other aspects of the poem, such as the identity of Grim. Edmund Reiss points out that the name Grímnir in the Old Norse sagas can mean "disguise," and in several sagas Odin disguises himself as a servant or a ferryman. In one version of *Havelok*, Grim is a servant, and in another, a sailor. Digging even deeper, Reiss observes that "just as Odin the ferryman takes the dead heroes to Valhalla, so Grim takes Havelok to a new life." Odin also keeps two ravens, Huginn and Muninn, who advise the god and bring news from around the world; in *Havelok*, one of Grim's sons is named Hugh Raven.¹⁵

Dating and Provenance

The only complete manuscript of *Havelok* appears in Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 108, dated c. 1300–25. The dialect of the poem seems to be Northeast Midlands, with both Northern and Southern forms.¹⁶ As the introduction to *King Horn* points out, both *Horn* and *Havelok* appear in this manuscript; both poems appear in the same hand. Also appearing are a variety of other writings (seventy all together, by Skeat's count) including hagiography in a fifteenth-century hand, *The Vision of St. Paul*, a *Disputatio inter corpus et animam*, and scientific information in a fifteenth-century hand. Rosamund Allen suggests that scribes who bound together the Laud MS may have included saints' lives

¹³ Nancy Mason Bradbury, "The Traditional Origins of *Havelok the Dane*," *Studies in Philology* 90 (1993), pp. 117 ff. Indeed, the legend persisted in oral traditions into the seventeenth century, "when Gervase Holles recorded some variant versions of the tale from the townspeople of Grimsby" (p. 125).

¹⁴ Piero Boitani, *English Medieval Narrative in the 13th and 14th Centuries*, trans. Joan Krakover Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 51. W. R. J. Barron says of the hero, "this male Cinderella accepts the ashes as his element" (p. 69). Donald Sands, in *Middle English Verse Romances* (New York: Rinehart & Winston, 1966) links the male Cinderella motif to the desires of the poem's humble audience (p. 55). For a comprehensive discussion of male Cinderellas, see Eve Salisbury, "(Re)dressing Cinderella," in *Retelling Tales*, ed. Alan Lupack and Thomas G. Hahn (Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 275–92.

¹⁵ Edmund Reiss, "Havelok the Dane and Norse Mythology," *Modern Language Quarterly* 27 (1966), 115–24.

¹⁶ For further information on the dialect of *Havelok* consult G. V. Smithers, ed., "Introduction" to *Havelok* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. i–lxxiii.

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because the story of *Havelok* itself is a kind of saint's life, and Horn himself kills Saracen infidels and rebuilds churches; or else, "The empty folios of 228v–237v were filled with saints' legends and moral matter by a fifteenth century compiler who then bound related matter together."¹⁷ As modern readers take the opportunity to read both poems in this volume, they may continue to observe and remark on parallels between the two poems that have often moved critics to consider them together.

¹⁷ Rosamund Allen, *King Horn: An Edition Based on Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 4.27* (New York: Garland, 1984), p. 12.

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Introduction

Hirsch, John C. "Havelok 2933: A Problem in Medieval Literary History." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78 (1977), 339–49. ["Such romances as *Havelok* tell us not so much what the lower classes thought of the upper, as what the upper classes liked to think the lower classes thought of them" (p. 343).]

Kretzschmar, William A., Jr. "Three Stories in Search of an Author: The Narrative Versions of *Havelok*." *Allegorica* 5 (1980), 21–97. [Compares first 800 lines of Gaimar's *Estoire des Angleis* (c. 1150) with the *Lai d'Haveloc* of the latter half of the twelfth century. Presents complete text and translation of the *Lai*.]

Levine, Robert. "Who Composed *Havelok* for Whom?" *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992), 95–104. [Rejects the characterization of the poem's audience as lower class.]

Liuzza, Roy Michael. "Representation and Readership in the ME *Havelok*." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 93 (1994), 504–19. [Sees the catalogue of fish as part of a larger system of economic exchange.]

McIntosh, Angus. "The Language of the Extant Versions of *Havelok the Dane*." *Medium Aevum* 45 (1976), 36–49. [Disputes, by linguistic analysis, the scholarly presumption of Lincolnshire origin; instead, argues Norfolk influence.]

Mills, Maldwyn. "Havelok's Return." *Medium Aevum* 45 (1976), 20–35. [Explores the return scene to shed light on the genesis and unity of the poem.]

———. "Havelok and the Brutal Fisherman." *Medium Aevum* 36 (1967), 219–30. [Argues that Grim is not as good as he seems.]

Pearsall, Derek. "John Capgrave's Life of St. Katharine and Popular Romance Style." *Medievalia et Humanistica* 6 (1975), 121–37. [John Capgrave, a fifteenth-century Augustinian friar, knew and mimicked romance formulae found in *Havelok* in his Life of St. Katharine. The close thematic associations of hagiography and romance are textually manifest as well.]

Purdon, Liam O. "The Rite of Vassalage in *Havelok the Dane*." *Medievalia et Humanistica* 20 (1993), 25–39. [The rites solidifying the connection between a vassal and his feudal lord combine homage, fealty, and investiture with a fief. These rites, incomplete or bypassed, help to explain the motives and actions of characters in the romance.]

Havelok the Dane

_____. “‘Na Yaf He Nouth a Stra’ in *Havelok*.” *Philological Quarterly* 69 (1990), 377–83. [Argues that the feudal act of renunciation is suggested by the placement, repetition, and language of this particular expression.]

Ramsey, Lee C. *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983. [A study of the Middle English romance with a chapter on the child exile story, comparing the characters of the king and traitors and the relation of heroes to heroines in *Havelok* and *King Horn*. Sees royalist sympathies and a concern for the rule of law in thirteenth-century England.]

Reiss, Edmund. “*Havelok the Dane* and Norse Mythology.” *Modern Language Quarterly* 27 (1966), 115–24. [Reveals Scandinavian mythological traces in several characters of the poem.]

Scott, Anne. “Language as Convention, Language as Sociolect in *Havelok the Dane*.” *Studies in Philology* 89 (1992), 137–60. [Views formulaic style of *Havelok* as an expression of Havelok’s acquisition of “language” or “sociolect” appropriate for a king.]

Smithers, G. V. “The Style of *Havelok*.” *Medium Aevum* 57 (1988), 190–218. [Meticulously detailed study of repetition, periphrasis, apostrophe, simile, hyperbole, and other devices, with comparisons to Anglo-Norman rhetorical practice on which these devices may have depended.]

_____. “The Scansion of *Havelok* and the Use of ME -en and -e in *Havelok* and by Chaucer.” In *Middle English Studies Presented to Norman Davis in Honour of His Seventieth Birthday*. Ed. Douglas Gray and E. G. Stanley. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983. Pp. 195–234. [Preliminary study of versification for his 1987 edition.]

_____. “Four Notes on *Havelok*.” In *So Meny People, Longages and Tonges: Philological Essays in Scots and Mediaeval English Presented to Angus McIntosh*. Ed. Michael Benskin and M. L. Samuels. Edinburgh: Middle English Dialect Project, 1981. Pp. 191–209. [Precedes his 1987 edition with a fuller discussion of certain textual cruces.]

Staines, David. “*Havelok the Dane*: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes.” *Speculum* 51 (1976), 602–23. [Argues that *Havelok* is a mirror for princes with implicit admonitions to treat the lower classes well and observe the rule of law. Sees a number of interesting parallels between *Havelok* and Edward I.]

Havelok the Dane

	Herkneth to me, gode men —	
	Wives, maydnes, and alle men —	
	Of a tale that ich you wile telle,	
	Wo so it wile here and therto dwelle.	<i>Whoever; wait</i>
5	The tale is of Havelok imaked:	
	Whil he was litel, he yede ful naked.	<i>went around poorly dressed</i>
	Havelok was a ful god gome —	<i>a decent guy</i>
	He was ful god in everi trome;	<i>company</i>
	He was the wicteste man at nede	<i>bravest; in time of need</i>
10	That thurte rideon on ani stede.	<i>might ride; steed</i>
	That ye mowen now yhere,	<i>may; hear</i>
	And the tale you mowen ylere,	<i>may learn</i>
	At the biginnig of ure tale,	<i>our</i>
	Fil me a cuppe of ful god ale;	
15	And wile drinken, her I spelle,	<i>tell a story</i>
	That Crist us shilde alle fro helle.	<i>shield</i>
	Krist late us hevere so for to do	<i>let; ever</i>
	That we moten comen Him to;	<i>may</i>
	And, withat it mote ben so,	<i>in order that; might</i>
20	<i>Benedicamus Domino!</i>	<i>Let us bless the Lord</i>
	Here I schal biginnen a rym;	<i>rhyme</i>
	Krist us yeve wel god fyn!	<i>good end</i>
	The rym is maked of Havelok —	<i>made</i>
	A stalworthi man in a flok.	<i>strong; band</i>
25	He was the stalwortheste man at nede	
	That may rideon on ani stede.	
	It was a king bi are dawes,	<i>in earlier days</i>
	That in his time were gode lawes	
	He dede maken and ful wel holden;	
30	Hym lovede yung, him lovede holde —	<i>Young and old loved him</i>
	Erl and barun, dreng and thayn,	<i>vassal; retainer</i>
	Knict, bondeman, and swain,	<i>Knight, peasant; commoner</i>

Havelok the Dane

	Wydues, maydnes, prestes and clerkes, And al for hise gode werkes.	widows; clerics good
35	He lovede God with al his micht, And Holy Kirke, and soth ant rieth. Ricthwise men he lovede alle, And overal made hem for to calle. Wreieres and wrobbernes made he falle	might <i>Church; truth and justice</i> Just summoned them
40	And hated hem so man doth galle; Utlawes and theves made he bynde, Alle that he micte fynde, And heye hengen on galwe-tre — For hem ne yede gold ne fee!	<i>Traitors; informers</i> as; bitter drink <i>Outlaws</i>
45	In that time a man that bore Wel fifty pund, I wot, or more, Of red gold upon hiis bac, In a male with or blac, Ne funde he non that him misseyde,	<i>I suppose</i> pouch white or black
50	Ne with ivele on hond leyde. Thanne micthe chapmen fare Thuruth Englond wit here ware, And baldelike beye and sellen, Overal ther he wilens dwellen —	evil laid on a hand merchants travel <i>Throughout; with their</i> boldly buy
55	In gode burwes and therfram Ne funden he non that dede hem sham, That he ne weren sone to sorwe brouth, And pouere maked and browt to nouth. Thanne was Engelond at hayse —	<i>towns; from there</i> who caused them shame they were not soon; brought made poor; nothing ease
60	Michel was swich a king to preyse That held so Englond in grith! Krist of hevene was him with — He was Engelondes blome. Was non so bold louerd to Rome	<i>Much; praise</i> peace
65	That durste upon his bringhe Hunger ne here — wicke thinghe. Hwan he fellede hise foos, He made hem lurken and crepen in wros — The hidden hem alle and helden hem stille,	flower lord [as far as] his [people] bring invasion
70	And diden al his herte wille. Ricth he lovede of alle thinge —	<i>When he conquered his enemies</i> corners They; themselves
		<i>Right (Justice); more than all things</i>

Havelok the Dane

	To wronge micht him noman bringe, Ne for silver ne for gold, So was he his soule hold.	
75	To the faderles was he rath — Wo so dede hem wrong or lath, Were it cleric or were it knicth, He dede hem sone to haven ricth; And wo dide widuen wrong,	<i>loyal</i> <i>a help</i> <i>Whoever; harm</i> <i>knight</i>
80	Were he nevre knicth so strong, That he ne made him sone kesten In feteres and ful faste festen; And wo so dide maydne shame Of hire bodi or brouth in blame,	<i>whoever; widows</i>
85	Bute it were bi hire wille, He made him sone of limes spille. He was the beste knith at nede That hevere micthe rideon stede, Or wepne wagge or folc ut lede;	<i>cast</i> <i>fasten tightly</i>
90	Of knith ne havede he nevare drede, That he ne sprong forth so sparke of glede, And lete him knawe of hise hand dede, Hu he couthe with wepne sped;	<i>brought</i> <i>Unless</i> <i>lose limbs</i>
95	And other he refte him hors or wede, Or made him sone handes sprede And "Louerd, merci!" loude grede. He was large and no wiþth gnede.	<i>ever</i> <i>wield; company</i>
100	Havede he non so god brede Ne on his bord non so god shrede, That he ne wolde thorwit fede Poure that on fote yede,	<i>spark from coal</i> <i>(see note)</i>
105	Forto haven of Him the mede That for us wolde on Rode blede — Crist, that al kan wisse and rede That evere woneth in any thede.	<i>clothing</i>
	The king was hoten Athelwold. Of word, of wepne, he was bold. In Engeland was nevre knicth That betere held the lond to ricth.	<i>Lord; cried</i> <i>generous; not at all stingy</i> <i>good</i> <i>shred (morsel)</i>
		<i>The poor who; went</i>
		<i>reward</i>
		<i>Cross</i>
		<i>guide; advise</i>
		<i>dwelt; country</i>
		<i>called</i>
		<i>justly</i>

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 110 | Of his bodi ne havede he eyr
Bute a mayden swithe fayr,
That was so yung that sho ne couthee
Gon on fote ne speke wit mouthe.
Than him tok an ivel strong, | <i>no heir</i>
<i>Except for; very fair</i>
<i>did not know how to</i>
<i>Walk; talk</i>
<i>violent illness</i> |
| 115 | That he wel wiste and underfong
That his deth was comen him on
And saide, "Crist, wat shal I don?
Louerd, wat shal me to rede?
I wot ful wel ich have mi mede. | <i>knew; realized</i>

<i>what</i>
<i>what do You advise</i>
<i>reward</i>
<i>How</i>
<i>much</i>
<i>thoughts</i> |
| 120 | Hw shal now my douhter fare?
Of hire have ich michel kare;
Sho is mikel in my thouth —
Of meself is me rith nowt.
No selcouth is thou me be wo: | <i>wonder</i>

<i>I think not of myself</i> |
| 125 | Sho ne can speke ne sho kan go.
Yif scho couthe on horse ride,
And a thousandde men bi hire syde,
And sho were comen intil helde
And Engelond sho couthewelde, | <i>knew how to</i>

<i>to a proper age</i>
<i>rule</i>
<i>pleasing</i> |
| 130 | And don hem of thar hire were queme,
And hire bodi couthe yeme,
Ne wolde me nevere ivele like,
Ne though ich were in heveneriche." | <i>take care of</i>

<i>Neither; not please me</i>
<i>heaven's realm</i> |
| 135 | Quanne he havede this pleinte maked,
Therafter stronglike quaked.
He sende writes sone onon
After his erles evereichon; | <i>When; made complaint</i>
<i>strongly [he]</i>
<i>writs (notices); very soon</i>
<i>For; everyone</i> |
| 140 | And after his baruns, riche and poure,
Fro Rokesburw al into Dovere,
That he shulden comen swithe
Til him, that was ful unblithe, | <i>Roxburgh</i>
<i>they; quickly</i>
<i>To; ill</i>
<i>place where</i> |
| 145 | To that stede ther he lay
In harde bondes nich and day.
He was so faste wit yvel fest
That he ne mouthe haven no rest, | <i>restraints; night</i>
<i>fastened; fastenings</i>
<i>might not</i>
<i>food eat</i> |
| | He ne mouthe no mete hete,
Ne he ne mouchte no lythe gete, | <i>comfort</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- Ne non of his ivel that couthe red —
Of him ne was nouth buten ded. *almost dead*
- 150 Alle that the writes herden *Everyone who*
 Sorful and sori til him ferdan; *went to him*
 He wrungen hondes and wepen sore *They; wept bitterly*
 And yerne preyden Cristes hore — *earnestly; ore (grace)*
 That He wolde turnen him
- 155 Ut of that yvel that was so grim. *they*
 Thanne he weren comen alle
 Bifor the king into the halle,
 At Winchestre ther he lay,
 "Welcome," he sayde, "be ye ay!" *where he*
 Ful michel thank kan I you *always*
 That ye aren comen to me now." *Very much*
- 160 Quanne he weren alle set, *When they*
 And the king aveden igret, *had greeted*
 He greten and gouleden and gouven hem ille, *They mourned; howled; lamented*
 And he bad hem alle been stille *quiet*
 And seyde that greting helpeth nouth,
 "For al to dede am ich brouth.
 Bute now ye sen that I shal deye,
 Now ich wille you alle preye *weeping; not*
 Of mi douther, that shal be *death; brought*
 Yure levedi after me,
 Wo may yemen hire so longe,
 Bothen hire and Engelonde,
 Til that she be wman of helde *beseech*
 And that she mowe hir yemen and welde?" *For my daughter*
 He answereden and seyden anon, *[sovereign] lady*
 Bi Crist and bi Seint Jon,
 That th erl Godrigh of Cornwayle *Who; protect*
 Was trewe man wituten faile,
- 165 170 175 180 185 190 195 200 205 210 215 220 225 230 235 240 245 250 255 260 265 270 275 280 285 290 295 300 305 310 315 320 325 330 335 340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405 410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455 460 465 470 475 480 485 490 495 500 505 510 515 520 525 530 535 540 545 550 555 560 565 570 575 580 585 590 595 600 605 610 615 620 625 630 635 640 645 650 655 660 665 670 675 680 685 690 695 700 705 710 715 720 725 730 735 740 745 750 755 760 765 770 775 780 785 790 795 800 805 810

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | The king was payed of that rede. | pleased with; advice |
| 185 | A wol fair cloth bringen he dede,
And thereon leyde the messebok,
The caliz, and the pateyn ok,
The corporaus, the messe-gere, | (see note) |
| | Theron he garte the erl swere | missal |
| 190 | That he sholde yemen hire wel,
Withuten lac, wituten tel,
Til that she were twelf winter hold
And of speche were bold, | chalice; paten also
communion cloth; implements of Mass
made |
| | And that she couthe of curteysye, | protect |
| 195 | Gon and speken of lovedrurye,
And til that she loven muthe | fail; reproach |
| | Wom so hire to gode thoucte; | old |
| | And that he shulde hire yeve | |
| | The beste man that micthe live — | courtship |
| 200 | The beste, fayreste, the strongest ok;
That dede he him sweren on the bok,
And thanne shulde he Engelond
Al bitechen into hire hond. | might
Whomsoever; seemed
give
noblest
strongest also
entrust |
| | Quanne that was sworn on his wise, | |
| 205 | The king dede the mayden arise,
And the erl hire bitaucte | When; in this way
compelled
entrusted her to |
| | And al the lond he evere awcte — | owned |
| | Engelonde, everi del — | part |
| | And preide he shulde yeme hire wel. | govern her |
| 210 | The king ne moucte don no more,
But yerne preyede Godes ore,
And dede him hoslen wel and shrive,
I wot fif hundred sithes and five, | might do
earnestly; grace |
| | And ofte dede him sore swinge | himself received the sacrament |
| 215 | And wit hondes smerte dinge
So that the blod ran of his fleys,
That tendre was and swithe neys.
He made his quiste swithe wel | I think five
beat himself hard
painfully strike himself |
| | And sone gaf it everil del. | from; flesh
so soft |
| 220 | Wan it was goven, ne micte men finde | bequest (will) very
affirmed
given |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 225 | <p>So mikel men micte him in winde,
Of his in arke ne in chiste,
In Engelond, that norman wiste;
For al was yoven, faire and wel,
That him was leved no catel.</p> | <p>(see note)
<i>coffer; chest</i>
<i>knew</i>
<i>disposed of</i>
<i>left; possession</i></p> |
| 230 | <p>Thanne he havede been ofte swngen,
Ofte shriven and ofte dungen,
“<i>In manus tuas, Louerde,</i>” he seyde,
Her that he the speche leyde,
To Jesu Crist bigan to calle</p> | <p><i>beaten</i>
<i>confessed; beaten</i>
<i>Into your hands, Lord</i>
<i>Here (then at this moment); lay aside</i></p> |
| 235 | <p>And deyede bifor his heymen alle.
Than he was ded, there micte men se
The mest sorwe that micte be:
Ther was sobbing, siking, and sor,
Handes wringing and drawing bi hor.</p> | <p><i>died; noblemen</i>
<i>When</i>
<i>greatest</i>
<i>sighing; grief</i>
<i>pulling out hair</i>
<i>wept very hard</i>
<i>were there</i></p> |
| 240 | <p>Alle greten swithe sore,
Riche and poure that there wore,
And mikel sorwe haveden alle —
Levedyes in boure, knictes in halle.
Quan that sorwe was somdel laten</p> | <p><i>Ladies; bower</i>
<i>When; somewhat relieved</i>
<i>they; wept</i></p> |
| 245 | <p>And he haveden longe graten,
Belles deden he sone ringen,
Monkes and prestes messe singen;
And sauteres deden he manie reden,
That God self shulde his soule leden</p> | <p><i>mass</i>
<i>psalters (psalm books)</i></p> |
| 250 | <p>Into hevene bifor his Sone,
And ther wituten hende won.
Than he was to the erthe brouth,
The riche erl ne foryat nouth
That he ne dede al Engelond</p> | <p><i>[his soul] should dwell</i>
<i>buried</i>
<i>forgot not</i></p> |
| 255 | <p>Sone sayse intil his hond,
And in the castels leth he do
The knictes he mighte tristen to,
And alle the Englis dede he swere
That he shulden him ghod fey beren:</p> <p>He yaf alle men that god thoucte,
Liven and deyen til that him moucte,</p> | <p><i>seize</i>
<i>he placed</i>
<i>trust in</i>
<i>he made to swear</i>
<i>they; good faith</i>
<i>whatever seemed good</i></p> |

Havelok the Dane

	Til that the kinges dowter wore Twenti winter hold and more.	would be old
260	Thanne he havede taken this oth Of erles, baruns, lef and loth, Of knictes, cherles, fre and thewe, Justises dede he maken newe Al Engelond to faren thorw	When dear; displeasing commoners; in service
265	Fro Dovere into Rokesborw. Schireves he sette, bedels, and greyves, Grith sergeans with longe gleyves, To yemen wilde wodes and pathes Fro wicke men that wolde don scathes,	travel through Sheriffs; beadles; reeves Peacekeepers; lances
270	And forto haven alle at his cri, At his wille, at hisse merci, That non durste ben him ageyn — Erl ne barun, knict ne sweyn. Wislike for soth was him wel	protect harm beck and call
275	Of folc, of wepne, of catel: Sothlike, in a lite thrawe Al Engelond of him stod awe — Al Engelond was of him adrad, So his the beste fro the gad.	against him commoner Assuredly possessions Truly; while
280	The kinges douther bigan thrive And wex the fairest wman on live. Of alle thewes was she wis That gode weren and of pris. The mayden Goldeboru was hoten;	in awe afraid
285	For hire was mani a ter igroten.	As is; beast; prod
290	Quanne the Erl Godrich him herde Of that mayden — hw wel she ferde, Hw wis sho was, hw chaste, hw fayr, And that sho was the rithe eyr Of Engelond, of al the rike; Tho bigan Godrich to sike, And seyde, "Wether she sholde be Quen and levedi over me?"	himself how; fared how wise she was rightful heir kingdom sigh Whether Queen; lady

Havelok the Dane

	Hwether sho sholde al Engelond	Whether
295	And me and mine haven in hire hond?	
	Datheit hwo it hire thave!	<i>Curses to whomever; tolerates (permits)</i>
	Shal sho it nevere more have.	
	Sholde ic yeve a fol, a therne,	<i>I; fool; serving girl</i>
	Engelond, thou sho it yerne?	<i>rules</i>
300	Datheit hwo it hire yeve	<i>Curses on whomever</i>
	Evere more hwil I live!	<i>while</i>
	She is waxen al to prud,	<i>grown; proud</i>
	For gode metes and noble shrud,	<i>food; clothes</i>
	That hic have yoven hire to offte;	
305	Hic have yemed hire to softe.	<i>I; given; too often</i>
	Shal it nouth ben als sho thenkes:	<i>I; guarded</i>
	Hope maketh fol man ofte blenkes.	<i>It shall not be</i>
	Ich have a sone, a ful fayr knave;	<i>foolish; blind</i>
	He shal Engelond al have!	
310	He shal king, he shal ben sire,	
	So brouke I evere mi blake swire!"	<i>use; pale neck (see note)</i>
	Hwan this trayson was al thouth,	<i>When treason; expressed</i>
	Of his oth ne was him nouth.	
	He let his oth al overga.	
315	Theroft he yaf he nouth a stra,	<i>straw</i>
	Bute sone dede hire fete,	<i>ordered her to be brought</i>
	Er he wolde heten ani mete,	<i>Before; eat</i>
	Fro Winchestre ther sho was,	<i>where</i>
	Also a wicke traytur Judas,	<i>As</i>
320	And dede leden hire to Dovre,	<i>ordered her to be led</i>
	That standeth on the seis oure,	<i>seashore</i>
	And therhinne dede hire fede	<i>keep</i>
	Pourelike in feble wede.	<i>Poorly; wretched rags</i>
	The castel dede he yemen so	<i>guard</i>
325	That non ne micte comen hire to	
	Of hire frend, with to speken,	
	That hevere micte hire bale wreken.	<i>ever might avenge her wrong</i>
	Of Goldeboru shul we now laten,	<i>leave off</i>
	That nouth ne blinneth forto graten	<i>without ceasing moans</i>
330	Ther sho liggeth in prisoun.	<i>Where; lies</i>
	Jesu Crist, that Lazarun	<i>who</i>

Havelok the Dane

- To live broucete fro dede bondes,
He lese hire wit Hise hondes!
And leve sho mote him yse
Heye hangen on galwe tre
That hire haved in sorwe brouth,
So as sho ne misdede nouth.
- bonds of death
May He loose her
permit; him (Godrich) see
gallows
- 335
- Say we now forth in hure spelle!
In that time, so it bifelle,
Was in the lond of Denemark
A riche king and swythe stark.
The name of him was Birkabeyn;
He havede mani knict and sweyn;
- our story
strong
- 340
- He was fayr man and wict,
Of bodi he was the beste knicth
That evere micte leden uth here,
Or stede on ride or handlen spere.
Thre children he havede bi his wif —
He hem lovede so his lif.
- knights; attendants
bold
- 345
- He havede a sone, douhtres two,
Swithe fayre, as fel it so.
He that wile non forbere,
Riche ne poure, king ne kaysere,
Deth him tok than he best wolde
- command an army
ride a horse
- 350
- Liven, but hyse dayes were fulde,
That he ne moucte no more live,
For gold ne silver ne for no gyve.
- as much as
daughters
as it happened
- 355
- Hwan he that wiste, rathe he sende
After prestes, fer an hende —
Chanounes gode and monkes bothe,
Him for to wisse and to rede,
Him for to hoslen an for to shrive,
Hwil his bodi were on live.
- caesar
when
fulfilled (ended)
might not
gift
- 360
- Hwan he was hosled and shriven,
His quiste maked and for him gyven,
Hise knicthes dede he alle site,
For thoru hem he wolde wite
- When; knew, quickly
far and near
Canons
counsel; advice
confess; absolve
While; alive
- 365
- When; given the sacrament
bequest (will)
- through; know

Havelok the Dane

	Hwo micte yeme his children yunge Til that he kouthen speken wit tunge, Speken and gangen, on horse riden, Knictes and sweynes by here siden. He spoken theroffe and chosen sone A riche man that under mone, Was the trewest, that he wende —	<i>Who; might look after they knew how to walk attendants at their sides</i>
370	Godard, the kinges owne frende — And seyden he moucthe hem best loke Yif that he hem undertoke, Til hise sone mouthe bere Helm on heved and leden ut here,	<i>moon thought friend</i>
375	In his hand a spere stark, And king been maked of Denemark. He wel trowede that he seyde, And on Godard handes leyde; And seyde, "Here biteche I thee	<i>might bear Helmet; head; command an army strong</i>
380	Mine children alle thre, Al Denemark and al mi fe, Til that mi sone of helde be, But that ich wille that thou swere On auter and on messe gere,	<i>believed what laid hands entrust to</i>
385	On the belles that men ringes, On messe bok the prest on singes, That thou mine children shalt wel yeme, That hire kin be ful wel queme, Til mi sone mowe ben knich.	<i>property be of age Except that; want altar; vestments</i>
390	395 Thanne biteche him tho his rieth: Denemark and that ther til longes — Casteles and tunes, wodes and wonges."	<i>missal protect their kin; approved</i>
395	Godard stirt up and swor al that The king him bad, and sithen sat Bi the knictes that ther ware, That wepen alle swithe sare For the king that deide sone. Jesu Crist, that makede mone On the mirke nith to shine, Wite his soule fro helle pine;	<i>then his rights belongs to it towns; fields</i>
400		<i>commanded; afterwards</i>
405		<i>very sorrowfully died soon moon dark night Protect; hell's pain</i>

Havelok the Dane

- And leve that it mote wone
In heveneriche with Godes Sone! permit; live
heaven
- 410 Hwan Birkabeyn was leyd in grave,
The erl dede sone take the knave, boy
Havelok, that was the eir, heir
Swanborow, his sister, Helfled, the tother, other
And in the castel dede he hem do, he had them placed
Ther non ne micte hem comen to
Of here kyn, ther thei sperd were. were kept
415 Ther he greten ofte sore
Bothe for hunger and for kold, they wept; miserably
Or he weren thre winter hold.
Feblelike he gaf hem clothes;
He ne yaf a note of hise othes — Before; three years old
420 He hem clothede rith ne fedde, wretched clothes
Ne hem ne dede richelike bebedde.
Thanne Godard was sikerlike nut
Under God the moste swike
That evre in erthe shaped was. regal bedding
425 Withuten on, the wike Judas. surely
Have he the malisun today
Of alle that evre speken may — greatest traitor
Of patriark and of pope, created
430 And of prest with loken kope, Except for; wicked
Of monekes and hermites bothe, curses
And of the leve Holi Rode patriarch
That God himselfe ran on blode! fastened cloak
Crist warie him with His mouth!
Waried wrthe he of north and suth, beloved Holy Cross
435 Offe alle men that speken kunne, bled upon
Of Crist that made mone and sunne! curse
Thanne he havede of al the lond Cursed be
Al the folk tilled intil his hond, can
And alle haveden sworn him oth, Nevertheless he (Godard)
440 Riche and poure, lef and loth, subdued
That he sholden hise wille freme dear; loathsome
And that he shulde him nouth greme, carry out
He thouthe a ful strong trechery, not troubledesigned

Havelok the Dane

- 445 A trayson and a felony,
Of the children for to make — *Against*
The devel of helle him sone take!
- 450 Hwan that was thouth, onon he ferde
To the tour ther he woren sperde,
Ther he greten for hunger and cold.
The knave, that was sumdel bold,
Kam him ageyn, on knes him sette,
And Godard ful feyre he ther grette.
And Godard seyde, "Wat is yw?
Hwi grete ye and goulen now?"
"For us hungreth swithe sore" —
Seyden he, "we wolden more:
We ne have to hete, ne we ne have
Her inne neyther knith ne knave
That yeveth us drinke ne no mete,
Halvendel that we moun ete —
Wo is us that we weren born!
Weilawai! nis it no korn
That men micte maken of bred?
Us hungreth — we aren ney ded!"
- 460 Godard herde here wa,
Ther-offe yaf he nouth a stra,
But tok the maydnes bothe samen,
Al so it were up on hiis gamen,
Al so he wolde with hem leyke
- 470 That weren for hunger grene and bleike.
Of bothen he karf on two here throtes,
And sithen hem al to grotes.
Ther was sorwe, wo-so it sawe,
Hwan the children by the wawe
- 475 Leyen and sprawleden in the blod.
Havelok it saw and therbi stod —
Ful sori was that sely knave.
Mikel dred he mouthe have,
For at hise herte he saw a knif
- 480 For to reven him hise lyf.
But the knave, that litel was,
- When; expressed; went
tower; they were kept
they wept*
*boy (Havelok); somewhat
Came towards him
greeted*
*What is the matter
Why weep; yowl
badly*
*have nothing; eat
knight; servant
gives; food*
*Half the amount; could
Woe*
*Alas! is not there any grain
make bread from
nearly*
*their woe
gave; straw
together*
*As if; for fun
play*
*green; pale
cut; their throats
then; pieces*
wall
*stood by
innocent*
Much; might
*rob
boy who*

Havelok the Dane

	He knelede bifor that Judas, And seyde, "Louerd, mercy now!"	<i>Lord</i>
	Manrede, louerd, biddi you:	<i>Homage; I offer</i>
485	Al Denemark I wile you yeve, To that forward thu late me live.	<i>give</i>
	Here hi wile on boke swere That nevremore ne shal I bere	<i>On the condition; you let me live</i>
	Ayen thee, louerd, sheld ne spere,	<i>I will</i>
490	Ne other wepne that may you dere. Louerd, have merci of me!	<i>Against; shield</i>
	Today I wile fro Denemark fle, Ne nevermore comen agheyn!	<i>harm</i>
	Sweren I wole that Bircabein	
495	Nevere yete me ne gat."	<i>fathered</i>
	Hwan the devel herde that, Sumdel bigan him for to rewe;	<i>[Godard] heard</i>
	Withdraw the knif, that was lewe Of the seli children blod.	<i>Somewhat; have pity</i>
500	Ther was miracle fair and god That he the knave nouth ne slou,	<i>warm</i>
	But for rewnesse him withdraw — Of Avelok reweude him ful sore,	<i>innocent</i>
	And thoucte he wolde that he ded wore,	<i>good</i>
505	But on that he nouth wit his hend Ne drepe him nouth, that fule fend!	<i>killed</i>
	Thoucte he als he him bi stod, Starinde als he were wod,	<i>pity; withdrew</i>
	"Yif I late him lives go,	<i>Havelok</i>
510	He micte me wirchen michel wo — Grith ne get I neveremo;	<i>thought he [Godard] wished; were dead</i>
	He may me waiten for to slo.	<i>would not with his [own] hand</i>
	And if he were brouct of live,	<i>kill; evil demon</i>
	And mine children wolden thrive,	<i>stood by</i>
515	Louerdinges after me Of al Denemark micten he be.	<i>Staring; crazy</i>
	God it wite, he shal ben ded —	<i>alive</i>
	Wile I taken non other red!	<i>cause</i>
	I shal do casten him in the she,	<i>Peace</i>
520	Ther I wile that he drench be,	<i>kill</i>
		<i>killed</i>
		<i>Lords</i>
		<i>they</i>
		<i>advice</i>
		<i>order; sea</i>
		<i>drowned</i>

Havelok the Dane

	Abouten his hals an anker god, Thad he ne flete in the flod."	neck; anchor That; float
	Ther anon he dede sende After a fishere that he wende	at once fisherman; thought
525	That wolde al his wille do, And sone anon he seyde him to: "Grim, thou wost thu art my thral; Wilte don my wille al That I wile bidden thee?	know; servant Will you
530	Tomorwen shal maken thee fre, And aucte thee yeven and riche make, Withthan thu wilt this child take And leden him with thee tonicht, Than thou seest the monelith,	[I] make you property Provided that you tonight When; moonlight
535	Into the se and don him therinne. Al wile I taken on me the sinne." Grim tok the child and bond him faste, Hwil the bondes micte laste, That weren of ful strong line.	throw While
540	Tho was Havelok in ful strong pine — Wiste he never he wat was wo! Jhesu Crist, that makede go The halte and the doumbe speken, Havelok, thee of Godard wreke!	pain Knew he never before lame; dumb take revenge
545	Hwan Grim him havede faste bounden, And sithen in an eld cloth wnden, He thriste in his muth wel faste A kevel of clutes ful unwraste, That he mouthe speke ne fnaste,	When; tightly bound then; wound (see note) gag; rags; filthy breathe
550	Hwere he wolde him bere or lede. Hwan he havede don that dede, Hwat the swike him havede he yede That he shulde him forth lede And him drinchen in the se —	Wherever When drown
555	That forwarde makeden he — In a poke, ful and blac, Sone he caste him on his bac, Ant bar him hom to hise cleve, And bitaucte him Dame Leve	agreement; they bag; big; pale And; hut entrusted him to

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 560 | And seyde, "Wite thou this knave,
Al so thou wit mi lif save!
I shal dreinchen him in the se;
For him shole we ben maked fre,
Gold haven ynow and other fe:
That havet mi louerd bihoten me." | Guard

<i>drown</i>

<i>enough; possessions</i>
<i>lord; promised</i> |
| Hwan Dame Leve herde that,
Up she stirte and nouth ne sat,
And caste the knave so harde adoun
That he crakede ther his croune | | <i>When</i>
<i>jumped; did not sit</i>
<i>down</i> |
| 570 | Ageyn a gret ston ther it lay.
Tho Havelok micte sei, "Weilawei,
That evere was I kinges bern —
That him ne havede grip or ern,
Leoun or wlf, wlvine or bere,
Or other best that wolde him dere!" | <i>Alas</i>
<i>son</i>
<i>vulture; eagle</i>
<i>Lion; wolf; she-wolf; bear</i>
<i>beast; harm</i>
<i>until midnight</i> |
| 575 | So lay that child to middel nicth,
That Grim bad Leve bringen lict,
For to don on his clothes:
"Ne thenkestu nowt of mine othes | <i>When; light</i>
<i>put on</i> |
| 580 | That ich have mi louerd sworn?
Ne wile I nouth be forloren.
I shal beren him to the se —
Thou wost that hoves me — | <i>Are not you thinking</i>
<i>sworn to my lord</i>
<i>disgraced</i> |
| And I shal drenchen him therinne; | | <i>know; behooves</i> |
| 585 | Ris up swithe an go thu binne,
And blow the fir and lith a kandel."
Als she shulde hise clothes handel | <i>at once; inside</i>
<i>stoke; fire; light</i> |
| On for to don and blawe the fir,
She saw therinne a lith ful shir, | | <i>bright</i> |
| 590 | Al so brith so it were day,
Aboute the knave ther he lay.
Of hise mouth it stod a stem | <i>as if</i> |
| Als it were a sunnebem; | | <i>Surrounding</i> |
| Al so lith was it therinne | | <i>a ray emerged</i> |
| 595 | So ther brenden cerges inne.
"Jesu Crist!" wat Dame Leve,
"Hwat is that lith in ure cleve? | <i>sunbeam</i>
<i>Just as light</i>
<i>As if; burned candles</i>
<i>exclaimed</i>
<i>our hut</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- Ris up, Grim, and loke wat it menes!
 Hwat is the lith, as thou wenes?" think
- 600 He stirten bothe up to the knave jumped
 For man shal god wille have,
 Unkeveleden him and swithe unbounden,
 And sone anon him funden,
 Als he tirveden of his serk,
 605 On hise rith shuldre a kynmerk,
 A swithe brith, a swithe fair.
 "Goddot!" quath Grim, "this ure eir,
 That shal louerd of Denemark!
 He shal ben king, strong and stark;
- 610 He shal haven in his hand
 Al Denemark and Engeland.
 He shal do Godard ful wo;
 He shal him hangen or quik flo,
 Or he shal him al quic grave. flay alive
bury alive
- 615 Of him shal he no merci have."
 Thus seide Grim and sore gret,
 And sone fel him to the fet,
 And seide, "Louerd, have mercy
 Of me and Leve, that is me bi!" greatly wept
- 620 Louerd, we aren bothe thine —
 Thine cherles, thine hine.
 Louerd, we sholen thee wel fede
 Til that thu cone rideon stede,
 Til that thu cone ful wel bere rustics; servants
keep
- 625 Helm on heved, sheld and spere.
 He ne shall nevere wite, sikerlike,
 Godard, that fule swike.
 Thoru other man, louerd, than thoru thee head
 Shal I nevere freman be.
- 630 Thou shalt me, louerd, fre maken,
 For I shal yemen thee and waken —
 Thoru thee wile I fredom have." know, surely
- Tho was Haveloc a blithe knave!
 He sat him up and cravede bred,
 635 And seide, "Ich am ney ded,
 Hwat for hunger, wat for bondes foul traitor
Through
protect and watch over you
- happy boy
asked for bread
nearly
What; ropes

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | That thu leidest on min hondes,
And for kevel at the laste,
That in my mouth was thirst faste. | [the] gag
firmly thrust
nearly
eat |
| 640 | I was ther with so harde prangled
That I was ther with ney strangled!"
"Wel is me that thou mayth hete!
Goddeth!" quath Leve, "I shal thee fete
Bred an chese, butere and milk, | God knows; fetch |
| 645 | Pastees and flaunes — al with swilk
Shole we sone thee wel fede,
Louerd, in this mikel nede.
Soth it is that men seyt and swereth:
'Ther God wile helpen, nouth ne dereth.'" | such things

<i>True</i>
<i>Where; nothing works injury</i> |
| 650 | Thanne sho havede brouth the mete,
Haveloc anon bigan to ete
Grundlike, and was ful blithe.
Couthe he nouth his hunger mithe.
A lof he het, I woth, and more, | Heartily
Could; hide
ate; believe |
| 655 | For him hungrede swithe sore.
Thre dayes ther biforn, I wene,
Et he no mete — that was wel sene!
Hwan he havede eten and was fed,
Grim dede maken a ful fayr bed, | <i>before that time; believe</i>

<i>When</i> |
| 660 | Unclothede him and dede him therinne,
And seyde, "Slep, sone, with muchel winne!
Slep wel faste and dred thee nouth —
Fro sorwe to joie art thu brouth." | put
great joy
fear not |
| 665 | Sone so it was lith of day,
Grim it undertok the wey
To the wicke traitour Godard
That was of Denemark a stiward
And saide, "Louerd, don ich have | <i>As soon as; light</i>

<i>wicked</i>
<i>overseer</i> |
| 670 | That thou me bede of the knave:
He is drenched in the flod,
Abouten his hals an anker god —
He is witerlike ded.
Eteth he nevremore bred: | <i>surely</i>

<i>He will never eat</i>
<i>lies</i> |
| | He lith drenched in the se. | |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 675 | Yif me gold and other fe,
That I mowe riche be,
And with thi chartre make fre;
For thu ful wel bihetet me
Thanne I last spak with thee." | <i>Give; possessions</i>
<i>promised</i>
<i>When</i> |
| 680 | Godard stod and lokede on him
Thoruthlike, with eyne grim,
And seyde, "Wiltu ben erl?
Go hom swithe, fule drit-cherl;
Go hethen and be everemore | <i>Thoroughly; eyes</i>
<i>Do you want to</i>
<i>base slave</i>
<i>hence</i> |
| 685 | Thral and cherl als thou er wore —
Shaltu have non other mede;
For litel I do thee lede
To the galwes, so God me rede!
For thou haves don a wicke dede. | <i>before</i>
<i>You shall have; reward</i>
<i>slight provocation</i>
<i>so help me God</i> |
| 690 | Thou mait stonden her to longe,
Bute thou swithe hethen gonge!" | <i>too</i>
<i>quickly go hence</i> |
| Grim thoucute to late that he ran
Fro that traytour, that wicke man,
And thoucute, "Wat shal me to rede?
<i>too</i> | | |
| 695 | Wite he him on live he wile bethe
Heye hangen on galwe tre.
Betere us is of londe to fle,
And berwen bothen ure lives,
And mine children and mine wives." | <i>How shall I be advised</i>
<i>[If] he knows [Havelok is] alive; both</i> |
| 700 | Grim soldé sone al his corn,
Shep with wolle, neth with horn,
Hors and swin, geet with berd,
The gees, the hennes of the yerd — | <i>for us out of</i>
<i>save; our</i>
<i>my wife's [life]</i>
<i>grain</i> |
| 705 | Al he soldé that outh douthe,
That he evre selle moucte;
And al he to the peni drou.
Hise ship he greythede wel inow; | <i>hens</i>
<i>was worth anything</i>
<i>might</i>
<i>converted to cash</i> |
| 710 | He dede it tere an ful wel pike
That it ne doutede sond ne krike;
Therinne dide a ful god mast,
Stronge kables and ful fast, | <i>supplied; enough</i>
<i>tar; pitch</i>
<i>uncertain sound; creak</i>
<i>installed</i> |
| Ores gode an ful god seyl —
<i>Oars</i> | | |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Therinne wantede nouth a nayl, | was needed |
| | That evere he sholde therinne do. | put |
| 715 | Hwan he havedet greythed so, | had it prepared |
| | Havelok the yunge he dede therinne, | put |
| | Him and his wif, hise sones thrinne, | three |
| | And hise two doutres that faire wore. | daughters; were |
| | And sone dede he leyn in an ore, | began to steer |
| 720 | And drou him to the heye see, | headed for |
| | There he mith altherbeste fle. | best of all |
| | Fro londe wornen he bote a mile, | they were |
| | Ne were it nevere but ane hwile | a short while |
| | That it ne bigan a wind to rise | |
| 725 | Out of the north men calleth "bise," | (see note) |
| | And drof hem intil Engelond, | them |
| | That al was sithen in his hond, | later; his [Havelok's] |
| | His, that Havelok was the name; | |
| | But or he havede michel shame, | But first; much |
| 730 | Michel sorwe and michel tene, | grief |
| | And yete he gat it al bidene; | completely |
| | Als ye shulen now forthward lere, | forthwith learn |
| | Yf that ye wilens therto here. | |
| | In Humber Grim bigan to lende, | land |
| 735 | In Lindeseye, rith at the north ende. | Lincolnshire |
| | Ther sat his ship upon the sond; | i.e., fishing boat |
| | But Grim it drou up to the lond; | |
| | And there he made a litel cote | cottage |
| | To him and to hise flote. | For; company |
| 740 | Bigan he there for to erthe, | live |
| | A litel hus to maken of erthe, | |
| | So that he wel thore were | there |
| | Of here herboru herborwed there. | shelter; sheltered |
| | And for that Grim that place aute, | owned |
| 745 | The stede of Grim the name laute, | place; took its name |
| | So that Grimesbi it calleth alle | |
| | That theroffe speken alle; | |
| | And so shulen men callen it ay, | always |
| | Bitwene this and Domesday. | now; Judgment Day |

Havelok the Dane

750	Grim was fishere swithe god, And mikel couthe on the flod — Mani god fish therinne he tok, Bothe with neth and with hok. He tok the sturgiun and the qual, And the turbut and lax withal; He tok the sele and the hwel — He spedde ofte swithe wel. Keling he tok and tumberel, Hering and the makerel,	<i>fisherman</i> <i>nets</i> <i>sturgeon; whale</i> <i>turbot; salmon</i> <i>seal; eel</i> <i>succeeded; very</i> <i>Cod; porpoise</i> <i>mackerel</i>
755	760 The butte, the schulle, the thornebake. Gode paniers dede he make, On til him and other thrinne Til hise sones to beren fishe inne, Up o londe to selle and fonge — Forbar he neyther tun ne gronge That he ne to yede with his ware. Kam he nevere hom hand-bare, That he ne broucte bred and sowel In his shirte or in his cowel, In his poke benes and korn — Hise swink he havede he nowt forlorn.	<i>baskets</i> <i>One for; three</i> <i>On land; collect money</i> <i>Neglected; neither town nor farm</i> <i>went</i> <i>empty-handed</i> <i>sauce</i> <i>hood</i> <i>bag; grain</i> <i>work; lost</i>
765	770 And hwan he took the grete lamprey, Ful wel he couthe the rithe wei To Lincolne, the gode boru; Ofte he yede it thoru and thoru, Til he havede wol wel sold And therfore the penies told. Thanne he com thenne he were blithe, For hom he brouthe fele sithe	<i>knew</i> <i>town</i> <i>traversed; through</i> <i>wool</i> <i>counted</i> <i>from there; happy</i> <i>many times</i>
775	780 Wastels, simenels with the horn, His pokes fulle of mele and korn, Netes flesh, shepes and swines; And hemp to maken of gode lines, And stronge ropes to hise netes, In the se weren he ofte setes.	<i>Cakes; horn-shaped bread</i> <i>bags; flour; grain</i> <i>Oxens'</i> <i>lines [for fishing]</i> <i>for his nets</i>
785	Thusgate Grim him fayre ledde: Him and his genge wel he fedde	<i>bore himself well</i> <i>household</i>

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------|
| | Wel twelf winter other more. | or |
| | Havelok was war that Grim swank sore | aware; worked hard |
| 790 | For his mete, and he lay at hom — | stayed |
| | Thouthe, "Ich am now no grom! | boy |
| | Ich am wel waxen and wel may eten | grown |
| | More than evere Grim may geten. | |
| | Ich ete more, bi God on live. | |
| 795 | Than Grim an hise children five! | |
| | It ne may nouth ben thus longe. | for long |
| | Goddot! I wile with hem gange | God knows; go |
| | For to leren sum god to gete. | useful thing |
| | Swinken ich wolde for my mete — | Work |
| 800 | It is no shame for to swinken! | |
| | The man that may wel eten and drinken | |
| | Thar nouth ne have but on swink long — | |
| | To liggen at hom it is ful strong. | stay; wrong |
| | God yelde him, ther I ne may, | reward; since |
| 805 | That haveth me fed to this day! | |
| | Gladlike I wile the paniers bere — | baskets |
| | Ich woth ne shal it me nouth dere, | know; harm |
| | They ther be inne a birthene gret | burden |
| | Al so hevi als a neth. | as an ox |
| 810 | Shal ich nevere lengere dwelle — | stay here |
| | Tomorwen shal ich forth pelle." | hurry forth |
| | On the morwen, hwan it was day, | |
| | He stirt up sone and nouth ne lay, | started early |
| | And cast a panier on his bac, | basket |
| 815 | With fish giveled als a stac, | heaped like |
| | Al so michel he bar him one, | |
| | So he foure, bi mine mone! | <i>As four men, on my word</i> |
| | Wel he it bar and solde it wel; | |
| | The silver he brouthe hom ilk del, | every bit |
| 820 | Al that he therfore tok — | for it |
| | Withheld he nouth a ferthinges nok. | trimming of a farthing |
| | So yede he forth ilke day | went; each |
| | That he nevere at home lay — | |
| | So wolde he his mester lere. | trade learn |
| 825 | Bifel it so a strong dere | <i>It happened; famine</i> |

Havelok the Dane

	Bigan to rise of korn of bred,	grain
	That Grim ne couthe no god red,	plan
	Hw he sholde his meiné fede;	household
	Of Havelok havede he michel drede,	doubt
830	For he was strong and wel mouthe ete	must
	More thanne evere mouthe be gete;	gotten
	Ne he ne mouthe on the se take	might; sea
	Neyther lenge ne thornbake,	ling; skate
	Ne non other fish that douthe	availed
835	His meyné feden with he mouthe.	family; might
	Of Havelok he havede kare,	worried
	Hwilgat that he micthe fare.	<i>In what way</i>
	Of his children was him nouth;	<i>he did not think</i>
	On Havelok was al hisethouth,	<i>thought</i>
840	And seyde, "Havelok, dere sone,	
	I wene that we deye mone	<i>think; must die</i>
	For hunger, this dere is so strong,	<i>famine</i>
	And hure mete is uten long.	<i>our; long gone</i>
	Betere is that thu henne gonge	<i>from here; go</i>
845	Than thu here dwelle longe —	
	Hethen thou mayt gangen to late;	<i>Hence [from here]; must go</i>
	Thou canst ful wel the ricthe gate	<i>know; right way</i>
	To Lincolne, the gode boru —	<i>town</i>
	Thou havest it gon ful ofte thoru.	
850	Of me ne is me nouth a slo.	<i>sloeberry (i.e., I am powerless)</i>
	Betere is that thu thider go,	
	For ther is mani god man inne;	<i>earn</i>
	Ther thou mayt thi mete winne.	<i>poorly clothed</i>
	But wo is me thou art so naked,	<i>sail</i>
855	Of mi seyl I wolde thee were maked	<i>Some clothing</i>
	A cloth thou mithest inne gongen,	<i>Son; endure</i>
	Sone, no cold that thu ne fonge."	
	He tok the sheres of the nayl	<i>shears off</i>
	And made him a covel of the sayl,	<i>garment</i>
860	And Havelok dide it sone on.	<i>put</i>
	Havede he neyther hosen ne shon,	<i>socks; shoes</i>
	Ne none kines other wede:	<i>Nor any kind of other clothes</i>
	To Lincolne barfot he yede.	<i>barefoot; went</i>

Havelok the Dane

	Hwan he cam ther, he was ful wil —	<i>perplexed</i>
865	Ne havede he no frend to gangen til.	<i>to go to</i>
	Two dayes ther fastinde he yede,	<i>fasting</i>
	That non for his werk wolde him fede.	
	The thridde day herde he calle:	<i>third</i>
	“Bermen, bermen, hider forth alle!”	<i>Porters; here</i>
870	Poure that on fote yede	<i>Poor who; went</i>
	Sprongen forth so sparke on glede,	<i>Sprang; as spark from burning coal</i>
	Havelok shof dun nyne or ten	<i>shoved down</i>
	Rith amidewarde the fen,	<i>amidst; mud</i>
	And stirte forth to the kok,	<i>toward the cook</i>
875	Ther the erles mete he tok	
	That he bouthe at the brigge:	<i>bridge</i>
	The bermen let he alle ligge,	<i>porters; stay</i>
	And bar the mete to the castel,	
	And gat him there a ferthing wastel.	<i>farthing cake</i>
880	Thet other day kepte he ok	<i>also</i>
	Swithe yerne the erles kok,	
	Til that he say him on the brigge,	<i>saw</i>
	And bi him many fishes ligge.	<i>lie</i>
	The herles mete havede he bouth	<i>earl's</i>
885	Of Cornwallie and kalde oft:	
	“Bermen, bermen, hider swithe!”	<i>quickly</i>
	Havelok it herde and was ful blithe	<i>glad</i>
	That he herde “berman” calle.	
	Alle made he hem dun falle	
890	That in his gate yeden and stode —	<i>way; walked</i>
	Wel sixtene laddes gode.	
	Als he lep the kok til,	
	He shof hem alle upon an hyl —	<i>down a hill</i>
	Astirte til him with his rippe	<i>Hurried; basket</i>
895	And bigan the fish to kippe.	<i>take</i>
	He bar up wel a carte lode	
	Of segges, laxes, of playces brode,	<i>squid, salmon; plaice</i>
	Of grete laumprees and of eles.	<i>lampreys; eels</i>
	Sparede he neyther tos ne heles	<i>toes nor heels (i.e., he ran)</i>
900	Til that he to the castel cam,	
	That men fro him his birthene nam.	
	Than men haveden holpen him doun	<i>Where; burden took</i>

Havelok the Dane

- | | |
|--|---|
| With the birthene of his croun,
The kok stod and on him low, | <i>off; head
smiled</i> |
| 905 And thoute him stalworthe man ynow,
And seyde, "Wiltu ben wit me?
Gladlike wile ich feden thee:
Wel is set the mete thu etes,
And the hire that thu getes!" | <i>strong; enough
Will you stay with
invested
wages</i> |
| 910 "Goddot!" quoth he, "leve sire,
Bidde ich you non other hire,
But yeveth me inow to ete —
Fir and water I wile you fete,
The fir blowe and ful wele maken; | <i>said; dear
Ask; [for] wages
give
Firewood; fetch</i> |
| 915 Stickes kan ich breken and kraken,
And kindlen ful wel a fyr,
And maken it to brennen shir.
Ful wel kan ich cleven shides,
Eles to turven of here hides; | <i>kindle
brightly
split sticks</i> |
| 920 Ful wel kan ich dishes swilen,
And don al that ye evere wilens."
Quoth the kok, "Wile I no more!
Go thu yunder and sit thore,
And I shal yeve the ful fair bred, | <i>Eels; skin; their
wash</i> |
| 925 And made the broys in the led.
Sit now doun and et ful yerne —
Datheit hwo the mete werne!" | <i>Said; I desire
there</i> |
| Havelok sette him dun anon
Al so stille als a ston,
Til he havede ful wel eten;
Tho havede Havelok fayre geten.
Hwan he havede eten inow,
He kam to the wele, water up drow,
And filde ther a michel so —
Bad he non ageyn him go,
But bitwen his hondes he bar it in,
Al him one, to the kichin.
Bad he non him water to fett,
Ne fro brigge to bere the mete. | |
| <i>at once
As still as
Then; well made out
drew up
large tub
All by himself</i> | |

Havelok the Dane

940	He bar the turves, he bar the star, The wode fro the brigge he bar, Al that evere shulden he nytte, Al he drow and al he citte — Wolde he nevere haven rest More than he were a best.	peat; star grass use hauled; cut Wanted; to have Any more than if; beast most meek Laughing; glad
945	Of alle men was he mest meke, Lauhwinde ay and blithe of speke; Evere he was glad and blithe — His sorwe he couthe ful wel mithe.	hide child sport; play
950	It ne was non so litel knave For to leyken ne for to plawe, That he ne wolde with him pleye. The children that yeden in the weie Of him he deden al here wille,	went their
955	And with him leykeden here fille. Him loveden alle, stille and bolde, Knicthes, children, yunge and holde — Alle him loveden that him sowen, Bothen heye men and lowe.	shy old saw
960	Of him ful wide the word spong, Hw he was mikel, hw he was strong, Hw fayr man God him havede maked, But on that he was almost naked: For he ne havede nouth to shride	far and wide great
965	But a kovel ful unride, That was ful and swithe wicke; Was it nouth worth a fir-sticke. The cok bigan of him to rewe And bouthe him clothes al spannewe:	Except nothing; wear wretched cloak; cumbersome foul; very wretched stick of firewood
970	He bouthe him bothe hosen and shon, And sone dide him dones on. Hwan he was clothed, osed, and shod, Was non so fayr under God, That evere yete in erthe were,	take pity brand new socks; shoes made him put them on hosed
975	Non that evere moder bere; It was nevere man that yemedē In kinneriche that so wel semede King or cayser for to be,	There; governed kingdom

Havelok the Dane

	Than he was shrid, so semede he;	clad
980	For thanne he weren alle samen	when; together
	At Lincoln at the gamen,	games
	And the erles men wornen al thore,	there
	Than was Havelok bi the shuldrnen more	i.e., taller by a head
	Than the meste that ther kam:	greatest
985	In armes him noman nam	no one took
	That he dounne sone ne caste.	
	Havelok stod over hem als a mast;	like
	Als he was heie, als he was long,	As, tall
	He was bothe stark and strong —	
990	In Engelond non hise per	peer
	Of strengthe that evere kam him ner.	
	Als he was strong, so was he softe;	As; gentle
	They a man him misdede ofte,	Although; mistreated
	Neveremore he him misseyde,	Never; insulted
995	Ne hond on him with yvele leyde.	evil intent
	Of bodi was he mayden clene;	pure
	Nevere yete in game, ne in grene,	sport; sexual desire
	With hire ne wolde he leyke ne lye,	her (an attractive woman); sport
	No more than it were a strie.	witch
1000	In that time al Hengelond	England
	Th'erl Godrich havede in his hond,	power
	And he gart komen into the tun	made to; town
	Mani erl and mani barun,	
	And alle that lives were	alive
1005	In Englond thanne wer there,	then
	That they haveden after sent	
	To ben ther at the parlement.	assembly
	With hem com mani chambiou,	champion
	Mani with ladde, blac and brown,	with servants
1010	And fel it so that yungemen,	
	Wel abouten nine or ten,	
	Bigunnen the for to layke.	there; sport
	Thider komen bothe stronge and wayke,	To that place; weak
	Thider komen lesse and more	
1015	That in the boru thanne weren thore —	then
	Chaunpiouns and starke laddes,	stalwart youth
	Bondemen with here gaddes,	Peasants; cattle prods

Havelok the Dane

	Als he comen fro the plow. There was sembling inow;	As they enough assembled
1020	For it ne was non horse-knave, Tho thei sholden in honde have, That he ne kam thider, the leyk to se. Biforn here fet thanne lay a tre, And pulten with a mikel ston	there; stable boy be on duty sport; see feet; tree [as a foul line] heaved; mighty
	The starke laddes, ful god won. The ston was mikel and ek gret, And al so hevi so a neth; Grundstalwyrthe man he sholde be	very large number also just as; an ox Very strong
1025	That mouthe liften it to his kne; Was ther neyther clerc ne prest, That mithe liften it to his brest. Therwit putten the chaumpiouns	Who might nor
1030	That thider comen with the barouns. Hwo so mithe putten thore	With it
	Biforn another an inch or more, Wore he yung, wore he hold, He was for a kempe told.	Whosoever
1035	Al so the stoden and ofte stareden, The chaumpiouns and ek the ladden,	Were; old outstanding performer counted
	And he maden mikel strout	As they
1040	Abouten the altherbeste but, Havelok stod and lokede thertil, And of puttingge he was ful wil, For nevere yete ne saw he or	also; lads great dispute greatest effort at that
	Putten the stone or thanne thor. Hise mayster bad him gon therto —	ignorant before
1045	Als he couthe therwith do. Tho hise mayster it him bad, He was of him sore adrad.	before that time
	Therto he stirte sone anon,	himself; doubtful
1050	And kipte up that hevi ston That he sholde putten withe; He putte at the firste sithe, Over alle that ther wore	picked
	Twelve fote and sumdel more.	putted [it]; time
1055	The chaumpiouns that put sown;	Farther somewhat shotput saw

Havelok the Dane

	Shuldreden he ilc other and lowen. Wolden he nomore to putting gange, But seyde, "Thee dwellen her to longe!"	<i>They shoved each other; laughed go here too long wonder; hidden made known threw each of them tall</i>
1060	This selkouth mithe nouth ben hyd: Ful sone it was ful loude kid Of Havelok, hw he warp the ston Over the laddes everilkon, Hw he was fayr, hw he was long,	<i>wonder; hidden made known threw each of them tall manly (wight)</i>
1065	Hw he was with, hw he was strong; Thoruth England yede the speche, Hw he was strong and ek meke; In the castel, up in the halle, The knithes speken therof alle,	<i>went the rumor also</i>
1070	So that Godrich it herde wel: The speken of Havelok, everi del — Hw he was strong man and hey, Hw he was strong, and ek fri, And thouthte Godrich, "Thoru this knave	<i>They; everywhere tall skillful Through</i>
1075	Shal ich Engelond al have, And mi sone after me; For so I wile that it be. The King Athelwald me dide swere Upon al the messe gere	<i>desire made me swear mass implements</i>
1080	That I shude his douther yeve The hexte that mithe live, The beste, the fairest, the strangest ok — That gart he me sweren on the bok. Hwere mithe I finden ani so hey,	<i>greatest (highest) strongest also made</i>
1085	So Havelok is, or so sley? Thou I southe hethen into Inde, So fayr, so strong, ne mithe I finde. Havelok is that ilke knave That shal Goldeboru have!"	<i>Where; tall skillful searched from here to India</i>
1090	This thouthe with trechery, With traysoun, and wit felony; For he wende that Havelok wore Sum cherles sone and no more; Ne shulde he haven of Engellond	<i>[he] thought with surmised ordinary person (peasant)</i>
1095	Onlepi foru in his hond	<i>A single furrow; possession</i>

Havelok the Dane

- | | |
|--|---|
| With hire that was therof eyr,
That bothe was god and swithe fair,
He wende that Havelok wer a thral,
Therthoru he wende haven al
1100 In Engelond, that hire rith was.
He was werse than Sathanas
That Jhesu Crist in erthe stoc.
Hanged worthe he on an hok! | <p>[rightful] heir
very
serf (slave)</p> <p>For this reason; expected</p> <p>Satan
buried</p> <p>Let him be hanged; oak</p> |
| After Goldeboru sone he sende,
That was bothe fayr and hende,
And dide hire to Lincolne bringe.
Belles dede he ageyn hire ringen,
And joie he made hire swithe mikel;
But netheless he was ful swikel. | <p>For; soon; sent
courteous
had her brought</p> <p>nonetheless; treacherous
wed (give)</p> |
| 1110 He saide that he sholde hire yeve
The fayreste man that mithe live.
She answerede and saide anon,
By Crist and bi Seint Johan,
That hire sholde noman wedde
1115 Ne noman bringen hire to bedde
But he were king or kinges eyr,
Were he nevere man so fayr. | <p>Saint John</p> <p>Unless; heir</p> |
| Godrich the erl was swithe wroth
That she swor swilk an oth,
1120 And saide, "Whether thou wilt be
Quen and levedi over me?
Thou shalt haven a gadeling —
Ne shalt thou haven non other king!
Thee shal spusen mi cokes knave —
1125 Ne shalt thou non other louered have.
Datheit that thee other yeve
Everemore hwil I live!
Tomorwe ye sholen ben weddeth,
And maugre thin togidere beddeth. | <p>so angry
such</p> <p>rogue</p> <p>marry; cook's</p> |
| 1130 Goldeboru gret and yaf hire ille;
She wolde ben ded bi hire wille.
On the morwen hwan day was sprungen | <p>in spite of you
wept</p> |

Havelok the Dane

	And day-belle at kirke rungen,	church
	After Havelok sente that Judas	<i>i.e., Godrich</i>
1135	That werse was thanne Sathanas,	
	And saide, "Maister, wilte wif?"	<i>do you want</i>
	"Nay," quoth Havelok, "bi my lif!	<i>said</i>
	Hwat sholde ich with wif do?	
	I ne may hire fede ne clothe ne sho.	<i>shoe</i>
1140	Wider sholde ich wimman bringe?	<i>Where</i>
	I ne have none kines thinge —	
	I ne have hws, I ne have cote,	<i>house; cottage</i>
	Ne I ne have stikke, I ne have sprote,	<i>twig [for fuel]</i>
	I ne have neyther bred ne sowel,	<i>sauce</i>
1145	Ne cloth but of an hold whit covel.	<i>clothing except; white cloak</i>
	This clothes that ich onne have	<i>have on</i>
	Aren the kokes and ich his knave!"	<i>cook's</i>
	Godrich stirt up and on him dong,	<i>struck</i>
	With dintes swithe hard and strong,	<i>blows</i>
1150	And seyde, "But thou hire take	<i>Unless</i>
	That I wole yeven thee to make,	<i>as a mate</i>
	I shal hangen thee ful heye,	<i>high</i>
	Or I shal thristen uth thin heie."	<i>thrust out your eye</i>
	Havelok was one and was odrat,	<i>alone; afraid</i>
1155	And grauntede him al that he bad.	<i>ordered</i>
	Tho sende he after hire sone,	<i>quickly</i>
	The fayrest wymman under mone,	<i>moon</i>
	And seyde til hire, fals and slike,	<i>treacherous</i>
	That wicke thrall that foule swike:	<i>slave; traitor</i>
1160	"But thu this man understande,	<i>Unless; accept</i>
	I shall flemen thee of londe;	<i>banish you from</i>
	Or thou shal to the galwes renne,	<i>gallows run</i>
	And ther thou shalt in a fir brenne."	<i>burn</i>
	Sho was adrad for he so thrette,	<i>threatened</i>
1165	And durste nouth the spusing lette;	<i>dared not; espousal obstruct</i>
	But they hire likede swithe ille,	<i>even though; very</i>
	Sho thouthe it was Godes wille —	
	God that makes to growen the korn,	
	Formede hire wimman to be born.	
1170	Hwan he havede don him, for drede,	<i>woman</i>

Havelok the Dane

	That he sholde hire spusen and fede,	espouse
	And that she sholde til him holde,	cling
	Ther weren penies thicke tolde	
	Mikel plenté, upon the bok —	
1175	He ys hire yaf and she is tok.	<i>A very great amount gave her [his]; she took them</i>
	He weren spused fayre and well,	<i>They; married</i>
	The messe he dede, everi del	<i>every bit</i>
	That fel to spusing, an god clek —	<i>dealt with; good clerk</i>
	The erchebishop uth of Yerk,	<i>from York</i>
1180	That kam to the parlement,	<i>assembly</i>
	Als God him havede thider sent.	<i>As; to that place</i>
	Hwan he weren togidere in Godes lawe,	
	That the folc ful wel it sawe,	
	He ne wisten what he mouthen,	<i>knew not; might [do]</i>
1185	Ne he ne wisten what hem douthe,	<i>would avail them</i>
	Ther to dwellen, or thenne to gonge.	<i>Where; go from there</i>
	Ther ne wolden he dwellen longe,	
	For he wisten and ful wel sawe	<i>knew</i>
	That Godrich hem hatede — the devel him hawe!	<i>seize (possess)</i>
1190	And if he dwelleden ther outh —	<i>without security</i>
	That fel Havelok ful wel on thouth —	<i>treachery; worried about</i>
	Men sholde don his leman shame,	<i>beloved</i>
	Or elles bringen in wicke blame,	
	That were him levere to ben ded.	<i>rather</i>
1195	Forthi he token another red:	<i>Therefore; counsel</i>
	That thei sholden thenne fle	
	Til Grim and til hise sone thre —	<i>to; sons</i>
	Ther wenden he altherbest to spedē,	
	Hem forto clothe and for to fede.	<i>Themselves</i>
1200	The lond he token under fote —	
	Ne wisten he non other bote —	<i>solution</i>
	And helden ay the rith sti	<i>always; way</i>
	Til he komen to Grimesby.	
	Thanne he komen there thanne was Grim ded —	
1205	Of him ne haveden he no red.	<i>word</i>
	But hise children alle fyve,	
	Alle weren yet on live,	<i>alive</i>
	That ful fayre ayen hem neme	

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | Hwan he wisten that he keme, | When they knew |
| 1210 | And maden joie swithe mikel —
Ne weren he nevere ayen hem fikel.
On knes ful fayre he hem setten
And Havelok swithe fayre gretten,
And seyden, "Welkome, louered dere!" | against; disloyal
they set themselves

dear lord |
| 1215 | And welkome be thi fayre fere!
Blessed be that ilke thrawe
That thou hire toke in Godes lawe!
Wel is hus we sen thee on live.
Thou mithe us bothe selle and yeve; | to your; companion
that very time |
| 1220 | Thou mayt us bothe yeve and selle,
With that thou wilt here dwelle.
We haven, louerd, alle gode —
Hors, and neth, and ship on flode,
Gold and silver and michel auchte, | Well is [it for] us; alive
may |
| 1225 | That Grim ure fader us bitauchte.
Gold and silver and other fe
Bad he us bitaken thee.
We haven sheep, we haven swin;
Bileve her, louerd, and al be thin! | If
good things
oxen; sea
great possessions
our; bequeathed
property |
| 1230 | Tho shalt ben louerd, thou shalt ben syre,
And we sholen serven thee and hire;
And hure sistres sholen do
Al that evere biddes sho:
He sholen hire clothes washen and wringen, | Told; to entrust you
swine |
| 1235 | And to hondes water bringen;
He sholen bedden hire and thee,
For levedi wile we that she be." | Remain; yours |
| | Hwan he this joie haveden maked, | |
| | Sithen stikes broken and kraked, | made |
| 1240 | And the fir brouth on brenne;
Ne was ther spared gos ne henne,
Ne the hende ne the drake:
Mete he deden plenté make; | Afterwards
stoked |
| | Ne wantede there no god mete, | goose; hen |
| 1245 | Wyn and ale deden he fete,
And hem made glade and blithe;
Weseyl ledden he fele sithe. | duck |
| | | i.e., They drank to their health often |

Havelok the Dane

	On the nith als Goldeboru lay, Sory and sorwful was she ay.	<i>During; night; as continually</i>
1250	For she wende she were biswike, That she were yeven unkyndelike. O nith saw she therinne a lith, A swithe fayr, a swithe bryth — Al so brith, all so shir	<i>thought; deceived given [in marriage] out of her rank One; light so bright bright; shining</i>
	So it were a blase of fir. She lokede noth and ek south, And saw it comen ut of his mouth That lay bi hire in the bed.	<i>blaze of fire north</i>
	No ferlike thou she were adred!	<i>wonder that; afraid</i>
1260	Thouthe she, “What may this bimene? He beth heyman yet, als I wene: He beth heyman er he be ded!” On hise shuldre, of gold red She saw a swithe noble croiz;	<i>mean nobleman; believe</i>
1265	Of an angel she herde a voyz:	<i>shoulders cross voice</i>
	“Goldeboru, lat thi sorwe be! For Havelok, that haveth spuset thee, He, kinges sone and kinges eyr, That bikenneth that croiz so fayr	<i>set aside married</i>
1270	It bikenneth more — that he shal Denemark haven and Englund al. He shal ben king strong and stark, Of Engelond and Denemark — That shal thu wit thin eyne seen,	<i>betokens means</i>
	And tho shalt quen and levedi ben!”	<i>eyes lady</i>
1275	Thanne she havede herd the stevene Of the angel uth of hevene, She was so fele sithes blithe That she ne mithe hire joie mythe, But Havelok sone anon she kiste,	<i>When; voice</i>
	And he slep and nouth ne wiste Hwat that aungel havede seyd. Of his slep anon he brayd,	<i>so many times over glad might not; hide knew out of; started</i>

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1285 | And seide, "Lemman, slepes thou?
A selkuth drem dremede me now — | <i>Beloved
wondrous dream; just now</i> |
| Herkne now what me hath haveth met.
Me thouthe I was in Denemark set,
But on on the moste hil
That evere yete cam I til. | | <i>Listen; dreamed
one of the tallest hills
to
high
world
As; hill
to possess
towns</i> |
| 1290 | It was so hey that I wel mouthe
Al the w提醒 se, als me thouthe.
Als I sat upon that lowe
I bigan Denemark for to awe,
The borwes and the castles stronge; | <i>embraced; once
i.e., my long body</i> |
| 1295 | And mine armes weren so longe
That I fadmede al at ones,
Denemark with mine longe bones;
And thanne I wolde mine armes drawe
Til me and hom for to have, | <i>Towards</i> |
| 1300 | Al that evere in Denemark liveden
On mine armes faste clyveden;
And the stronge castles alle
On knes bigunnen for to falle —
The keyes fallen at mine fet. | <i>Everyone who
clung</i> |
| 1305 | Another drem dremede me ek:
That ich fley over the salte se
Til Engelond, and al with me
That evere was in Denemark lyves
But bondemen and here wives; | <i>I dreamed also
fled
alive
Except serfs; their</i> |
| 1310 | And that ich com til Engelond —
Al closede it intil min hond,
And, Goldeborw, I gaf thee.
<i>Deus!</i> lemman, what may this be?" | <i>Enclosed
[England]
God; my dear</i> |
| 1315 | Sho answerede and seyde sone:
"Jesu Crist, that made mone,
Thine dremes turne to joye . . .
That wite thu that sittes in trone!
Ne non strong, king ne caysere | <i>She; quickly
moon
(see note)
throne
caesar</i> |
| 1320 | So thou shalt be, fo thou shalt bere
In Engelond corune yet.
Denemark shal knele to thi fet; | <i>for; wear
crown</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------------|
| | Alle the castles that aren therinne | |
| | Shaltou, lemman, ful wel winne. | |
| | I woth so wel so ich it sowe, | saw |
| 1325 | To thee shole comen heye and lowe, | shall |
| | And alle that in Denemark wone — | live |
| | Em and brother, fader and sone, | Uncle |
| | Erl and baroun, dreng and thayn, | vassal; thane |
| | Knightes and burgeys and sweyn — | citizens; attendants |
| 1330 | And mad king heyelike and wel. | made; solemnly |
| | Denemark shal be thin evere ilc del — | every part |
| | Have thou nouth theroffe douthe, | nothing to fear |
| | Nouth the worth of one nouthe; | value; nut |
| | Theroffe withinne the firste yer | |
| 1335 | Shalt thou ben king of evere il del. | doubt |
| | But do now als I wile rathe: | advise |
| | Nim in wit lithe to Denemark bathe, | quickly |
| | And do thou nouth on frest this fare — | not postpone; journey |
| | Lith and selthe felawes are. | |
| 1340 | For shal ich nevere blithe be | |
| | Til I with eyen Denemark se, | eyes |
| | For ich woth that al the lond | know |
| | Shalt thou haven in thin hond. | |
| | Prey Grimes sones alle thre, | Ask |
| 1345 | That he wenden forth with the; | they; go |
| | I wot he wilens the nouth werne — | refuse |
| | With the wende shulen he yerne, | go; eagerly |
| | For he loven thee hertelike. | they; heartily |
| | Thou maght til he aren quike, | may; ready |
| 1350 | Hwore-so he o worde aren; | Wherever in the world they are |
| | There ship thou do hem swithe yaren, | make them quickly prepare |
| | And loke that thou dwelle nouth — | delay not |
| | Dwelling haveth ofte scathe wrouth." | harm |
| |
Hwan Havelok herde that she radde, | |
| 1355 | Sone it was day, sone he him cladde, | what; advised |
| | And sone to the kirke yede | dressed |
| | Or he dide any other dede, | church went |
| | And bifor the Rode bigan falle, | Before |
| | "Croiz" and "Crist" bi to kalle, | in front of; Cross |
| | | Cross; began to call upon |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1360 | And seyde, "Louerd, that all weldes —
Wind and water, wodes and feldes —
For the holy milce of you,
Have merci of me, Louerd, now!
And wreke me yet on mi fo | <i>who governs</i>
<i>mercy</i>
<i>avenge; enemy</i>
<i>eyes kill</i> |
| 1365 | That ich saw biforn min eyne slo
Mine sistres with a knif,
And sithen wolde me mi lyf
Have reft, for in the se
Bad he Grim have drenched me. | <i>deprived</i>
<i>Commanded</i>
<i>great injustice</i>
<i>harm</i>
<i>mistreated; in any way</i>
<i>[he] has</i>
<i>driven; beg</i>
<i>pain lie</i> |
| 1370 | He hath mi lond with mikel unrith,
With michel wrong, with mikel plith,
For I ne misdede him nevere nouth,
And haved me to sorwe brouth.
He haveth me do mi mete to thigge, | <i>I</i> |
| 1375 | And ofte in sorwe and pine ligge.
Louerd, have merci of me,
And late me wel passe the se —
Though ihc have theroffe douthe and kare,
Withutten stormes overfare, | |
| 1380 | That I ne drenched therine
Ne forfaren for no sinne,
And bringe me wel to the lond
That Godard haldes in his hond,
That is mi rith, everi del — | <i>drowned</i>
<i>lost</i> |
| 1385 | Jesu Crist, thou wost it wel!" | <i>holds</i>
<i>right</i>
<i>know</i> |
| Thanne he havede his bede seyd,
His offrende on the auter leyd,
His leve at Jhesu Crist he tok,
And at his swete moder ok,
And at the Croiz that he biforn lay; | | |
| 1390 | Sithen yede sore grotinde awey, | <i>prayer</i>
<i>offering; altar</i>
<i>took his leave</i>
<i>i.e., the Virgin Mary</i>
<i>Cross</i>
<i>weeping</i> |
| 1395 | Hwan he com hom, he wore yare,
Grimes sones, for to fare
Into the se, fishes to gete,
That Havelok mithe wel of ete.
But Avelok thoughte al another: | <i>they were ready</i>
<i>to go</i>
<i>something else</i> |

Havelok the Dane

	First he kalde the heldest brother, Roberd the Rede, bi his name, Wiliam Wenduth and Huwe Raven,	called; eldest
1400	Grimes sones alle thre — And seyde, "Lithes now alle to me; Louerdinges, ich wile you shewe A thing of me that ye wel knewe. Mi fader was king of Denshe lond —	said; Listen Gentlemen Danish
1405	Denemark was al in his hond The day that he was quik and ded. But thanne havede he wicke red, That he me and Denemark al And mine sistres bitawte a thral;	alive advice
1410	A develes lime he hus bitawhte, And al his lond and al hise authe, For I saw that fule fend Mine sistres slo with hise hend: First he shar a two here throtes,	entrusted to a servant limb (i.e., a villain); entrusted us possessions foul fiend
1415	And sithen hem al to grotes, And sithen bad in the se Grim, youre fader, drenchen me. Deplike dede he him swere On bok that he sholde me bere	cut in two their then [chopped] them into small pieces [he] ordered
1420	Unto the se and drenchen ine, And wolde taken on him the sinne. But Grim was wis and swithe hende — Wolde he nouth his soule shende;	Solemnly in [fit]
	Levere was him to be forsworen	skillful harm
1425	Than drenchen me and ben forlorn. But sone bigan he forto fle Fro Denemark for to berthen me. For yif ich havede ther ben funden,	Preferable; falsely sworn drown; lost
	Havede he ben slain or harde bunden,	protect if; found
1430	And heye ben hanged on a tre — Havede go for him gold ne fe. Forthi fro Denemark hider he fledde, And me ful fayre and ful wel fedde,	tightly bound Therefore
	So that unto this day	
1435	Have ich ben fed and fostred ay.	brought up

Havelok the Dane

	But now ich am up to that helde Cumen that ich may wepne welde, And I may grete dintes yeve, Shal I nevere hwil ich lyve	age wield weapons blows give
1440	Ben glad til that ich Denemark se! I preie you that ye wende with me, And ich may mak you riche men; Ilk of you shal have castles ten,	beseech; go
	And the lond that thor til longes — Borwes, tunes, wodes, and wonges.	Each belongs to it <i>Boroughs, fields; village</i>

[Approximately 180 lines are missing here; see note]

1625	"With swilk als ich byen shal. Ther of biseche you now leve Wile ich speke with non other reve But with thee, that justise are, That I mithe seken mi ware	such as; buy permission magistrate judge
1630	In gode borwes up and doun, And faren ich wile fro tun to tun." A gold ring drew he forth anon — An hundred pund was worth the ston — And yaf it Ubbe for to sped.	town drew
1635	He was ful wis that first yaf mede; And so was Havelok ful wis here: He solde his gold ring ful dere — Was nevere non so dere sold Fro chapmen, neyther yung ne old.	<i>in hope of success</i> shrewd who; gave reward
1640	That sholen ye forthward ful wel heren, Yif that ye wile the storie heren.	at a high price merchants later; hear If

	Hwan Ubbe havede the gold ring, Havede he yovenet for no thing, Nouth for the borw evere ilk del.	given it up
1645	Havelok bihel he swithe wel, Hw he was wel of bones maked, Brod in the sholdres, ful wel schaped, Thicke in the brest, of bodi long — He semede wel to ben wel strong.	beheld Broad

Havelok the Dane

1650	<p>"Deus!" hwat Ubbe, "Qui ne were he knith? I woth that he is swithe with! Betere semede him to bere Helm on heved, sheld and spere, Thanne to beye and selle ware —</p>	<p><i>God; said; Why; knight know; very powerful</i></p>
1655	<p>Allas, that he shal therwith fare! Goddot! Wile he trowe me, Chaffare shal he late be." Nethelas he seyde sone: "Havelok, have thi bone!</p>	<p><i>Helmet; head buy; goods (i.e., be a merchant) get along If he takes my advice Trading; leave off Nonetheless request</i></p>
1660	<p>And I ful wel rede thee That thou come and ete with me Today, thou and thi fayre wif That thou lovest al so thi lif. And have thou of hire no drede —</p>	<p><i>as much as your life fear offer faith myself; pledge</i></p>
1665	<p>Shal hire no man shame bede. Bi the fey that I owe to thee, Ther of shal I me self borw be."</p>	
1670	<p>Havelok herde that he bad, And thow was he ful sore drad With him to ete, for his wif; For him wore levere that his lif Him wore reft, than she in blame Felle or lauthe ani shame.</p>	<p><i>what he offered afraid because of</i></p>
1675	<p>Hwanne he havede his wille yat, The stede that he onne sat Smot Ubbe with spures faste, And forth awey, but at the laste, Or he fro him ferde, Seyde he, that his folk herde:</p>	<p><i>experienced any assented horse; sat on</i></p>
1680	<p>"Loke that ye comen bethe, For ich it wile and ich it rede."</p>	<p><i>[went] forth away went so that both I; want; advise</i></p>
1685	<p>Havelok ne durste, the he were adrad, Nouth withsitten that Ubbe bad. His wif he dide with him lede — Unto the heye curt he yede. Roberd hire ledde, that was red,</p>	<p><i>though he were frightened oppose what; bade court; went who (see note)</i></p>

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | That havede tholed for hire the ded
Or ani havede hire misseyd,
Or hand with iwele onne leyd. | would have suffered death
<i>laid an evil hand on her</i> |
| 1690 | Willam Wendut was that other
That hire ledde, Roberdes brother,
That was with at alle nedes.
Wel is him that god man fedes!
Than he weren comen to the halle, | brave
<i>i.e., has good retainers</i> |
| 1695 | Biforen Ubbe and his men alle,
Ubbe stirte hem ageyn,
And mani a knith and mani a sweyn,
Hem for to se and for to shewe.
Tho stod Havelok als a lowe | went towards them
<i>inspect</i>
<i>Then; hill</i> |
| 1700 | Aboven that ther inne wore,
Rith al bi the heved more
Thanne ani that ther inne stod.
Tho was Ubbe blithe of mod
That he saw him so fayr and hende; | <i>those; were</i>
<i>head</i> |
| 1705 | Fro him ne mithe his herte wende,
Ne fro him, ne fro his wif —
He lovede hem sone so his lif.
Weren non in Denemark that him thouthe
That he so mikel love mouthe. | courteous
<i>turn</i>
<i>just as much as</i>
<i>might [have]</i> |
| 1710 | More he lovede Havelok one
Than al Denemark, bi mine wone.
Loke now, hw God helpen kan
O mani wise wif and man! | only
<i>on my word</i>
<i>many [a]</i> |
| 1715 | Hwan it was comen time to ete,
Hise wif dede Ubbe sone in fete,
And til hire seyde al on gamen,
“Dame, thou and Havelok shulen ete samen,
And Goldeboru shal ete wit me,
That is so fayr so flour on tre. | fetch inside
<i>to her; in jest</i>
<i>together</i> |
| 1720 | In al Denemark is wimman non
So fayr so sche, by Seint Johan.”
Thanne were set and bord leyd,
And the beneysun was seyd,
Biforn hem com the beste mete | <i>Who; as a flower</i>
<i>no woman</i>
<i>as she</i>
<i>table</i>
<i>blessing</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1725 | That king or cayser wolde etc:
Kranes, swannes, veneysun,
Lax, lampreys, and god sturgun,
Pyment to drinke and god claré,
Win hwit and red, ful god plenté — | emperor; caesar
<i>Cranes, swans, venison</i>
<i>Salmon; good sturgeon</i>
<i>claret</i>
<i>Wine white</i> |
| 1730 | Was ther inne no page so lite
That evere wolde ale bite.
Of the mete forto telle
Ne of the win bidde I nout dwelle; | <i>There was; little</i>
<i>request</i> |
| 1735 | That is the storie for to lenge —
It wolde anuye this fayre genge.
But hwan he haveden the kilthing deyled
And fele sithe haveden wosseyled, | <i>prolong</i>
<i>annoy; company</i>
<i>each; tippling shared</i> |
| 1740 | With gode drinkes seten longe,
And it was time for to gonge,
Ilk man to ther he cam fro,
Thouthe Ubbe, "If I late hem go, | <i>toasted</i>

<i>Each</i>
<i>let; go</i> |
| 1745 | Thus one foure, withuten mo,
So mote ich brouke finger or to,
For this wimman bes mikel wo!
For hire shal men hire louerd slo." | <i>four alone</i>
<i>use; toe</i>
<i>woman; there will be much</i>
<i>their lords</i> |
| 1750 | He tok sone knithes ten,
And wel sixti other men
Wit gode bowes and with gleives,
And sende hem unto the greyves, | <i>spears</i>

<i>(see note)</i> |
| 1755 | The beste man of al the toun,
That was named Bernard Brun —
And bad him als he lovede his lif,
Havelok wel yemen and his wif, | <i>as</i>
<i>protect</i>
<i>keep watch</i> |
| 1760 | And wel do wayten al the nith
Til the other day that it were lith.
Bernard was trewe and swithe with,
In al the borw ne was no knith | <i>next; when; light</i>
<i>powerfully strong</i> |
| | That betere couthe on stede ridein,
Helm on heved ne swerd bi side.
Havelok he gladlike understod
With mikel love and herte god, | |
| | And dide greythe a super riche
Al so he was no with chinche | <i>prepare a sumptuous supper</i>
<i>not a bit stingy</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 1765 | To his bihove everil del,
That he mithe supe swithe wel. | taste
eat |
| 1770 | Al so he seten and sholde soupe,
So comes a ladde in a joupe,
And with him sixti other stronge
With swerdes drawen and knives longe,
Ilkan in hande a ful god gleive,
And seyde, "Undo, Bernard the greyye!
Undo swithe and lat us in,
Or thu art ded, bi Seint Austin!"
Bernard stirt up, that was ful big, | loose jacket
strong men

<i>Each one; sword
night watchman</i> |
| 1775 | And caste a brinie upon his rig,
And grop an ax that was ful god —
Lep to the dore so he wore wod,
And seyde, "Hwat are ye, that ar ther-oute,
That thus biginnen for to stroute? | Saint Augustine
who
<i>coat of mail; back
grabbed
as if he were crazy
out there
make a ruckus</i> |
| 1780 | Goth henne swithe, fule theves,
For, bi the Louerd that man on leves,
Shol ich casten the dore open,
Summe of you shal ich drepen,
And the othre shal ich kesten | Go hence
believes
<i>Should I
kill
others; cast</i> |
| 1785 | In feteres and ful faste festen!
"Hwat have ye seid?" quoth a ladde,
"Wenestu that we ben adradde?
We shole at this dore gonge
Maugre thin, carl, or outh longe." | <i>bind up</i>

<i>Do you think; afraid
door go</i> |
| 1790 | He gripen sone a bulder ston
And let it fleye, ful god won,
Agen the dore, that it to-rof.
Avelok it saw, and thider drof
And the barre sone ut drow, | <i>Despite all of you, churl, before long
boulder
fly with great force
broke apart
ran</i> |
| 1795 | That was unride and gret ynow,
And caste the dore open wide
And seide, "Her shal I now abide!
Comes swithe unto me —
Dathey hwo you henne fle!" | <i>quickly pulled out
huge; quite big</i> |
| 1800 | "No," quodh on, "that shaltou coupe;"
And bigan til him to loupe, | <i>Here
quickly
<i>Cursed be any who flee
one; you will pay
run</i></i> |

Havelok the Dane

	In his hond his swerd ut drawe,	pulled out
	Havelok he wende thore have slawe,	
	And with him comen other two	
1805	That him wolde of live have do.	robbed him of life
	Havelok lifte up the dore tre	door-bar
	And at a dint he slow hem thre.	with one stroke he killed all three of them
	Was non of hem that hise hernes	brains
	Ne lay ther ute ageyn the sternes.	
1810	The ferthe that he sithen mette	Did not lie open to the stars
	Wit the barre so he him grette	fourth
	Bifor the heved that the rith eye	greeted
	Ut of the hole made he fleye,	Upon; head that
	And sithe clapte him on the crune	eye socket; fly
1815	So that he stan ded fel thor dune.	hit; head
	The fifte that he overtok	stone dead; there down
	Gaf he a ful sor dint ok,	fifth
	Bitween the sholdres ther he stod,	Gave; hard
	That he spen his herte blod.	shed
1820	The sixte wende for to fle,	turned
	And he clapte him with the tre	
	Rith in the fule necke so	
	That he smot hise necke on to.	in two
	Thanne the sixe weren doun feld,	felld
1825	The seventhe brayd ut his swerd	whipped out
	And wolde Havelok riht in the eye;	wanted [to hit]
	And Havelok let the barre fleye	
	And smot him sone agheyn the brest,	
	That havede he nevere schrifte of prest	
1830	For he was ded on lesse hwile	absolution
	Than men mouthe renne a mile.	in less time
	Alle the othere weren ful kene;	might run
	A red they taken hem bitwene	very tough
	That he sholde him bihalve,	
1835	And brisen so that wit no salve	decision; among themselves
	Ne sholde him helen leche non.	They; surround
	They drowen ut swerdes, ful god won,	batter [him]
	And shoten on him so don on bere	heal; doctor
	Dogges that wolden him to-tere,	quite a number
1840	Thanne men doth the bere beyte.	as do; bear
		tear apart
		bear bait

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | The laddes were kaske and teyte
And umbiyeden him ilkon.
Sum smot with tre and sum wit ston,
Summe putten with gleyve in bac and side | active; eager
surrounded him altogether

thrust with sword |
| 1845 | And yeven wundes longe and wide
In twenti stedes and wel mo,
Fro the croune til the to.
Hwan he saw that, he was wod
And was it ferlik hw he stod! | places
head to toe
crazy
amazing that

off |
| 1850 | For the blod ran of his sides
So water that fro the welle glides.
But thanne bigan he for to mowe
With the barre, and let hem shewe
Hw he couthe sore smite; | As

mow

show them |
| 1855 | For was ther non, long ne lite,
That he mouthe overtake,
That he ne garte his croune krake,
So that on a litel stund,
Felde he twenti to the grund. | caused
in a little while
felled |
| 1860 | Tho bigan gret dine to rise,
For the laddes on ilke wise
Him asayleden with grete dintes,
Fro fer he sto[n]den him with flintes,
And gleyves schoten him fro ferne, | Then; a great noise
in every way
Assailed him
very far
swords rushed; from far away |
| 1865 | For drepen him he wolden yerne;
But dursten he newhen him nomore
Thanne he bor or leun wore. | kill; gladly
They dared get near
Than if; boar; lion |
| 1870 | Huwe Raven that dine herde,
And thowthe wel that men misferde
With his louerd for his wif
And grop an ore and a long knif,
And thider drof al so an hert, | Hugh; din
acted wrongly
Against; lord
grabbed; oar
as a hart (stag) |
| 1875 | And cham ther on a litel stert
And saw how the laddes wode
Havelok his louerd umbistode,
And beten on him so doth the smith
With the hamer on the stith. | came there in a little while
angry
[they] surrounded
as
anvil |

Havelok the Dane

	"Allas!" hwat Hwe, "that I was boren!	said Hugh
	That evere et ich bred of koren!	ate; grain
1880	That ich here this sorwe se!	
	Roberd! Willam! Hware ar ye?	Where
	Gripeth ether unker a god tre	<i>Grab both of you two; cudgel</i>
	And late we nouth thise doges fle	allow; not
	Til ure louerd wreke be.	<i>Until; avenged</i>
1885	Cometh swithe, and folwes me:	
	Ich have in honde a ful god ore —	
	Datheit wo ne smite sore!"	
	"Ya! leve, ya!" quod Roberd sone,	<i>Cursed be [the one] who</i>
	"We haven ful god lith of the mone."	<i>my good boy</i>
1890	Roberd grop a staf strong and gret,	<i>good light; moon</i>
	That mouthe ful wel bere a net,	<i>grabbed</i>
	And Willam Wendut grop a tre	<i>bear an ox</i>
	Mikel gretttere than his the,	
	And Bernard held his ax ful faste	<i>Much thicker; thigh</i>
1895	I seye was he nouthe the laste!	
	And lopen forth so he weren wode	<i>rushed; as; frenzied</i>
	To the laddes ther he stode,	
	And yaf hem wundes swithe grete;	
	Ther mithe men wel se boyes bete,	<i>knaves</i>
1900	And ribbes in here sides breke	
	And Havelok on hem wel wreke.	<i>avenged</i>
	He broken armes, he broken knes,	<i>legs; thighs</i>
	He broken shankes, he broken thes.	<i>caused; run down</i>
	He dide the blod there renne dune	
1905	To the fet rith fro the crune,	<i>feet; crown</i>
	For was ther spared heved non.	<i>not one head</i>
	He leyden on hevedes ful god won,	<i>quite a number</i>
	And made croune breke and crake	<i>crowns</i>
	Of the broune and of the blake.	<i>dark; white (OE blāc)</i>
1910	He maden here backes al so bloute	<i>be beaten soft</i>
	Als here wombes and made hem rowte	<i>As; stomachs; roar</i>
	Als he weren kradelbarnes —	<i>babies</i>
	So dos the child that moder tharnes.	<i>loses its mother</i>
	Datheit the recke! For he it servede.	<i>ruckus; they deserved it</i>
1915	Hwat dide he thore? Weren he werewed.	<i>they; mauled</i>

Havelok the Dane

	So longe haveden he but and bet With neves under hernes set That of tho sixti men and on Ne wente ther awey lives non.	<i>thrust; hit fists; brains sixty-one No one</i>
1920	On the morwen, hwan it was day, Ilc on other wirwed lay Als it were dogges that weren henged; And summe leye in dikes slenget,	<i>mangled</i>
	And summe in gripes bi the her	<i>wretches</i>
1925	Drawen ware and laten ther. Sket cam tiding intil Ubbe That Havelok havede with a clubbe Of hise slawen sixti and on	<i>ditches; slung trenches; hair left</i>
	Sergaunz, the beste that mihten gon.	<i>Quickly; news to</i>
1930	"Deus," quoth Ubbe, "Hwat may this be? Betere is I nime myself and se That this baret on hwat is wold	<i>Men-at-arms; might have been go</i>
	Thanne I sende yunge or old; For yif I sende him unto,	<i>what this disturbance means</i>
1935	I wene men sholde him shame do, And that ne wolde ich for no thing. I love him wel, bi Heveneking —	<i>I would prefer</i>
	Me wore levele I wore lame Thanne men dide him ani shame	
1940	Or tok or onne handes leyde Unornelike or shame seyde."	<i>Roughly lept; horse nimbly</i>
	He lep up on a stede lith, And with him mani a noble knith,	
	And ferde forth unto the tun,	<i>town</i>
1945	And dide calle Bernard Brun Ut of his hus wan he ther cam;	
	And Bernard sone ageyn nam,	<i>called</i>
	Al to-tused and al to-torn,	<i>cut up; torn to pieces</i>
	Ner al so naked so he was born	<i>as</i>
1950	And al to-brised, bac and the. Quoth Ubbe, "Bernard, hwat is thee?	<i>bruised; thigh</i>
	Hwo haves thee thus ille maked,	<i>what is wrong with you</i>
	Thus to-riven and al mad naked?"	<i>Who; treated torn to pieces</i>

Havelok the Dane

	"Louerd, merci," quot he sone,	
1955	"Tonicht, al so ros the mone, Comen her mo than sixti theves With lokene copes and wide sleves, Me for to robban and to pine, And for to drepe me and mine.	<i>as the moon rose</i> <i>fastened cloaks</i> <i>torment</i> <i>kill</i> <i>quickly</i>
1960	Mi dore he broken up ful sket, And wolde me binden hond and fet. Wan the godemen that sawe, Havelok and he that bi the wowe Leye, he stirten up sone onon	<i>people</i> <i>wall</i> <i>right away</i> <i>grabbed</i>
1965	And summe grop tre and sum grop ston And drive hem ut, thei he weren crus, So dogges ut of milne-hous. Havelok grop the dore-tre, And a dint he slow hem thre.	<i>out; though they were fierce</i> <i>As; mill</i> <i>with one stroke</i>
1970	He is the beste man at nede That everemar shal ride stede — Als helpe God, bi mine wone A thousand men his he worth one! Yif he ne were, ich were now ded —	<i>in time of need</i> <i>in my opinion</i> <i>alone</i> <i>If it were not for him</i>
1975	So have ich don mi soule red! But it is of him mikel sinne: He maden him swilke woundes thrinne That of the altherlest wounde Were a stede brought to grunde.	<i>my own soul's counsel</i> <i>harm</i> <i>such; therein</i> <i>very least</i> <i>horse; brought down</i>
1980	He haves a wunde in the side With a gleyve ful unride; And he haves on thoru his arum Ther of is full mikel harum; And he haves on thoru his the —	<i>sword; very huge</i> <i>has one through; arm</i> <i>harm</i> <i>one; thigh</i>
1985	The unrideste that men may se. And othe wundes haves he stronge, Mo than twenti, swithe longe. But sithen he havede lauth the sor Of the wundes, was nevere bor	<i>most enormous</i> <i>other</i> <i>severe</i> <i>since; felt; pain</i> <i>boar</i>
1990	That so fauth, so he fauth thanne! Was non that havede the hernepanne So hard that he ne dede al to-cruhsse	<i>fought</i> <i>brain-pan (skull)</i> <i>utterly crush</i>

Havelok the Dane

	And al to-shivere and al to-frusshē. He folwede hem so hund dos hare —	<i>shiver; smash as a hound does</i>
1995	Datheyt on he wolde spare, That ne made hem everilkon Ligge stille so doth the ston. And ther nis he nouth to frie For other sholde he make hem lye	<i>A curse every Lie; as he is not to be blamed either</i>
2000	Ded, or thei him havede slawen, Or al to-hewen or al to-drawen.	<i>killed</i>
	"Louerd, havi nomore plith Of that ich was grethed tonith. Thus wolde the theves me have reft; But, God thank, he havenet sure keft! But it is of him mikel scathe — I woth that he bes ded ful rathe."	<i>I have; harm troubled robbed they have certainly paid for it know; will be soon dead</i>
2005	Quoth Ubbe, "Bernard, seyst thou soth?" "Ya, sire, that I ne leye o tooth! Yif I, louerd, a word leye, Tomorwen do me hengen heye." The burgeys that ther bi stode thore Grundlike and grete othes swore, Little and mikle, yunge and holde,	<i>truth lie through my teeth [should] tell a lie hang citizens; stood by Hearty; solemn old</i>
2010	That was soth that Bernard tolde — Soth was that he wolden him bynde, And trusse al that he mithen fynde Of hise in arke or in kiste That he mouthe in seckes thriste.	<i>carry off coffer; chest might in sacks thrust</i>
2015	"Louerd, he haveden al awey born His thing, and himself al to-torn, But als God self barw him wel, That he ne tinte no catel. Hwo mithe so mani stonde ageyn	<i>possessions; torn apart himself preserved lost no possessions</i>
2020	Bi nither-tale, knith or swein? He weren bi tale sixti and ten — Starke laddes, stalworthi men, And on the mayster of hem alle, That was the name Griffin Galle.	<i>Who; stand up against nighttime tally Strong one Who was named</i>
2025		

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 2030 | Hwo mouthe ageyn so mani stonde,
But als this man of ferne londe
Haveth hem slawen with a tre?
Mikel joie have he!
God yeve him mikel god to welde, | <i>far away</i>
<i>killed; beam</i> |
| 2035 | Bothe in tun and ek in felde:
Wel is set the mete he etes."
Quoth Ubbe, "Doth him swithe fete,
That I mouthe his woundes se,
If that he mouthen holed be; | <i>possessions to control</i>
<i>town; country</i>
<i>spent; food</i>
<i>Fetch him quickly</i> |
| 2040 | For if he mouthe covere yet
And gangen wel upon hiset,
Miself shal dubben him to knith,
Forthi that he is so with.
And yif he livede, tho foule theves, | <i>might be made whole</i>
<i>recover</i>
<i>go</i> |
| 2045 | That weren of Kaym kin and Eves,
He sholden hange bi the necke —
Of here ded datheit wo recke,
Hwan he yeden thus on nithes
Tobinde bothe burgmen and knithes! | <i>Because</i>
<i>those</i>
<i>Cain's</i>
<i>They</i>
<i>their death cursed</i> |
| 2050 | For bynderes love ich neveremo —
Of hem ne yeve ich nouht a slo." | <i>Since; went; at night</i>
<i>citizens</i>
<i>outlaws; more</i>
<i>sloeberry (i.e., I do not care)</i> |
| Havelok was bifore Ubbe browth,
That havede for him ful mikel thouth
And mikel sorwe in his herte
For hise wundes, that we so smerte. | | <i>brought</i>
<i>concern</i>

<i>were so severe</i> |
| 2055 | But hwan his wundes weren shewed,
And a leche havede knawed
That he hem mouthe ful wel hele,
Wel make him gange and ful wel mele, | <i>examined</i>
<i>doctor; determined</i>
<i>he (the doctor)</i>
<i>walk; talk</i> |
| 2060 | And wel a palefrey bistride,
And wel upon a stede ride,
Tho let Ubbe al his care
And al his sorwe over fare, | <i>sit on a palfrey</i>
<i>charger</i>
<i>Then Ubbe put aside</i>
<i>pass over</i> |
| 2065 | And seyde, "Cum now forth with me,
And Goldeboru, thi wif, with thee,
And thine serjaunz alle thre, | <i>men-at-arms</i> |

Havelok the Dane

	For now wile I youre warant be:	guarantee
	Wile I non of here frend	their friends
	That thu slowe with thin hend	
2070	Moucte wayte thee to slo Also thou gange to and fro. I shal lene thee a bowr That is up in the heye tour, Til thou mowe ful wel go	wait [in ambush] go loan; room high tower may; get around
2075	And wel ben hol of al thi wo. It ne shal nothing ben bitwene Thi bowr and min, al so I wene, But a fayr firrene wowe — Speke I loude or spek I lowe,	healed
2080	Thou shalt ful wel heren me, And than thu wilt thou shalt me se. A rof shal hile us bothe o nith, That none of mine, clerk ne knith, No sholen thi wif no shame bede	firwood wall whenever you want cover; at night
2085	No more than min, so God me rede!"	offer; cause counsel
	He dide unto the borw bringe Sone anon, al with joiinge, His wif and his sergaunz thre, The beste men that mouthe be.	rejoicing men-at-arms
2090	The first nith he lay ther inne, Hise wif and his serganz thrinne, Aboute the middel of the nith Wok Ubbe and saw a mikel lith In the bowr thar Havelok lay	three
2095	Al so brith so it were day.	Woke room where As bright
	" <i>Deus!</i> " quoth Ubbe, "Hwat may this be? Betere is I go miself and se Hwether he sitten now and wesseylen, Or ani sotshipe to deyle,	is partying
2100	This tid nithes also foles; Than birthe men casten hem in poles Or in a grip, or in the fen — Now ne sitten none but wicke men,	foolishness; take part in time of night it behooves; pools ditch; mud

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 2105 | Glotuns, revres, or wicke theves,
Bi Crist that alle folk onne leves!" | <i>robbers
believe in</i> |
| He stod and totede in at a bord
Her he spak anilepi word
And saw hem slepen faste ilkon
And lye stille so the ston;

2110 And saw al that mikel lith
Fro Havelok cam that was so brith.
Of his mouth it com il del —
That was he war ful swithe wel.
<i>"Deus," quoth he, "Hwat may this mene!"</i> | | <i>peered in
spoke a single</i> |
| 2115 | He calde bothe arwe men and kene,
Knithes and serganz swithe sleie,
Mo than an hundred, withuten leye,
And bad hem alle comen and se
Hwat that selcuth mithe be. | <i>called; shy; bold
cunning
More; lie</i> |
| 2120 | Als the knithes were comen alle,
Ther Havelok lay ut of the halle,
So stod ut of his mouth a glem,
Rith al swilk so the sunne-bem,
That al so lith was thare, bi hevene, | <i>marvel
When
out
issued from; gleam
Just like</i> |
| 2125 | So ther brenden serges sevne
And an hundred serges ok
That durste I sweren on a book!
He slepen faste, alle five,
So he weren brouth of live; | <i>As if seven candles burned
also
they dared
soundly
As if; dead</i> |
| 2130 | And Havelok lay on his lift side,
In his armes his brithe bride:
Bi the pappes he leyen naked —
So faire two weren nevere maked
In a bed to lyen samen. | <i>left
Down to the breast</i> |
| 2135 | The knithes thouth of hem god gamen,
Hem for to shewe and loken to.
Rith al so he stoden alle so,
And his bac was toward hem wend,
So weren he war of a croiz ful gent | <i>together
sport
observe
Just as
turned</i> |
| 2140 | On his right shuldre swithe brith,
Brithter than gold ageyn the lith, | <i>cross
so bright</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- So that he wiste, heye and lowe,
That it was kunrik that he sawe.
It sparkede and ful brith shon
2145 So doth the gode charbuncle ston
That men see mouthe se by the lith
A peni chesen, so was it brith.
Thanne bihelden he him faste,
So that he knewen at the laste
2150 That he was Birkabeynes sone,
That was here king, that was hem wone
Wel to yeme and wel were
Ageynes uten-laddes here —
“For it was nevere yet a brother
2155 In al Denemark so lich another,
So this man, that is so fayr,
Als Birkabeyn; he is hise eyr.”
- He fallen sone at hise fet.
Was non of hem that he ne gret —
2160 Of joye he weren alle so fawen
So he him haveden of erthe drawen.
Hise fet he kisten an hundred sythes —
The tos, the nayles, and the lithes —
So that he bigan to wakne
2165 And wit hem ful sore to blakne,
For he wende he wolden him slo,
Or elles binde him and do wo.
- Quoth Ubbe, “Louerd, ne dred thee nowth,
Me thinkes that I se thi thouth.
2170 Dere sone, wel is me
That I thee with eyn se.
Manred, louerd, bede I thee —
Thi man auht I ful wel to be;
For thu art comen of Birkabeyn,
2175 That havede mani knith and sweyn,
And so shalt thou, louerd, have:
Thou thou be yet a ful yung knave
Thou shalt be King of al Denemark —
- knew
mark of exalted birth
sparkled
As

penny to pick out (choose)

Who; their; [to] them wont
govern; protect
foreign army
there was
like
As
As; his heir

They fell
greeted
glad
As if; risen from the grave
times
tips

go blank (become pale)
they

Homage; offer

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | Was ther inne never non so stark. | <i>strong [as you]</i> |
| 2180 | Tomorwen shaltru manrede take
Of the brune and of the blake,
Of alle that aren in this tun,
Bothe of erl and of barun,
And of dreng and of thayn
And of knith and of sweyn. | <i>swear fealty</i>
<i>dark; light</i>
<i>town (fortified place)</i> |
| 2185 | And so shaltru ben mad knith
Wit blisse, for thou art so with." | <i>retainer; vassal</i> |
| | Tho was Havelok swithe blithe,
And thankede God ful fele sithe. | <i>very glad</i>
<i>many times</i> |
| 2190 | On the morwen, wan it was lith,
And gon was thisternesse of the nith,
Ubbe dide upon a stede
A ladde lepe, and thider bede
Erles, barouns, drenges, theynes, | <i>darkness; night</i> |
| 2195 | Klerkes, knithes, burgeys, sweynes,
That he sholden comen anon
Biforen him sone everilkon,
Al so he loven here lives
And here children and here wives. | <i>vassals, thanes</i>
<i>citizens</i> |
| 2200 | His bode ne durste he non atsitte
That he ne neme for to wite,
Sone hwat wolde the justise;
And bigan anon to rise
And seyde sone, "Lithes me, | <i>command; refuse</i>
<i>went; know</i>
<i>wanted</i> |
| 2205 | Alle samen, theu and fre,
A thing ich wile you here shauwe
That ye alle ful wel knawe.
Ye witen wel that al this lond
Was in Birkabeynes hond | <i>Listen to me</i>
<i>together, slave; noble</i> |
| 2210 | The day that he was quic and ded,
And how that he, bi youre red
Bitauhte hise children thre
Godard to yeme, and al his fe.
Havelok his sone he him tauhte | <i>advice</i>
<i>Entrusted</i>
<i>protect; property</i> |
| 2215 | And hise two douhters and al his auhte. | <i>possessions</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- Alle herden ye him swere
 On bok and on messe gere
 That he shulde yemen hem wel,
 Withuten lac, withuten tel.
vestments
protect
Without fault; deceit (reproach)
- 2220 He let his oth all overgo —
 Evere wurthe him yvel and wo!
 For the maydnes here lif
 Refte he bothen with a knif,
 And him shulde ok have slawen —
oath he disregarded
become him evil
- 2225 The knif was at his herte drawen.
 But God him wolde wel have save:
 He havede rewnesse of the knave
 So that he with his hend
 Ne drop him nouth, that sori fend!
pity; boy
hands
- 2230 But sone dide he a fishere
 Swithe grete othes swere,
 That he sholde drenchen him
 In the se, that was ful brim.
 Hwan Grim saw that he was so fayr,
killed; sorry fiend (villain)
- 2235 And wiste he was the rith eir,
 Fro Denemark ful sone he fledde
 Intil Englond and ther him fedde
 Mani winter that til this day
 Haves he ben fed and fostred ay.
forced; fisherman

drown
wild
- 2240 Lokes hware he stondes her!
 In al this werd ne haves he per —
 Non so fayr, ne non so long,
 Ne non so mikel, ne non so strong.
 In this middelerd nis no knith
brought up
Look
world; peer
tall
great
earth
- 2245 Half so strong ne half so with.
 Bes of him ful glad and blithe,
 And cometh alle hider swithe,
 Manrede youre louerd for to make,
 Bothe brune and the blake —
Be

Homage to
- 2250 I shal miself do first the gamen
 And ye sithen alle samen.”
ceremonial honor
together

Havelok the Dane

	O knes ful fayre he him sette — Mouthe nothing him ther fro lette, And bicam is man rith thare, That alle sawen that there ware.	<i>On; very Might; from that prevent became his; there were</i>
2255	After him stirt up laddes ten And bicomen hisse men, And sithen everilk a baroun That evere weren in al that toun,	<i>each</i>
2260	And sithen drenges, and sithen thaynes And sithen knithes, and sithen sweynes; So that, or that day was gon, In al the tun ne was nouth on	<i>servants before; done not one</i>
2265	That it ne was his man bicomen — Manrede of alle havede he nomen.	<i>Oaths of loyalty; they took</i>
	Hwan he havede of hem alle Manrede taken in the halle, Grundlike dide he hem swere That he sholden him god feyth bere	<i>Fealty Solemnly faith</i>
2270	Ageynes alle that woren on live; Ther-yen ne wolde never on strive, That he ne maden sone that oth — Riche and poure, lef and loth.	<i>Towards against that never a one would oppose</i>
	Hwan that was maked, sone he sende Ubbe writes fer and hende,	<i>writs far and near governed</i>
2275	After alle that castel yemedē, Burwes, tunes, sibbe an fremde That thider sholden comen swithe Til him and heren tithandes blithe	<i>siblings and kinsmen immediately To; good news</i>
2280	That he hem alle shulde telle. Of hem ne wolde nevere on dwelle, That he ne come sone plattinde; Hwo hors ne havede, com gangande.	<i>delay hurrying</i>
	So that withinne a fourtenthe	<i>Whoever had no horse; walking fortnight (two weeks)</i>
2285	In al Denemark ne was no knith, Ne constable, ne shireve, That com of Adam and of Eve, That he ne com biforn sire Ubbe —	<i>Sheriff</i>

Havelok the Dane

	He dredden him so thef doth clubbe.	<i>They feared; as thief</i>
2290	Hwan he haveden alle the king gret And he weren alle dun-set, Tho seyde Ubbe, "Lokes here Ure louerd swithe dere, That shal ben king of al the lond	<i>they; greeted</i> <i>seated</i> <i>Look</i> <i>Our</i>
2295	And have us alle under hond, For he is Birkabeynes sone, The king that was umbe stonde wone Us for to yemen and wel were With sharp swerd and longe spere.	<i>in control</i>
2300	Lokes now, hw he is fayr: Sikerlike he is hise eyr. Falles alle to his fet — Bcomes hise men ful sket."	<i>formerly accustomed</i> <i>govern; defend</i>
	He weren for Ubbe swithe adrad	<i>Surely; heir</i>
2305	And dide sone al that he bad. And yet he deden sumdel more: O bok ful grundlike he swore That he sholde with him halde,	<i>quickly</i>
	Bothe ageynes stille and bolde	<i>On; gravely</i>
2310	That evere wolde his bodi dere. That dide he hem o boke swere.	<i>remain loyal</i> <i>timid</i> <i>harm</i>
	Hwan he havede manrede and oth Taken of lef and of loth, Ubbe dubbede him to knith	<i>dear ones; hostile ones</i>
2315	With a swerd ful swithe brith, And the folk of al the lond Bitauhte him al in his hond, The cunnriche everil del	<i>Entrusted them</i>
	And made him king heylike and wel.	<i>kingdom</i>
2320	Hwan he was king, ther mouthe men se The moste joye that mouhte be — Buttinge with sharpe speres, Skirming with talevaces that men beres,	<i>solemnly</i>
	Wrastling with laddes, putting of ston,	<i>Thrusting</i>
2325	Harping and piping, ful god won, Leyk of mine, of hasard ok,	<i>Fencing; swords</i> <i>shot-putting</i> <i>a great amount</i> <i>Game of backgammon; dice also</i>

Havelok the Dane

- Romanz reding on the bok.
 Ther mouthe men here the gestes singe,
 The glewmen on the tabour dinge. *tales*
 2330 Ther moutthe men se the boles beyte,
 And the bores, with hundes teyte. *minstrels; drum beat*
 Tho mouhte men se everil glew;
 Ther mouthe men se hw grim grew — *bulls baited*
 Was nevere yete joye more *dogs lively*
 2335 In al this werd than tho was thore. *every type of sport*
 Ther was so mikel yeft of clothes
 That, thou I swore you grete othes,
 I ne wore nouth ther of trod. *excitement*
 That may I ful wel swere, bi God! *believed*
 2340 There was swithe gode metes
 And of wyn that men fer fetes,
 Rith al so mik and gret plenté
 So it were water of the se. *wine; bring from far away*
 The feste fourti dawes sat — *much; abundant*
 2345 So riche was nevere non so that.
 The king made Roberd there knith,
 That was ful strong and ful with,
 And Willam Wendut hec, his brother,
 And Huwe Raven, that was that other,
 2350 And made hem barouns alle thre,
 And yaf hem lond and other fe,
 So mikel that ilker twenti knihtes
 Havede of genge, dayes and nithes. *feast; days lasted*
 also
Had in his company
 Hwan that feste was al don,
 2355 A thousand knihtes ful wel o bon *equipped*
 Withheld the king with him to lede,
 That ilkan havede ful god stede,
 Helm and sheld, and brinie brith,
 And al the wepne that fel to knith. *that each one had*
 2360 With hem ek five thousand gode
 Sergaunz that weren to fyht wode *coat of mail*
 Withheld he al of his genge — *were appropriate*
 Wile I namore the storie lenge.
 Yet hwan he havede of al the lond *good*
 eager
 company
 lengthen

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 2365 | The casteles alle in his hond,
And conestables don therinne,
He swor he ne sholde never blinne
Til that he were of Godard wreken,
That ich have of ofte speken. | <i>castle wardens; placed</i>
<i>stop</i>
<i>avenged</i> |
| 2370 | Half hundred knithes dede he calle,
And hise fif thusand sergaunz alle,
And dide sweren on the bok
Sone, and on the auter ok,
That he ne sholde nevere blinne, | <i>altar also</i>
<i>stop</i> |
| 2375 | Ne for love ne for sinne,
Til that he haveden Godard funde
And brouth biforn him faste bunde. | <i>bound</i> |
| Thanne he haveden swor this oth,
Ne leten he nouth, for lef ne loth,
That he foren swithe rathe
Ther he was, unto the pathe
Ther he yet on hunting for,
With mikel genge and swithe stor.
Robert, that was of all the ferd | | <i>When they; sworn</i>
<i>went very quickly</i> |
| 2380 | Mayster, girt was wit a swerd,
And sat upon a ful god stede,
That under him rith wolde wede.
He was the firste that with Godard | <i>strong retainers; very proud</i>
<i>army</i> |
| 2385 | Spak, and seyde, "Hede, cavenard!
Wat dos thu here at this pathe?
Cum to the king swithe and rathe! | <i>would gallop powerfully</i>
<i>Halt, villain</i> |
| 2390 | That sendes he thee word and bedes,
That thu thenke what thou him dedes
Whan thu reftes with a knif
Hise sistres here lif | <i>soon</i>
<i>orders</i> |
| 2395 | And sithen bede thou in the se
Drenchen him — that herde he!
He is to thee swithe grim;
Cum nu swithe unto him | <i>deprived</i>
<i>their lives</i>
<i>ordered</i> |
| 2400 | That king is of this kunerike,
Thou fulle man, thou wicke swike! | <i>angry</i>
<i>kingdom</i>
<i>traitor</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- And he shal yelde thee thy mede,
Bi Crist that wolde on Rode blede!" reward
Cross
- 2405 Hwan Godard herde that he ther thrette,
With the neve he Robert sette fist; struck
Biforn the teth a dint ful strong. teeth; blow
And Robert kipt ut a knif long whipped out
And smot him thoru the rith arum — arm
Ther of was ful litel harum! harm
- 2410 Hwan his folk that saw and herde,
Hwou Robert with here louerd ferde, their lord fared
He haveden him wel ner browt of live, They [would] have; murdered
Ne weren his two brethren and othre five If it were not for
Slowen of here laddes ten.
- 2415 Of Godardes altherbeste men.
Hwan the othre sawen that, he fledden, very best
And Godard swithe loude gredde:
"Mine knithes, hwat do ye?
Sule ye thusgate fro me fle? others; they shouted
- 2420 in this way
Ich have you fed and yet shal fede —
Helpe me nw in this nede difficulty
And late ye nouth mi bodi spille,
Ne Havelok don of me hise wille!
- 2425 Yif ye it do, ye do you shame
And bringeth youself in mikel blame!" allow; destroy
Hwan he that herden, he wenten ageyn,
And slowen a knit and a sweyn yourselves
Of the kinges ounen men, dishonor
And woundeden abuten ten. they; returned
- 2430 knight
The kinges men, hwan he that sawe, own
Scuten on hem, heye and lowe, yourselves
And everilk fot of hem he slowe, everyone
But Godard one, that he flowe, alone whom he flayed
So the thef men dos henge, Like
- 2435 Or hund men shole in dike slenge. hound; ditch sling
He bunden him ful swithe faste,
Hwil the bondes wolden laste,
That he rored als a bole roared; bull

Havelok the Dane

	That wore parred in an hole	confined
2440	With dogges forto bite and beite.	bait
	Were the bondes nouth to leite —	not hard to find
	He bounden him so fele sore	<i>They; very sorely</i>
	That he gan crien Godes ore,	<i>plead for; grace</i>
	That he sholde of his hend plette;	<i>cut off</i>
2445	Wolden he nouht ther fore lette	<i>stop</i>
	That he ne bounden hond and fet.	
	Datheit that on that ther fore let!	<i>Cursed be the one who hinders any of it</i>
	But dunten him so man doth bere	
	And keste him on a scabbed mere,	
2450	Hise nese went unto the crice.	
	So ledden he that ful swike	<i>threw; mangy mare</i>
	Til he biforn Havelok was brouth,	<i>nose; arse</i>
	That he havede ful wo wrowht,	<i>they led; traitor</i>
	Bothe with hungre and with cold	
2455	Or he were twel winter old,	
	And with mani hevi swink,	<i>Before; twelve</i>
	With poure mete and feble drink,	<i>much; labor</i>
	And swithe wikke clothes,	<i>bad</i>
	For al hise manie grete othes.	
2460	Nu beyes he his holde blame:	<i>pays for; guilt</i>
	Old sinne makes newe shame!	
	Wan he was so shamelike	
	Brouth biforn the king, the fule swike!	<i>When</i>
	The king dede Ubbe swithe calle	<i>soul traitor</i>
2465	Hise erles and hise barouns alle,	
	Dreng and thein, burgeis and knith,	<i>Vassal; thane</i>
	And bad he sholden demen him rith,	<i>judge</i>
	For he knew the swike dam;	<i>they; treacherous fellow</i>
	Everil del God was him gram!	<i>In every way; [with] him angry</i>
2470	He setten hem dun bi the wawe,	<i>They set themselves; wall</i>
	Riche and pouere, heye and lowe,	
	The helde men and ek the grom,	<i>old; young</i>
	And made ther the rithe dom	<i>judgment</i>
	And seyden unto the king anon,	
2475	That stille sat so the ston:	
	"We deme that he be al quic flauen	<i>slayed alive</i>
	And sithen to the galwes drawe	<i>then</i>

Havelok the Dane

	At this foule mere tayl,	<i>mare's</i>
	Thoru his fet a ful strong nayl,	
2480	And thore ben henged wit two feteres And thare be writen thise leteres: 'This is the swike that wende wel The king have reft the lond ilk del, And hise sistres with a knif Bothe refte here lif.'	<i>chains</i>
	This writ shal henge bi him thare. The dom is demd — seye we namore."	<i>thought</i>
	Hwan the dom was demd and give, And he was wit the prestes shrive,	<i>robbed of; every par-</i>
2490	And it ne mouhte ben non other, Ne for fader ne for brother, But that he sholde tharne lif, Sket cam a ladde with a knif And bigan rith at the toe	<i>absolved</i>
	For to ritte and for to flo;	<i>lose</i>
	And he bigan tho for to rore So it were grim or gore, That men mithe thethen a mile Here him rore, that fule file!	<i>Quickly</i>
2495	2500	Because; gory <i>from there</i>
	The ladde ne let nowith forthi, They he criede, "Merci! Merci!" That ne flow him everil del With knif mad of grunden stel.	<i>cut; flay</i>
	Thei garte bringe the mere sone,	<i>cry out (roar)</i>
2505	Skabbed and ful ivele o bone, And bunden him rith at hire tayl With a rop of an old seyl And drownen him unto the galwes,	<i>Because; gory</i>
	Nouth bi the gate but over the falwes,	<i>from there</i>
2510	And henge him thore bi the hals — Datheit hwo recke: he was fals!	<i>Hear; foul wretch</i>
		<i>stopped no wit</i>
		<i>Although</i>
		<i>flayed him every bit</i>
		<i>had prepared to bring the mare</i>
		<i>infirm</i>
		<i>sail</i>
		<i>dragged</i>
		<i>Not; roadway; fields</i>
		<i>neck</i>
		<i>Cursed be any who cares</i>
	Thanne he was ded, that Sathanas, Sket was seyzed al that his was In the kinges hand ilk del —	<i>Quickly; seized</i>
2515	Lond and lith and other catel —	<i>every bit</i>
		<i>Land; estates; property</i>

Havelok the Dane

	And the king ful sone it yaf Ubbe in the hond, wit a fayr staf, And seyde, "Her ich sayse thee In al the lond, in al the fe . . ."	gave <i>i.e., into Ubbe's hands</i> <i>invest</i> <i>property (see note)</i>
2520	Tho swor Havelok he sholde make, Al for Grim, of monekes blake A priorie to serven in ay Jhesu Crist, til Domesday, For the god he havede him don	<i>black monks</i> <i>priory; forever</i> <i>Judgment Day</i>
2525	Hwil he was pouere and ivel o bon. And ther of held he wel his oth, For he it made, God it woth, In the tun ther Grim was graven, That of Grim yet haves the name.	<i>infirm of body</i> <i>promise</i> <i>knows</i> <i>buried</i>
2530	Of Grim bidde ich namore spelle. But wan Godrich herde telle, Of Cornwayle that was erl, That fule traytour, that mixed cherl! That Havelok King was of Denemark,	<i>offer; to tell</i> <i>when</i> <i>filthy man</i>
2535	And ferde with him, strong and stark Comen Engelond withinne, Engelond al for to winne; And that she that was so fayr, That was of Engelond rith eir,	<i>army</i> <i>into England</i> <i>[Goldeboru]</i> <i>rightful heir</i>
2540	Was comen up at Grimesbi, He was ful sorful and sori, And seyde, "Hwat shal me to rathe? Goddeth, I shal do slon hem bathe! I shal don hengen hem ful heye	<i>What is advisable for me to do</i> <i>have them both slain</i>
2545	So mote ich brouke my rith eie, But yif he of mi londe fle. Hwat! Wenden he deserite me?" He dide sone ferd ut bidde, That al that evere mouhte o stede	<i>enjoy</i> <i>Unless; out of</i> <i>Do they want to disinherit</i> <i>army called out</i> <i>might on horse</i>
2550	Ride or helm on heved bere, Brini on bac, and sheld and spere, Or ani other wepne bere, Hand-ax, sythe, gisarm, or spere, Or aunlaz and god long knif,	<i>helmet on head</i> <i>Coat of mail on back</i> <i>Battle axe, scythe, halberd</i> <i>dagger</i>

Havelok the Dane

2555	That als he lovede leme or lif, That they sholden comen him to, With ful god wepne yboren, so To Lincolne, ther he lay, Of Marz the seventente day,	limb <i>weapons; borne</i>
2560	So that he couthe hem god thank; And yif that ani were so rank That he thanne ne come anon, He swor bi Crist and by Seint Johan, That he sholde maken him thral,	March <i>could; well</i> <i>headstrong</i> <i>they</i>
2565	And al his offspring forth withal.	<i>slave</i> <i>forfeit</i>
	The Englishe that herde that, Was non that evere his bode sat; For he him dredde swithe sore, So runcy spore, and mikle more.	<i>command resisted</i> <i>they feared him</i> <i>As the nag [fears] the spur</i>
2570	At the day he come sone That he hem sette, ful wel o bone, To Lincolne with gode stedes, And al the wepne that knith ledes. Hwan he wore come, sket was the erl yare	<i>well-equipped</i> <i>warhorses</i> <i>weaponry; carries</i> <i>eager; to hasten</i>
2575	Ageynes Denshe men to fare, And seyde, "Lythes nw alle samen! Have ich gadred you for no gamen, But ich wile seyen you forthi. Lokes hware here at Grimesbi	<i>Danish; go</i> <i>Listen now</i> <i>gathered; play</i> <i>want to</i>
2580	Hise uten laddes here comen, And haves nu the priorie numen — Al that evere mithen he finde, He brenne kirkes and prestes binde; He stranglēth monkes and nunnes bothe —	<i>foreigners</i> <i>captured</i> <i>burns churches</i>
2585	Wat wile ye, frend, her-offe rede? Yif he regne thusgate longe, He moun us alle overgange, He moun us alle quic henge or slo, Or thral maken and do ful wo	<i>advise</i> <i>rules</i> <i>may; overcome</i> <i>hang alive or kill</i>
2590	Or elles reve us ure lives And ure children and ure wives. But dos nw als ich wile you lere,	<i>rob us of our</i> <i>teach</i>

Havelok the Dane

	Als ye wile be with me dere.	<i>Just as; faithful</i>
	Nimes nu swithe forth and rathe	<i>set; indeed</i>
2595	And helps me and yuself bathe, And slos upo the dogges swithe. For shal I nevere more be blithe, Ne hoseled ben ne of prest shriven Til that he ben of londe driven.	<i>both</i> <i>strike at; forcefully</i>
		<i>confessed; absolved</i>
		<i>off</i>
2600	Nime we swithe and do hem fle And folwes alle faste me! For ich am he of al the ferd That first shal slo with drawnen swerd. Datheyt hwo ne stonde faste	<i>Get going; make them flee</i>
		<i>follow</i>
		<i>army</i>
	Bi me hwil hise armes laste!"	<i>Cursed be any who do not</i>
	"Ye! lef, ye!" quoth the erl Gunter;	<i>dear one</i>
	"Ya!" quoth the Erl of Cestre, Reyner.	<i>Chester</i>
	And so dide alle that ther stode And stirte forth so he were wode.	<i>rushed; as if they; mad</i>
2610	Tho mouthe men se the brinies brihte On backes keste and lace rithe, The helmes heye on heved sette. To armes al so swithe plette That thei wore on a litel stunde	<i>Then</i>
		<i>thrown; straightened</i>
		<i>hurried</i>
		<i>time</i>
2615	Grethet als men mithe telle a pund, And lopen on stedes sone anon; And toward Grimesbi, ful god won, He foren softe bi the sti Til he come ney at Grimesbi.	<i>Equipped; count out a pound</i>
		<i>forcefully</i>
		<i>went quietly by the road</i>
		<i>near to</i>
2620	Havelok, that havede spired wel Of here fare, everil del, With all his ferd cam hem ageyn. Forbar he nother knith ne sweyn: The firste knith that he ther mette	<i>learned</i>
		<i>journey</i>
		<i>army; against them</i>
		<i>Spared</i>
2625	With the swerd so he him grette, For his heved of he plette — Wolde he nouth for sinne lette. Roberd saw that dint so hende — Wolde he nevere thethen wende,	<i>thus</i>
		<i>head struck off</i>
		<i>delay</i>
		<i>skillful</i>
2630	Til that he havede another slawen	<i>from there; go</i>

Havelok the Dane

- With the swerd he held ut drawnen.
 Willam Wendut his swerd ut drow,
 And the threddes so sore he slow
 That he made upon the feld
 2635 His lift arm fleye with the swerd.
- third
left
- Hewe Raven ne forgat nouth
 The swerd he havede thider brouth.
 He kipte it up, and smot ful sore
 An erl that he saw priken thore
 2640 Ful noblelike upon a stede,
 That with him wolde al quic wede.
 He smot him on the heved so
 That he the heved clef a two.
 And that bi the shudre blade
- raised
spurring [his horse]
- 2645 The sharpe swerd let wade
 Thoru the brest unto the herte;
 The dint bigan ful sore to smerte,
 That the erl fel dun anon
 Al so ded so ani ston.
- gallop
shoulder
pass
hurt
*as dead as
hesitate*
- 2650 Quoth Ubbe, "Nu dwelle ich to longe!"
 And let his stede sone gonge
 To Godrich, with a god spere,
 That he saw another bere;
 And smot Godrich and Godrich him,
- Bitterly
they
headfirst
they
Violently
- 2655 Hetelike with herte grim,
 So that he bothe felle dune
 To the erthe, first the croune.
 Thanne he wornen fallen dun bothen,
 Grundlike here swerdes he ut drowen,
- sweat
- 2660 That weren swithe sharp and gode,
 And fouhten so thei wornen wode
 That the swot ran fro the crune
 To the fet right there adune.
 Ther mouthe men se to knicthes bete
- two knights*
- 2665 Ayther on other dintes grete,
 So that with the altherlest dint
 Were al to-shivered a flint,
 So was bitwenen hem a fiht
- smallest
Would all be smashed to pieces*

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 2670 | Fro the morwen ner to the niht,
So that thei nouth ne blunne
Til that to sette bigan the sunne.
Tho yaf Godrich thorw the side
Ubbe a wunde ful unride,
So that thorw that ilke wounde | <i>ceased</i> |
| 2675 | Havede ben brouth to grunde
And his heved al of slawen,
Yif God ne were and Huwe Raven,
That drew him fro Godrich awey
And barw him so that ilke day. | <i>ugly</i>
<i>very</i>
<i>[He] would have</i>
<i>cut off</i>
<i>were not [there]</i>
<i>pulled</i>
<i>saved; very</i>
<i>before</i> |
| 2680 | But er he were fro Godrich drawen,
Ther were a thousind knihtes slawen
Bi bothe halve and mo ynowe,
Ther the ferdes togidere slowe,
Ther was swilk dreping of the folk | <i>sides; plenty more</i>
<i>armies; clashed</i>
<i>such killing</i>
<i>pool</i> |
| 2685 | That on the feld was nevere a polk
That it ne stod of blod so ful
That the strem ran intil the hul.
Tho tarst bigan Godrich to go
Upon the Danshe and faste to slo | <i>into the hollow (i.e., downhill)</i>
<i>Then first of all</i> |
| 2690 | And forthrit, also leun fares
That nevere kines best ne spares,
Thanne his gon, for he garte alle
The Denshe men biforn him falle.
He felde browne, he felde blake, | <i>as a lion goes</i>
<i>no kind [of] beast</i>
<i>[the lion] is gone; made</i> |
| 2695 | That he mouthe overtake.
Was nevere non that mouhte have
Hise dintes, noyther knith ne knave,
That he felde so dos the gres
Biforn the sythe that ful sharp es. | <i>survive</i> |
| 2700 | Hwan Havelok saw his folk so brittene
And his ferd so swithe littene,
He cam drivende upon a stede,
And bigan til him to grede,
And seyde, "Godrich, wat is thee, | <i>broken</i>
<i>very much reduced</i>
<i>charging</i>
<i>exhort</i> |
| 2705 | That thou fare thus with me
And mine gode knihtes slos?
Sikerlike, thou misgos! | <i>how is it with you</i>
<i>do</i>
<i>Certainly; do wrong</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | Thou wost ful wel, yif thu wilt wite, | understand |
| | That Athelwold thee dide site | set |
| 2710 | On knes and sweren on messe bok,
On caliz and on pateyn ok,
That thou hise douhter sholdest yelde,
Than she were wimman of elde,
Engelond everil del. | missal
<i>chalice; paten also</i>
<i>[to] his; yield</i>
<i>When; age</i>
<i>every part</i> |
| 2715 | Godrich the erl, thou wost it wel!
Do nu wel withuten fiht
Yeld hire the lond, for that is rith.
Wile ich forgive thee the lathe,
Al mi dede and al mi wrathe, | |
| 2720 | For I se thu art so with
And of thi bodi so god knith."
"That ne wile ich neveremo,"
Quoth erl Godrich, "for ich shal slo
Thee, and hire forhenge heye. | <i>your hatred</i>
<i>dead [companions]; anger</i>
<i>strong</i> |
| 2725 | I shal thirst ut thy rith eye
That thou loikes with on me,
But thu swithe hethen fle!"
He grop the swerd ut sone anon,
And hew on Havelok ful god won, | <i>hang high</i>
<i>thrust out</i> |
| 2730 | So that he clef his shield on two.
Hwan Havelok saw that shame do
His bodi ther biforn his ferd,
He drow ut sone his gode swerd,
And smote him so upon the crune | <i>forcefully</i>
<i>broke; in two</i> |
| 2735 | That Godrich fel to the erthe adune.
But Godrich stirt up swithe sket —
Lay ne nowth longe at hise fet —
And smot him on the sholdre so
That he dide thare undo | <i>army</i>
<i>quickly</i> |
| 2740 | Of his brinie ringes mo
Than that ich kan tellen fro,
And woundede him rith in the flesh,
That tendre was and swithe nesh,
So that the blod ran til his to. | <i>count up</i> |
| 2745 | Tho was Havelok swithe wo,
That he havede of him drawen | <i>soft</i>
<i>toe</i>
<i>distressed</i>
<i>[Godrich] should have from</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Blod and so sore him slawen. | wounded |
| | Hertelike til him he wente | Vehemently to |
| | And Godrich ther fulike shente, | fouilly injured |
| 2750 | For his swerd he hof up heye, | raised |
| | And the hand he dide of fleye | fly off |
| | That he smot him with so sore — | |
| | Hw mithe he don him shame more? | |
| | | |
| | Hwan he havede him so shamed, | When |
| 2755 | His hand of plat and ivale lamed, | cut off; wickedly |
| | He tok him sone bi the necke | |
| | Als a traitour, datheit who recke! | As |
| | And dide him binde and fetere wel | |
| | With gode feteres al of stel, | |
| 2760 | And to the quen he sende him, | |
| | That birde wel to him ben grim, | bride ought; angry |
| | And bad she sholde don him gete | have him guarded |
| | And that non ne sholde him bete, | beat |
| | Ne shame do, for he was knith, | |
| 2765 | Til knithes haveden demd him rith. | judged; appropriately |
| | Than the Englishe men that sawe, | saw that |
| | That thei wisten, heye and lawe, | knew; high and low |
| | That Goldeboru that was so fayr | |
| | Was of Engelond rith eyr, | rightful heir |
| 2770 | And that the king hire havede wedded, | |
| | And haveden been samen bedded, | |
| | He comen alle to crie "Merci," | They |
| | Unto the king at one cri, | in one voice |
| | And beden him sone manrede and oth | offered; homage |
| 2775 | That he ne sholden, for lef ne loth, | love; hate |
| | Nevermore ageyn him go, | |
| | Ne ride, for wel ne for wo. | for weal nor for woe |
| | | |
| | The king ne wolde nouth forsake | neglect |
| | That he ne shulde of hem take | take from them |
| 2780 | Manrede that he beden and ok | Homage; they offered; also |
| | Hold othes sweren on the bok. | Loyalty oaths |
| | But or bad he that thider were brouth | commanded |
| | The quen for hem swilk was his thouth | them |

Havelok the Dane

	For to se and forto shawe, Yif that he hire wolde knawe — Thoruth hem witen wolde he Yif that she aucte quen to be.	observe recognize understand oughi
2785	Sixe erles weren sone yare After hire for to fare.	eager go <i>set out immediately</i>
2790	He nomen onon and comen sone, And brouthen hire, that under mone In al the werd ne havede per Of hendeleik, fer ne ner. Hwan she was come thider, alle	peer <i>courtesy, far or near</i>
2795	The Englishe men bigunne falle O knes, and greten swithe sore, And seyden, "Levedi, Kristes ore And youres! We haven misdo mikel That we ayen you have be fikel,	on mercy <i>done much wrong</i> <i>against you have been disloyal</i>
2800	For Englond auhte for to ben Youres and we youre men. Is non of us, yung ne old, That he ne wot that Athelwold Was king of this kunerike	<i>ought to be</i> <i>Who does not know</i> <i>kingdom</i>
2805	And ye his eyr, and that the swike Haves it halden with mikel wronge — God leve him sone to honge!"	<i>traitor</i> <i>held</i> <i>grant; hang</i>
	Quot Havelok, "Hwan that ye it wite, Nu wile ich that ye dounے site; And after Godrich haves wrouht, That haves in sorwe himself brouth, Lokes that ye demen him rith, For dom ne spareth clerk ne knith, And sithen shal ich understande Of you, after lawe of londe, Manrede and holde othes bothe, Yif ye it wilan and ek rothe." Anon ther dune he hem sette, For non the dom ne durste lette And demden him to binden faste	<i>Since; understand</i> <i>according as; done</i> <i>Make sure; judge</i> <i>judgment</i> <i>Homage; loyalty oaths</i> <i>counsel</i> <i>no one; dared prevent</i> <i>judged</i>
2810		
2815		
2820		

Havelok the Dane

	Upon an asse swithe unwraste, Andelong, nouht overthwert, His nose went unto the stert And so to Lincolne lede,	<i>filthy</i> <i>Endwise; across</i> <i>turned; tail</i>
2825	Shamelike in wicke wede, And, hwan he come unto the borw, Shamelike ben led ther thoru, Bi southe the borw unto a grene,	<i>Shamefully in wretched clothes</i> <i>south of</i>
	That thare is yet, als I wene, And there be bunden til a stake, Abouten him ful gret fir make,	<i>still; think</i>
2830	And al to dust be brend rith there. And yet demden he ther more, Other swikes for to warne:	<i>ashes; burned</i> <i>traitors</i>
	That hise children sulde tharne Everemore that eritage That his was, for hise outrage.	<i>should lose</i> <i>heritage</i> <i>crime (outrage)</i>
	Hwan the dom was demd and seyd, Sket was the swike on the asse leyd,	<i>judgment</i>
2840	And led him til that ilke grene And brend til asken al bidene. Tho was Goldeboru ful blithe —	<i>to; very</i> <i>ashes; right away</i> <i>then</i>
	She thanked God fele sythe That the fule swike was brend	<i>many times</i> <i>burned</i>
2845	That wende wel hire bodi have shend; And seyde, "Nu is time to take Manrede of brune and of blake, That ich se ride and go, Nu ich am wreke of mi fo."	<i>intended; shamed</i> <i>brown</i> <i>Whom; walk</i> <i>avenged upon</i>
2850	Havelok anon manrede tok Of alle Englishe on the bok And dide hem grete othes swere That he sholden him god feyth bere Ageyn hem alle that woren lives	
2855	And that sholde ben born of wives.	<i>women</i>

Havelok the Dane

	Thanne he haveden sikernesse Taken of more and of lesse, Al at hise wille, so dide he calle The Erl of Cestre and hise men alle,	<i>surety from high and low (socially)</i>
2860	That was yung knith withuten wif, And seyde, "Sire erl, bi mi lif, And thou wile mi conseyl tro, Ful wel shal ich with thee do;	<i>Chester Who If; trust deal</i>
	For ich shal yeve thee to wive The fairest thing that is o live.	<i>alive</i>
2865	That is Gunnild of Grimesby, Grimes douther, bi Seint Davy, That me forth broute and wel fedde, And ut of Denemark with me fledde	<i>Grim's daughter brought up</i>
2870	Me for to burwe fro mi ded. Sikerlike, thoru his red, Have ich lived into this day — Blissed worthe his soule ay!	<i>rescue; from; death advice</i>
	I rede that thu hire take	<i>Blessed be; always command</i>
2875	And spuse and curteyse make, For she is fayr and she is fre, And al so hende so she may be. Ther tekene, she is wel with me;	<i>espouse noble</i>
	That shal ich ful wel shewe thee.	<i>as gracious as Moreover</i>
2880	For ich wile give thee a give That everemore, hwil ich live, For hire shal tu be with me dere, That wile ich that this folc al here."	<i>promise</i>
	The erl ne wolde nouth ageyn	<i>Because of; you shall</i>
2885	The king be, for knith ne sweyn Ne of the spusing seyen nay, But spusede that ilke day.	<i>marriage same</i>
	That spusinge was in god time maked, For it ne were nevere, clad ne naked,	
2890	In a thede samened two That cam togidere, livede so So they diden al here live: He geten saman sones five, That were the beste men at nede	<i>land united their lives They produced</i>

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 2895 | That mouthe ride on ani stede,
Hwan Gunnild was to Cestre brouth,
Havelok the gode ne forgat nouth
Bertram, that was the erles kok,
That he ne dide callen ok, | <i>earl's cook</i>
<i>also</i> |
| 2900 | And seyde, "Frend, so God me rede,
Nu shal tu have riche mede,
For wissing and thi gode dede
That tu me dides in ful gret nede.
For thanne I yede in mi cuvel | <i>reward</i>
<i>guidance</i> |
| 2905 | And ich ne havede bred ne sowel.
Ne I ne havede no catel,
Thou feddes and claddes me ful wel.
Have nu forthi of Cornwayle
The erldom ilk del, withuten fayle, | <i>cloak</i>
<i>sauce</i> |
| 2910 | And al the lond that Godrich held,
Bothe in towne and ek in feld;
And ther-to wile ich that thu spuse,
And fayre bring hire until huse,
Grimes douther, Levive the hende, | <i>clothes</i>
<i>for that reason</i> |
| 2915 | For thider shal she with thee wende.
Hire semes curteys for to be,
For she is fayr so flour on tre;
The hew is swilk in hire ler
So the rose in roser, | <i>marry</i>
<i>happily; to</i>
<i>gracious</i>
<i>go</i> |
| 2920 | Hwan it is fayre sprad ut newe,
Agyen the sunne brith and lewe."
And girde him sone with the swerd
Of the erldom, biforn his ferd,
And with his hond he made him knith, | <i>hue; face</i>
<i>As; rose bush</i>
<i>blossomed</i>
<i>fresh</i> |
| 2925 | And yaf him armes, for that was rith,
And dide him there sone wedde
Hire that was ful swete in bedde. | |
| 2930 | After that he spused wore,
Wolde the Erl nouth dwelle thore,
But sone nam until his lond
And seyded it al in his hond
And livede ther inne, he and his wif, | <i>were married</i>
<i>linger</i>
<i>went to</i>
<i>received</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- An hundred winter in god lif,
 And gaten mani children samen
 2935 And liveden ay in blisse and gamen.
 Hwan the maidens were spused bothe,
 Havelok anon bigan ful rathe
 His Denshe men to feste wel
 Wit riche landes and catel,
 2940 So that he weren alle riche,
 For he was large and nouth chiche.
- produced
forever; happiness
- Ther after sone, with his here,
 For he to Lundone for to bere
 Corune, so that it sawe
 2945 Henglishe ant Denshe, heye and lowe,
 Hwou he it bar with mikel pride,
 For his barnage that was unride.
- army
traveled; wear
Crown
and
How
barony; prolific
- The feste of his coruning
 Lastede with gret joying
 2950 Fourti dawes and sumdel mo.
 Tho bigunnen the Denshe to go
 Unto the king to aske leve;
 And he ne wolde hem nouth greve,
 For he saw that he wornen yare
 2955 Into Denemark for to fare;
 But gaf hem leve sone anon
 And bitauhte hem Seint Johan,
 And bad Ubbe, his justise,
 That he sholde on ilke wise
 2960 Denemark yeme and gete so
 That no pleynte come him to.
- at his coronation
- Then; Danes
permission to leave
- were eager
travel
- entrusted
magistrate
in every way
rule; good
complaint
- Hwan he wore parted alle samen,
 Havelok bilefte wit joye and gamen
 In Engelond and was ther-inne
 2965 Sixti winter king with winne,
 And Goldeboru Quen, that I wene
 So mikel love was hem bitwene
 That al the werd spak of hem two;
- they set out
stayed behind with
joy
world

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------------------|
| | He lovede hir and she him so | |
| 2970 | That neyther owe mithe be | <i>anywhere</i> |
| | Fro other, ne no joye se | <i>away from</i> |
| | But if he were togidere bothe. | <i>Unless; they</i> |
| | Nevere yete no weren he wrothe | <i>angry at each other</i> |
| | For here love was ay newe — | <i>their; always</i> |
| 2975 | Nevere yete wordes ne grewe | <i>anger</i> |
| | Bitwene hem hwar of ne lathe | <i>hostile</i> |
| | Mithe rise ne no wrathe. | <i>arise</i> |
| | He geten children hem bitwene | |
| | Sones and doughtres rith fivetene, | <i>precisely fifteen</i> |
| 2980 | Hwar-of the sones were kinges alle, | <i>Of whom</i> |
| | So wolde God it sholde bifalle, | |
| | And the doughtres alle quenes: | |
| | Him stondes wel that god child strenes! | <i>begets</i> |
| | Nu have ye herd the gest al thoru | <i>story; completely</i> |
| 2985 | Of Havelok and of Goldeboru — | |
| | Hw he weren bornen and hw fedde, | <i>How they</i> |
| | And hwou he wornen with wronge ledde | <i>wrongly</i> |
| | In here youthe with trecherie, | |
| | With tresoun, and with felonuye; | <i>evil</i> |
| 2990 | And hwou the swikes haveden tiht | <i>traitors; intended</i> |
| | Reven hem that was here rith, | <i>To rob them</i> |
| | And hwou he weren wreken wel, | |
| | Have ich seyd you everil del. | |
| | Forthi ich wolde biseken you | <i>Therefore; beseech</i> |
| 2995 | That haven herd the rim nu, | <i>rhyme now</i> |
| | That ilke of you, with gode wille, | |
| | Saye a Pater Noster stille | <i>quietly</i> |
| | For him that haveth the rym maked, | <i>rhyme</i> |
| | And ther-fore fele nihtes waked, | <i>kept awake</i> |
| 3000 | That Jesu Crist his soule bringe | <i>So that</i> |
| | Biforn his Fader at his endinge. | <i>Before; father</i> |

Amen

Notes

We have used the Laud MS (L) as base text, with occasional reference to the fragments found in C. Abbreviations: C: Cambridge Add. 4407; L: MS Laud 108; F&H: French and Hale; Ho: Holthausen; Ma: Madden; Sa: Sands; Si: Sisam; Sk: Skeat; Sm: Smithers

- 1–26 As in the other Middle English romances in this volume, *Havelok* begins with a formal exhortation to its audience. The convention, according to Sm derives from Old French epics and romances and consists of four parts: an exhortation to listen, a statement of subject, praise of the hero, and a prayer. Sa, on the other hand, links the poem to its cultural milieu: “Its Latin subtitle *Incipit vita Hauelok quondam rex anglie et denemarchie* must have matched some sort of popular realization that Englishmen of the North were in blood half-Scandinavian and that they just before the Conquest had actually been part of a dual kingdom of England and Denmark” (p. 55).
- 20 *Benedicamus Domino.* “Let us bless the Lord.” This is a verse in the Mass not often used in literature. The only other literary example known to Sm occurs in Philippe de Thaün’s *Bestaire*, in which a pearl is a symbol of Christ.
- 27–86 Sm notes these lines as an extensive example of a traditional eulogy of kings such as William the Conqueror and Henry I found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.
- 28 *That* refers to the king; thus, construe lines 27–30 as “It was a king in former days who in his time made good laws and upheld them; young people loved him, old people loved him.” Note the inverted sentence structure that emphasizes the object “him” twice by giving it syntactical priority.
- 31 *Dreng* and *thayn* are synonyms for a king’s vassals, though connotations may be distinct in other contexts, as Sa suggests when he defines a *dreng* in Northumbria at this time as “a tenant with military obligations” (p. 59).
- 46 *Wel fifty pund, I wot, or more.* This line is supplied by Ma and F&H. It does not appear in Sm. Ma conjectures this line and indicates that other such liberties have been taken in his edition, many of which Sk follows.

Notes

- 48 *In a male with or blac.* F&H read *with* as *hwit* and translate the term as *white*; the reversal of letters appears in other words, but is not consistent throughout the MS. F&H read the prolific *h*'s as "mannerisms in spelling," but it is more likely that the *h*'s signify aspiration and point to pronunciation for this dialect. F&H reckon the dialect to be North Midlands with strong Norse influence. Referring to the pouch as "with or black" could mean "white or off-white (pale)," which is a common meaning in ME for "blāc." See MED *blak* n. 6. See also note to line 311.
- 64 *Was non so bold louerd to Rome.* L: *non so bold lond to rome*. Sm emends *lond* to *louerd* for the sake of sense. Sk emends to: *Was non so bold [pe] lond to rome*, which makes sense too.
- 65 *upon his bringhe.* L: *upon his bringhe*. Sm emends to *upon his londe bringhe* ostensibly to connect the king's political expertise more definitively to his realm as well as to regularize the meter. Sk reads: *That durste upon his [menie] bringe*.
- 66 *Hunger ne here.* As noted by Sm, *hunger ne here* is an Old English alliterative phrase used three times by Wulfstan, an Old English writer of homilies.
- 69 *The.* L: *Pe*. F&H: *Pei*, "They hid themselves and kept themselves still."
- 74 *his soule hold.* Sm notes this as an unusual expression which occurs in *Ywain and Gawain* (line 887) where it refers to the widow's concern for the soul of her dead husband: *Upon his sawl was shoful helde*. Athelwold's loyalty to his own soul is not narcissistic, but virtuous.
- 79 The source for the passage is Psalm 146:9: "The Lord preserveth the stranger; he relieveth the fatherless and widow, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."
- 85 *Bute it were bi hire wille.* This distinguishes rape, which is punishable by medieval English law, from consensual sexual relations, though the issue is complicated in jurisprudence. The most complete articulation of rape laws is found in the Statutes of Westminster in the thirteenth century. Over time secular legislation conflated rape with abduction, shifting it from a crime done to a woman's body to a crime done against the peace of the king.
- 86 As F&H note "even up to the time of the Commonwealth, mutilation was a legal punishment; it was occasionally forbidden, but continued to be practiced" (p. 77).

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Public punishment such as flogging, drawing and quartering, and various forms of mutilation often depicted graphically by romancers were thought to be a deterrent to crime in real life.

- 87–90 Sm notes the recurrence of these four lines in the account of King Arthur in the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle of England*. He surmises that *Havelok* was the source for the chronicle repetition and not vice versa.
- 89 *folc ut lede*. The sense of *folc* is “army.”
- 92 *And lete him knawe of hise hand dede*. L: *And lete him of hise hand dede*. Sm notes that this is the “sole example” of the use of *hand-dede* in post-Conquest English. A relatively ancient word, it implied “violence” and sometimes “criminal violence,” or could mean “the actual perpetrator of a crime” and in Middle Dutch “one who perpetrates a criminal or violent act.” In *Havelok* the “imputation is of violence” (p. 86). Both Sm and Sk add a verb to this line after *him*, but disagree on what it should be. Sk, followed by F&H and Sa, adds *knawe*, as do we; Sm adds *shewe*.
- 94 To the victor belong the spoils. The victorious army carried off plunder, particularly valuable horses and armor. As F&H note, “the practice was deplored by moralists as unchristian, but is a matter of course in the romances” (p. 78).
- 109 *held*. L: *hel*. The emendation is universal.
- 115 *wel wiste*. L: *we wiste*. The emendation maintains the gravity of Athelwold’s perception. The ending consonant is frequently omitted for *wel* in the MS.
- 120 *Hw shal now my douhter fare*. L: *W shal nou mi douhter fare*. F&H add the consonant presumably to clarify the question.
- 135 *Therafter stronglike quaked*. F&H note the frequency with which the poet or scribe omits pronouns. They supply them in their edition as does Sk and Ho; Sm frequently does not. Sa regularizes as much as possible.
- 137 On the dying of a king F&H write: “When a king was dying, the great nobles hastened to the capital, either out of sympathy or a wish to maintain order and look after their interests in arranging for a successor. The romancers made a conventional scene of this” (p. 79). It is important to note that King Athelwold has no male heir to maintain the peace he has established.

Notes

- 139 Roxburgh, a fort on the Scottish border, was often contested by opposing armies and changed hands frequently. Dover, on the southeast coast of England, is famous for its “white cliffs.” Traveling from Roxburgh to Dover would mean traversing the whole length of England. See also line 265.
- 142 *ther he lay.* L: *þe he lay.* Sm and F&H supply the missing consonant. The omission of consonants in various words is a frequent occurrence throughout the MS and unrelated to the common practice of abbreviation.
- 154 *That He wolde turnen him.* L: *þat he turned him.* The subjunctive verb — *wolde* — is supplied by all editors.
- 158 Winchester was the Anglo-Saxon capital of England before the center of government was relocated in London. Important legislation in the poem, however, is enacted in Lincoln, the probable home of the poet.
- 160 *thank kan I you.* L: *þank kan you.* This is an example of the omission of pronouns by the poet and/or scribe.
- 174 *that she be wman of helde.* L: *þat she wman of helde.*
- 175 *And that she mowe hir yemen.* L: *And þa she mowe yemen.* Sk's emendation. F&H emend to: *And thaſt] she mowe [hit] yemen*, followed by Sa. Sm conjectures that the author wrote something like: *and þat she mowe hir-selwe welde.*
- 177 *Bi Crist and bi Seint Jon.* L: *Bi Crist and bi seint Jon.* Sm: *Bi Jesu Crist and bi seint Johan.* We have followed F&H here by returning to the MS reading.
- 185 *A wol fair cloth.* L: *A wol fair cloþ.* F&H: *A wel fair cloth.* Sm: *A wol fair cloth.* Sa: *a well fair cloth;* Sk: *a wel fair cloth;* Ho: *a wel fair cloth.* Though a majority of editors read the adjective to describe the beauty of the cloth, it could also modify wool as the cloth's base fabric. Also, there is a distinct rendering of *th* for the *p* in L.
- 188 F&H gloss *corporaus* as fine linen cloth. We have placed emphasis on its purpose rather than its fabric by glossing the term as *communion cloth*.
- 187–88 The missal contains the order of service used in the mass, the principal Christian liturgical rite; the chalice contains the wine used in communion; and the paten holds

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the bread wafer, called the “Host” (from Latin *hostia*, “victim”). After the bread and wine are consecrated, they are placed on a white linen cloth, the “corporal.” All of this “messe-gere” is holy by virtue of its use in the sacred re-enactment of Christ’s death that is the Eucharist. Hence, swearing an oath by these instruments is a serious matter.

- 195 *Gon and speken.* L: *Gon and speken.* F&H: *Don and speken.* Ho: *Gon and speken;* Sk: *Don and speken;* Sm and Ho agree with the MS reading as do we.
- 199 *beste man.* L: *beste man;* Sk: *hexte man;* F&H: *hexte;* Sm: *heste.*
- 213–17 Self-flagellation was thought to be an appropriate penance in general, though there is some dispute about whether it was more often a feature of dramatic representation than a realistic feature of life. Frederick Paxon, who charts the development of bedside rites for the dying in *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual in Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), concludes that the earlier focus on the fate of the dying person’s soul was replaced with a Germanic/Celtic concern with the needs of the dying person. However, according to the medieval chronicler William of Malmesbury, Henry I confessed, beat his breast, was absolved three times, and received unction before he died.
- 221–22 *So mikel men micte him in winde, / Of his in arke ne in chiste.* “So much [as a shroud] to wind him in among his possessions, neither in trunk nor chest,” since he had already given away so much in his will.
- 226 *ofte swngen.* L: *ofte swngen.* Ho: *ofte swngen;* Sk: *ofte swungen;* Sm: *ofte swungen;*
- 228 *Louerde.* L: *Loude.* Preceded by *in manus tuas*, this is a partial quotation of Jesus at the point of death (Luke 23:46): “Into thy hands [I commend my spirit].”
- 239 The “bower” and “hall” were two fundamental units of a castle or noble dwelling that persisted in some form throughout the Middle Ages. The hall was an open, public space used for dining, entertaining, or convening of nobles; the bower was a relatively more secluded area used for sleeping. The bower, it should be noted, was not necessarily a more private place. Yet the association of bower with ladies and hall with knights is appropriate; while one could find either sex in either place, the bower is associated more with the more intimate love of women, the hall with the masculine world of celebrating achievements and swearing loyalties to comrades.

Notes

- Compare with *Beowulf*, where the king and queen retire to the burgh while Beowulf and the retainers sleep on and around the same benches where they have feasted.
- 245 F&H note the subject shift from God to Athelwold's soul in this line. The effect glorifies the king in that God himself should lead his soul into heaven. The attention to the king's soul in line 74 is underscored here.
- 256 *that god thoucte*. L: *bat god thoucte*. F&H: *bat god him thoucte*.
- 263 F&H note the use of itinerant justices in Saxon times: "They seem not to have held permanent commission, but to have been appointed in emergencies. Their function was to mitigate the injustice of local courts, which might be dominated by powerful nobles" (p. 84).
- 265 Sm comments on the significance of the road from Dover to Roxburgh: "The mention of Dover and Roxburgh as marking the extreme limits of England, as in [line] 139, is here in a context of peace-keeping and the king's peace. This is why the AN [Anglo-Norman] *Le Petit Bruit* names a road from *en long de Rokesburg jekis a Dover* as one of *les quatre royales chemyn parmy Engleterre* — the four royal roads were under the king's peace. . ." (p. 99).
- 266 *Schireves he sette, bedels, and greyves* (Sheriffs, beadles, and reeves). The sheriff, or "shire-reeve," enforced law and order in the shire (county); the beadle was a sort of church police officer; and the grave or "greyve," according to the OED, was a steward placed in charge of property, a reeve. In certain parts of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, each of a number of administrative officials formerly elected by the inhabitants of a township served this function for a town.
- 269 Outside the walled cities, protection was difficult and travel hazardous because of marauding thieves. Establishing peace in a violent environment is thus an extraordinary achievement.
- 282 *Of alle thewes was she wis*. L: *Of alle pewes wshe wis*.
- 285 The sense here is prophetic, i.e., that many a tear would be wept for Goldeboru's sake.
- 286 *Quanne the Erl Godrich him herde* (When the Earl Godric heard). "Him" is a reflexive pronoun that would normally be dropped in modern English.

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- 287 *hw wel she ferde.* L: *hw we she ferde.*
- 288 *hw chaste.* L: *w chaste.*
- 292 *Wether* (whether) functions as an interrogative particle, which signals that a question is coming.
- 296 *Datheit* (Curses) is said to be a contraction for *odium Dei habit.*
- 305 Note the recurrence of the verb *yeme* here. In lines 190 and 206, the dying Athelwold made Godrich promise to “yeme” her “well”; by saying that he has “yemed” her “too softe,” Godrich creates perhaps an unconscious double meaning. He is obviously saying (and in his state of jealousy and malice he would naturally mean), “She has grown up to be too pampered,” but of course he is to blame because it is he who has not followed the king’s dying wish that he guard her “wel.”
- 311 This is perhaps another way of saying, “As long as I have a head on my shoulders.” Note that “blake” here probably means “white” (compare French *blanc* or more likely OE *blac* meaning “pale”). See lines 48 and 2165 for a possibly similar usage.
- 317 Contrast this sort of fasting with King Arthur’s refusal to sit down and feast until he had seen some marvel in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
- 322 There may be a pun on *fede*, which as a noun can mean “hostility.” In its verbal form, to “feed” or “keep,” it has a range of meanings both positive and negative. Godrich is probably not interested in comforting or nurturing Goldeboru. Rather, he misconstrues his duties to protect those who cannot protect themselves and holds her captive instead.
- 328 *Of Goldeboru.* L: *Of Goldeb.*
- 334 *sho mote.* L: *sho mo.*
- 352 *He* refers to *deth* in line 354.
- 353 *kaysere.* A Germanic form of the Latin *caesar.*
- 354 *Deth him tok than he best wolde.* L: *Deth him tok than he bes wolde.*

Notes

- 360 *Chanounes gode and monkes bothe.* A canon might be a priest of a cathedral church or a member of a particular religious community.
- 360–61 Sm prefers to maintain the end rhyme in this couplet: *Chanounes gode and monkes bape / Him for to wisse and to rape.* To do that he has emended *bope* to *bape* and *rede* to *rape*. There are other such emendations. See lines 693–94 and 1680–81. Sk: *bethe / rede*; Ho: *bothe / rothe*. We follow F&H in retaining the MS reading *bothe / rede*.
- 373 *under mone.* In other words, “in the whole world.” Medieval writers often distinguished between events below and above the moon, as everything beneath the moon’s sway was thought to be subject to Fortune.
- 392 *shalt wel yeme.* L: *shalt we yeme.*
- 393 *That hire kin be ful wel queme.* The reading here depends on whether the third word in the line should read “kin” (“their relations will indeed be pleased”) or is actually a scribal error for “kind” (“type,” “nature,” “rank”). Sa suggests “that it indeed quite befits their rank” (p. 68).
- 410 *Havelok, that was the eir.* L: *Havelok that was the eir.* F&H follow Ho’s emendation here: *Havelok, that was the brother*, presumably to preserve the end rhyme.
- 425 For writers of the Middle Ages, Judas, the arch traitor of Christ in the Gospels, was the archetype of treachery and betrayal. Both Godard and Godrich are called by this arch traitor’s name, though Godard is called Satan in line 2512. See line 319.
- 436 *made mone.* L: *maude mone*; Sm: *maude mone*; F&H: *made mone*; Sk: *made mone*; Ho: *made mone*.
- 456 *Seyden he, “we wolden more.* L: *Seyden he wolden more.* Sm: *Seyden he he wolden more.* F&H: *Seyden hi, we wolden more;* Ho: *Seyden thei withuten more;* Sk: *Seyden he wolden have more.*
- 476 *Havelok it saw and therbi stod.* L: *Havelok it saw and þe bi stod.*
- 481 *But the knave.* L: *But þe kave.*

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- 484 Note the pathetic and very ironic scene here: the boy, to save his life, offers feudal homage (*manrede*) to a lord whose last thought is to protect the child.
- 489 *Ayen thee, louerd, sheld ne spere.* L: *Ayen þe, louerd, shel ne spere.*
- 496 *Hwan the devel herde that.* L: *Hwan þe devel hede þat.*
- 502 *withdraw.* L: *bitdrow.* F&H: *withdraw.* Sm: *bit-drow.* Ho: *bith-drow.* Sk: *wit-drow.* Ma: *bit-drow.*
- 503 *Avelok.* This is the French name to which Havelok is etymologically linked according to Sa. It equates with *OE Anlaf*, a Scandinavian form of Olaf. Sa suggests a historical connection to Olaf Sctricson (p. 57).
- 512 *He may me waiten.* L: *He may waiten.*
- 520 *drench.* L: *drench.* Sm: *drenth.* F&H: *drenched.* Ho: *drenched.* Sk: *drenched.* We have returned to the MS reading.
- 534 *thou sest.* L: *þou se.*
- 536 *Al wile I taken.* L: *Al wile taken.*
- 546 The line following this numbered line — *He thriste in his muth wel faste* — is supplied by C and not counted in the line numbering. Sa, Sm, and F&H add the line without counting it. Sk and Ho omit the line altogether.
- 552 *he yede.* Sm emends to *hepede.* “In the sentence as it stands, a past participle is required; and the final -e of *hethede* (if this word is one) is presumably an error. But a rhyme on the unstressed ending of the past participle would be unparalleled in *Hav*” (p. 105).
- 553 *forth lede.* L: *forth.* F&H: *forth lede.* Sk: *forth lede.* Ho: *forth lede.* Sm: *forth lede*
- 558 *Ant bar him.* L: *Ant bar him.* Sk: *And bar him.* Ho: *And bar him.* F&H: *Ant bar him*
- 561 *Also thou wit mi lif save.* L: *Also þou wit my lif have.* Sm: *Also þou wilt mi lif have*
save. Ho: *Also þou wilth mi lif save.*

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- 564 *Ynow* means literally “enough,” but this typical Middle English stock phrase often understates the situation.
- 566 *Hwan Dame Leve herde that.* L: *Hwan dame herde þat.* The inclusion of Grim’s wife’s name adds another foot to the meter and renders her identity clear.
- 583 *wost that hoves me.* L: *wost þat hoves me.* F&H and Sm: *wost þat bi hoves me.* Ho: *wost that it bi hoveth me.* Sk: *wost that so bihoves me.*
- 594–95 *Al so lith was it therinne / So ther brenden cerges inne.* “It was as light in there as if candles were burning there.” *Al so / so* are correlatives that connect or compare two statements.
- 601 *For man shal god wille have.* F&H suggest a meaning for this line: “People are naturally kind” (p. 97).
- 605 *kynmerk.* A king’s birthmark attests to royal birth. Sm notes only one other example of the word (slightly modified) in the ME *Emaré*, lines 503–04: “A fayr chyld borne and a godele; / Hadde a dowbyll kyngus marke.”
- 611 *Al Denemark and Engeland.* Grim’s prophesy is fulfilled by the poem’s end not only by Havelok’s reappropriation of his homeland and his victory over Godrich and marriage to Goldeboru, but also by the marriages of Grim’s daughters to Englishmen of noble rank.
- 521 *cherles* often means “villeins,” non-free peasants bound to work the land, donating a portion of their produce and labor to the lord of the manor. Because the basic definition of “cherle” is a person from the lowest orders of society, the word is often used as an insult (e.g., line 683), or here, as a label of self-abasement.
- 645–46 *Pastees* (pasties) are meat pies; *flaunes*, custard, or cheese pies. These are dishes that were an integral part of a professional cook’s repertoire. Terence Scully explains in *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995): “What the professional cook dealt with from day to day in the thirteen and fourteen hundreds were menus consisting of well-rounded meals of soups, stews, pies, torts, flans, biscuits, roasts, sauces, jellies and ‘desserts’” (p. 3).
- 667 *That was of Denemark a stiward.* L: *Þat was Denemk a stiward.* The preposition *in* is inserted by F&H. Sk, Ho, and Sm prefer *of*.

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- 675 *Yif me gold and other fe.* L: *Yif me gold other fe.*
- 677 Villeins (peasants) could be released by their lords and become equals of freeborn men in the eyes of the law.
- 686 *Shaltu have non other mede.* L: *Shal have non other mede.* F&H: *Shaltu have.* Sk: *Shaltu have.* Ho: *Shaltu have.*
- 691 *hethen.* L: *ethen.* F&H's emendation.
- 693 *that wicke man.* L: *ba wicke man.* F&H and Sm emend to provide distinction for the demonstrative adjective.
- 694–95 *shal me to rede . . . he wile bethe.* The end rhyme in this couplet has been emended by Sm as follows: *And poucte, wat shal me to rape / Wite him on live he wile us bape.* F&H follow L, supplying *[us]* before *bepe.* We have returned to the MS despite the loss of rhyme.
- 702 *Hors and swin, geet with berd.* L: *Hors and swin with berd.* F&H and Sm add "goats," presumably because neither swine nor horses have beards.
- 709 Sa suggests the reading "So that it [should] fear neither sound nor inlet;" *sond* can also be 'sand' with the extended meaning 'shoal water;' but 'sound' seems more appropriate and is quite possible orthographically" (p. 76). F&H translate *sond* and *krike* as bodies of water. Since Grim has just finished placing pitch in the seams of his boat, it is likely that this line refers to the craft's water worthiness. It is sound because it does not creak or leak, for that matter.
- 723 *Ne were it nevere.* L: *Ne were neuere.*
- 725 "Bise" appears in Old French works as a common word for the North Wind (see, e.g., *Pelerinage de Charlemagne*, line 354). According to the MED, *Havelok* is the only Middle English romance in which this term appears.
- 732 *Als ye shulen now forthward lere.* L: *Als ye shulen now forthwar here.* Skeat emendation.
- 734–35 The Humber River, now the center of the modern county of Humberside, divides what is considered northern England (Yorkshire and northward to the Scottish

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border) from the English midlands (Lincolnshire south to London). Lindsay is still a division of the county of Lincoln.

- 745 The place took its name from Grim (i.e., the present port of Grimsby in Humber-side). This line reflects a popular local legend of a fisherman by the name of Grim who founded a town that bears his name. Reputedly the legendary Grim, like the Grim of the poem, befriended an exiled prince. Sm's edition depicts a twelfth-century town seal with three names and figures inscribed on it — Grym, Habloc, and Goldeboru. Robert Mannyng of Brunne tells of a stone that was allegedly thrown by Havelok against his enemies and indicates the chapel where he and Goldeboru were married (p. 78). For an interesting interpretation of Grim, see Maldwyn Mills, "Havelok and the Brutal Fisherman."
- 754–60 For an interesting interpretation of the catalogue of fish see Roy Michael Liuzza, "Representation and Readership in the ME *Havelok*." Liuzza sees the emphasis on fish as "part of a system of exchange in which money rather than chivalric honor is the source of value" (p. 510). Such exchange systems lend *Havelok* a realism that few romances of the time can claim.
- 765 *Forbar he neyther tun.* L: *Forbar he neybe tun.*
- 772 A lamprey is an eel-like fish with a mouth like a sucker, pouch-like gills, seven spiracles or apertures on each side of the head, and a fistula or opening on the top of the head (OED). F&H's note on the lamprey is interesting in relation to this rather unappetizing description: "A 'great' lamprey weighed as much as five pounds, and sold for three shillings. . . . It was highly prized as a delicacy. Henry I is said to have brought on a fatal illness by partaking too freely of lamprey" (p. 104). His cooks must have prepared the lamprey properly, i.e., soaked it to its death in wine before cooking, then serving it in a gelatinous galantine sauce.
- 773 *Ful wel.* L: *Ful we.*
- 776 *wol wel sold.* L: *wol wel sold.* F&H: *al wel sold.* Sm: *wol wel sold.* Grim seems to be selling wool without mention of his keeping sheep, the reason perhaps that F&H emend *wol* to *al*. Sheep are mentioned in line 782, however.
- 785 *In the se weren he ofte setes.* L: *In the se weren he offte setes.* F&H: *Pat in the se he ofte setes.* Sm: *In the se-weres he ofte setes.* Kevin Gosling in "Sewere in *Havelok* 784," *Notes and Queries* 34 (1987), 151, suggests that this is a compound based on

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an ON borrowing in the poet's Lincolnshire dialect. ON *ver* means "station for taking eggs, fishing, catching seals, etc." *Sewere* would then mean "inshore fishing ground." The MS, however, clearly depicts an abbreviation mark above the final *-e* in *sewerē* (*se weren*) rendering verbal force to the suffix. Sm fills in the abbreviation with *s*. We have emended.

- 791–811 Havelok's insatiable appetite reflects his regal deprivation. Only when he comes fully into his royal estate can his nature be satisfied. His vast appetite becomes a comic send up on his political displacement rather than a sign of gluttony or avarice. In his effort to win his own bread he becomes a lord at all degrees. See also lines 828 ff.; 911–26; and, in the conclusion, line 2986, where his having been fed is deemed a key component of his biographical summary. See note to line 1726.
- 807 *woth*. Sk emends to *wot*.
- 819 *ilk del.* L: *il del.* F&H's emendation.
- 821 *ferthinges nok*. A farthing from medieval to quite modern times was worth a quarter of a penny. A "corner" of a farthing would be a very little bit; the idiom reflects the illegal practice of clipping off bits of coins for the silver, which might, when collected, be sold as bullion.
- 850 *nouth a slo*. An expression referring to a sloeberry, a fruit of a blackthorn tree used as a metaphor for "something of little value," an "insignificant amount," or to mean "not at all," to "care nothing for."
- 858 *sheres*. L: *shres*.
- 861 *Havede he neyther*. L: *Havede neber*.
- 862 *other wede*. L: *ope wede*.
- 864 *he cam ther*. L: *he cam pe*.
- 870 *Poure that on fote yede*. This line, supplied by Sk, repeats line 101 and fills in the rhyme scheme.
- 875 *Ther the erles mete he tok*. This line is supplied by Ma and Sk. Both F&H and Sm agree.

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- 882 *on the brigge.* L: *on þe bigge.*
- 897 Plaice is a type of European flatfish, often preferred over other species such as salmon, mackerel, and turbot. It is still quite a popular dish in the British Isles.
- 903 Presumably, Havelok was carrying the load on his head.
- 908 *Wel is set the mete thu etes.* Echoes the proverb in line 1693: *wel is him that god man fedes.* Here the earl's cook sees an opportunity he cannot refuse.
- 911 Havelok, as orphaned king's son and kitchen knave, has been referred to as a "male Cinderella." He joins the ranks of a long tradition of male Cinderellas and their stories including a number of Arthurian knights and Horn. See Donald G. Hoffman, "Malory's Cinderella Knights and the Notion of Adventure," *Philological Quarterly* 67 (1988), 145–56. For gender politics in these tales, see Eve Salisbury, "(Re)dressing Cinderella," in *Retelling Tales*, ed. Alan Lupack and Thomas G. Hahn (Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 275–92. Kitchen drudgery prepares the hero for his future role as king. Analogous to Cinderella's shoe, Havelok's "kynmerk" is a hidden sign of nobility, both of character and of class.
- 934 *filde ther.* L: *filde þe.*
- 937 *Al him one.* L: *A him one.*
- 939 *Ne fro brigge.* L: *Ne fro bigge.*
- 940 The *turves* were pieces of turf or peat moss cut from the ground and stacked to dry, then used as fuel. Star grass, a name given locally to various coarse seaside grasses and sedges, according to the OED, was used for kindling.
- 952 *ne wolde with.* L: *ne wode with.* The emendation makes an important distinction between an intransitive subjunctive verb and a noun connoting madness.
- 961 *mikel.* L: *mike.*
- 965 *unride.* See Sk's extended discussion of the term as indicative of a large, cumbersome or rough garment; of the body, a deep, wide wound; of metal, something great; of politics, something unwieldy; of sound, something loud or tremendous (p. 164).

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- 966 *That was ful.* L: *þat ful.* Adding an intransitive verb is followed universally.
- 971 *dones.* He “dons” them, i.e., puts them on.
- 983 Havelok’s height recalls the biblical King Saul, who was taller than the men around him and admired for his physical beauty. Nobility was presumed to inhere in such men, though giants were often portrayed as outlaws or Philistines (such as Goliath) in Scripture and medieval romance.
- 988 *als he was long.* L: *al he was long.*
- 998 *With hire ne wolde he leyke.* L: *þit hire ne wold leyke.* Sm: *Wit hire.* F&H: *With hore.* *Hire* could refer to a woman who prostitutes herself for hire, or who is at least a woman of sexual experience. Given the economies of exchange in the poem, sex is another mode of negotiation. The OE *hóre* originally meant adultery, but gradually became more closely associated with female sexuality, perhaps in part because *hire* is a feminine possessive pronoun. Sm rejects the emendation to *hore* on grounds that it is “paleologically very improbable” (p. 119).
- 1009 *Mani with ladde, blac and brown.* Black could refer to peasants; brown, as F&H suggest (p. 112), can mean “persons of all ranks” or “peasants,” since peasant complexions are often described as black or brown, noble faces as red or white. Thus, this phrase may mean “people of every rank” or “the lower classes.” See also line 2847, where the metaphor is clearly political, as people of all ranks swear *manrede* to Goldeboru. But see also the note to line 1909, where the idiom “broune or blake” may refer to “dark or fair” complexion, with *broune* meaning dark and *blake* meaning pale or fair.
- 1024 *And pulten with a mikel ston.* The sport, analogous to shotput, was popular among Germanic peoples, though it is also found in the legends of other cultures. Robert Mannyng of Brunne in Lincolnshire claimed that the stone Havelok throws was preserved in a Lincoln castle in his day (c. 1338). Such chronicle accounts encourage historical identification. (See also lines 1032–37).
- 1037–39 F&H make a distinction between *chaumpioun* and *kempe*. While the former means “competent athlete, man of valor,” the latter means “outstanding performer among many good ones” (p. 113).
- 1080 *his douther yeve.* L: *his douthe yeve.*

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- 1095 *Onlepi foru.* The aristocratic Godrich imagines Havelok incapable of ever becoming landed by any means.
- 1102 *erthe stoc.* L: *erthe shop.* While the MS reads *shop* (created), the word neither rhymes nor fits the meaning. Both F&H and Sa substitute *stoc*, which F&H gloss as “shut fast”; Satan resides in hell, the center of the earth in medieval belief.
- 1120 *Whether* simply introduces a question here. See note to line 292.
- 1149 *With dintes swithe hard and strong.* This line is supplied by Sk.
- 1158 *hire, fals and slike.* L: *hire and slike.* F&H: *hire fals and slike.* Sm: *fel and slike.*
- 1173 *Ther weren penies thicke tolde.* “There were pennies thickly counted,” i.e., a lot of them. Mass pennies were given as an offering for the nuptial ceremony.
- 1175 *He ys hire yaf and she is tok.* L: *she as tok.* F&H emend *as* to *is*, and gloss *ys* as *them*. Their note is helpful here: “Part of the money was the clerk’s fee, part was a symbol that the wife was endowed with the husband’s worldly goods . . . and part might be payment for the wife’s virginity” (p. 118). According to Christopher Brooke in *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989): “Each partner is to rehearse his and her consent; the woman’s dower is to be confirmed, and some pennies set aside to be distributed among the poor. . . . Marriage from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries and beyond was a public event, rather than private or clandestine, accompanied by the publication of banns and witnessed by parish or community members” (p. 249). The money is taken by the bride as part of her dowry.
- 1202 *ay the rith sti.* L: *ay þe rith;* F&H and Sm add *sti.*
- 1204 *Thanne he komen there thanne was Grim ded.* “Thanne. . . thanne” is a correlative construction linking the clauses: “When they arrived there, [then] Grim was dead.” The second “thannte” is best left untranslated in modern English.
- 1247 *Weseyl ledden he fele sithe.* “They drank healths (toasted) many times.” “Wessail” derives from OE *wes hael* — “be healthy; to your health.”
- 1251 *That she were.* L: *Pat shere.* Sk’s emendation, followed by Sm, F&H, and Sa.

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- 1306 *That ich fley over the salte se.* This line could mean: “That I fled over the salty sea” or “That I flew over the salty sea.” Given the context, it is a little more likely that “fley” means “fled.”
- 1316 Earlier editors suggest that at least two lines are missing here. Presumably, the first would have a final word rhyming with *joye* of line 1315, while the next would rhyme with *trone* in what is now numbered as 1316.
- 1337 *Nim in wit lithe to Denemark.* L: *Nim in witl be to Denemak.* F&H: *Nimen we to Denemark bape.* Sa: *Nimen wit to Denmark bathe*, where *wit* means “we too.” Sm: *Nim in wit līpe to Denemark bape.* Sm’s note on this line is useful: “As an emendation *l[i]the* has the advantage of preserving the *l* in MS *witl* as well as the MS *the*. . . . If *lithe* is interpreted as ‘journey’ in line 1337, it is necessary to take *wit* as the dual ‘we two’ and to emend *nim* to *nime*. . . . The line would translate to ‘Let’s both make the journey to Denmark’” (p. 127).
- 1343 *thin hond.* L: *þin hon.*
- 1349 *Thou maght til he aren quike.* Sm emends *til* to *tel* because there is “no known word corresponding in form to *til* that would fit this context” (p. 128). See John Wilson, “*Havelok the Dane*, line 1349: ‘til,’” *Notes and Queries* 36 (1989), 150–51.
- 1370 *He hath mi lond.* L: *He mi lond.* Sm: *He haldes mi lond.* Our emendation agrees with that of F&H.
- 1377 *And late me wel.* L: *And late wel.*
- 1397 *he kalde.* L: *he kade.*
- 1399 *and Huwe Raven.* L: *h aven.* In the *Dictionary of British Surnames*, Percy H. Reaney lists *Raven* as having derived from ON *Hrafñ* or OE *Hraefn* or as a nickname from the bird. The surname may also indicate a link to Norse mythology. The trickster god Odin kept two ravens — Huginn and Manimen — to act as advisors and messengers. *Rede*, also *Read*, *Reade*, *Reed*, *Red*, *Redd* or *Reid*, he conjectures, indicates OE *redd* “red” of complexion or hair (p. 292). The closest Reaney comes to *Willam Wenduth* is William Wende, a thirteenth-century listing, derived from OE *wende* meaning “dweller by the bend” (p. 375).

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1410 *lime he hus.* L: *lime hus.*

1429 *Havede he ben slayn.* L: *Havede ben.*

1445–1624 At this point in the MS, a whole leaf has been cut away. Ma surmises that approximately 180 lines are missing. The gist of the section, says Sa, “probably was that the three sons agree to follow Havelok; and all the men, together with Goldeboru, sail for Denmark. Ashore, Havelok, William, and Roberd, disguised as peddlers, meet the Danish earl Ubbe and ask permission to sell their wares. Line 1625 opens in the middle of Havelok’s plea” (p. 95). F&H’s synopsis varies somewhat: “The three sons agree, and exchange some of their property for a peddler’s wares and a fine ring. They sail to Denmark and moor the boat; Hugh Raven remains in it. The others disembark and on the shore meet Ubbe, a Danish earl, who is out riding with his retinue near a town and castle. Havelok asks permission to sell his wares” (p. 127).

1632–34 The jewel in the ring was worth a hundred pounds, an enormous amount of money in the Middle Ages.

1635 *He was ful wis that first yaf mede.* Proverbial. See Bartlett Jere Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly before 1500* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 226; entry G78: “He was full wise that first gave gift.” Whiting cites similar passages in *Tristrem* 19.626–27, Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* V.4720 and V.4798; and Wyntoun VI. 199,6450.

1644 *ilk del.* L: *il del.*

1660 *ful wel rede thee.* L: *ful wel rede þe.*

1680–81 Sm ends the couplet for the sake of the meter and the end rhyme: *Loke that ye comen bape / For ich it wile and ich it rape.* Compare lines 694–95 and lines 360–61.

1685 *he yede.* L: *he yde.*

1686 *red.* Sense uncertain. Perhaps *red* means “of ruddy complexion” or “sanguine of disposition”; but more likely the sense is “wise,” or “well-advised,” or “well-counselled.”

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- 1698 *for to shewe.* Sm: *for to shawe.* F&H: *forto shewe.*
- 1722 *Thanne were set and bord leyd.* F&H and Sm add a pronoun: *Thanne he were set and bord leyd.* The table is the subject, however.
- 1726 The types of fowl on the menu — cranes and swans — were more common for a medieval feast than they might be now. Cranes, as many other wild fowl, were roasted over an open flame often with a special basting sauce to keep them moist. Presentation was just as important as the dish itself. Swans, peacocks, and other birds of extraordinary plumage underwent an elaborate skinning procedure so that they could be served inside their own skin replete with feathers. The idea was to present the dish as if it were still alive. Food often took on symbolic significance in the Middle Ages. See Robert W. Hanning, "Hungry Heroes in Medieval Literature," in *Food in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Melitta Weiss Adamson (New York: Garland, 1995), 145–59.
- 1728 *Pyment.* Meaning spiced wine, *pyment* differs from *claré*, which is spiced wine mixed with honey, not to be confused with the modern claret, a fine red wine.
- 1731 Ale is considered a lowly drink, unfit for even a page at such a feast, at least in this poem. In general, however, beer and ale were served and consumed as regular table beverages, preferable even to water. Andrew Boorde, writing in the mid-fifteenth century, says: "Ale for an Englyssh man is a naturall drynke" (as quoted in Terence Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages* [Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995], p. 153.)
- 1736 *the kilthing deyled.* L: *the kilbing deled.* Sm: *the kilping deyled.* F&H: *the ilk ping deled.* We concur with Sm's emendation. Sm rejects Sk's "violent emendation," of *kilthing* to *ilk thing*. For Sm it represents "a re-writing that offers no means of accounting for the alleged corruption" (p. 132). Instead, Sm chooses to retain the integrity of the line.
- 1740 *Ilk man.* L: *Il man.* Sm: *Il man.* F&H: *Ilk man.* Since the distinction is important, we have followed F&H's emendation.
- 1744 *bes mikel wo.* L: *bes mike wo.*

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- 1749 *greyves*. Not to be confused with shin armor, this term refers to the house of the grave, i.e., the night watchman's place of residence. (See note to line 266.)
- 1753 *Havelok wel yemen*. L: *Havelok wel ymen*.
- 1761 *With mikel love*. L: *with mike love*.
- 1773 *bi Seint Austin*. This could refer to either Augustine, Bishop of Hippo and author of a number of widely read works in the Middle Ages including *Confessions*, or Augustine of Canterbury, the first Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1785 *In feteres and ful faste festen*. Notice how the alliteration in this line underscores Bernard's oath.
- 1794 *barre*. The sliding beam that secures the door.
- 1798 *Comes swithe unto me*. Armed with his cross beam, Havelok's command strangely echoes Christ's "come unto me." Here the true lord calls with a grim irony; his cross piece will be their death. It is noteworthy that Havelok's "kynmerk" (birthmark) on his shoulder is a cross. See note to lines 2037–45, where his wounds make him more kin of Christ than kin of Cain.
- 1804 *And with him comen*. L: *And with comen*. The thorn has been replaced by *th* in L.
- 1827 *Havelok let the barre fleye*. L: *Have le barre fleye*.
- 1829 *That havede he nevere schrifte of prest*. In other words, he was killed so fast that he did not have time to give his confession to a priest or receive the last rites (quite an understatement).
- 1840 *bere beyte*. Bear baiting was a cruel sport enjoyed by lovers of violence in England until it was officially banned in 1835. The bear was lugged (chained by his neck or hind leg to a log or something more secure), and dogs were turned loose on the creature. The dogs were often killed or mauled and the bear seriously torn. Detailed accounts may be found in Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, from the Earliest Period... Illustrated by Reproductions from Ancient Paintings*, 1801; rpt. London: Thomas Tegg, 1834, rev. in a new edition, much enlarged and corrected by J. Charles Cox (London: Methuen & Co., 1903). See especially pp. 204–08 in Cox's revised edition. Though officially banned in 1835 the sport continued illegally for a couple more decades, the last recorded

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entertainment being in West Derby in 1853. Sometimes the bear was blinded and whipped to add to the sport.

- 1884 *louerd wreke be.* L: *louerd wreke.*
- 1890 Romance heroes occasionally use clubs as weapons, though not always with comic effect as in this scene, but rather as a serious demonstration of knightly potential (e.g., Sir Degré, Sir Perceval).
- 1909 *of the broune and of the blake.* Sa glosses as “Of the brown and of the fair.” *Blake* comes from OE *blāc*, meaning white. See also lines 1008, 2181, and 2249.
- 1911 *Als here wombes.* L: *Als hee wombes.*
- 1941 *or shame seyde.* L: *or same seyde.* F&H: *or shame seyde.* Sm: *or same seyde.*
- 2009 *leye o tooth.* L: *leye othe.* Si’s emendation, followed by F&H and Sa.
- 2029 *Griffin Galle.* L: *Giffin Galle.* Griffin, a name probably of Breton origin, was used as a nickname for the Middle Welsh *Gruffydd*. Galle was a well-known surname in Lincolnshire in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Sm notes that there are other examples combined with “Christian names such as Walter or Arnald. . . . But in *Havelok*, the combination of this surname of Celtic origin with the non-English Griffin is striking” (p. 136). In the *Dictionary of British Surnames*, second ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan, Paul, 1977), Percy H. Reaney comments: “The name in England is found in the counties bordering Wales and also in Lincolnshire where it was of Breton origin. In Brittany where the name was common, it was applied to immigrants from France” (p. 139).
- 2030 *mouthe ageyn so.* L: *mouthe agey so.*
- 2036 *Wel is set the mete he etes.* L: *We is set be mete he etes.* This proverb appears earlier in a variant form in line 908.
- 2037–45 The beholding of the young lord’s wounds is perhaps another allusion to the hero’s miraculously redemptive role as opponent to “Kaym kin” (line 2045). See note to line 1798.
- 2055 *that we so.* L: *bat we so.*

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- 2060 A palfrey was a small saddle-horse used for riding, usually for women or ecclesiastics, and never for war. It would be humiliating for a knight to ride to combat or tournament or even to his execution on a palfrey.
- 2070 *Moucte wayte thee to slo.* L: *Movcte wayte pe slo.*
- 2072 *I shal lene thee a bowr.* See note to line 239.
- 2124 *lith was thare.* L: *lith wa þare.* Sm: *lith was þore.*
- 2140 *shuldre swithe brith.* L: *shuldre swe brith.* Sk's emendation, followed by F&H and Sa.
- 2143 Sa remarks that the line means: "That it was a mark of kingship that they saw"; the word *kunrik* is probably an error for *kynemerk* of line 604" (p. 108). Sm, on the other hand, rejects Sk's emendation on the grounds that *kunrik* is not a noun, but an adjective meaning "of exalted birth" (p. 137).
- 2145 F&H note the widespread belief that precious stones gave off light at night. The fifteenth-century *Peterborough Lapidary* entry for carbuncle is as follows:
- Carbunculus is a precios stone, & he schineth as feyre whose chynyngis not overcom by nyght. It chineth in derk places, & it semeth as it were a feyr; & ther bene xii kyndes ther-of, & worthyest ben tho that schynen & send owte leemes as feyre, as Ised. Also it is seyd that the carbuncyl is cleped so in grek, & it is gendryd in libia amonge the tregodites. Of this carnuncul ther is xii maneris of kendes of carbuncles. But thoo ben best that han the coleur of fire & tho ben closed in a wyght veyne. The best carbucul hathe this propirtie: if it is throwene. In the feyre it is qwent as it were amonges dede colis. (*English Mediaeval Lapidaries*, ed. Joan Evans and Mary Seantson, EETS o.s. 190 [London: Oxford University Press, 1933; rpt. 1960], p. 82)
- 2195 *knithes, burgeys, sweynes.* L: *Knighes bugeys sweynes.*
- 2229 *that sori fend.* L: *þat sor fend.*
- 2249 *Bothe brune and the blake.* See note to line 1009.
- 2250 *Gamen* here literally means "fun," "sport," but in a cheerful, jesting way means "ritual [of homage]."

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- 2274 *He* here refers to Ubbe in the next line.
- 2287 *That com of Adam and of Eve.* I.e., that was born of the human race started by Adam and Eve — in other words, everyone.
- 2298 *Us for to yemen.* L: *for to yemen.* F&H: *Men for to yemen.* Sm: *Us for to yemen.* Since Ubbe is speaking, his designation of group and self-inclusion make sense.
- 2310 *evere wolde his.* L: *evere wode his.*
- 2311 *That dide he hem o boke swere.* L: *Pat dide hem o boke swere.*
- 2327 Note the reference to romance reading in the context of leisure. Some medieval medical authorities considered reading a good story for the sake of pleasure and the release of emotion and laughter a sound measure for good health. See Glending Olson, *Literature as Recreation in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).
- 2331 Bull and boar-baiting were common medieval pastimes. A bull or boar was tied to a stake or set in a pit, and dogs were let loose to annoy and irritate the larger animal. See note to line 1840.
- 2336 *so mikel yeft of clothes.* L: *so mike yeft of cloþes.*
- 2352 *ilker twenti knihtes.* L: *ilker twent knihtes.*
- 2370 *Half hundred.* L: *hal hundred.*
- 2389 *cavenard.* Sk refers to the term as an error for *caynard*, a term for a scoundrel (see Chaucer's Wife of Bath CT III[D] 235). Sa emends to *caynard*.
- 2404 *that he ther thrette.* L: *pat þer prette.*
- 2432 *And everilk fot of hem he slowe.* *Fot* here stands for person — thus, a synecdoche, in which a part of something stands for a whole.
- 2450 *Hise nese went unto the crice.* He is bound on his steed face down and backwards, with his nose in the cleft between the horse's buttocks.

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- 2453 *he havede ful.* L: *he have ful.*
- 2458–59 *And swithe wikke clothes, / For al hise manie grete othes.* F&H and Sm emend these lines as follows: *Wan he was brouth so shamelike / Biforn the king, (the fule swike!).* We have returned to the MS reading.
- 2470 As F&H explain (p. 158), the wall would have been lined with benches.
- 2478 *At this foule mere tayl.* Just as riding a palfrey would humiliate a knight, so too would riding a mare. Even more humiliating would be being tied to its befouled tail. F&H note: “Criminals drawn to the gallows were placed on hurdles or a cowhide that they should not be battered to death on the way. The ‘foule mere’ was an added humiliation, since a knight was usually allowed to ride to his death on a charger. The traces of harness may have been attached to the nail in line 2479. Chains were used to hang for a long time” (p. 158).
- 2479 *Thoru his fet.* L: *Þoru is fet.*
- 2483 *ilk.* L: *il.* Sk’s emendation, followed by F&H and Sa. So too in line 2514.
- 2492 *But that he sholde.* L: *þat he sholde.* F&H and Sm concur on the emendation.
- 2502 *That ne flow him.* L: *That ne flow everil del.*
- 2514 *ilk.* L: *il.*
- 2515 A traitor’s estates were confiscated by the Crown.
- 2518 *sayse.* The appropriate definition of the term here is: “To put in legal possession of.”
- 2519 F&H conjecture the absence of approximately twenty lines: “The copyist omitted a passage, probably about twenty lines long, in which the journey to England is described. The French poems contribute little information; they mention, however, that the expedition disembarks at Grimsby and sends Godrich a demand that he restore England to its rightful owners” (p. 160). Sm and Sa are silent on this alleged omission.

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- 2521 *monekes blak.* The poet may be referring to the Grimsby Abbey monks — Augustinians, founded by Henry I, chartered by Henry II, given to Henry VII, and torn down for a farmhouse. But “black monks” generally refers to Benedictines. Augustinian (Austin) friars were a mendicant order that arrived in England in 1248. Ma’s early speculation dated the founding of the house of Austin friars in 1293.
- 2556 *That* is repeated here from line 2555 for intensifying purposes.
- 2557 *yboren, so.* L: *ye ber so.* Sk’s emendation.
- 2597 *For shal I.* L: *For shal.*
- 2615 *Grethet als men mithe telle a pund.* “As men might count out a pound.” F&H suggest counting out a pound penny by penny (the only way to make change) would have taken quite a long while. But this meaning, which they accept, does not seem to make sense here, except vaguely as “matter-of-factly” (p. 163).
- 2629 *nevere thethen.* L: *nevere þeþe.*
- 2654 *Godrich him.* L: *G-him.*
- 2663 *To the fet right there adune.* Supplied by Ma’s edition and followed by Sk. It echoes line 1905.
- 2711 *ok.* L: *hok.*
- 2797 *Kristes.* L: *Kistes.*
- 2840 *And led him til.* L: *And him til.* Sm: *And led huntil.* F&H: *And led him til.* Sa follows L.
- 2867 *bi Seint Davy.* St. David, the sixth-century patron saint of Wales whose cult, most evident in the city of the same name, nonetheless spread to other ecclesiastical centers (Sherborne, Glastonbury, and Salisbury). Sm finds it curious that this particular saint should be invoked in this particular English poem and wonders how the poet came to know St. David. The answer, he says, is “to be sought in certain Welsh connections of the cathedral and the monastic community of Lincoln. The prominent Welsh writer and churchman Giraldus Cambrensis, who

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wrote a *Vita* of St. David, had withdrawn from court life after 1194 to go and study at Lincoln under William of Leicester (then Chancellor of Lincoln), and was there from at least 1196 to 1198. . . . It does not necessarily follow that the author of *Havelok* had read Gerald's *Vita* (or any other). But it does seem likely that he was in some fashion exposed to the ecclesiastical interest in St. David at Lincoln, and therefore he may have lived in Lincoln (as is also suggested by the signs that he knew the city at first hand)" (pp. 154–55).

- 2888 *was in god time.* L: *was god time.*
- 2905 *ich ne havede.* L: *ich ne have.*
- 2909 *ilk del.* L: *il del.*
- 2933 This line has spawned two theories: (1) that the exemplar of L was a minstrel's copy and (2) that the original poet was probably himself a minstrel. See John C. Hirsh "Havelok 2933: A Problem in Medieval Literary History," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78 (1977), 339–47.
- 2983 *Him stondes wel that god child strenes.* Proverbial. See Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases*, C224, p. 83.
- 2993 *Have ich seyd.* L: *Have ich sey.*
- 2997 A *Pater Noster* (Our Father) is the Lord's Prayer.

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Introduction

Bevis of Hampton (c. 1324) is a romance that has it all: a hero whose exploits take him from callow youth to hard-won maturity to a serene and almost sanctified death; a resourceful and appealing heroine; faithful servants and dynastic intrigue; a parade of interesting villains, foreign and domestic, exotic and local; a geographical sweep which moves back and forth from England to the Near East and through most of western Europe; battles with dragons and giants; forced marriages and episodes of domestic violence; a myriad of disguises and mistaken identities; harsh imprisonments with dramatic escapes, harrowing rescues, violent urban warfare; and, last but not least, a horse of such valor that his death at the end of the poem is at least as tragic as that of the heroine, and almost as tragic as that of Bevis himself. Not surprisingly, however, this much variety makes the poem a difficult one to characterize with any degree of certainty. And several other factors make it a poem which is perhaps easier to enjoy than to evaluate accurately.

The Text of Bevis

One of these complicating factors is textual. Unlike the other romances in this volume, which survive in only one or two manuscripts, there are six manuscripts of *Bevis*, and the relationship between them is complex.¹ A. C. Baugh's conclusion is that the six extant manuscripts — descended from a lost earlier Middle English version of the poem, which in turn is descended from the Anglo-Norman *Boeuve de Haumton* — are so different from each other that “[i]nstead of speaking of a single Middle English romance of *Bevis of Hampton* it would be more in accordance with the facts to say that we have at least five versions, each of which is entitled to be considered a separate romance.”² Our decision to edit the A version (the Auchinleck MS) was not especially problematic; indeed, it was the obvious decision, since this manuscript is recognized as the most complete and also, as

¹ The six manuscripts referred to do not include fragments found in Douce MS 19.

² A. C. Baugh, “The Making of *Beves of Hampton*,” *Bibliographic Studies in Honor of Rudolf Hirsch*, ed. William E. Miller and Thomas G. Waldman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974), p. 34.

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scholarly consensus suggests, the best. Nonetheless, it is important to be forthright in acknowledging that what we have done is present "a" version of *Bevis* rather than "the" definitive version.

The wide variation in manuscripts would certainly seem to be unusual, at least from the point of view of somewhat more "canonical" texts — Biblical and classical — which were held in such awe by medieval authors that they dared not alter them. As Baugh puts it, a "Biblical text was protected by the sanctity of the work, a classical text by the fame of the author. One did not try to improve on Virgil" (p. 17). What happens when a text is protected neither by sanctity nor sufficient authorial fame? Since so many of the Middle English romances survive in only a single manuscript, this is not always a relevant question. But, in the case of an anonymous, non-canonical poem such as *Bevis of Hampton*, its relevance is significant.

Baugh's own explanation for the great differences among the existing manuscripts of *Bevis* is that the written texts represent versions based on oral recitations from minstrels relying on memory and not unwilling to resort to improvisation when memory failed (p. 34). Whether or not one accepts his conclusion, it is clear from a comparison of the *Bevis* manuscripts that the vast textual differences cannot be accounted for by claiming either scribal variation or serendipitous oral performance. Not only are words changed, but entire scenes as well. Bevis' battle with the dragon which likens him to St. George, the patron saint of England, and the descriptive urban war in London, for example, do not appear in the Anglo-Norman version.³ Likewise, from the textual evidence available, it is also clear that the lost Middle English original from which the Auchinleck manuscript descends was in no sense an attempt to translate literally the French of the Anglo-Norman version. Rather, while retaining fidelity to what Baugh calls "incident and idea," the "author" of the original Middle English text felt free to paraphrase and even to invent.⁴

This brief textual history reminds us that what survives is a *Bevis* tradition rather than a singular *Bevis* text, though it would be an exaggeration to compare it too closely to a *Troilus* tradition, for example. But the way in which the story of *Troilus and Criseyde* is developed by a writer such as Chaucer can at least be suggestive of what we mean here. In composing *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer meticulously translated blocks of narrative from the Italian *Il Filostrato* written by his predecessor Boccaccio. Yet much, if not most of what he does, is something more than a literal translation of his illustrious predecessor, something more aptly described as imaginative recreation. The proportion between

³ See Judith Weiss, "The Major Interpolation in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*," *Medium Aevum* 48 (1979), 71–79. Laura [Hibbard] Loomis adds a third scene to the two described by Weiss, i.e., the Christmas battle. See *Mediaeval Romance in England: A Study in the Source and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 116.

⁴ On the relationship between *Bevis* and its Anglo-Norman source, see Baugh, pp. 17–23.

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imitation and individuality is perhaps reversed in the various versions of *Bevis* — for all their differences, there are still greater similarities in the surviving manuscripts than between Boccaccio and Chaucer — and we are not claiming that anything like the individual genius of Chaucer (or Boccaccio) has put a stamp on any of the later versions of the poem. But the “tradition” of *Bevis* apparently continued to interest a wide number of people over a long period of time, apart from the authority of any individual text. Baugh writes:

The story’s popularity continued on into the sixteenth and even the seventeenth century when various early printed editions appeared. Like the story of Guy of Warwick, it doubtless owed something of its popularity to national pride, but it is a good story in itself and was told three times in French verse, even at great length, to say nothing of versions in Celtic, Old Norse, Dutch, Italian, even in Romanian, Russian, and Yiddish.⁵

***Bevis* as an Episodic Narrative**

A second interesting aspect of *Bevis* concerns the shape of the poem itself, more specifically the verse form. The first 475 lines of the poem are written in six-line tail-rhyme stanzas. Then, for reasons that remain unexplained, there is a switch and the rest of the romance, over 4000 lines, is written in couplets. Rather than attempt to posit another theory to account for this change, perhaps we can do no more than suggest what it points toward, which is the highly episodic nature of the work. Dieter Mehl confidently divides the romance into five parts of almost equal sections of 900 lines each, and suggests the obvious reason for these breaks — ease in recitation at different intervals.⁶ These narrative episodes in *Bevis* are largely self-sufficient, without the kind of interlace that is characteristic of, for example, the French romances of Chrétien de Troyes in the twelfth century which are carefully conjoined both structurally and thematically into the larger fabric of the work.⁷ Nevertheless, both the dynastic and the personal characteristics of the story are tied up at the end, allowing Mehl to say that *Bevis* is “indeed a unified whole” (p. 216).

While it would be too much even to describe all of the hero’s adventures, a brief

⁵ Baugh, p. 15. See also Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Mediaeval Romance in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), p. 115.

⁶ Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 213.

⁷ See Douglas Kelly, *The Art of Medieval French Romance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

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summary is useful at the outset to provide the reader with the flavor of an episodic plot that is so complex as to challenge even the best of memories.

Episode One:

Like many of the poems of the thirteenth century, this one begins with the death of the hero's father — Guy of Hampton who, in his old age, decides that he needs to produce an heir for his estate. For this purpose he requests marriage to the beautiful young daughter of the King of Scotland, who agrees to the suit without his daughter's consent. Thus arranged, the marriage commences and soon Bevis is born. By the time Bevis is seven years old, however, his mother has become discontent with marriage to a man who spends more time in church than in her boudoir, and she plots his murder. To accomplish the deed she sends a messenger to her former lover, the Emperor of Germany, with an invitation to invade England and murder Sir Guy. Bevis' mother then feigns an illness which requires, as remedy, the blood of a boar that resides at the agreed-upon battle site; persuaded by her imploring rhetoric and her convincing theatrical skill, Sir Guy is duped into combat. Caught by surprise and hopelessly outnumbered by the emperor's army, the hapless earl must beg for mercy; the request is honored by immediate decapitation. Sir Guy's head is then sent to Bevis' mother, who invites the emperor to her bedchamber that very night. Soon the conspirators are married.

This places Bevis in a difficult position, since he is the rightful heir to his father's earldom; for this reason alone the conspirators would kill him. Yet when Bevis, a precocious seven-year-old, calls his mother a "vile whore" and voices his wish to have her executed in the most horrible manner, he unwittingly provides his mother with additional incentive to destroy him. She commands Saber, his teacher, to kill the boy and provide proof of his death. Reluctant to do the deed, however, Saber kills a swine, sprinkles its blood upon the boy's clothes, and vows to send him from harm's way. Bevis takes matters into his own hands; he gains entry into the castle by killing the porter and vehemently attacks his stepfather. Outraged, Bevis' mother requisitions four knights to sell the boy to merchants, and soon Bevis finds himself on a ship headed for the Near East.

Bevis, who seems doomed, finds solace in the Armenian court of King Ermin. When the king hears the boy's woeful story, he welcomes him with the hope that one day he will become a devotee to Mohammed and carry the king's banner in battle. Even when Bevis refuses to convert, the king admires him and arranges that the boy be trained in the manner of all young Armenian warriors. When Bevis turns fifteen, his training has been completed and it is time for his first test of prowess in the field. But before an appropriate venue can be found, Bevis is goaded into a defensive attack by an insult made by one of the king's men. The king is not pleased when he learns that Bevis has annihilated some of his best men; he would hang him for treason but his beautiful daughter, Josian, intercedes, arguing

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that the novice warrior acted only in self-defense. Showing his grievous wounds Bevis again elicits the king's admiration, and when he reverses his judgment, Josian provides medical aid. This marks the beginning of her love for Bevis.

The episode ends with a battle between Bevis and a vicious, man-eating boar. In a contest that takes all day, Bevis finally makes the kill by inserting his sword in the beast's open mouth and carving its heart in two. He then cuts off the boar's head which he initially plans to present to Josian. Those plans change, however, when Bevis is attacked by an envious steward and several of the king's men. In protecting himself, Bevis slays his attackers and cuts off the steward's head. But rather than take the steward's head to the king to expose the steward's treachery, Bevis delivers the boar's head in its place. Meanwhile, Josian has witnessed the entire event from her tower and falls ever more deeply in love with this amazing young man.

Episode Two:

King Brademond requests Josian's hand in marriage, threatening to destroy Ermin's kingdom should he refuse. The act provokes hostilities and provides Bevis an opportunity to demonstrate his martial prowess which by this time is fully endorsed by Josian. The king agrees to dub the young man and presents him with a special sword named Morgelai and an extraordinary horse named Arondel, both of which prove invaluable during the course of Bevis' career. Thus armed and mobilized, Bevis leads a host of thirty thousand into battle against King Redefoun, Brademond's ally; sixty thousand Saracens are slain. When Brademond witnesses the carnage he flees, only to be caught and challenged to hand-to-hand combat with Bevis himself. When Brademond realizes that this battle could be his last, he cries for mercy. But rather than cut off his head, as the Emperor of Germany had done to his father, Bevis extracts, instead, Brademond's promise of homage to King Ermin.

When Bevis returns to the victory celebration, Josian declares her love for him. But Bevis is taken aback by her assertive behavior and declines her willingness to submit to him in any way. Angry and frustrated at his rejection, she calls him a churl, an insult to which he responds by retreating to the nearest inn. Not easily dissuaded, however, Josian sends her messenger, Bonefas, with an apology. In acknowledgment Bevis sends her a white silk mantle, the extravagance of which compels Josian to seek him out herself. Reluctant to talk with her, however, Bevis feigns sleep, but Josian persists and in a desperate plea for his love, pledges conversion to Christianity. At this magnanimous gesture, Bevis acquiesces and they seal their reconciliation and future together with a kiss. Meanwhile, smoldering with anger and envy, Brademond starts a rumor that Bevis has deflowered Josian; when her father hears it, he orders Bevis to take a letter to Brademond

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demanding Bevis' death; the newly dubbed knight is ordered to leave his sword and horse at home. Meanwhile, back in England, Saber sends his son, Terri, to find Bevis.

Terri's search takes him all over Europe and the Middle East where he soon meets Bevis while both are seeking repose under a tree one day. Terri, who has never met the man he has been sent to find, does not recognize Bevis. But when he asks this stranger whether he has heard about a child sold to the Saracens, Bevis reveals his identity and a nostalgic scene ensues; it is followed by a brief discussion of the letter Bevis is delivering to Brademond. Bevis knows nothing of its contents and suspects neither the king's betrayal nor Brademond's treacherous motives. Before they part, Bevis requests Terri to take a message to Saber to spread a rumor in England that he is dead. Terri agrees and they separate, going in opposite directions. When Bevis reaches Damascus he commits an impious act against the Saracen gods (throws them in the dirt) before presenting himself to Brademond. When Brademond reads King Ermin's letter of betrayal, he personally restrains the young man while his men subdue him and cast him into a pit twenty fathoms deep. In this deep, dark prison Bevis is bound to a great stone and fed only bread and water.

The scene then switches to Josian who does not know what her father has done. When she asks Bevis' whereabouts, he tells her that her beloved has married an English princess; Josian is grief stricken. This is the point at which King Yvor enters the narrative by proposing a marriage suit that is almost immediately granted by Josian's father. Yvor not only acquires Josian in this deal, but also Arondel, Bevis' wonder horse which Yvor soon discovers can be ridden only by one man. When he is unceremoniously thrown, Yvor commands that Arondel be fettered and chained in a manner reminiscent of Bevis' punishment. Meanwhile, back in his pit, Bevis is attacked by a venomous snake that scars his forehead for life. Now in his seventh year of imprisonment, Bevis is so overwhelmed by despair that in desperation he prays for help; shortly thereafter there appears an opportunity to dispatch his wardens. Another prayer frees him from the great stone and he climbs out of the prison, rearms himself, and finds a horse to make his escape. He dupes the porter into opening the castle gates and rides until he can ride no farther. Then in a state of utter fatigue he falls asleep and dreams that Brademond and seven kings are about to kill him. Startled into wakefulness he rides like a madman until inevitably Brademond's search party catches up with him. One of the kings in the group, King Grander, challenges Bevis to combat and soon loses his life. Bevis quickly confiscates Grander's horse, Trenchefis, and with Brademond's men in hot pursuit, horse and rider leap into the sea and swim for their lives.

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Episode Three:

What would seem to be a trivial event launches the third episode — when Trenchefis arises from the sea, shaking himself dry, he inadvertently throws the enervated Bevis to the ground which jars the knight's memory of the horse he left behind. This remembrance spurs him to continue riding until he finds a town that he soon discovers is under siege by a giant, the brother of King Grander. When the giant recognizes Bevis' steed as his brother's, he attacks and accidentally kills his brother's horse. Horseless and wounded, Bevis prevails nonetheless, liberating the townspeople by defeating their oppressor. Grateful, they tend to his wounds until he is ready to continue his journey. On the way he stops off in Jerusalem to visit with a patriarch who tells him to marry no woman unless she is a virgin. This reminds Bevis that he has also left Josian in Armenia, a memory that triggers an adjustment to the purpose of his journey.

When he arrives at the Armenian court he learns that Josian has been married off to King Yvor, who has also acquired Morgelai and Arondel. This triple affront prompts Bevis to press on to Mombraunt, Yvor's stronghold, with intent to recuperate his losses. When he arrives, Yvor is out hunting whereupon Bevis disguises himself as a beggar to gain an audience with Josian, who has already acquired a reputation for generosity toward the needy. When she asks the homeless and transient group before her whether anyone has heard about a man named Bevis, Bevis, in disguise, replies in the affirmative. But before revealing his identity he arranges to see the imprisoned wonder horse. When Arondel shows signs of immediate recognition, Josian realizes who the pilgrim is and reminds Bevis of their tacit betrothal. But since she is already married and presumably not a virgin anymore, Bevis rescinds his commitment. Josian persists in her claim that she has remained a virgin despite her marriage to Yvor and dares him to find anyone to prove otherwise. Meanwhile, her servant Bonefas strongly urges escape since the king is expected back at any moment. Yvor soon arrives but when he is told that his brother, the King of Dabilent, is under siege, he bequeaths guardianship of the city to Garcy, an elderly king, and departs. Bevis and his cohorts drug Garcy in order to escape. But because Garcy is a necromancer he can see in his magic ring where they have gone and instructs a formidable giant named Ascopard to track them and kill Bevis.

Meanwhile, Bevis and company hide in a cave where they soon grow very hungry. When Bevis goes out to hunt, leaving Bonefas and Josian alone, they are attacked by two ferocious lions. The beasts kill Bonefas and his horse, but leave Josian, who is protected by her virginity, unharmed. When Bevis returns, he too is attacked and when Josian offers to help him fight, Bevis refuses for the insult to his masculine pride. He gets wounded in a prolonged fight but finally defeats both lions. Bevis sets Josian upon a mule, and they ride forth. Soon they meet Ascopard whose ambush provokes angry retaliation from Bevis. Josian intercedes successfully this time and recruits Ascopard as Bevis' page before either

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is killed. Together the three find a ship filled with Saracens whom Ascopard quickly dispatches; he then carries Bevis, Josian and her mule, and Arondel to the ship and they sail away to Cologne. There they meet with Bevis' uncle Saber (not to be confused with his teacher back in England) who is a Florentine bishop. Bevis requests that Josian and Ascopard be baptized into the Christian faith. Josian willingly accepts, but Ascopard rejects the offer, saying that he is too large to fit into the baptismal font.

In Cologne there is a dragon whose origin prompts a minor digression. The dragon is one of two kings magically transformed after a twenty-four-year battle, until a hermit prays for their demise. One then flies to Tuscany where it takes up residence under a cliff at Cologne; the other flies to Rome where every seven years it raises a stench that makes the local folks sick. Before his battle with the beast of Cologne commences, Bevis dreams that he is attacked and covered with its venom. Shaken by the premonition, he asks Ascopard whether they should fight the beast together. At first Ascopard agrees, but when he realizes the dangers of such an endeavor he declines the invitation.

Episode Four:

Bevis' battle with the dragon carries on for days, wearing down the hero's strength. Nearby, however, there is a well made holy, legend says, by the bathing of a virgin. The weary and desperate Bevis drinks from the well and calls on St. George for help. Miraculously, he regains his strength to continue the fight until the dragon spews forth its venom, rendering Bevis' premonitory dream true. His armor bursts; his skin becomes leprous; he cries for divine aid. The third time he is thrown into the well, he recovers his courage, his leprous skin is healed, and as a whole man he assails the dragon again. The hero soon prevails, cuts the dragon's tongue out, and displays it for the liberated townspeople to see. Then in a quiet moment, Bevis seeks counsel from Saber Florentine about his patrimony in England; the bishop advises him to go back and fight. Bevis arranges to leave and assigns Ascopard the task of protecting Josian.

The scene then switches to Josian who has been admired from afar by an earl named Miles. In order to entice Ascopard away from her, the earl sends him a false letter from Bevis and when Ascopard is safely removed, Miles forces Josian into wedlock. Josian, whose will is not to be taken lightly, murders him on their wedding night before the marriage is consummated. The next day her deed is discovered, however, and she is condemned to death. By the time Ascopard breaks away from his imprisonment and gets to Josian, Bevis is already there; he berates the giant for neglecting his guard duties, but after Ascopard offers a rational explanation of events, Bevis' anger is assuaged; together they rescue Josian and sail back to the Isle of Wight.

Bevis enters Hampton disguised as a Frenchman named Gerard and consults with the emperor about procuring military support in a fight against Saber, who by this time has

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become the emperor's sworn enemy. The cover story works, and a poignant reunion between Bevis and his beloved teacher ensues on the Isle of Wight. Bevis then orders a messenger to return to the emperor to disclose his deception. The emperor is so enraged by the duping that he flings his knife at the messenger and accidentally kills his own son. The messenger then insults the emperor — too much sex has distorted your vision!

During the culminating battle against the emperor, Bevis soon finds himself face to face with his stepfather who is rescued before Bevis can kill him. However, where Bevis fails Ascopard succeeds, and he soon delivers the emperor to Saber's castle where he is thrown into a kettle of molten lead. When Bevis' mother witnesses her husband's gruesome demise, she falls from her tower and breaks her neck. Bevis thus regains his patrimony and sends for Josian and his uncle the bishop to officiate at their wedding. Shortly thereafter, Josian is pregnant with twins.

Bevis requests an audience with the English monarch, King Edgar, in order to gain proper recognition of his reacquired estates. The king, impressed with the courageous man before him, not only renders approbation but also makes Bevis his marshal. The king's son admires Bevis' horse, but Arondel kicks him and the prince dies. King Edgar is very angry and condemns Bevis to death until his barons convince him that only the horse should be put to death. But Bevis would rather relinquish his estates than lose Arondel again. So Bevis, the pregnant Josian, Terri, Ascopard, and Arondel leave for Armenia. When Terri is made Bevis' page, Ascopard begins to plot his betrayal.

Episode Five:

King Yvor receives Ascopard and demands that he abduct Josian. Ascopard, now a traitor, kidnaps Josian immediately after she has given birth to twin sons — Miles and Guy — while Bevis and Terri are off building a hut for her. Her abductors beat her with their swords, bind her hands, and carry her away, leaving her infants unattended. When Bevis and Terri return, they find the boys alone and soon foster them — one to a forester and the other to a fisherman — with instructions to baptize them. Meanwhile, Josian makes herself appear leprous so that the king might be more likely to reject her. The strategy works: he sends her away into the wilderness with Ascopard as her guard.

Bevis and Terri have no idea where Josian has been taken, but come across a tournament being fought for the hand of the princess of Aumbeforce. Bevis and Terri enter and when Bevis demonstrates his prowess the princess wants to marry him. He objects, citing a wife as an impediment to such a marriage, but the persistent princess makes him a deal he cannot refuse. They will live in marital chastity for seven years after which time consummation would occur. Should Josian return before that time, however, the princess agrees to separate from Bevis and wed Terri in his place.

Back in Hampton, Saber dreams that Bevis is on his way to the shrines of St. James and

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St. Giles. When Saber's wife interprets the dream — i.e., Bevis has lost either his wife or child — the concerned Saber, with twelve of his knights, initiates another search. They discover the castle in which Ascopard has imprisoned Josian; when she calls to them from the tower they attack. Saber kills Ascopard in battle, then he and Josian alone resume the search for Bevis and Terri. During their wanderings, Saber falls ill and Josian supports them both through her minstrelsy. She prays that Saber will be healed, and finally he is. They continue on their way and eventually find Bevis and Terri. Another poignant reunion takes place.

Josian and Bevis are soon reunited with their children, and Terri is wedded to the princess of Aumbeforce. Together they help King Ermin battle Yvor. Bevis beats Yvor in combat and sends him to Ermin for judgment only to have him ransomed rather than executed. King Ermin dies shortly thereafter making Bevis' son Guy his heir. Together Bevis and Guy convert all of Armenia to Christianity, and Saber goes home to England. A thief from Yvor's court steals Arondel, which prompts another of Saber's premonitory dreams, and compels his return to Armenia to retrieve the horse with several of Yvor's knights in pursuit. Bevis' sons prove themselves in battle and rescue Saber from certain death. A confrontation between Bevis and Yvor takes place on a small nearby island. Inevitably, Yvor is defeated and Bevis is crowned king of Mombraunt in his place. At this point a messenger arrives from England to report that King Edgar has confiscated Saber's son's land, and Bevis promises to aid Saber in a war against the English king. When they arrive, Bevis leaves his army at Hampton, rides to London to make a courteous appeal for restoration of the land. The king receives him and is about to comply with his request when suddenly dissent erupts from his steward. Proclaiming Bevis an outlaw and a traitor, a provocative action indeed, the steward is pursued to Cheapside where an intense street battle commences. News that Bevis has been killed reaches Josian back in Hampton, and she sends her two sons to avenge his death. Instead, Guy rescues his father with his brother's help and victory is proclaimed. Josian is then brought to London for the celebration.

King Edgar offers his only daughter to Miles in marriage. Bevis bequeaths his property and earldom to Saber, and, together, Bevis, Josian, and Guy go back to Armenia where Guy is king. Bevis and Josian continue on to Mombraunt where they live and rule for twenty years until Josian becomes ill. At about the same time Bevis finds Arondel dead in his stall. Soon afterward, Josian and Bevis die together in a poignant embrace. Guy orders that his parents be interred in a newly constructed chapel dedicated to St. Lawrence. He also founds a religious house where songs for their souls and for the soul of the great horse Arondel are to be sung every day.

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Realism and the Exotic in *Bevis*

The Anglo-Norman version of *Bevis* is, as Barron suggests, rooted in the need to establish a native ancestry for a new set of rulers.⁸ While this dynastic impulse is still surely present in the Middle English versions, with a pre-conquest hero dressed in the garb and the virtues of present-day England, the poem's most characteristic virtues have at least as much to do with adventure as with ideology. The incredible geographic sweep — which gets more and more misty and impressionistic the farther we go from England — is perhaps a way of placing England within the larger rhythms of world history, but it is also a way to have adventure on the grandest possible scale. As in the other romances in this volume, especially *Havelok*, there is an intriguing combination of the exotic and supernatural combined with very realistic detail, local color, and homey touches. In *Bevis*, miraculous escapes from prison are juxtaposed with the naming and the description of actual streets in Cheapside. The final set of battles is one particularly impressive example of using local scenes to energize the story.

Bevis of Hampton was one of the best known and most popular of the Middle English romances (Mehl, p. 211). Yet critical response has not always been kind to our hero, whose story seems in part to be a victim of its own popularity. In the conclusion to *English Medieval Romances*, W. R. J. Barron comes close to damning the poem with only the slightest touch of accompanying faint praise, writing that “[t]he English versions of *Bevis* and *Guy [of Warwick]* are competent but somewhat vulgarized, given to the reduplication of striking effects, paying lip-service to the hero's values while almost wholly preoccupied by their adventures” (p. 233). This characterization of *Bevis* is probably both accurate and at the same time unfair. *Bevis* is first and foremost an adventure story. But if the values of the hero are not particularly deep, they are nonetheless heartfelt, and expressed with admirable verve. And we should be reluctant to underestimate the value of a good adventure story or the difficulty of producing one. Its energy and its variety, perhaps more than anything, are what enable modern readers to understand its earlier popularity and also to respond to it in the present.

⁸ W. R. J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 217.

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Bevis of Hampton

- Lordinges, herkneth to me tale!
Is merier than the nightingale,
That I schel singe;
5 Of a knight ich wile yow roune,
Beves a highte of Hamtoune,
Withouten lesing.
- 10 Ich wile yow tellen al togadre
Of that knight and of is fadre,
Sire Gii.
15 Of Hamtoun he was sire
And of al that ilche schire,
To wardi.
- 20 Lordinges, this, of whan I telle,
Never man of flesch ne felle
Nas so strong.
25 Whan he was fallen in to elde,
That he ne mighte himself welde,
He wolde a wif take,
Sone thar after, ich understande,
Him hadde be lever than al this londe
Hadde he hire forsake.¹
- 25 An elde a wif he tok an honde,
The kinges doughter of Scotlonde,
- I will sing to you*
he [is] called
lying
- I; together*
his
- same shire*
guard
- skin*
Was not
quarrel
lived
- old age*
control
- elderly man*

¹ Lines 23–24: *It would have been better had he forsaken her than lose all his land*

Bevis of Hampton

- So faire and bright.
 Allas, that he hire ever ches!
 For hire love his lif a les
 30 With mechel unright.
- This maide ichave of ytold,
 Faire maide she was and bold
 And fre yboren;
 Of Almayne that emperur
 35 Hire hadde loved paramur
 Wel thar beforen.
- Ofte to hire fader a sente
 And he him selve theder wente
 For hire sake;
 40 Ofte gernede hire to wive;
 The king for no thing alive
 Nolde hire him take.¹
- Sithe a yaf hire to sire Gii,
 A stalword erl and hardi
 45 Of Southhamtoun.
 Man, whan he falleth in to elde.
 Feeble a wexeth and unbelde
 Thourgh right resoun.
- So longe thai yede togedres to bedde,
 50 A knave child betwene hem thai hedde,
 Beves a het.
 Faire child he was and bolde,
 He nas boute seve winter olde,
 Whan his fader was ded.
- 55 The levedi hire misbethoughte
 And meche aghen the right she wroughte
 In hire tour:

*chos
he lost
much evil*

I have

*nobly born
Germany
as a mistress*

*he
there (thither)*

desired

*Then he gave
old age
Feeble he grew; unbold*

they went

he was called

not quite seven

*lady; had evil thoughts
much against
tower*

¹ Lines 41–42: *The king did not wish him to take her away, for anything alive*

Bevis of Hampton

- “Me lord is olde and may nought werche,
Al dai him is lever at cherche,
60 Than in me bouri.”¹ *work
rather*
- Hadde ich itaken a yong knight,
That ner nought brused in werre and fight,
65 Also he is,
A wolde me loven dai and night,
Cleppen and kissen with al is might
65 And make me blis.
- I nel hit lete for no thinge,
That ich nel him to dethe bringe
70 With sum braide!”
Anon right that levedi fer
To consaile clepede hir masager
70 And to him saide:
- “Maseger, do me surté,
That thow nelt nought discure me
75 To no wight!
And yif thow wilt, that it so be,
I schel thee yeve gold and fe
75 And make the knight.”
- Thanne answerde the masager —
80 False a was, that pautener,
 And wel prut —
“Dame, boute ich do thee nede,
Ich graunte, thow me forbede
80 The londe thourgh out.”
- The levedi thanne was wel fain:
“Go,” she seide, “in to Almaine
85 Out of me bouri!
Maseger, be yep and snel,

will not allow it

do not

trick

Soon; lady fierce

counsel called; messenger

Messenger, promise me

disclose

person

wish

property

vagabond

proud

unless I do your bidding

imagine you would forbid me

glad

Germany

chamber

prompt; swift

¹ Lines 59–60: *All day he would rather be in church / Than in my bower*

Bevis of Hampton

- 90 And on min half thow grete wel *behalf*
 That emperur,
- 145 And bid, in the ferste dai,
 That cometh in the moneth of May,
 For love of me,
 That he be to fighte prest *ready*
150 With is ferde in hare forest
 Beside the se. *his retinue; our sea*
- 195 Me lord ich wile theder sende
 For his love, for to schende *destroy*
 And for to sle; *kill*
200 Bid him, that hit be nought beleved,
 That he ne smite of his heved *believed*
 And sende hit me! *cut off; head*
- 245 And whan he haveth so ydo,
 Me love he schel underfo, *done*
250 Withouten delai! *My; receive*
- 295 Thanne seide that masager:
 "Madame, ich wile sone be ther!
 Now have gode dai!"
- 340 Now that masager him goth.
110 That ilche lord him worthe wroth, *same; became angry*
 That him wroughte!
- 385 To schip that masager him wode. *ship; went*
 Allas! The wind was al to gode,
 That him over broughte.
- 430 Tho he com in to Almayne,
 Thar a mette with a swain *he; servant*
 And grette him wel.
 "Felawe," a seide, "par amur:
 Whar mai ich finde th'emperur? *if you please
120 Thow me tel!" *the emperor**

Bevis of Hampton

- "Ich wile thee telle anon right:
 At Rifoun a lai tonight,
 Be me swere!" *he lay
by my oath*
- 125 The masager him thankede anon
 And thederwardes he gan gon
 Withouten demere. *thither
delay*
- Th'empereur thar a fonde;
 Adoun a knevlede on the grounde,
 Ase hit was right, *he found
he knelt*
- 130 And seide: "The levedi of South Hamtome
 Thee grette wel be Godes sone,
 That is so bright, *Greets you; by God's son*
- And bad thee, in the ferste day
 That cometh in the moneth o May,
 How so hit be, *ready*
- 135 That ye be to fighte prest
 With your ferde in hare forest
 Beside the se. *retinue; her*
- Hire lord she wile theder sende
 For the love, for to schende, *kill*
 With lite meini; *With few followers*
- 140 Thar aboute thou schost be fouse,
 And thou schelt after her wedde to spouse,
 To thin amy." *strenuous
as
love*
- 145 "Sai," a seide, "Icham at hire heste:
 Yif me lif hit wile leste,
 Hit schel be do! *he said; command
If my life will last
It shall be done*
- Gladder icham for that sawe,
 Than be foul, whan hit ginneth dawe,
 And sai hire so! *advice
Than birds; it begins to dawn
tell her so*
- 150 And for thou woldes hire erande bede,
 An hors icarged with golde rede *make known
laden with red gold*
- Ich schel thee yeve,
 And withinne this fourtene night

Bevis of Hampton

- 155 Me self schel dobbe thee to knight,
Yif that ich live." *dub you knight*
- The mesager him thankede yerne;
Hom ayen he gan him terne
To Hamtoun; *earnestly*
Home again
- 160 The levedi a fond in hire bour,
And he hire clepede doceamur
And gan to roun: *he found; chamber*
embraced sweetly
began to talk secretly
- "Dame," a seide, "I thee tel:
That emperur thee grette wel
With love mest: *greets you well*
greatest love
- 165 Glad he is for that tiding,
A wile be prest at that fighting
In that forest. *He will be ready for*
- Yif thow ert glad the lord to sle,
Gladder a is for love of thee
Fele sithe!" *you are happy*
Happier he is
Many times
- The mesager hath thus isaid,
The levedi was right wel apaid
And maked hire blithe. *content*
- 175 In Mai, in the formeste dai,
The levedi in hire bedde lai,
Ase hit wer nede; *foremost (first)*
- Hire lord she clepede out of halle
And seide, that evel was on hire falle,
She wende be ded. *As though it were a necessity*
called
evil (sickness)
She thought [she would] be dead
- 180 That erl for hire hath sorwe ikaught
And askede, yif she desired aught,
That mighte hire frevre.
"Ye," she seide, "of a wilde bor *earl; sympathetized*
if; desired anything
might comfort her
boar

Bevis of Hampton

- 185 I wene, me mineth, boute for
Al of the fevre!"¹
- "Madame," a seide, "for love myn,
Whar mai ich finde that wilde swin?
I wolde, thow it hadde!"
- 190 And she answerde with tresoun mest,
Be the se in hare forest,
Thar a bradde.
- That erl swor, be Godes grace,
In that forest he wolde chace,
195 That bor to take;
And she answerde with tresoun than;
"Blessed be thow of alle man
For mine sake!"
- That erl is hors began to stride,
200 His scheld he heng upon is side,
Gert with swerd;
Moste non armur on him come,
Himself was boute the ferthe some
Toward that ferd.
- Allas, that he nadde be war
Of is fomen, that weren thar,
205 Him forte schende:
With tresoun worth he ther islawe
And ibrought of is lif-dawe,
Er he hom wende!
- Whan he com in to the forest,
Th'emerur a fond al prest;
For envi
A prikede out before is ost,
- my love
Where; swine
- treason
our
he breeds
- his; mount
shield; his
Armed
- among a group of four
army
- had not been wary
enemies
To kill him
slain
from his life
Before
- he found all ready
spurred; his host

¹ Lines 184–86: "Yes," she said, "from a wild boar I think, if memory serves me right, remedy [will come] for all of the fever."

Bevis of Hampton

- 215 For pride and for make bost,
And gan to crie:

“Aghilt thee, treitour! thou olde dote!
Thow shelt ben hanged be the throte,
Thin heved thou schelt lese;
The sone schel anhanged be
And the wif, that is so fre,
To me leman I chese!”

Th’erl answerde at that sawe:
“Me thenketh, thow seist ayen the lawe,
So God me amende!
Me wif and child, that was so fre,
Yif thou thenkest beneme hem me,
Ich schel hem defende!”

Tho prikede is stede Sire Gii,
A stalword man and hardi,
While he was sounde;
Th’emperur he smot with is spere,
Out of is sadel he gan him bere
And threw him to grounde.

“Treitour,” a seide, “thow ert to bolde!
Wenestow, thegh ich bo olde,
To ben afered?
That thow havest no right to me wif,
I schel thee kithe be me lif!”
And drough is swerd.

That erl held is swerd adrawe,
Th’emperur with he hadde slawe,
Nadde be sokour:
Thar come knighting mani and fale,
Wel ten thosent told be tale,
To th’emperur.
- boast
Surrender; traitor; fool
head; lose
Your son
noble
I choose for my lover

The earl; speech
speak against
noble
to take them from me
them

spurred his horse
healthy
his saddle

too
Do you think since I am old
To be afraid
my
show
drew

drawn
would have slain
Had there not been help
many; numerous
thousand tolled by tally

Bevis of Hampton

- | | |
|--|---|
| Tho Sire Gii him gan defende,
Thre hondred hevedes of a slende
With is brond; | <i>himself
heads he struck off
sword</i> |
| 250 Hadde he ben armed wel, ywis,
Al the meistré hadde ben his,
Ich understande. | <i>well-armed; I imagine
victory</i> |
| | |
| Thre men were slawe, that he ther hadde,
That he with him out ladde
And moste nede; | <i>slain
and needed the most</i> |
| 255 To have merci, that was is hope;
Th'embrerur after him is lope
Upon a stede. | <i>his
rode
his horse</i> |
| | |
| Th'erl knewlede to th'embrerur,
Merci a bad him and sokour
And is lif: | <i>knelt
succor
his life</i> |
| 260 "Merci, sire, ase thou art fre,
Al that ichave, I graunte thee,
Boute me wif! | <i>noble
I have
Except</i> |
| | |
| 265 For thine men, that ichave slawe,
Have her me swerd idrawe
And al me fe: | <i>I have slain
here; drawn
possessions</i> |
| Boute me yonge sone Bef
And me wif, that is me lef,
270 That let thou me!" | <i>Except; Bevis
my beloved</i> |
| | |
| "For Gode," queth he, "that ich do nelle!"
Th'embrerur to him gan telle,
And was agreed, | <i>will not do
angered</i> |
| 275 Anon right is swerd out drough
And the gode knight a slough
And nam is heved. | <i>slew
took his head</i> |
| | |
| A knight a tok the heved an honde:
"Have," a seide, "ber this sonde
Me leve swet!" | <i>take; message
[To] my sweet love</i> |
| 280 The knight to Hamtoun tho gan gon, | |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | The levedi thar a fond anon
And gan hire grete: | <i>he found soon
greet</i> |
| 285 | "Dame," a seide, "to me atende:
Th'emerur me hider sende
With is pray!"
And she seide: "Blessed mot he be!
To wif a schel wedde me
To morwe in the dai. | <i>listen to me
sent me hither
prize
he shall
Tomorrow</i> |
| 290 | Sai him, me swete wight,
That he come yet to night
In to me bour!"
The mesager is wei hath holde,
Al a seide, ase she him tolde,
To th'emerur. | <i>tell; man
my bedchamber
held his way
All he said</i> |
| 295 | Now scholle we of him mone,
Of Beves, that was Guis sone,
How wo him was:
Yerne a wep, is hondes wrong,
For his fader a seide among:
"Allas! Allas!" | <i>speak
Guy's son
sorrowful
<i>Earnestly he wept, he wrung his hands</i>
repeatedly</i> |
| 300 | He cleded is moder and seide is sawe:
"Vile houre! Thee worst to-drawe
And al to-twight!
Me thenketh, ich were ther-of ful fawe,
For thow hastest me fader slawe
With mechel unright! | <i>called; speech
whore; You should be drawn
pulled apart
I would be very glad
slain my father
much injustice</i> |
| 310 | Allas, moder, thee faire ble!
Evel becometh thee, houre to be,
To holde bordel,
And alle wif houren for thee sake,
The devel of helle ich hii betake,
Flesch and fel! | <i>complexion
Evil becomes you, whore
manage [a] brothel
all women whore (i.e., work for you)
I would deliver them
skin</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|
| | Ac o thing, moder, I schel thee swere: | <i>But one</i> |
| | Yif ich ever armes bere | |
| 315 | And be of elde, | <i>age</i> |
| | Al that hath me fader islawe | <i>slain</i> |
| | And ibrought of is lif dawe, | <i>dear</i> |
| | Ich shel hem yilden!" | <i>repay</i> |
| | The moder hire hath understande, | |
| 320 | That child she smot with hire honde | |
| | Under is ere. | <i>his ear</i> |
| | The child fel doun and that was scathe, | <i>pity</i> |
| | His meister tok him wel rathe, | <i>mentor; quickly</i> |
| | That highte Saber. | <i>Who was called</i> |
| 325 | The knight was trewe and of kinde, | <i>by nature</i> |
| | Strenger man ne scholde men finde | |
| | To ride ne go. | |
| | A was ibrought in tene and wrake | <i>He (Saber); harm; injury</i> |
| | Ofte for that childe's sake | |
| 330 | Ase wel ase tho. | <i>then</i> |
| | That childe he nam up be the arm, | <i>took</i> |
| | Wel wo him was for that harm, | |
| | That he thar hadde, | |
| | Toward is kourt he him kende; | <i>showed the way</i> |
| 335 | The levedi after Saber sende | <i>sent after</i> |
| | And to him radde. | <i>spoke</i> |
| | "Saber," she seide, "thow ert me lef, | <i>love</i> |
| | Let sle me yonge sone Bef, | <i>slay; Bevis</i> |
| | That is so bold!" ¹ | |
| 340 | Let him anhang swithe highe, | <i>very high</i> |
| | I ne reche, what deth he dighe, | |
| | Sithe he be cold!" ¹ | |

¹ Lines 341–42: *I do not care what kind of death he dies. / As long as he is cold*

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| | Saber stod stille and was ful wo; | |
| | Natheles a seide, a wolde do | Nevertheless |
| 345 | After hire sawe; | command |
| | The child with him hom he nam, | he took home |
| | A swin he tok, whan he hom cam, | swine |
| | And dede hit of dawe. | killed it |
| | The childe's clothes, that were gode, | |
| 350 | Al a bisprengde with that blode | sprinkled |
| | In many stede, | places |
| | Ase yif the child were to-hewe, | cut apart |
| | A thoughte to his moder hem schewe, | He; show |
| | And so a dede. | he did |
| 355 | At the laste him gan adrede, | to be afraid |
| | He let clothen in pouer wede | poor clothes |
| | That hende wight, | gentle person |
| | And seide: "Sone, thou most kepe | |
| | Upon the felde mine schepe | sheep |
| 360 | This fourte night! | fortnight (two weeks) |
| | And whan the feste is come to th'ende, | |
| | In to another londe I schel thee sende | |
| | Fer be southe, | |
| | To a riche erl, that schel thee gie | guide you |
| 365 | And teche thee of corteisie | teach you courtesy |
| | In the youthe. | your |
| | And whan thou ert of swich elde, | such [an] age |
| | That thou might the self wilde, | govern |
| | And ert of age, | |
| 370 | Thanne scheltow come in te Ingelonde, | return to England |
| | With werre winne in to thin honde | win back |
| | Thin eritage. | Your heritage |
| | I schel thee helpe with alle me might, | all my |
| | With dent of swerd to gete thee right, | your rights |
| | Be thou of elde!" | [Until] you are of age |
| 375 | The child him thankede and sore wep, | thanked him; wept |

Bevis of Hampton

- And forth a wente with the schep
Upon the velde. field
- 380 Beves was herde upon the doun
He lokede homward to the toun,
That scholde ben his;
He beheld toward the tour,
Trompes he herde and tabour
And meche blis. shepherd; hill
tower
Trumpets; drum
much bliss (celebration)
- 385 "Lord," a seide, "on me thow mone!
Ne was ich ones an erles sone
And now am herde?
Mighte ich with that emperur speke,
Wel ich wolde me fader awreke
For al is ferde!" remember
once; earl's son
shepherd
avenge
Despite his retinue
- 390 He nemeth is bat and forth a goth,
Swithe sori and wel wroth,
Toward the tour;
"Porter!" a sede, "Let me in reke!
A lite thing ich ave to speke
With th'emperur." picked up; club
Deeply sorry; angry
quickly
little; have
- 395 "Go hom, truant!" the porter sede,
"Scherewe houre sone, I thee rede,
Fro the gate:
Boute thow go hennes also swithe,
Hit schel thee rewe fele sithe,
Thow come ther-ate!" vagrant
Wicked whore's; command
From
Unless
- 400 Sixte the scherewe, "Ho be itte,
A loketh, as a wolde smite
With is bat:
Speke he ought meche more, Said; evil man; How
If he says anything much more

¹ Lines 400–02: *Unless you go hence very quickly, / You shall rue it [as] many times / [As] you come there*

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | I schel him smite swithe sore
Upon is hat." | very sore |
| 410 | "For Gode," queth Beves, "natheles,
An houre sone for soth ich wes,
Wel ich it wot!
I nam no truant, be Godes grace!"
With that a lefte up is mace
Anon fot hot. | A whore's son
lifted; club
Quickly |
| 415 | Beves withoute the gate stod.
And smot the porter on the hod,
That he gan falle;
His heved he gan al to cleve
And forth a wente with that leve
In to the halle. | outside; stood
hood
head
permission |
| 420 | Al aboute he gan beholde,
To th'emerur he spak wordes bolde
With meche grame:
"Sire," a sede, "what dostow here?
Whi colles thou aboute the swire
That ilche dame? | anger
are you doing
embraces, neck
same |
| 425 | Me moder is that thou hastest an honde:
What dostow her upon me londe
Withouten leve? | permission |
| 430 | Tak me me moder and mi fe,
Boute thou the rather hennes te,
I schel thee greve! | Take [from] me my; property
Unless; sooner go
make trouble for you |
| 435 | Nastow, sire, me fader slawe?
Thow schelt ben hanged and to-drawe,
Be Godes wille!
Aris! Fle hennes, I thee rede!"
Th'emerur to him sede:
"Foul, be stille!" | Have you not; slain
drawn
Arise; advise
Fool |

Bevis of Hampton

- 440 Beves was nigh wod for grame,
For a clepede him "foul" be name,
 And to him a wond;
For al that weren in the place,
Thries a smot him with is mace
 And with is honde.
- 445 Thries a smot him on the kroun;
That emperur fel swowe adoun,
 Thar a sat.
The levedi, is moder, gan to grede:
"Nemeth that treitour!" she sede,
 "Anon with that!"
- 450 Tho dorste Beves no leng abide;
The knightes up in ech a side,
 More and lasse,
Wo hem was for the childe sake,
Boute non of hem nolde him take
 Hii lete him pase.
- 455 Beves goth faste ase he mai,
His meister a mette in the wai,
 That highte Saber,
And he him askede with blithe mod:
"Beves!" a seide, "for the Rode,
 What dostow her?"
- 460 "I schel thee telle al togadre:
Beten ichave me stifadre
 With me mace;
Thries I smot him in the heved,
Al for ded ich him leved
 In the place!"
- 465 "Beves," queth Saber, "thow ert to blame:
The levedi wile now do me schame
 For thine sake!
Boute thow be me consaile do,
- mad; anger
called; fool
he turned
- Three times; club
his hand
- crown (head)
in a swoon
- cry
Seize
- But none of them would take him
They; pass
- teacher he met
was called
uplifted spirits
Cross
are you doing here
- at once
Beaten; stepfather
- left
- will; shame (harm)
- Unless; counsel

Bevis of Hampton

- Thow might now sone bringe us bo
In meche wrake!" both
trouble
- 475 Saber Beves to his hous ladde,
Meche of that levedi him dradde.
The levedi out of the tour cam,
To Saber the wei she nam. led
he was very afraid
- "Saber," she seide, "whar is Bef,
480 That wike treitour, that fulle thef?" *she made her way*
- "Dame," a seide, "ich dede him of dawe
Be thee red and be thee sawe:
This beth his clothe, thow her sixt."
The levedi seide: "Saber thou lixt! By your advice; by your command
as you can see
you lie
Unless
pay
teacher (mentor); threatened
- 485 Boute thou me to him take,
Thow schelt abegge for is sake."
Beves herde his meister threte;
To hire a spak with hertte grete *Lo, I am here, by name*
- And seide: "Lo, me her be name!
490 Do me meister for me no schame!
Yif thow me sext, lo, whar ich am here!" *Do not shame my teacher on my behalf*
- His moder tok him be the ere;
Fain she wolde a were of live.
Foure knightes she clepede blive: *call for me; here I am*
- 495 "Wendeth," she seide, "to the stronde:
Yif ye seth schipes of painim londe,
Selleth to hem this ilche hyne,
That ye for no gode ne fine, *Eagerly she wished he were dead*
- Whather ye have for him mor and lesse,
500 Selleth him right in to hethenesse!" *called quickly
Go; shore
ships; heathen land
Sell to them; very boy
fine possessions*
- Forth the knightes gonне te,
Til that hii come to the se, *began to go*
- Schipes hii fonde ther stonde
Of hethenesse and of fele londe; *they*
- 505 The child hii chepeden to sale,
Marchaundes thai fonde ferli fale
And solde that child for mechel aughte
And to the Saracins him betaughte, *found standing there*
- Forth thai wente with that child,
510 Crist of hevene be him mild! *many
they offered to sell
Merchants; very many
a good price
delivered*

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|
| | The childes hertte was wel colde, | fearful |
| | For that he was so fer isolde; | far away sold |
| | Natheles, though him thoughte eile, | grief |
| | Toward painim a moste saile. | he must |
| 515 | Whan hii rivede out of that strand, | sailed forth |
| | The king highte Ermin of that londe; | was called |
| | His wif was ded, that highte Morage, | |
| | A doughter a hadde of yong age, | |
| | Josiane that maide het, | was named |
| 520 | Hire schon wer gold upon hire fet; | shoes; feet |
| | So faire she was and bright of mod, | mind |
| | Ase snow upon the rede blod — | |
| | Wharto scholde that may discribe? | To what should she be compared |
| | Men wiste no fairer thing alive, | knew |
| 525 | So hende ne wel itaught; | gentle nor well brought up |
| | Boute of Cristene lawe she kouthe naught. | Except; knew nothing |
| | The marchauns wente an highing | in haste |
| | And presente Beves to Ermyn King. | |
| | The king thar of was glad and blithe | |
| 530 | And thankede hem mani a sithe: | time |
| | “Mahoun!” a seide, “thee might be proute, | Mohammed; proud |
| | And this child wolde to thee aloute; | If; incline to |
| | Yif a wolde a Sarasin be, | If only [he] would be a Saracen |
| | Yit ich wolde hope, a scholde the! | As; he should prosper |
| 535 | Be Mahoun, that sit an high, | By Mohammed |
| | A fairer child never I ne sigh, | saw |
| | Neither a lingthe ne on brade, | length; breadth |
| | Ne non, so faire limes hade! | limbs |
| | Child,” a seide, “whar wer thee bore? | where were you born |
| 540 | What is thee name? telle me fore! | |
| | Yif ich it wiste, hit were me lef.” | It would please me if I knew it |
| | “For Gode,” a seide, “ich hatte Bef; | am called |
| | Iborne ich was in Ingelonde, | I was born; England |
| | At Hamtoun, be the se stronde. | seashore |
| 545 | Me fader was erl thar a while, | |
| | Me moder him let sle with gile, | murdered treacherously |
| | And me she solde in to hethenlonde; | |
| | Wikked beth fele wimmen to fonde! | many; prove to be |
| | Ac, sire, yif it ever so betide, | But; happen |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 550 | That ich mowe an horse ride
And armes bere and scheft tobreke,
Me fader deth ich schel wel wreke!"
The kinges hertte wex wel cold,
Whan Beves hadde thus itolde, | <i>might</i>
<i>lance shatter</i>
<i>avenge</i>
<i>heart grew</i> |
| 555 | And seide: "I nave non eir after me dai,
Boute Josian, this faire mai;
And thow wile thee god forsake
And to Apolyn, me lord, take,
Hire I schel thee yeve to wive
And al me lond after me live!" | <i>have no heir</i>
<i>Except; maiden</i>
<i>If you forsake your god</i> |
| 560 | "For Gode!" queth Beves, "that I nolde
For al the selver ne al the golde,
That is under hevene light,
Ne for thee daughter, that is so bright. | <i>give [her] to you to marry</i>
<i>when I die</i>
<i>would not</i>
<i>silver</i> |
| 565 | I nolde forsake in none manere
Jesu, that boughte me so dere.
Al mote thai be doum and deve,
That on the false godes beleve!"
The king him lovede wel the more, | <i>Neither</i>

<i>redeemed</i>
<i>dumb; deaf</i> |
| 570 | For him ne stod of no man sore,
And seide: "Beves, while thow ert swain,
Thow schelt be me chaumberlain,
And thow schelt, whan thow ert dobbed knight,
Me baner bere in to everi fight!" | <i>loved him</i>

<i>endured no other man's sorrow</i>
<i>servant</i> |
| 575 | Beves answerde al with skil:
"What ye me hoten, don ich wil!"
Beves was ther yer and other,
The king him lovede also is brother,
And the maide that was so sligh. | <i>dubbed</i>

<i>My banner bear</i> |
| 580 | So dede everi man that him sigh.
Be that he was fiftene yer olde,
Knight ne swain thar nas so bolde,
That him dorste aynes ride
Ne with wrethe him abide. | <i>command; I will do</i>
<i>a year and a second (two years)</i>
<i>as his</i>
<i>clever</i>
<i>saw</i> |
| 585 | His ferste bataile, for soth te say
A dede a Cristes messe day;
Ase Beves scholde to water ride | <i>By the time</i>

<i>ride against him (challenge)</i>
<i>anger tolerate him</i> |
| | | <i>He did on Christmas</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- And fiftene Sarasins be is side,
 And Beves rod on Arondel,
 That was a stede gode and lel.
 A Sarasin began to say
 And askede him, what het that day.
 Beves seide: "For soth ywis,
 I not never, what dai it is,
 For I nas boute seve winter old,
 Fro Cristendome ich was isold;
 Tharfore I ne can telle nought thee,
 What dai that hit mighte be."
 The Sarasin beheld and lough.
 "This dai," a saide, "I knowe wel inough.
 This is the ferste dai of Youl,
 Thee God was boren withouten doul;
 For thi men maken ther mor blisse
 Than men do her in hethenesse.
 Anoure thee God, so I schel myn,
 Bothe Mahoun and Apolyn!"
 Beves to that Sarasin said:
 "Of Cristendom yit ichave abraid,
 Ichave seie on this dai right
 Armed mani a gentil knight,
 Torneande right in the feld
 With helmes bright and mani scheld;
 And were ich also stith in plas,
 Ase ever Gii, me fader was,
 Ich wolde for me Lordes love,
 That sit high in hevene above,
 Fighte with yow everichon,
 Er than ich wolde hennes gon!"
 The Sarasin seide to his felawes:
 "Lo, brethern, hire ye nought this sawes,
 How the yonge Cristene hounde,
 A saith, a wolde us fallen te grounde.
 Wile we aboute him gon
 And fonde that treitour slon?"
 Al aboute thai gonне thringe,
 And hard on him thai gonне dinge
- loyal
speak
was called
do not know
seven
From
cannot tell you
looked at him; laughed
Yule
Your; pain
partake in greater joy
Honor
partaken
Tourneying
helmets; many [a] shield
as strong; [my] place
every one
Before leaving
Listen; these boasts
He; defeat us
Shall
try; to slay
press
to strike

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | And yaf him wondes mani on
Thourgh the flesch in to the bon,
Depe wondes and sore, | wounds |
| 630 | That he mighte sofre namore;
Tho his bodi began to smerte,
He gan plokken up is hertte,
Ase tid to a Sarasin a wond
And breide a swerd out of is honde, | suffer
hurt
<i>pluck up his courage</i>
<i>Quickly; he turned</i>
<i>took</i> |
| 635 | And fifti Sarasins, in that stonde
Thar with a yaf hem dedli wonde,
And sum he strok of the swire,
That the heved flegh in to the rivere,
And sum he clef evene asonder; | <i>place</i>
<i>them deadly wounds</i>
<i>some; severed; neck</i>
<i>head flew</i> |
| 640 | Here hors is fet thai laine under;
Ne was ther non, that mighte ascape,
So Beues slough hem in a rape.
The stedes hom to stable ran
Withouthe kenning of eni man. | <i>Their horses' feet; they lay</i>
<i>There were none</i>
<i>them hastily</i>
<i>home</i>
<i>guidance from</i> |
| 645 | Beves hom began to ride,
His wondes bledde be ech side;
The stede he graithed up anon,
In to his chaumber he gan gon
And leide him deueling on the grounde, | <i>put into the stable</i>

<i>himself flat</i> |
| 650 | To kolen his hertte in that stounde.
Tiding com to King Ermyn
That Beves hadde mad is men tyn;
The king swor and seide is sawe.
For thi a scholde ben to-drawe. | <i>calm; place</i>
<i>Word</i>
<i>perish</i>
<i>his sentence</i>
<i>That he should</i> |
| 655 | Up stod that maide Josian,
And to hire fader she seide than:
“Sire, ich wot wel in me thought,
That thine men ne slough he nought,
Be Mahoun ne be Tervagaunt, | <i>know; mind</i> |
| 660 | Boute hit were himself defendaunt!
Ac, fader,” she saide, “be me red,
Er thou do Beves to ded,
Ich priae, sire, for love o me,
Do bringe that child before thee! | <i>Unless he were defending himself</i>
<i>And; advice</i>
<i>Before you put; death</i>
<i>pray</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- 665 Whan the child, that is so bold,
His owene tale hath itolde,
And thow wite the soth, aplight,
Who hath the wrong, who hath right,
Yef him his dom, that he schel have,
670 Whather thow wilt him slen or save?"
King Ermyn seide: "Me doughter fre,
Ase thow hastest seid, so it schel be!"
Josiane tho anon rightes
Clepede to hire twei knightes:
675 "To Beves now wende ye
And prai him, that he come to me:
Er me fader arise fro his des;
Ful wel ich schel maken is pes!"
Forth the knightes gonre gon,
680 To Beves chaumber thai come anon
And praid, ase he was gentil man,
Come speke with Josian.
Beves stoutliche in that stounde
Haf up is heved fro the grunde;
685 With stepe eighen and rowe bren
So lotheliche he gan on hem sen,
The twei knightes, thar thai stode,
Thai were aferde, hii wer nigh wode.
A seide: "Yif ye ner masegers,
690 Ich wolde yow sle, losengers!
I nele rise o fot fro the grunde,
For speke with an hethene hounde:
She is an honde, also be ye,
Out of me chaumber swithe ye fle!"
695 The knightes wenten out in rape,
Thai were fain so to ascape.
To Josian thai wente as tit
And seide: "Of him is gret despit:
Sertes, a clepede thee hethene hound
700 Thries in a lite stounde
We nolde for al Ermonie
Eft sones se him with our eie!"
"Hardeliche," she seide, "cometh with me,
- truth, indeed
Render; judgment
slay
noble
very soon
Called; two
make your way
ask
dais
peace
bravely
Heaved; head
bright; hairy brows
loathly; looked to them
afraid; confused
were not messengers
cowards
one foot from
heathen as you are
Get out quickly
haste
eager; escape
at once
Certainly, he called you heathen hound
Three times; short time
Armenia
Again
Hardily

Bevis of Hampton

	And ich wile your waraunt be!"	guarantee
705	Forth thai wente al isame, To Beves chaumber that he came. "Lemman," she seide, "gent and fre, For Godes love, spek with me!"	together Sweetheart
	She keste him bothe moth and chin	kissed; mouth
710	And yaf him confort gode afin, So him solaste that mai, That al is care wente awai, And seide: "Lemman, thin ore!	throughout gave solace; maiden
	Icham iwonded swithe sore!"	his mercy
715	"Lemman," she seide, "with gode entent Ichave brought an oyument, For make thee bothe hol and fere; Wende we to me fader dere!"	ointment To make you whole; sound
	Forth thai wenten an highing Til Ermyn, the riche king,	Let us go in haste
720	And Beves tolde unto him than, How that stour ended and gan, And schewed on him in that stounde Fourti grete, grishi wounde.	To conflict; began showed; place
725	Thanne seide King Ermin the hore: "I nolde, Beves, that thou ded wore For al the londes, that ichave; Ich pracie, daughter, that thou him save	grayhaired do not wish
	And prove to hele, ase thou can, The wondes of that droughti man!"	bring to health brave
730	In to chaumber she gan him take And riche bathes she let him make, That withinne a lite stonde He was bothe hol and sonde.	healthful in a short time whole and sound
735	Thanne was he ase fresch to fight, So was the faukoun to the flight. His other prowesse who wile lere, Hende, herkneth, and ye mai here!	As; falcon learn Nobles
	A wilde bor thar was aboute, Ech man of him hadde gret doute.	boar fear
740	Man and houndes, that he tok, With his toskes he al toschok.	tusks; shook to pieces

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 745 | Thei him hontede knightes tene,
Tharof ne yef he nought a bene,
At is mouth fif toskes stoden out,
Everich was fif enches about,
His sides wer hard and strong,
His brostles were gret and long,
Himself was fel and kouthe fighte,
No man sle him ne mighte. | hunted [the boar]; ten
gave he not a bean (did not care)
five
<i>Each; inches wide</i> |
| 750 | Beves lay in is bedde a night
And thoughte, a wolde kethen is might
Upon that swin himself one,
That no man scholde with him gone. | <i>fierce; knew how to</i>

<i>his</i>
<i>dreamed; he would prove his</i>
<i>swine; alone</i> |
| 755 | A morwe, whan hit was dai cler,
Ariseth knight and squier;
Beves let sadlen is ronsi,
That bor a thoughte to honti,
A gerte him with a gode brond | <i>In the morning</i>

<i>saddled; horse</i>
<i>decided; hunt</i>
<i>armed himself; sword</i> |
| 760 | And tok a spere in is hond,
A scheld a heng upon is side,
Toward the wode he gan ride.
Josian, that maide, him beheld,
Al hire love to him she feld; | <i>forest</i>
<i>watched</i>
<i>felt</i> |
| 765 | To hire self she seide, ther she stod:
“Ne kepte I never more gode
Ne namore of al this worldes blisse,
Thanne Beves with love o time te kisse;
In gode time were boren, | <i>as she stood there</i> |
| 770 | That Beves hadde to lemman koren!” | <i>chosen</i> |
| Tho Beves in to the wode cam,
His scheld aboute is nekke a nam
And tide his hors to an hei thorn
And blew a blast with is horn;
Thre motes a blew al arowe, | | |
| 775 | That the bor him scholde knowe.
Tho he com to the bor is den,
A segh ther bones of dede men,
The bor hadde slawe in the wode,
Ieten here flesch and dronke her blode. | he took
<i>tree</i>

<i>notes; in a row</i>
<i>boar; hear</i>
<i>Then; boar's den</i>
<i>saw</i>
<i>slain</i>
<i>Eaten their; drunk their blood</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- "Aris!" queth Beves, "corsede gast,
And yem me bataile wel in hast!"
Sone so the bor him sigh,
Aerde is brostes wel an high
785 And starede on Beves with eien holwe,
Also a wolde him have aswolwe;
And for the bor yenede so wide,
A spere Beves let to him glide;
On the scholder he smot the bor,
790 His spere barst to pises thore
The bor stod stille ayen the dent,
His hyde was harde ase eni flent.
Now al to-borste is Beves spere,
A drough his swerd, himself to were,
795 And faught ayen the bor so grim,
A smot the bor and he to him.
Thus the bataile gan leste long
Til the time of evesong,
That Beves was so weri of foughte,
800 That of is lif he ne roughe,
And tho the bor was also,
Awai fro Beves he gan go,
Wile Beves made is praier
To God and Mari, is moder dere,
805 Whather scholde other slen.
With that com the bor ayen
And bente is brostles up, saunfaile,
Ayen Beves to yeve bataile;
Out at is mouth in aither side
810 The foim ful ferli gan out glide;
And Beves in that ilche veneu,
Thourgh Godes grace and is vertu
With swerd out a slinte
Twei toskes at the ferste dent;
815 A spanne of the groin beforne
With is swerd he hath of schoren.
Tho the bor so loude cride,
Out of the forest wide and side,
To the castel thar that lai Ermin,
- cursed spirit
give; right now
As soon as; saw
He raised
stared at; hungry eyes
As if; swallowed
when; yawned
- pieces there
blow
any flint
broken
protect
- evensong
fighting
cared
- his prayer
- without fail
Against; give
- foam; wondrously
very place
His virtue
sliced
Two tusks; stroke
- hand's breadth of the snout
shorn away
- long

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 820 | Men herde the noise of the swin;
And, also he made that lotheli cri,
His swerd Beves hasteli
In at the mouth gan threste tho
And karf his herte evene ato | <i>loathly</i>

<i>thrust</i>
<i>carved; exactly in two</i> |
| 825 | The swerd a breide ayen fot hot
And the bor is heved of smot,
And on a tronsoun of is spere
That heved a stikede for to bere,
Thanne a sette horn to mouthe | <i>brandished again quickly</i>
<i>off smote</i>
<i>handle</i>
<i>head; stuck</i> |
| 830 | And blew the pris ase wel kouthe,
So glad he was for is honting.
That heved a thoughte Josian bring:
And er he com to that maide fre,
Him com strokes so gret plenté, | <i>flourish; known</i> |
| 835 | That fain he was to weren is hed
And save himself fro the ded.
A stiward was with King Ermin, | <i>eager; defend</i>
<i>from; death</i>
<i>steward</i> |
| 840 | That hadde tight to sle that swin;
To Beves a bar gret envie,
For that he hadde the meistrie; | <i>Who; hoped</i>

<i>bore</i> |
| 845 | He dede arme his knightes stoute,
Four and twenti in a route,
And ten forsters also he tok
And wente to wode, seith the bok. | <i>mastery</i>

<i>stout</i> |
| 850 | Thar-of ne wiste Beves nought.
Helpe him God, that alle thing wrought!
In is wei he rit pas for pas.
Herkneth now a ferli cas: | <i>the book says</i>

<i>knew</i> |
| 855 | A wende pasi in grith and pes,
The stiward cride: "Leith on and sles!"
Beves seigh that hii to him ferde,
A wolde drawe to is swerde: | <i>who created all things</i>

<i>rides step for step</i>

<i>Listen; marvelous event</i> |
| | Thanne had he leved it thor,
Thar he hadde slawe the bor.
He nadde nothing, himself to were,
Boute a tronsoun of a spere. | <i>He (Bevis) went walking in peace; security</i>

<i>Attack; strike down</i> |
| | Tho was Beves sore desmeid,
The heved fro the tronsoun a braid, | <i>drew</i>

<i>left it there</i>

<i>Where</i>

<i>defend</i>

<i>handle</i>

<i>dismayed</i>

<i>took</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 860 | And with the bor is heved a faught
And wan a swerd of miche maught,
That Morgelai was cleped, aplight.
Beter swerd bar never knight. | <i>boar's head he
great power
was called, indeed</i> |
| 865 | Tho Beves hadde that swerd an hond,
Among the hethene knightes a wond,
And sum upon the helm a hitte,
In to the sadel he hem slitte, | <i>When
turned
them slit
a certain: reached</i> |
| 870 | And sum knight Beves so ofraughte,
The heved of at the ferste draughte,
So harde he gan to lein abouthe
Among the hethene knightes stoute, | <i>stroke
rush</i> |
| 875 | That non ne pasede hom, aplight;
So thourgh the grace of God almighty
The kinges stiward a hitte so,
That is bodi a clef ato. | <i>he cleft in two
corpse; pulled down
saddle
placed</i> |
| 880 | The dede kors a pulte adoun
And lep himself in to the arsoun.
That strok him thoughte wel iset
For he was horsed meche bet. | <i>much better
wanted to make a certain peace</i> |
| 885 | He thoughte make pes doun rightes
Of the forsters ase of the knightes;
To hem faste he gan ride;
Thai gonne schete be ech a side, | <i>With
them
shoot
arrows
Scarcely</i> |
| 890 | So mani arwes to him thai sende,
Unnethe a mighte himself defende,
So tho is a lite stounde
The ten forsters wer feld te grounde, | <i>Josian lai in a castel</i> |
| 895 | And hew hem alle to pices smale:
So hit is fonde in Frenshe tale.
"O Mahoun," she seide, "oure drighe,
What Beves is man of meche mighte! | <i>conflict
lord</i> |
| | Al this world yif ich it hedde,
Ich him yeve me to wedde;
Boute he me love, icham ded.
Swete Mahoun, what is thee red? | <i>if I had it
would wed him
Unless
your advice</i> |
| | Lovelonging me hath becought, | <i>captivated</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- Thar-of wot Beves right nought,"
Thus that maide made hire mon,
900 Thar she stod in the tour al on,
And Beves thar the folk beleved
And wente hom with the heved;
That heved of that wilde swin
He presente to King Ermin.
- 905 The king thar-of was glad and blithe
And thankede him ful mani a sithe,
Ac he ne wiste ther of nowight,
How is stiward to deth was dight.
Thre yer after that bataile,
- 910 That Beves the bor gan asaile,
A king ther com in to Ermonie
And thoughte winne with meistrie
Josiane, that maide bright,
That lovede Beves with al hire might.
- 915 Brademond cride, ase he wer wod,
To King Ermin, thar a stod:
"King," a seide swithe blive,
"Yem me thee daughter to wive!
Yif thou me wernest, withouten faile,
- 920 I schel winne hire in plein bataile,
On fele half I schel thee anughe,
And al thee londe I schel destruye
And thee sle, so mai betide,
And lay hire a night be me side,
- 925 And after I wile thee daughter yeve
To a weine-pain, that is fordriue!"
Ermin answerde blive on highe:
"Be Mahoun, sire, thou schelt lighe!"
Adoun of his tour a went
- 930 And after al is knightes a sent
And tolde hem how Brademond him asailed hadde,
And askede hem alle, what hii radde.
A word thanne spak that maiden bright:
"Be Mahoun, sire! wer Beves a knight,
- 935 A wolde defende thee wel inough.
Me self I segh, whar he slough
- knows nothing
lament (moan)
alone
left
- time
*But he did not learn from anyone
was done to death*
- Who
crazed
- very quickly
Give
refuse
- all-out combat
many sides; provoke
- destroy
happen
- carter; worn out
- lie
- they advise

Bevis of Hampton

- | | |
|--|---|
| Your owene stiward, him beset,
Al one in the wode with him a met,
At wode he hadde his swerd beleved,
Thar he smot of the bores heved;
He nadde nothing, himself to were,
Boute a tronsoun of is spere,
And your stiward gret peple hadde,
Four and twenti knighting a ladde, | <i>who set upon him</i>
<i>Alone</i>
<i>taken away</i>
<i>Where; boar's head</i>
<i>defend</i>
<i>handle</i> |
| 940
Al y-armed to the teth,
And everi hadde swore is deth,
And ten forsters of the forest
With him a broughte ase prest,
That thoughte him have slawe thore | <i>he led</i> |
| 945
950
And take the heved of the bore,
And yeve the stiward the renoun.
Tho Beves segh that foule tresoun,
A leide on with the bor is heved,
Til that hii were adoun iweved, | <i>ready</i>
<i>there</i> |
| 955
And of the stiward a wan that day
His gode swerd Morgelay.
The ten forsters also a slough
And hom a pasede wel inough,
That he of hem hadde no lothe." | <i>boar's head</i>
<i>knocked down</i>
<i>won</i> |
| 960
King Ermyn thanne swor is othe,
That he scholde be maked knight,
His baner to bere in that fight. | <i>slew</i> |
| He clepede Beves at that sake
And seide: "Knight ich wile thee make. | <i>fear</i> |
| 965
Thow schelt bere in to bataile
Me baner, Brademond to asaile!" | <i>his oath</i> |
| Beves answerde with blithe mod:
"Blethelich," a seide, "be the Rod!" | <i>[Bevis] should be dubbed</i> |
| King Ermin tho anon righte
Dobbede Beves unto knighte | <i>enthusiasm</i> |
| And yaf him a scheld gode and sur
With thre eglen of asur, | <i>Gladly; Cross</i> |
| The champe of gold ful wel idight
With fif lables of selver bright; | <i>Dubbed</i> |
| 970
975
Sithe a gerte him with Morgelay, | <i>sure</i>
<i>eagles; azure</i>
<i>field; ornamented</i>
<i>ribbons</i>
<i>Then he armed himself</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- A gonfanoun wel stout and gay banner
 Josian him broughte for to bere.
 Sent of the scheld, I yow swere!
- Beves dede on is actoun,
- 980 Hit was worth mani a toun; put on his jacket
 An hauberk him broughte that mai,
 So seiden alle that hit isai:
 Hit was wel iwrought and faire,
 Non egge tol mighte it nought paire.
- 985 After that she yaf him a stede,
- That swithe gode was at nede,
 For hit was swift and ernede wel.
 Me clepede hit Arondel. edge-tool; sever horse
- Beves in the sadel lep,
- 990 His ost him folwede al to hep ran
 With baner bright and scheldes schene, Men called it
 Thretti thosent and fiftene,
 The ferste scheld trome Beves nam.
- Brademond aghenes him cam;
- 995 His baner bar the King Redefoun, host; in a group
 That levede on Sire Mahoun. shining
 Row he was also a schep, Thirty thousand
 Beves of him nam gode kep. first shield retinue; took against
- He smot Arondel with spures of golde;
- 1000 Thanne thoughte that hors, that he scholde, Who believed in
 Aghen Redefoun Beves gan ride Rough; shepherd
 And smot him thourgh out bothe side, took good care
 Hauberk ne scheld ne actoun jacket
 Ne vailede him nought worth a botoun, availed; button
- 1005 That he ne fel ded to the grunde.
- "Reste thee," queth Beves, "hethen hounde!" at home
 Thee hadde beter atom than here!" he ordered his companions
 "Lay on faste!" a bad his fere.
- Tho laide thai on with eger mod
- 1010 And slowe Sarsins, as hii wer wod, Then, eager mood (enthusiastically)
 And Sire Beves, the Cristene knight slew; as if they; berserk (see note)
 Slough ase mani in that fight
 With Morgelay himself alone,
 Ase thai deden everichone. did everyone [else]

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1015 | And ever hii were to fighte prest
Til that the sonne set in the west.
Beves and is ost withinne a stounde
Sexti thosent thai felde to grounde,
That were out of Dameske isent, | <i>ready</i> |
| | That never on homward ne went;
Tho Brademond segh is folk islayn,
A flegh awei with mighte and mayn.
Ase he com ride be a cost, | <i>moment</i> |
| 1020 | Twei knightes a fond of Beves ost;
Of his stede he gan doun lighte
And bond hem bothe anon righte,
And thoughte hem lede to his prisoun | <i>Sixty thousand</i> |
| | And have for hem gret raunsoun.
Ase he trosede hem on is stede, | <i>Damascus</i> |
| 1025 | Beves of hem nam gode hede,
And hasteliche in that tide
After Brademond he gan ride
And seide: "Brademond, olde wreche, | <i>ransom</i> |
| | Ertow come Josiane to feche? | <i>trussed; steed</i> |
| 1030 | Erst thou schelt pase thourgh min hond
And thourgh Morgelay, me gode brond!"
Withouten eni wordes mo
Beves Brademond hitte so | <i>took heed</i> |
| | Upon is helm in that stounde,
That a felde him flat to grounde. | <i>time</i> |
| 1035 | "Merci!" queth Bradmond, "ich me yelde,
Recreaunt to thee, in this felde,
So harde thee smitest upon me kroun,
Ich do me all in the bandoun, | <i>Are you; fetch</i> |
| | Sexti cites with castel tour
Thin owen, Beves, to thin onour,
With that thou lete me ascape!" | <i>First</i> |
| 1040 | Beves answerde tho in rape:
"Nay!" a seide, "be sein Martyn! | <i>my; sword</i> |
| | Icham iswore to King Ermin.
Al that ich do, it is his dede; | <i>any; more</i> |
| 1045 | Tharfore, sire, so God me spede,
Thow schelt swere upon the lay, | <i>place</i> |
| | | <i>I acknowledge myself</i> |
| | | <i>Defeated by</i> |
| | | <i>crown</i> |
| | | <i>relinquish; your power</i> |
| 1050 | | <i>Your own; honor</i> |
| | | <i>Providing that; escape</i> |
| | | <i>then in haste</i> |
| | | <i>for him</i> |
| | | <i>law</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1055 | Thow schelt werre on him night ne day,
And omage eche yer him yelde
And al the londe of him helde!"
Brademond answerde anon righte:
"Tharto me treuthe I thee pligte,
That I ne schel never don him dere | <i>war; [neither] day nor night</i>
<i>homage</i> |
| 1060 | Ne aghen thee, Beves, armes bere!"
And whan he hadde swore so,
Beves let King Brademond go.
Allas, that he nadde him slawe
And ibrought of is life dawe! | <i>thereto</i>
<i>harm</i>
<i>Neither against you</i> |
| 1065 | For sithe for al is faire beheste
Mani dai a maked him feste,
In is prisoun a lai seve yere,
Ase ye may now forthward here.
Beves rod hom and gan to singe | <i>for later despite all his fair promise</i>
<i>feast</i>
<i>henceforth hear</i> |
| 1070 | And seide to Ermin the Kinge:
"Sire! Brademond, King of Sarasine,
A is become one of thine;
The man a is to thin heste,
While his lif wile leste, | <i>command</i>
<i>As long as he lives</i> |
| 1075 | Londes and ledes, al that he walt,
A saith, sire, of thee hem halt!"
Thanne was King Ermin at that sithe
In is hertte swithe blithe;
A clepede is doughter and saide: | <i>people; possesses</i>
<i>He says; holds them for you</i>
<i>time</i> |
| 1080 | "Josian, the faire maide,
Unarme Beves, he wer at mete,
And serve thee self him ther-ate!"
Tho nolde that maide never blinne,
Til she com to hire inne, | <i>food (dinner)</i> |
| 1085 | Thar she lai hire selve anight:
Thar she sette that gentil knight,
Hire self yaf him water to hond
And sette before him al is sonde.
Tho Beves hadde wel i-ete | <i>cease</i>
<i>lodging</i> |
| 1090 | And on the maidenes bed isete,
That mai, that was so bright of hiwe,
Thoughte she wolde hire consaile schewe, | <i>gave</i>
<i>servings [of various dishes]</i>
<i>eater</i> |
| | | <i>hue (complexion)</i>
<i>counsel; show</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- And seide: "Beves, leman, thin ore!
Ichave loved thee ful yore,
1095 Sikerli can I no rede,
Boute thou me love, icham dede,
And boute thou with me do thee wille."
"For Gode," queth Beves, "that ich do nelle!
Her is," a seide, "min unliche,
1100 Brademond King, that is so riche,
In al this world nis ther man,
Prinse ne king ne soudan,
That thee to wive have nolde,
And he the hadde ones beholde!"
1105 "Merci," she seide, "yet with than
Ichavede thee lever to me leman,
Thee bodi in thee scherte naked,
Than al the gold, that Crist hath maked,
And thou wost with me do thee wille!"
1110 "For Gode," queth Beves, "that I do nelle!"
Sche fel adoun and wep right sore:
"Thow seidest soth her before:
In al this world nis ther man,
Prinse ne king ne soudan,
1115 That me to wive have nolde,
And he me hadde ones beholde,
And thou, cherl, me hast forsake;
Mahoun thee yeve tene and wrake!
Beter become the iliche
1120 For to fowen an olde diche
Thanne for to be dobbed knight,
Te gon among maidenes bright.
To other contré thou might fare:
Mahoun thee yeve tene and care!"
1125 "Damesele," a seide, "thow seist unright;
Me fader was bothe erl and knight.
How mighte ich thanne ben a cherl,
Whan me fader was knight and erl?
To other contré ich wile te:
1130 Scheltow me namore ise!
Thow yeve me an hors: lo it her!
- my dear; if you please
so completely
Truly I know no counsel
Unless
unless you do your will with me
nothing of the kind
There; unlike me

sultan
would not wish to have
you have once beheld

I would rather have you as my lover

will not do

That would not have me as wife
If

suffering; injury
the likes [of you]
clean; ditch
dubbed

pain; suffering
you say wrong

go
see
[bring] it here*

Bevis of Hampton

- I nel namore of thee daunger!"
 Forth him wente Sire Bevoun
 And tok is in in that toun,
 1135 Sore aneighed and aschamed,
 For she hadde him so gramed.
 Tho Beves was to toun igo,
 Tho began that maidenes wo;
 Thanne was hire wo with alle,
 1140 Hire thoughte, the tour wolde on hir falle.
 She clepede hire chaumberlein Bonefas
 And tolde to him al hire cas
 And bad him to Beves wende:
 "And sai him, ich wile amende
 1145 Al togodre of word and dede,
 Of that ichave him misede!"
 Forth wente Bonefas in that stounde
 And Beves in is chaumber a founde
 And seide, she him theder sende,
 1150 And that she wolde alle amende
 Al togodres to is wille,
 Bothe loude and eke stille.
 Thanne answerde Beves the fer:
 "Sai, thow might nought speden her!
 1155 Ac for thow bringest fro hire mesage,
 I schel thee yeve to the wage
 A mantel whit so melk:
 The broider is of Tuli selk,
 Beten abouten with rede golde,
 1160 The king to were, thegh a scholde!"
 Bonefas him thankede yerne,
 Hom aghen he gan terne;
 A fond that maide in sorwe and care
 And tolde hire his answare,
 1165 That he ne mighte nought spede
 Aboute hire nede,
 And seide: "Thow haddest unright,
 So te misain a noble knight!"
 "Who yaf thee this ilche wede?
 1170 "Beves, that hendi knight!" a sede.
- will not [endure]; of your threats*
lodging
annoyed; ashamed
angered
troubles
tell; change
mis-said (spoken falsely)
valiant
as payment
white as milk
silk from Toulouse
Embroidered
wear, as he should
eagerly
return
succeed
speak evil of
very same garment
courteous

Bevis of Hampton

- “Allas!” she seide, “Ich was to blame,
 Whan ich seide him swiche schame,
 For hit nas never a cherles dede,
 To yeve a maseger swiche a wede!
- 1175 Whan he nel nought to me come,
 The wei to his chaumber I wil neme,
 And, what ever of me befalle,
 Ich wile wende in to is halle!”
- Beves herde that maide ther-oute.
- 1180 Ase yif aslep, he gan to route. snore
 “Awake, lemmán!” she seide, “Awake!
 Icham icome, me pes to make.
 Lemman, for the corteisie,
 Spek with me a word or tweie!” two
- 1185 “Damesele,” queth Beves thanne,
 “Let me ligge and go the wei henne!
 Icham weri of-foughte sore,
 Ich faught for thee, I nel namore.” lie; go away
 “Merci,” she seide, “lemmán, thin ore!” I am weary
 if you please
- 1190 She fel adoun and wep wel sore:
 “Men saith,” she seide, “in olde riote,
 That wimmanes bolt is sone schote.
 Forghem me, that ichave misede,
 And ich wile right now to mede sayings
 Min false godes al forsake woman's arrow; shot
 And Cristendom for thee love take!” Forgive
 “In that maner,” queth the knight,
 “I graunte thee, me swete wight!” as a reward
 And kiste hire at that cordement.
- 1195 Tharfore he was negh after schent. My
 The twei knightes, that he unbond,
 That were in Brademondes hond,
 He made that on is chaumberlain. your
 Him hadde be beter, he hadde hem slain! one
 It would have been better
- 1200 Thei wente to the king and swor othe:
 “No wonder, sire, thegh ye be wrothe,
 No wonder, thegh ye ben agreved,
 Whan Beves, scherewe misbeleved,
 The doughter he hath now forlain. oath
 that you are angry
- 1205 wicked infidel
 deflowered

Bevis of Hampton

- 1210 Hit were gode, sire, that he wer slain!"
 Hii lowe, the scherewes, that him gan wreie.¹
 In helle mote thai hongen beie!
 He dede nothing, boute ones hire kiste,
 Nought elles bi hem men ne wiste.
- kiss her once
Nothing else about him; knew
- 1215 Tharfore hit is soth isaide
 And in me rime right wel ilaid.
 Delivre a thef fro the galwe,
 He thee hateth after be alle halwe!
 "Allas!" queth Ermin, the King,
- my rhyme; placea
gallows
by all saints
- 1220 "Wel sore me reweth that tiding!
 Sethe he com me ferst to,
 So meche he hath for me ido,
 I ne mighte for al peynim londe,
 That men dede him eni schonde!
- See to it; come to me first*
done
pagan
disgrace
eagerly; avenged
Unless; see
- 1225 Ac fain ich wolde awreke be,
 Boute I ne mighte hit nought ise."
 Thanne bespak a Sarasin —
 Have he Cristes kurs and myn —
 "Sire, she scholle for is sake
- May he have; curse*
- 1230 A letter swithe anon do make
 To Brademond, the stronge king,
 And do him theder the letter bringe;
 And in the letter thee schelt saie,
 That he hath Josian forlaie!"
- make him*
seduced
- 1235 Whan the letter was come to th'ende,
 After Beves the king let sende
 And seide: "Beves, thou most hanne
 To Brademond, thin owene manne:
 Al in solas and in delit
- go hence*
- 1240 Thou most him bere this ilche scriit!
 Ac yif yow schelt me letter bere,
 Upon the lai thou schelt me swere,
 That thou me schelt with no man mele,
 To schewe the prente of me sele!"
- very writing*
law
speak
imprint; seal
quick
- 1245 "I wile," queth Beves ase snel,

¹ *The wicked ones who betrayed him were lying*

Bevis of Hampton

	"The leter bere treuliche and wel;	<i>truthfully</i>
	Have ich Arondel, me stede,	
	Ich wile fare in to that thede,	<i>country</i>
	And Morgelai, me gode bronde,	<i>sword</i>
1250	Ich wile wende in to that londe!	
	King Ermin seide in is sawe,	<i>speech</i>
	That ner no mesager is lawe,	<i>allowed</i>
	To ride upon an hevi stede,	<i>heavy steed (warhorse)</i>
	That swiftli scholde don is nede.	
1255	"Ac nim a lighter hakenai	<i>take; hackney</i>
	And lef her the swerd Morgelai,	<i>leave here</i>
	And thow schelt come to Brademonde	
	Sone withinne a lite stounde!"	<i>a little while</i>
	Beves an hakenai bestrit	<i>mounted</i>
1260	And in his wei forth a rit	<i>he rode</i>
	And bereth with him is owene deth,	<i>own</i>
	Boute God him helpe, that alle thing seth!	<i>Unless; sees</i>
	Terne we aghen, thar we wer er,	<i>earlier</i>
	And speke we of is em Saber!	<i>uncle</i>
1265	After that Beves was thus sold,	<i>when</i>
	For him is hertte was ever cold.	
	A clepede to him his sone Terri	<i>called</i>
	And bad him wenden and aspie	<i>go; search</i>
	In to everi londe fer and ner,	
1270	Whider him ladde the maroner,	<i>mariner</i>
	And seide: "Sone, thow ert min owen,	
	Wel thow canst the lord knownen!	
	Ich hote thee, sone, in alle manere,	<i>command</i>
	That thow him seche this seve yer.	<i>seven</i>
1275	Ich wile feche him, mowe thow him fynde,	<i>might</i>
	Though he be biyende Inde!"	<i>beyond</i>
	Terri, is sone, is forth ifare,	<i>has gone away</i>
	Beves a soughte everiwhare;	
	In al hethenes nas toun non,	<i>all pagan lands</i>
1280	That Cristene man mighte ther in gon,	
	That he ne hath Beves in isought,	<i>could</i>
	Ac he ne kouthe finde him nought.	<i>by chance</i>
	So hit be fel upon a cas,	<i>Damascus</i>
	That Terri com beside Damas;	

Bevis of Hampton

1285	And ase he com forth be that stede, A sat and dinede in a wede Under a faire medle tre, That Sire Beves gan of-see. “Sire,” queth Terri, “for Sein Juline!	place dined; in armor medlar tree <i>Saint Julian</i>
1290	Is it thee wille, come nere and dine!” Beves was of-hongred sore And kouthe him gret thank therfore, For twei dawes he hadde ride Fastande in that ilche wede.	<i>If you would like</i> <i>very hungry</i> <i>showed</i> <i>days</i> <i>Garbed; same clothes</i> <i>pilgrim; supplies</i>
1295	The palmer nas nougnt withouten store, Inough a leide him before, Bred and flesc out of is male And of his flaketes win and ale Whan Beves hadde eten gret foisoun	<i>Bread; meat; bag</i> <i>flagons; wine</i> <i>abundance</i>
1300	Terri askede at Sire Bevoun, Yif a herde telle yong or olde Of a child, that theder was soldē. His name was ihote Bevoun I bore a was at South-Hamtoun.	<i>Whether</i> <i>called</i> <i>Born</i> <i>laughed</i>
1305	Beves beheld Terri and lough, And seide, a knew that child wel inough: “Hit is nougnt,” a seide, “gon longe, I segh the Sarsins that child anhonge!” Terri fel ther doun and swoough,	<i>not; long ago</i> <i>hang</i> <i>fell down; swooned</i>
1310	His her, his clothes he al to-drough. Whan he awok and speke mighte, Sore a wep and sore sighte And seide: “Allas, that he was born! Is me lord Beves forloren!”	<i>hair; tore</i> <i>sighed</i> <i>lost</i>
1315	Beves tok him up at that cas And gan him for to solas: “Wend hom,” a seide, “to thee contré! Sai the frendes so ichave thee. Though thou him seche thes seve yer,	<i>event</i> <i>Return home</i> <i>Tell your friends what I have told you</i>
1320	Thow worst that child never the ner!” Terri on Beves beheld And segh the boiste with a scheld. “Me thenketh, thow ert a masager,	<i>sought; seven</i> <i>were; nearer</i> <i>saw; letter case; seal</i>

Bevis of Hampton

- That in this londe walkes her;
 1325 Icham a clerk and to scole yede:
 Sire, let me the letter rede,
 For thow might have gret doute,
 Thin owene deth to bere aboute!"
 Beves seide, ich understande:
 1330 "He, that me tok this letter an honde,
 He ne wolde love me non other,
 Than ich were is owene brother."
 Beves him thankede and thus hii delde.
 Terri wente hom and telde
 1335 His fader Saber in the Ilde of Wight,
 How him tolde a gentil knight,
 That Sarsins hadde Beves forfare
 And hangede him, while he was thare.
 Saber wep and made drem.
 1340 For he was the childe em,
 And ech yer on a dai certaine
 Upon th'emperur of Almaine
 With a wel gret baronage
 A cleimed his eritage.
 1345 Let we now ben is em Saber
 And speke of Beves, the maseger!
 Forth him wente Sire Bevoun
 Til a com to Dames toun;
 Aboute the time of middai
 1350 Out of a mameri a sai
 Sarasins come gret foisoun,
 That hadde anoured here Mahoun,
 Beves of is palfrei alighte
 And ran to her mameri ful righte
 1355 And slough here prest, that ther was in,
 And threw here godes in the fen
 And lough hem alle ther to scorn.
 On ascapede and at-orn
 In at the castel ghete,
 1360 As the king sat at the mete.
 "Sire," seide this man at the frome,
 "Her is icome a corsede gome,
- went to school*
read
fear
- As if*
they parted
- Isle; [Man]*
- killed*
- lament*
uncle
- Germany*
- claimed; heritage*
Let us now leave
- Damascus*
- mosque; he saw*
[in] great abundance
honored their
palfrey dismounted
temple
- priest*
ditch
- escaped; ran fast*
- dinner*
at once
cursed man

Bevis of Hampton

	That throweth our godes in the fen And sleth al oure men;	gods
1365	Unnethe I scapede among that thring, For to bringe thee tiding!" Brademond quakede at the bord And seide: "That is Beves, me lord!" Beves wente in at the castel ghathe,	Scarcely; throng <i>trembled with fear; table</i>
1370	His hors he lefte ther-ate And wente forth in to the halle And grete hem in this maner alle: "God, that made this world al ronde, Thee save, Sire King Brademond,	<i>greeted them</i>
1375	And ek alle thine fere, That I se now here, And yif that ilche blessing Liketh thee right nothing, Mahoun, that is god thin,	<i>Save you</i> <i>companions</i> <i>very</i>
1380	Tervagaunt and Apolin, Thee blessti and dighte Be alle here mighte! Lo her, the King Ermin The sente this letter in parchemin,	<i>Termagant</i> <i>bless; save</i> <i>their</i> <i>Look here</i> <i>parchment</i>
1385	And ase the letter thee telleth to, A bad, thow scholdest swithe do!" Beves kneueled and nolde nought stonde And yaf up is deth with is owene honde.	<i>He bade</i> <i>kneeled</i> <i>furthered</i> <i>fear</i>
1390	Brademond quakede al for drede, He undede the letter and gan to rede And fond iwriten in that felle, How that he scholde Beves aquelle.	
1395	Thanne seide Brademond to twenti king, That were that dai at is gistning, A spak with tresoun and with gile: "Ariseth up," he sede "a while,	<i>banquet</i>
1400	Everich of yow fro the bord, And wolcometh your kende lord!" Alle hii gonnen up right stonde, And Brademond tok Beves be the honde And held him faste at that sake,	<i>gentle</i> <i>for that purpose</i>

Bevis of Hampton

- That he ne scholde is swerd out take,
And cride, alse he hadde be wod,
To hem alle, aboute him stod:
as if he were mad
- 1405 "Ase ye me loven at this stounde,
Bringeth this man swithe to grounde!"
So faste hii gonue aboute him scheve,
Ase don ben aboute the heve.
moment
quickly
shove
- So withinne a lite stounde
As bees do around the hive
- 1410 Beves was ibrought to grounde.
Brademond seide him anon right:
"Yif thow me naddest wonne with fight,
I nolde for nothing hit beleve,
That thow schost be hanged er eve.
If you had not beaten me in a fight
before dark
- 1415 Ac ase evel thee schel betide,
In me prisoun thow schelt abide
Under th'erthe twenti teise,
Thar thow schelt have meche miseise.
Ne schel tow have, til thow be ded,
fathoms
mis-ease (discomfort)
- 1420 Boute ech a dai quarter of a lof bred;
Yif thow wilt drinke, thegh it be nought swet,
Thee schelt hit take under the fet!"
loaf of bread
- 1425 A dede Beves binde to a ston gret,
That wegh seve quarters of whet,
And het him caste in to prisoun,
That twenti teise was dep adoun.
great stone
wheat
ordered
fathoms
- At the prisoun dore Beves fond
A tronsoun, that he tok in is hond.
Tharwith a thoughte were him there
club
- 1430 Fram wormes, that in prisoun were.
Now is Beves at this petes grounde.
God bringe him up hol and sonde!
to protect himself
snakes
pit's bottom
- Now speke we of Josian, the maide,
That com to hire fader and seide:
"Sire," she seide, "whar Beves be,
That me mighte him nought fern ise?"
where is Bevis
see for a long time
- 1435 "Doughter," a seide, "a is ifare
In to his londe and woneth thare,
In to is owene eritage,
has gone
dwells
- 1440 And hath a wif of gret parage,
birth

Bevis of Hampton

- The kinges daughter of Ingélonde,
Ase men doth me to understande." tell me
Thanne was that maide wo ynough,
In hire chaumber hire her she drogh sorrowful
1445 And wep and seide ever mo,
That sum tresoun thar was ydo. hair she tore out
"That me ne telde ord and ende,
What dai awai whanne a wolde wende." sighed
Of Mombraunt the King Yvor,
1450 A riche king of gret tresore, done
Whan he owhar to werre wolde,
Fiftene kinges him sewe scholde: did not tell me beginning
Comen a is Josian to wedde;
Aghen hire fader so a spedde, anywhere to make war
1455 That he hire grauntede to is wive follow
And al is londe after is live.
Tho Josian wiste, she scholde be quen, Towards; he hastened
Hit was nought be hire wille; I wen
Hire were lever have had lasse she would be queen
1460 And have be Beves is contasse. not her will; believe
Natheles, now it is so,
Hire fader wil she moste do, She would rather; lower station
Ac ever she seide: "Bevoun,
Hende knight of South Hamtoun, Bevis' countess
1465 Naddestow me never forsake,
Yif sum tresoun hit nadde make: Gentle
Ac for the love, that was so gode,
That I lovede ase min hertte blode, You would never have
Ichave," she seide, "a ring on,
1470 That of swiche vertu is the ston:
While ichave on that ilche ring,
To me schel no man have welling, as my heart's blood
And Beves!" she seide, "be God above,
I schel it weren for thee love!" I have
1475 Whan hit to that time spedde, his will
That Yvor scholde that maide wedde,
He let sende withouten ensoine rapidly came closer
After the Soudan of Babiloine delay
And after the fiftene kinge, Sultan; Babylon

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1480 | That him scholde omage bringe,
And bad hem come lest and meste,
To onoure that meri feste.
Of that feste nel ich namor telle,
For to highe with our spelle. | should bring homage
honor
<i>I will not tell anymore</i>
hasten; story
finished |
| 1485 | Whan al the feste to-yede,
Ech knight wente to is stede,
Men graithede cartes and somers,
Knights to horse and squiers,
And Josian with meche care | prepared; packhorses |
| 1490 | Theder was brought in hire chare.
King Ermin nom Arondel
And let him sadlen faire and wel,
A wente to Beves chaumber, ther he lay,
And nom his swerd Morgelay; | Thither; chariot
took |
| 1495 | With Arondel agan it lede
To King Yvor, and thus a sede:
“Sone,” a sede, “have this stede,
The beste fole, that man mai fede,
And this swerd of stel broun, | began
Son
best horse; feed
shining |
| 1500 | That was Beves of Hamtoun.
A nolde hit yeve, wer it in is honde,
Nought for al painim londe!”
“Ne ich,” queth the King Yvor,
“For al the gold ne the tresor, | <i>He (Bevis) would not give it</i>
Nor |
| 1505 | That thou might in the cité belouke!”
“Sone,” queth Ermin, “wel mot thee it brouke!”
Yver gan homward te ride
And dede lede Arondel be is side.
Whan he com withoute Mombraunt, | guard
use |
| 1510 | A swor is oth be Tervagaunt,
That he wolde in to his cité ride
Upon Arondel before is bride.
Arondel thar he bestrit;
That hors wel sone underyit, | <i>sat upon</i>
understands |
| 1515 | That Beves nas nought upon is rigge
The king wel sore scholde hit abegge.
He ran over dich and thorn,
Thourgh wode and thourgh thekke korn; | back
<i>pay for</i>
grain |

Bevis of Hampton

- For no water ne for no londe,
Nowhar nolde that stede astonde; stop
At the laste a threw Yvor doun
And al to-brak the kinges kroun,
That al is kingdom wel unnethe
Arerede him ther fro the dethe; Prevented
And er hii mighte that hors winne,
Thai laughte him with queinte ginne. capture
A wonderthing now ye may here.
After al that seve yere nearly
To rakenteis a stod iteide,
Nas mete ne drinke before him leid, caught; cunning ruse
Hey ne oten ne water clere,
Boute be a kord of a solere. wondrous; hear
No man dorste come him hende,
Thar that hors stod in bende. seven years
1530 To rakenteis a stod iteide, chains
Nas mete ne drinke before him leid, No food
Hey ne oten ne water clere, Hay; oats; clear
Boute be a kord of a solere. Except; cord from a balcony
No man dorste come him hende, No one dared approach
Thar that hors stod in bende. Where; fetters
- 1535 Now is Josian a quene;
Beves in prisoun hath gret tene. pain
The romounce telleth, ther a set,
Til the her on is heved grew to is fet; hair; grew to his feet
Snakes and euetes and oades fale, lizards; many toads
- 1540 How mani, can I nought telle in tale,
That in the prisoun were with him,
That provede ever with her venim attempted; their venom
To sle Beves, that gentil knight,
Oc, thourgh the grace of God Almighty, But
- 1545 With the tronsoun, that he to prisoun tok, club
A slough hem alle, so saith the bok.
A fleande nadder was in an hole, flying adder
For elde blak ase eni cole; age; coal
Unto Beves she gan flinge
- 1550 And in the forehed thoughte him stinge.
Beves was redi with is tronsoun
And smot hire, that she fel adoun.
Upon aghen the nadder rowe again; adder rose
And breide awei his right browe; took away
- 1555 Tho was Beves sore agreed
And smot the nadder on the heved; head
So harde dent he hire yaf,

Bevis of Hampton

	The brein clevede on is staf.	brain stuck to his
	Doun fel the nadder, withouten faile,	
1560	And smot so Beves with the taile, That negh a les ther contenaunse, ¹ Almest is lif was in balaunce.	
	Whan he awakede of that swough, The tronsoun eft to him a drough	out of; swoon
1565	And bet hire al to pises smale, As hit is fonde in Frensch tale.	beat; small pieces
	Tho he hadde slawe the foule fendes,	fiends
	Be that hadde Beves lein in bendes	bonds
	Seve yer in peines grete,	great pain
1570	Lite idronke and lasse iete; His browe stank for defaut of yeme, That it set after ase a seme, Wharthourgh that maide ne kneu him nought, Whan hii were eft togedre brought.	Little; less [he] ate lack; care scar (seam)
1575	On a dai, ase he was mad and feint, To Jesu Crist he made is pleint And to his moder, seinte Marie, Reuliche he gan to hem crie: “Lord,” a seide, “Hevene King,	delirious; sick Mournfully
1580	Schepere of erthe and alle thing: What have ich so meche misgilt, That thou sext and tholen wilt, That Thee wetherwines and Thee fo Schel Thee servaunt do this wo?	Maker done so wrong see; will allow enemies; foes
1585	Ich bedde Thee, Lord, for Thee pité, That Thow have merci on me And yeve grace, hennes to gange Or sone be drawnen other anhange! Me roughe never, what deth to me come,	your hither; go drawn or hanged I do not care
1590	With that ich were hennes nome! The gailers, that him scholde yeme, Whan hii herde him thus reme, “Thef! cherl!” seide that on tho:	hence taken jailers; guard cry out Thief, then

¹ That he almost lost his countenance (identifying features) there

Bevis of Hampton

- 1595 "Now beth thee lif dawes ydo,
For king ne kaiser ne for no sore
Ne scheltow leve no lenger more."
Anon rightes with that word
A laumpe he let doun be a cord,
A swerd a tok be his side,
1600 And be the cord he gan doun glide
And smot him with that other hond,
And Beves to the grounde a wond.
"Allas," queth Beves, "that ilche stounde!
Wo is the man, that lith ybounde
1605 Medel bothe fet and honde!
Tho ich com ferst in to this londe,
Hadde ich had me swerd Morgelay
And Arondel, me gode palfrey,
For Dames, nadde be tresoun,
1610 I nolde have yeve a botoun,
And now the mestre wreche of alle
With a strok me doth adoun falle,
Bidde ich never with Jesu speke,
Boute ich ther-of may ben awreke!"
1615 A smot the gailer with is fest,
That is nekke him to-berst.
His felawe above gan to crie:
"Highe hider, felawe," queth Beves, "highe!"
"Yif thou most have help," a sede,
1620 "Ich come to thee with a gode sped!"
"Yis!" queth Beves, al for gile,
And knette the rop thar while
Ase high ase a mighty reche.
Tho queth Beves with reufel speche:
1625 "For the love of Sein Mahoun,
Be the rop glid blive adoun
And help, that this thef wer ded!"
Whan he hadde thus ised,
That other gailer no leng abod,
1630 Boute by the rop adoun he glod.
Whan the rop failede in is hond,
Beves held up that gode bronde
your life's days are done
caesar; sorrow
Very soon
lamp
fell
very time of suffering
lies
Middle (waist); feet
saddle horse
Damascus; had it not been for
give a button (would not care)
avenged
fist
bursts
companion
Come
knotted
reach
rueful retort
Saint Mohammed
By; glide quickly
thief
said
longer
slid
missed
weapon

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|------------------------------------|
| | And felde to gronde that sori wight, | <i>man</i> |
| | Thourghout is bodi that swerd he pight. | <i>set</i> |
| 1635 | Now er thai ded, the geilers tweie, | <i>are they dead</i> |
| | And Beves lith to the rakenteie, | <i>lies in chains</i> |
| | His lif him thoughte al to long, | |
| | Thre daies after he ne et ne drong, | <i>ate nor drank</i> |
| | Tofore that, for soth to sai | |
| 1640 | A was woned, ech other dai | <i>accustomed; every other day</i> |
| | Of berelof to have a quarter | <i>barley-loaf</i> |
| | To his mete and to his diner; | <i>For food; dinner</i> |
| | And, for is meisters wer bothe ded, | <i>keepers</i> |
| | Thre daies after he ne et no bred. | |
| 1645 | To Jesu Crist he bed a bone, | <i>prayed a prayer</i> |
| | And He him grauntede wel sone; | <i>granted</i> |
| | So yerne he gan to Jesu speke, | <i>eagerly</i> |
| | That his vetres gonne breke | <i>fetters</i> |
| | And of his medel the grete ston. | <i>off; belly</i> |
| 1650 | Jesu Crist he thankede anon; | <i>He</i> |
| | A wente quik out of prisoun | |
| | Be the rop the gailer com adoun, | |
| | And wente in to the castel right, | |
| | Ac it was abouthe the midnight; | <i>But</i> |
| 1655 | He lokede abouthe fer and ner, | <i>far; near</i> |
| | No man wakande ne segh he ther; | |
| | He beheld forther a lite | |
| | To a chaunber under a garite, | <i>watchtower</i> |
| | Thar-inne he segh torges ilight; | <i>torches</i> |
| 1660 | Beves wente theder ful right; | |
| | Twelf knightes a fond ther aslepe, | <i>Twelve; found there</i> |
| | That hadde the castel for to kepe; | <i>guard</i> |
| | The chaumber dore a fond unsteke, | <i>unfastened</i> |
| | And priveliche he gan in reke | <i>did indeed go in</i> |
| 1665 | And armede him in yrene wede, | <i>iron clothes (chain mail)</i> |
| | The beste, that he fond at nede, | <i>best; handy</i> |
| | And gerte him with a gode bronde | |
| | And tok a gode spere in is honde; | |
| | A scheld abouthe is nekke he cast | <i>girt himself; sword</i> |
| 1670 | And wente out of the chaumber in hast. | |
| | Forther a herde in a stable | |

Bevis of Hampton

	Pages fele, withoute fable,		
	Ase thai sete in here raging;		
	In at the dore Beves gan spring,		
1675	And for thai scholde him nought wrain,		
	Under his hond he made him plai.		
	And whan the Sarasins wer islawe,		
	The beste stede he let forth drawe		
	And sadelede hit and wel adight.		
1680	And wente him forth anon right		
	And gan to crie with loude steven		
	And the porter he gan nevenen:		
	"Awake!" a seide, "proude felawe,		
	Thow were worthi ben hanged and drawe!		
1685	Highe, the gates wer unsteke,		
	Beves is out of prisoun reke,		
	And icham sent now for is sake,		
	The treitour yif ich mighte of-take!"		
	The porter was al bewaped:		
1690	"Allas!" queth he, "is Beves ascaped?"		
	Up he caste the gates wide,		
	And Beves bi him gan out ride		
	And tok is wei ful hastelie		
	Toward the londe of Ermonie.		<i>Armenia</i>
1695	He nadde ride in is wei		
	Boute seve mile of that contrei,		
	He wex asleped wondersore,		
	He mighte ride no furthermore;		
	He reinede his hors to a chesteine		
1700	And felle aslepe upon the pleine;		
	And else a slep, in is snewene		
	Him thoughte, Brademond and kinges seven		
	Stod over him with swerdes drawe,		
	Al slepande him wolde han slawe.		
1705	Of that snewen he was of-drad;		
	He lep to hors ase he wer mad,		
	Towarde Damas agein, aplight!		
	Now reste we her a lite wight,		
	And speke we scholle of Brademond.		
1710	Amorwe, whan he it hadde ifonde,		

Bevis of Hampton

- That Beves was ascaped so,
In is hertte him was ful wo.
That time be comin acent
Thar was comin parlement,
1715 Erles, barouns, lasse and more,
And fiftene kinges were samned thore.
To hem Brademond tolde thare,
That Beves was fro him ifare,
And bad help with might and main,
1720 For to feche Beves again.
A king thar was swithe fer,
His nam was hote Grander.
An hors he hadde of gret pris,
That was icleped Trinchefis:
1725 For him a yaf selper wight,
Er he that hors have might.
He armeade him in yrene wede,
Seve knightes he gan with him lede
And prikede forth on Trenchefis
1730 And wende wenne meche pris;
And Beves sone he gan se,
Ase he rod toward the cité.
“Ayilt thee,” a seide, “thow fox welp,
Thee god schel thee nothing help,
1735 For her thourgh min hondes one,
For sothe, thow schelt thee lif forgon!”
“So helpe me God!” queth Beves tho,
“Hit were no meistri, me to slo,
For this is the ferthe dai agon,
1740 Mete ne drinke ne bot i non:
Ac natheles, God it wot,
Yif ich alle nedes mot,
Yit ich wile asaie,
A lite box thee to paie!”
1745 King Grander was of herte grim
And rod to Beves and he to him;
And ase thei bothe togedre mete,
With here launces thei gonне mete,
That hit gonnен al to-drive
- by common assent*
- assembled there*
- gone*
- very valiant
name; called
worth*
- weight in silver*
- spurred*
- went forth [to] win much honor*
- Surrender
Your god
here; alone*
- mastery; slay*
- have I had neither
God willing*
- attempt*
- blow to please (pay) you*
- clashed*

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1750 | And teborsten on pises five.
Here swerdes drowe knightes stoute
And fighteth faste, it is no doute;
The medwe squaughte of her dentes,
The fur fleght out, so spark o flintes; | <i>burst; pieces</i>
<i>Their</i>
<i>meadow torn [by] their strokes</i>
<i>fire flies; from flint</i> |
| 1755 | Thus thai leide on in bothe side
Betwene midmorwe and undertide.
King Grander was agremed strong,
That Sire Beves him stod so long,
And with is swerd a hitte is scheld, | <i>morning; noon</i>
<i>angered greatly</i>
<i>withstood</i> |
| 1760 | A quarter fel in to the feld,
Hauberk, plate and aktoun,
In to Beves forther arsoun
Half a fot he karf doun right.
Tho Beves segh that strok of might, | <i>armor; quilted jacket</i>
<i>saddlebow</i>
<i>foot</i>
<i>Then</i>
<i>well done</i> |
| 1765 | A seide: "That dent was wel iset,
Fasten I wile another bet!"
With that word Beves smot doun
Grander is scheld with is fachoun,
And is left honde be the wrest, | <i>I will do you one better</i>

<i>his; falchion</i>
<i>at; wrist</i> |
| 1770 | Hit fleght awei thourgh help of Crist.
Tho Grander hadde his scheld ilore,
He faught ase he wer wode therfore;
A yaf Beves strokes that tide,
Non ne moste other abide. | <i>taken away</i>

<i>time</i> |
| 1775 | Beves ther-of was agreved
And smot of King Grander is heved,
The dede kors in that throwe
Fel out over the sadel bowe. | <i>cut off; his head</i>
<i>corpse at that moment</i> |
| 1780 | Tho King Grander was islawe,
The seve knightes of hethen lawe
Beves slough that ilche stounde,
So hit is in Frensch yfounde. | <i>When</i> |
| 1785 | For nought Beves nolde belave,
The beter hors a wolde have;
Beves Trenchefis bestrit,
And in is weie forth a rit, | <i>would not remain</i> |
| | And Brademond with al is ost
Com after with meche bost; | <i>bestrode</i>
<i>rode</i>
<i>host</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- So longe hii han Beves drive,
 1790 That hii come to the clive, cliff
 Ther the wilde se was. sea
- Harkneth now a wondercas!
 In to the se a moste, iwis, *he must [go], certainly*
 Other fighte aghenes al hethenes. *Or*
- 1795 To Jesu Crist he bad a bone, *asked a favor*
 And He him grauntede wel sone:
 "Lord," a sede, "hevene king,
 Schepere of erthe and alle thing, Maker
 Thow madest fisch ase wel else man,
- 1800 That nothing of senne ne can, *know nothing of sin*
 Ne nought of fisches kenne *kind*
 Never yet ne dede senne, *sin*
 Of this hethene hounde,
 That beste Thee and bounde *That bested you*
- 1805 And bete Thee body to the dethe, *as easily*
 Tharfore ich may also eth
 To water fle in this stede, *on this horse*
 To fisch, that never senne dede, *sinned*
 Than her daien in londe *die here*
- 1810 In al this Sarasines honde!"
 Beves smot is hors, that it lep
 In to the se, that was wel dep.
 Whan he in to the se cam,
 Over the se, I wot, a swam; *He*
- 1815 In a dai and in a night
 A bar over that gentil knight.
 Whan he com of that wilde brok, *raised himself [out of the water]*
 His gode stede him resede and schok, *because of hunger; time*
 And Beves, for honger in that stounde
- 1820 The hors threw him doun to the grounde.
 "Allas!" queth Beves, whan he doun cam,
 "Whilom ichadde an erldam *Once I had; earldom*
 And an hors gode and snel, *swift*
 That men clepede Arondel;
- 1825 Now ich wolde yeve hit kof *quickly*
 For a schiver of a lof!" *slice; loaf*
 A restede him ther a lite tide,

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | His gode stede he gan bestride
And rod over dale and doun, | mount
<i>lowland and upland</i> |
| 1830 | Til he com to a gret toun;
The levedi thar-of over the castel lai,
And Beves hire sone of-say
And wende ben al out of care
And thoughte wel to spedre thare. | <i>lady</i>
<i>soon saw her</i> |
| 1835 | Beves to the castel gate rit
And spak to hire, above him sit:
“Dame,” a seide, “that sit above,
For that ilche lordes love,
On wham thin herte is on iset: | <i>rode</i> |
| 1840 | Yeve me today a meles met!”
The levedi answerde him tho:
“Boute thow fro the gate go,
Thee wer beter elleswhar than her;
Go, or the tit an evel diner! | <i>meal's measure</i> |
| 1845 | Me lord,” she seide, “is a geaunt
And leveth on Mahoun and Tervagaunt
And felleth Cristene men to grounde,
For he hateth hem ase hounde!”
“Be God!” queth Beves, “I swere an othe: | <i>Unless</i>
<i>elsewhere; here</i>
<i>receive</i>
<i>giant</i>
<i>believes in</i> |
| 1850 | Be him lef and be him lothe,
Her ich wile have the mete
With love or eighe, whather I mai gete!”
The levedi swithe wroth with alle
Wente hire forth in to the halle | <i>like dogs</i>
<i>oath</i>
<i>lovable or loathsome</i> |
| 1855 | And tolde hire lord anon fore,
How a man hadde iswore,
That he nolde fro the ghete,
Er he hadde ther the mete.
The geaunt was wonderstrong, | <i>fear, whichever</i>

<i>would not go from the gate</i>
<i>Before</i> |
| 1860 | Rome thretti fote long;
He tok a levour in is hond,
And forth to the gate he wond.
Of Beves he nam gode hede,
Ful wel a knew Beves is stede: | <i>In length thirty feet</i>
<i>lever (club)</i> |
| 1865 | “Thow ert nome thef, ywis:
Whar stele thou stede Trenchefis, | <i>Bevis' horse</i>
<i>caught thief</i>
<i>Where did you steal</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- That thou ridest upon here?
 Hit was me brotheres Grandere!" brother's
gave [a] cap
- "Grander," queth Beves, "I yaf hod
 1870 And made him a kroune brod;
 Tho he was next under me fest,
 Wel I wot, ich made him prest, priest
 And high dekne ich wile make thee,
 Er ich ever fro thee te!" archdeacon
go
- 1875 Thanne seide the geaunt: "Meister sire,
 Slough thou me brother Grandere,
 For al this castel ful of golde
 A live lete thee ich nolde!" I will not let you live
 "Ne ich thee," queth Beves, "I trowe!" Nor I you
- 1880 Thus beginneth grim to growe. anger
- The geaunt, that ich spak of er,
 The staf, that he to fighte ber,
 Was twenti fote in lengthe be tale, by measure (tally)
 Tharto gret and nothing smale:
- 1885 To Sire Beves a smot therwith
 A sterne strok withouten grith, peace
 Ac a failede of his divis
 And in the heved smot Trenchefis,
 That ded to grounde fel the stede. But he failed; device (he missed)
- 1890 "O," queth Beves, "so God me spedie,
 Thow hast don gret vileinie,
 Whan thou spardest me bodi
 And for me gilt min hors aqueld, killed
 Thow witest him, that mai nougant weld."¹
- 1895 Be God, I swere thee an oth:
 Thow schelt nougant, whan we tegoth, go forth
 Laughande me wende fram,
 Now thow hast mad me gram!" Laughing get away from me
made; angry
- 1900 Beves is swerd anon up swapte,
 He and the geaunt togedre rapte swept
 And delde strokes mani and fale: rushed

¹ You blame him (the horse), who has no control [over the situation]

Bevis of Hampton

- The nombre can I nought telle in tale.
The geaunt up is clobbe haf
And smot to Beves with is staf,
That his scheld flegh from him thore
Thre akres brede and sumdel more.
Tho was Beves in strong erur
And karf ato the grete levour
And on the geauntes brest a wonde,
That negh a felde him to the grounde.
The geaunt thoughte this bataile hard,
Anon he drough to him a dart,
Thourgh Beves scholder he hit schet,
The blod ran doun to Beves fet,
Tho Beves segh is owene blod,
Out of is wit he wex negh wod,
Unto the geaunt ful swithe he ran
And kedde that he was droughti man,
And smot ato his nekke bon:
The geaunt fel to grounde anon.
Beves wente in at castel gate,
The levedi a mette ther-ate,
“Dame!” a seide, “go, yeve me mete,
That ever have thow Cristes hete!”
The levedi, sore adrad with alle,
Ladde Beves in to the halle,
And of everiche sonde,
That him com to honde,
A dede hire ete al ther ferst,
That she ne dede him no berst,
And drinke ferst of the win,
That no poisoun was ther-in.
Whan Beves hadde ete inough,
A keverchef to him a drough
In that ilche stounde,
To stope mide is wonde.
“Dame, dame,” Beves sede,
“Let sadele me a gode stede,
For hennes ich wile ride,
I nel lo lenger her abide!”
- heaved
flew
acres across
wrath
cut in two; club (lever)
wound

hand spear
hurled

became nearly mad

showed; powerful
in two

give me food
hatred

every dish
was served

damage

he drew

To stop up his wound

here

Bevis of Hampton

	The levedi seide, she wolde fawe;	joyfully provide
	A gode stede she let forth drawe	
	And sadeled hit and wel adight,	appointed
	And Beves, that hendi knight,	
1945	Into the sadel a lippte,	he lept
	That no stirop he ne drippete.	touched
	Forth him wente Sire Bevoun,	
	Til he com withoute the toun	
	In to a grene mede.	meadow
1950	"Now, loverd Crist," a sede,	Lord
	"Yeve it, Brademond the king,	Grant that
	He and al is offspring,	
	Wer right her upon this grene:	
	Now ich wolde of me tene	pain
1955	Swithe wel ben awreke,	avenged
	Scholde he never go ne speke:	
	Now min honger is me aset,	satisfied
	Ne liste me never fighten bet!"	
	Forth a wente be the strem,	
1960	Til a come to Jurisalem;	
	To the patriarch a wente cof,	patriarch; quickly
	And al his lif he him schrof	confessed
	And tolde him how hit was bego,	
	Of is wele and of is wo.	his weal (success); woe (failure)
1965	The patriarch hadde reuthe	
	Of him and ek of is treuthe	
	And forbed him upon his lif,	
	That he never toke wif,	
	Boute she were clene maide.	Unless; virgin
1970	"Nai, for sothe!" Sire Beves saide.	
	On a dai aghenes the eve	toward evening
	Of the patriarke he tok is leve;	
	Erliche amorwe, whan it was dai,	Early
	Forth a wente in is wai;	
1975	And also a rod himself alone:	
	"Lord," a thoughte, "whar mai I gone?	
	Whar ich in to Ingelonde fare?	
	Nai," a thoughte, "what sholde I thare,	
	Boute yif ichadde ost to gader,	Unless; an army assembled

Bevis of Hampton

1980	For to sle me stifader?" He thoughte, that he wolde an hie In to the londe of Ermonie, To Ermonie, that was is bane, To his lemmann Josiane.	stepfather hurry on death
1985	And also a wente theder right, A mette with a gentil knight, That in the londe of Ermonie Hadde bore him gode companie; Thai kiste hem anon with that	
1990	And ather askede of otheres stat. Thanne seide Beves and lough: "Ich ave fare hard inough, Sofred bothe honger and chele And other peines mani and fele	each asked about the other's situation laughed have Suffered; chill pains
1995	Thourgh King Ermines gile: Yet ich thenke to yelde is while, For he me sente to Brademond, To have slawe me that stonde: God be thanked, a dede nought so,	Through; deceit yield; well (a good idea) time
2000	Ac in is prisoun with meche wo Ichave leie this seven yare, Ac now icham from him ifare Thourgh Godes grace and min engyn, Ac al ich wite it King Ermyn,	far ingenuity credit it all
2005	And, ne wer is daughter Josiane, Sertes, ich wolde ben is bane!" "Josiane," queth the knight, "is a wif Aghen hire wille with meche strif.	were it not for his his slayer Against
2010	Seve yer hit is gon and more, That the riche King Yvore To Mombraunt hath hire wedde Bothe to bord and to bedde, And hath the swerd Morgelai	
	And Arondel, the gode palfrai:	
2015	Ac sithe the time, that I was bore, Swiche game hadde ich never before, Ase ich hadde that ilche tide, Whan I segh King Yvor ride	since amusement

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 2020 | Toward Mombraunt on Arondel;
The hors was nought ipaied wel:
He arnedē awai with the king
Thourgh felde and wode, withouten lesing,
And in a mure don him cast,
Almest he hadde deied in hast. | <i>contented</i>
<i>bolted</i>
<i>in truth</i>
<i>mire</i> |
| 2025 | Ac er hii wonne the stede,
Ropes in the contré thai leide;
Ac never sithe, withoute fable,
Ne com the stede out of the stable,
So sore he was aneied that tide; | <i>gathered</i> |
| 2030 | Sithe dorste no man on him ride!"
For this tiding Beves was blithe,
His joie kouthe he no man kithe.
"Wer Josiane," a thoughte, "ase lele,
Alse is me stede Arondel, | <i>[Arondel] annoyed</i>
<i>happy</i>
<i>tell</i>
<i>as loyal</i>
<i>As</i> |
| 2035 | Yet scholde ich come out of wo!"
And at the knight he askede tho:
"Whiderwardes is Mombraunt?"
"Sere," a sede, "be Tervagaunt,
Thow might nought thus wende forth, | <i>Yonder</i> |
| 2040 | Thow most terne al aghen north!"
Beves ternede his stede
And rod north, Gode spedē;
Ever a was pasaunt,
Til a com to Mombraunt. | <i>God [let him] prosper</i>
<i>he; moving on</i> |
| 2045 | Mombraunt is a riche cité;
In al the londe of Sarsine
Nis ther non therto iliche
Ne be fele parti so riche. | <i>none like it</i> |
| 2050 | And whan that hende knight Bevoun
Come withouten the toun,
Tharwith a palmer he mette,
And swithe faire he him grette: | <i>pilgrim</i> |
| 2055 | "Palmer," a sede, "whar is the king?"
"Sire," a seide, "an honting
With kinges fiftene."
"And whar," a seide, "is the quene?"
"Sire," a seide, "in hire bour." | <i>bedchamber</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- “Palmer,” a seide, “paramour,
Yem me thine wede
2060 For min and for me stede!”
“God yeve it,” queth the palmare,
“We hadde drive that chefare!”
Beves of is palfrei alighte
And schrede the palmer as a knighe
2065 And yaf him is hors, that he rod in,
For is bordon and is sklavin.
The palmer rod forth ase a king,
And Beves went also a bretheling.
Whan he com to the castel gate,
2070 Anon he fond thar-ate
Mani palmer thar stonde
Of fele kene londe,
And he askede hem in that stede,
What hii alle thar dede.
2075 Thanne seide on, that thar stod:
“We beth icome to have gode,
And so thow ert also!”
“Who,” queth Beves, “schel it us do?”
“The quene, God hire schilde fro care!
2080 Meche she loveth palmare;
Al that she mai finden here,
Everiche dai in the yere,
Faire she wile hem fede
And yeve hem riche wede
2085 For a knightes love, Bevoun,
That was iboren at Southampton;
To a riche man she wolde him bringe,
That kouthe telle of him tiding!”
“Whanne,” queth Beves, “schel this be don?”
2090 A seide: “Betwene middai and noun.”
Beves, hit ful wel he sai,
Hit nas boute yong dai;
A thoughte that he wolde er than
Wende aboute the barbican,
2095 For to loke and for to se,
How it mighte best be,
- for love's sake*
Fetch; clothes
bargain
dismounted
clothed
pilgrim's staff; coat
as a wretched person
many diverse [kinds of] lands
goods
feed them
noon
saw
early
before then
Walk (turn); tower

Bevis of Hampton

- Yif he the castel wolde breke,
 Whar a mighty best in reke;
 And also a com be a touret,
 2100 That was in the castel iset,
 A herde wepe and crie;
 Thederward he gan him hie.
 "O allas," she seide, "Bevoun,
 Hende knight of Southhamtoun,
 2105 Now ichave bide that day,
 That to the treste I ne may:
 That ilche God, that thou of speke,
 He is fals and thou ert eke!"
 In al the sevene yer eche dai
 2110 Josiane, that faire mai,
 Was woned swich del to make,
 Al for Sire Beves sake.
 The levedi gan to the gate te,
 The palmeres thar to se;
 2115 And Beves, after anon
 To the gate he gan gon.
 The palmers gonne al in threste,
 Beves abod and was the laste;
 And whan the maide segh him thar,
 2120 Of Beves she nas nothing war;
 "Thee semest," queth she, "man of anour,
 Thow schelt this dai be priour
 And beginne oure deis:
 Thee semest hende and corteis."
 2125 Mete and drinke thai hadde afyn,
 Bothe piment and plenté a wyn,
 Swithe wel thai hadde ifare;
 Thanne seide the quene to eche palmare:
 "Herde ever eni of yow telle
 2130 In eni lede or eni spelle,
 Or in feld other in toun,
 Of a knight, Beves of Hamtoun?"
 "Nai!" queth al that thar ware.
 "What thow?" she seide, "niwe palmare?"
 2135 Thanne seide Beves and lough:
- go in
turret
- lived to see
trust
- also
- wont such mourning
- go
- all pushed forward
remained [behind]
- honor
- first
- preside at the feast
- courteous
- throughout
- spiced wine
- So well; partaken
- people; story
- who were there
- new

Bevis of Hampton

- “That knight ich knowe wel inough!
 Atom,” a seide, “in is contré
 Icham an erl and also is he;
 At Rome he made me a spel
- At home
told; story
- 2140 Of an hors, men clepede Arondel:
 Wide whar ichave iwent
 And me warisoun ispent
 I sought hit bothe fer and ner,
 Men telleth me, that it is her;
- treasure*
here
- 2145 Yif ever lovedestow wel that knight,
 Let me of that hors have a sight!”
 What helpeth hit, to make fable?
 She ladde Beves to the stable:
 Josian beheld him before,
- By*
Were not; man's brow all torn
fashion
- 2150 She segh his browe to-tore;
 After Bonefas she gan grede,
 At stable dore to him she sede;
 “Be the moder, that me hath bore,
 Ner this mannes browe to-tore,
- disfigured*
Boniface; call
- 2155 Me wolde thenke be his fasoun,
 That hit were Beves of Hamtoun!”
 Whan that hors herde nevene
 His kende lordes stevene,
 His rakenteis he al terof
- speak*
legitimate; voice
chains; rent asunder
- 2160 And wente in to the kourt wel kof
 And neide and made Miche pride
 With gret joie be ech a side.
 “Allas!” tho queth Josiane,
 “Wel mani a man is bane
- quickly*
neighed
- 2165 To dai he worth illaught,
 Er than this stede ben icaught!”
 Thanne seide Beves and lough:
 “Ich can take hit wel inough:
 Wolde ye,” a sede, “yeve me leve,
- doomed*
permission
- 2170 Hit ne scholde no man greve!”
 “Take hit thanne,” she sede,
 “And in to stable thow it lede
 And teie it thar it stod,
 And thow schelt have mede gode!”
- tie; where*
reward

Bevis of Hampton

- 2175 Beves to the hors tegh;
 Tho the hors him knew and segh.
 He ne wawede no fot,
 Til Beves hadde the stirop;
 Beves in to the sadel him threw,
 2180 Tharbi that maide him wel knew.
 Anon seide Josian with than:
 "O Beves, gode lemman,
 Let me with thee reke
 In that maner, we han ispeke,
 2185 And thenk, thow me to wive tok,
 Whan ich me false godes forsok:
 Now thow hast thin hors Arondel,
 Thee swerd ich thee fette schel,
 And let me wende with thee sithe
 2190 Hom in to thin owene kithe!"
 Queth Beves: "Be Godes name,
 Ichave for thee sofred meche schame,
 Lain in prisoun swithe strong:
 Yif ich thee lovede, hit were wrong!
 2195 The patriarch me het upon me lif,
 That I ne tok never wif,
 Boute she were maide clene;
 And thow havest seve year ben a quene,
 And everi night a king be thee:
 2200 How mightow thanne maide be?"
 "Merci," she seide, "leman fre,
 Led me hom to thee contré,
 And boute thee finde me maide wimman,
 Be that eni man saie can,
 2205 Send me aghen to me fon
 Al naked in me smok alon!"
 Beves seide: "So I schel,
 In that forward I graunte wel!"
 Bonefas to Sire Beves sede:
 2210 "Sire, thee is beter do be rede!
 The king cometh sone fro honting
 And with him mani a riche king,
 Fiftene told al in tale,

Bevis of Hampton

	Dukes and erles mani and fale.	numerous
2215	Whan hii fonde us alle agon, Thai wolde after us everichon With wondergret chevalrie, And do us schame and vileinie; Ac formeste, sire, withouten fable,	gone away everyone horsemanship harm first; lie
2220	Led Arondel in to the stable, And ate the gate thow him abide, Til the king cometh bi the ride; A wile thee asken at the frome, Whider thow schelt and whannes thow come;	at; wait
2225	Sai, that thou hastest wide iwent, And thou come be Dablenet, That is hennes four jurné: Sai, men wile ther the king sle, Boute him come help of sum other;	right then Who are you traveled widely from [days'] journey
2230	And King Yvor is his brother, And whan he hereth that tiding, Theder a wile an highing With al is power and is ost: Thanne mai we with lite bost	Unless
2235	Forth in oure wei go!" Beves seide: "It schel be so!" And Arondel to stable lad, Ase Bonefas him bad; And to the gate Beves yode	in haste host effort
2240	With other beggers, that ther stode, And pyk and skrippe be is side, In a sklavin row and wide; His berd was yelw, to is brest wax And to his gerdel heng is fax.	staff and purse by pilgrim's cloak rough and unfitted yellow; [down] to his breast waist; hair
2245	Al thai seide, that hii ne sighe So faire palmer never with eighe, Ne com ther non in that contré: Thus wondred on him that him gan se; And so stod Beves in that thring,	eyes
2250	Til noun belle began to ring.	throng noon

Bevis of Hampton

- Fram honting com the King Yvore,
 And fistene kinges him before,
 Dukes and erles, barouns how fale
 I can nought telle the righte tale.
 2255 Mervaile thai hadde of Beves alle.
 Yvor gan Beves to him calle
 And seide: "Palmer, thou comst fro ferre:
 Whar is pes and whar is werre?
 Trewe tales thou canst me sain."
 2260 Thanne answerde Beves again:
 "Sire, ich come fro Jurisalem
 Fro Nazareth and fro Bedlem,
 Emauns castel and Synaie;
 Ynde, Erop, and Asie,
 2265 Egippte, Grese, and Babiloine,
 Tars, Sesile and Sesaoine,
 In Fris, in Sodeine and in Tire,
 In Aufrik and in mani empire,
 Ac al is pes thar ichave went,
 2270 Save in the lond of Dabilent.
 In pes mai no man come thare,
 Thar is werre, sorwe and care.
 Thre kinges and dukes five
 His chevalrie adoun ginneth drive,
 2275 And meche other peple ischent,
 Cites itake and tounes ibrent;
 Him to a castel thai han idrive,
 That stant be the se upon a clive,
 And al the ost lith him aboute,
 2280 Be this to daie a is in doute,"
 King Yvor seide: "Allas, allas,
 Lordinges, this is a sori cas!
 That is me brother, ye witen wel,
 That lith beseged in that castel:
 2285 To hors and armes, lasse and more,
 In haste swithe, that we wer thore!"
 Thai armede hem anon bedene,
 Yvor and his kinges fiftene,
 And to the Cité of Diablen
- many
give accurate account
Wonder
- afar
peace; war
- Bethlehem
Emmaus; Sinai
India; Europe; Asia
- Tarsus; Sicily; Saxony
Friesland; Sidon; Tyre
- wherever
Except
- killed
torched
- cliff
surrounded
- situation
know
- Immediately; there
themselves instantly

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 2290 | Alle samen forth they went.
But an old king, that hight Garcy,
At home he lefte to kepe the lady.
Thoo seid Beves: "Make yow yare,
Yif that ye wille with me fare!" | <i>together</i>

<i>guard</i>
<i>ready</i>

<i>go</i> |
| 2295 | Sir Bonefas answered thoo:
"Yif ye wil by my consaile do:
Here is an olde king Garcy,
That muche can of nygremancy;
He may see in his goldryng, |

<i>necromancy</i>
<i>gold ring</i> |
| 2300 | What any man dooth in alle thing.
I know an erbe in the forest.
Now wille I sende therafter prest
And let brochen Reynessh wyne
And do that yerbe anoon therynne, |

<i>herb</i>
<i>quickly</i>
<i>broach (a cask) of Rhenish</i>
<i>herb</i> |
| 2305 | And what he be, that ther-of doth drynke,
He shal lerme for to wynke
And slepe anon after ryght
Al a day and al a nyght." |

<i>nod off</i> |
| 2310 | Sir Bonefas dide al this thing;
They resen up in the dawnyng;
Inowgh they toke what they wolde,
Both of silver and of golde,
And other tresoure they toke also, |

<i>on their</i> |
| 2315 | And in hur way they gunne goo. |

<i>on their</i> |
| 2320 | And when they were went away,
Garcy awaked a morow day
And had wonder swith stronge,
That he hadde slept so longe.
His ryng he gan to him tee, |

<i>very</i>

<i>take</i> |
| 2325 | For to loke and for to see;
And in his ryng say he thare,
The queene awey with the palmer was fare.
To his men he grad ryght:
"As armes, lordinges, for to fyght!" |

<i>saw</i>
<i>gone</i>
<i>cried out</i>
<i>To arms</i>

<i>truly</i> |
| | And tolde his folke, verament,
How the queene was awey went.
They armed hem in ryche wede
And every knyght lep on his stede, |

<i>armor</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- And after went al that route
 2330 And besette hem al aboute.
 Thenne seide Beves to Bonefas:
 "Kepe wel Josian at this cas,
 And I wil wynde to bataile,
 Garcy and his ost assaile. go
 2335 I wil fonde, what I do may,
 I have rested me moony a day. try
many days
 Fyght, I will now my fylle
 And hem overcom by Goddes wille!"
 Tho Bonefas to him saide:
 2340 "Sir, yow is better do by my reed:
 Ye shal be in the lasse dout,
 For I know the contré al about;
 I can bryng yow in to a cave,
 There a sheparde with a stave, staff
 2345 Theyghe men hadden his deth sworn,
 He myght him kepe wel therform!" Though
 Into the cave he hath hem brought;
 Garcy, the Kyng, hem couth fynde nought, could not find them
 Therfore him was swith woo; so angry
 2350 He and his ost bethought hem thoo,
 Hoom agheyn for to wende
 And sende Ascopart hem to shende. destroy
 In the cave they were al nyght
 Withouthe mete or drynke, aplyght. indeed
 2355 Twoo dayes it was goon,
 That mete ne drynke had they noon. passed
 Josian was afyngered soore
 And told anoon Beves therfore. starved
 Beves seid, "How darst thou of me meete crave?" food [ask for]
 2360 Wel thou wotest, that noon I have." you know
 Josian answered sone anoon
 And bade Sir Beves to wood goon: forest
 I have herde of savagenes, savageness
 Whenne yonge men were in wyldernes,
 2365 That they toke hert and hinde stag; doe
 And other bestes, that they myght fynde;
 They slowen hem and soden hem in her hide; prepared

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| | Thus doon men that in wood abyde. | live |
| | Sir, thou myghtest bestes lyghtly take, | easily |
| 2370 | For cause good I wyl thee make!" | sauce |
| | Beves seide to Bonefas than; | |
| | "I pray thee kepe wel Josian, | |
| | The while I wynde into the forest, | |
| | For to take sum wylde beest!" | |
| 2375 | Forth went Beves in that forest, | |
| | Beestes to sheete he was ful prest. | shoot; ready |
| | Als sone as he was forth yfare, | |
| | Two lyouns ther com yn thare, | |
| | Grennand and rampand with her feet. | <i>Gnashing; standing (as lions rampant)</i> |
| 2380 | Sir Bonefas then als skeet | <i>very quickly</i> |
| | His hors to him thoo he drowgh | |
| | And armyd him wel ynowgh | |
| | And yave the lyouns bataile to fyght; | |
| | Al to lytel was his myght. | |
| 2385 | The twoo lyouns sone had sloon | |
| | That oon his hors, that other the man. | |
| | Josian into the cave gan shete, | <i>shut [herself]</i> |
| | And the twoo lyouns at hur feete, | |
| | Grennand on hur with muche grame, | <i>ferocity</i> |
| 2390 | But they ne myght do hur no shame, | |
| | For the kind of lyouns, ywis, | <i>nature</i> |
| | A kynges daughter, that maide is, | <i>virgin</i> |
| | Kinges daughter, quene and maide both, | <i>queen</i> |
| | The lyouns myght do hur noo wroth. | <i>harm</i> |
| 2395 | Beves com sone fro huntyng | |
| | With three hertes, without lesyng, | <i>stags</i> |
| | And fonde an hors gnawe to the boon, | <i>bone</i> |
| | And Josian awey was goon. | |
| | He sowned soone for sorow and thought, | <i>swooned</i> |
| 2400 | Fro cave to cave he her sought, | |
| | To wete how that cas myght be, | <i>understand what happened</i> |
| | And in a cave he gan to see, | |
| | Where Josain sate in grete doute | <i>fear</i> |
| | And twoo lions hur about. | |
| 2405 | Too Sir Beves gan she speke: | <i>To</i> |
| | "Sir, thyn help, me to awreke | <i>avenge</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- Of these two liouns, that thy chamberleyn,
Ryght now han him slayn!" *steward*
- She seide, she wolde that oon hoolde,
2410 While that he that other quelde. *killed*
- Aboute the nekke she hent that oon,
And Beves bade let him goon,
And seide: "Dame, forsoth, ywys,
I myght yelp of lytel prys,
2415 There I had a lyon quelde, *boast; worth*
- The while a woman another helde!
Thow shalt never umbraide me,
When thou comest hoom to my contré:
But thou let hem goo both twoo,
2420 Have good day, fro thee I goo!" *reproach*
- She let hem skip up and doun,
And Beves assailed the lyoun.
Strenger bataile ne strenger fyght
Herde ye never of no knyght
2425 Byfore this in romaunce telle,
Than Beves had of beestes felle.
Al that herkeneth word and ende,
To hevyn mot her sowles wende!
That oon was a lionesse,
2430 That Sir Bevis dide grete distresse;
At the first begynnyng
To Beves hondes she gan spryng
And al to peces rent hem there,
Or Beves myght ther-of be werre. *cruel*
- 2435 That other lyon, that Josian gan holde,
To fight with Beves was ful bold;
He ran to him with grete randon
And with his pawes he rent adoun
His armour almost to ground,
2440 And in his thyghe a wel grete wound. *Before; beware*
- Tho was Beves in hert grame,
For the lioun had do him shame;
As he were wood, he gan to fyght;
The lionesse seyge that sight *vehemently*
- 2445 And raught to Beves, without faile, *thigh*
- discouraged*
- mad*
- rushed*

Bevis of Hampton

- Both at oones they gan him assaile.
 Thoo was Beves, in strong tempestes,
 So strong and egre were these beestes,
 That nyghe they hadde him there queld;
 great trouble
 2450 Unnethe he kept him with his shelde.
 With Morgelay, that wel wold byte,
 To the lioun he gan smyte;
 His ryght foot he shore asonder,
 Sir Beves shilde the Lyoun ranne under
 2455 And with his teeth with sory happe
 He kitte a pece of his lappe,
 And Beves that ilke stounde
 For anguysses fel to the grounde,
 And hastely Beves than up stert,
 2460 For he was grevyd in his hert;
 He kyd wel tho, he was agrevyd,
 And clef a twoo the lyon is hevyd,
 And to his hert the poynt thrast;
 Thus the lioun died at the last.
 2465 Stoutliche the liounesse than
 Asailed Beves, that droughti man,
 And with hire mouth is scheld tok
 So sterneliche, saith the bok,
 That doun it fel of is left hond.
 2470 Tho Josian gan understande,
 That hire lord scholde ben slawe;
 Helpe him she wolde fawe.
 Anon she hente that lioun:
 Beves bad hire go sitte adoun,
 2475 And swor be God in Trinité,
 Boute she lete that lioun be,
 A wolde hire sle in that destresse
 Ase fain ase the liounesse.
 Tho she ne moste him nought helpe fighte,
 2480 His scheld she broughte him anon righte
 And yede hire sitte adoun, saun faile,
 And let him worthe in that bataile.
 The liounesse was stout and sterne,
 Aghen to Beves she gan erne
 eager
 nearly; killed
 Scarcely he protected himself
 sheared
 unfortunately
 anguish
 knew
 split the lion's head in two
 Courageously
 hearty
 gladly
 seized
 Unless
 would slay her
 As gladly as
 Again; run

Bevis of Hampton

- 2485 And be the right leg she him grep,
Ase the wolf doth the schep,
That negh she braide out is sparlire;
Tho was Beves in gret yre,
And in that ilche selve veneu
gripped
sheep
almost; tore out his calf
- 2490 Thourgh Godes grace and is vertu
The liounesse so harde he smot
With Morgelai, that biter bot
Evene upon the regge an high,
That Morgelai in therthe fligh.
place
His
previously cut
back
the earth
very glad
- 2495 Tho was Josian ful fain,
Tho that hii were bothe slain,
And Beves was glad and blithe,
His joie ne kouthe he no man kithe,
And ofte he thankede the king in glori
When they (the lions)
could; show
- 2500 Of his grace and is viktori;
Ac wo him was for Bonefas,
And tho he segh, non other it nas,
A sette Josian upon a mule
And ride forth a lite while,
victory
then; saw
- 2505 And metten with a geaunt
With a lotheliche semlaunt.
He was wonderliche strong,
Rome thretti fote long;
His berd was bothe gret and rowe;
giant
loathsome semblance
In length
shaggy
- 2510 A space of fot betwene is browe;
His clob was, to yeve a strok,
A lite bodi of an ok.
brows
club
small trunk; oak
- Beves hadde of him wonder gret
And askede him, what a het,
2515 And yef men of his contré
Were ase meche ase was he.
“Me name,” a sede, “is Ascopard:
Garci me sente hideward,
For to bringe this quene aghen
here to slay
- 2520 And thee, Beves, her of-slen.
Icham Garci is chaumpioun
And was idrive out of me toun;
Al for that ich was so lite,
Garci's
driven

Bevis of Hampton

- 2525 Everi man me wolde smite;
 Ich was so lite and so merugh,
 Everi man me clepede dwerugh,
 And now icham in this londe,
 Iwoxe mor, ich understande,
 And strengere than other tene,
 2530 And that schel on us be sene;
 I schel thee sle her, yif I mai!"
 "Thourgh Godes help," queth Beves, "nai!"
 Beves prikede Arondel a side,
 Aghen Ascopard he gan ride
 2535 And smot him on the scholder an high,
 That his spere al to-fligh,
 And Ascopard with a retret
 Smot after Beves a dent gret,
 And with is o fot a slintte
 2540 And fel with is owene dentte.
 Beves of is palfrai alighte
 And drough his swerd anon righte
 And wolde have smiten of is heved;
 Josian besoughte him, it were beleved:
 2545 "Sire," she seide, "so God thee save,
 Let him liven and ben our knave!"
 "Dame, a wile us betrai!"
 "Sire, ich wil ben is bourgh, nai!"
 Thar a dede Beves omage
 2550 And becom is owene page.
 Forth thai wenten alle thre,
 Til that hii come to the se;
 A dromond hii fonde ther stonde,
 That wolde in to hethene londe,
 2555 With Sarazines stout and fer,
 Boute thai nadde no maroner.
 Tho hii sighe Ascopard come,
 Hii thoughten wel, alle and some,
 He wolde hem surliche hem lede,
 2560 For he was maroner god at nede.
 Whan he in to the schipe cam,
 His gode bat an honde he nam,
- delicate
dwarf

stronger; ten others

spurred Arondel's flanks
Against

step backward

one foot he slipped

off his

cut off his head
delayed

servant
he will betray us
bail

he (Ascopard) did; homage

fast ship

fierce
But they (Saracens); mariner

good

club; took

Bevis of Hampton

- A drof hem out and dede hem harm,
Arondel a bar to schip in is arm,
And after in a lite while
Josian and hire mule,
And drownen up saile al so snel
And sailede forth faire and wel,
That hii come withouten ensoine
To the haven of Coloine.
Whan he to londe kem,
Men tolde, the bischop was is em,
A noble man wis afin
And highte Saber Florentin.
- 2565
- 2570
- 2575
- 2580
- 2585
- 2590
- 2595
- 2600
- A drof hem out and dede hem harm,
Arondel a bar to schip in is arm,
And after in a lite while
Josian and hire mule,
And drownen up saile al so snel
And sailede forth faire and wel,
That hii come withouten ensoine
To the haven of Coloine.
Whan he to londe kem,
Men tolde, the bischop was is em,
A noble man wis afin
And highte Saber Florentin.
- them (*the Saracens*)
he bore
quickly
without delay
harbor; *Cologne*
uncle
altogether wise
chance
who
dear
beautiful lady
Be christened by you
made; font
hell's pain
too large; christened
Josian's christening
- Beves grete him at that cas
And tolde him what he was.
The beschop was glad afin
And seide: "Wolkome, leve cosin!
Gladder I nas, sethe ich was bore,
Ich wende, thou haddest be forlore.
Who is this levedi schene?"
"Sire, of hethenesse a quene,
And she wile, for me sake,
Cristendome at thee take."
"Who is this with the grete visage?"
"Sire," a sede, "hit is me page
And wile ben icristnede also,
And ich bidde, that ye hit do!"
The nexste dai after than
The beschop cristnede Josian.
For Ascopard was mad a kove;
Whan the beschop him scholde in schove,
A lep anon upon the benche
And seide: "Prest, wiltow me drenche?
The devel yeve thee helle pine,
Icham to meche te be cristine!"
After Josian is cristing
Beves dede a gret fighting,
Swich bataile dede never non
Cristene man of flesch ne bon,
Of a dragoun ther be side,

Bevis of Hampton

- That Beves slough ther in that tide,
 Save Sire Launcelet de Lake,
 He faught with a fur drake
 2605 And Wade dede also,
 And never knightes boute thai to,
 And Gy a Warwik, ich understande,
 Slough a dragoun in NorthHomberlonde.
 How that ilche dragoun com ther,
 2610 Ich wile yow telle, in what maner.
- Thar was a king in Poyle land
 And another in Calabre, ich understande;
 This twe kinge foughte ifere
 More than foure and twenti yere,
 2615 That hii never pes nolde,
 Naither for selver ne for golde,
 And al the contré, saundoute,
 Thai distruede hit al aboute;
 Thai hadde mani mannes kours,
 2620 Wharthourgh hii ferdan wel the wors;
 Tharfore hii deide in dedli sinne
 And helle pine thai gan hem winne.
 After in a lite while
 Thai become dragouns vile,
 2625 And so thai foughte dragouns ifere
 Mor than foure and thretti yere.
 An ermite was in that londe,
 That was feld of Godes sonde;
 To Jesu Crist a bed a bone,
 2630 That he dilivre the dragouns sone
 Out of that ilche stede,
 That hii namore harm ne dede.
 And Jesu Crist, that sit in hevene,
 Wel herde that ermites stevene
 2635 And grauntede him is praiere.
 Anon the dragouns bothe ifere
 Toke here flight and flowe awai,
 Thar never eft man hem ne sai.
 That on flegn anon with than,
 2640 Til a com to Toscan.
- firebreathing dragon
except those two
- Apulia*
Calabria
together (i.e., each other)
- peace*
- without doubt*
destroyed
curse
- became*
as dragons together
- hermit*
Who had received; mercy
he requested; favor
- soon*
very place
no more
- voice*
his prayer
together
flew
- thence*
Tuscany

Bevis of Hampton

- That other dragoun is flight nome
 To Seinte Peter is brige of Rome;
 Thar he schel leggen ay,
 Til hit come Domes Dai.
- 2645 And everi seve yer ones,
 Whan the dragoun moweth is bones,
 Than cometh a roke and a stink
 Out of the water under the brink,
 That men ther-of taketh the fevere,
- 2650 That never after mai he kevere;
 And who that nel noughe leve me,
 Wite at pilgrimes that ther hath be,
 For thai can telle yow, iwis,
 Of that dragoun how it is.
- 2655 That other thanne fleghe an highe
 Thourgh Toskan and Lombardie,
 Thourgh Province, withouten ensoine,
 Into the londe of Coloyne;
 Thar the dragoun gan arive
- 2660 At Coloyne under a clive.
 His eren were rowe and ek long,
 His frount before hard and strong;
 Eighte toskes at is mouth stod out,
 The leste was seventene ench about,
- 2665 The her, the cholle under the chin,
 He was bothe leith and grim;
 A was imaned ase a stede;
 The heved a bar with meche pride,
 Betwene the scholder and the taile
- 2670 Foure and twenti fot, saunfaile.
 His taile was of gret stringethe,
 Sextene fot a was a lingthe;
 His bodi ase a wintonne.
 Whan hit schon the brighte sonne,
- 2675 His wingges schon so the glas.
 His sides wer hard ase eni bras.
 His brest was hard ase eni ston;
 A foulere thing nas never non.
 Ye, that wile a stounde dwelle,
- took his flight*
Saint Peter's bridge
lay dormant
Judgment Day
- moves his*
vapor
- recover*
will not believe
Ask; have been there
- flew*
- delay*
- cliff*
ears; rough
forehead (whole face)
- inches around*
hair; throat
loathsome
maned
- without fail*
strength
it was in length
wine tun
- When the bright sun shone*
as glass
- [If] you will stay awhile*

Bevis of Hampton

- 2680 Of his stringethe I mai yow telle.
 Beves yede to bedde a night
 With torges and with candel light. *torches*
 Whan he was in bedde ibrought,
 On Jesu Crist was al is thought.
- 2685 Him thoughte, a king, that was wod, *A vision came to him; mad*
 Hadde wonded him ther a stod;
 He hadde wonded him biter and sore,
 A wende a mighte leve namore,
 And yet him thoughte a virgine
- 2690 Him broughte out of al is pine. *He thought he might not remain
it seemed to him
suffering*
 Whan he of is sleep abraid,
 Of is svevene he was afraid.
 Thanne a herde a reuli cri,
 And besoughte Jesu merci:
- 2695 "For the venim is on me throwe, *[abruptly] awakened
dream
mournful*
 Her I legge al to-blowe,
 And roteth me flesch fro the bon,
 Bote ne tit me never non!" *lie; swollen*
 And in is cri a seide: "Allas,
- 2700 That ever yet I maked was!" *Nor do I have any remedy at all
ever I was born*
 Anon whan hit was dai light,
 Beves awakede and askede right,
 What al that cri mighte ben.
 His men him answerde aghen
- 2705 And seide, that he was a knight, *immediately
valiant*
 In bataile he was holden wight;
 Alse a wente him to plaie
 Aboute her in this contrai,
 In this contré aviroun *hereabout*
- 2710 A mette with a vile dragoun, *he lies; swollen*
 And venim he hath on him throwe:
 Thar a lith al to-blowe!
 "Lord Crist," queth Beves tho,
 "Mai eni man the dragoun slo!"
- 2715 His men answerde, withouten lesing: *lying*
 "Thar nis neither emperur ne king,
 That come thar the dragoun wore,
 An hundred thosend men and more, *where the dragon was*

Bevis of Hampton

- That he nolde selen hem everichon,
 2720 Ne scholde hii never thannes gon."
- "Ascopard," a seide, "whar ertow?"
 "Icham her; what wilte now?"
 "Wile we to the dragoun gon?
 Thourgh Godes help we scholle him slo!"
- 2725 "Ya, sire, so mot I the,
 Bletheliche wile I wende with thee!"
 Beves armede him ful wel,
 Bothe in yrene and in stel,
 And gerte him with a gode bronde
- 2730 And tok a spere in is honde.
 Out ate gate he gan ride,
 And Ascopard be his side.
 Alse hii wente in here pleghing,
 Hii speke of mani selkouth thing.
- 2735 That dragoun lai in is den
 And segh come the twei men;
 A made a cri and a wonder,
 Ase hit were a dent of thonder.
 Ascopard was adrad so sore,
- 2740 As if
 Forther dorste he go namore;
 A seide to Beves, that was is fere:
 "A wonderthing ye mai here!"
 Beves saide: "Have thow no doute,
- 2745 is close
 The dragoun lith her aboute;
 Hadde we the dragoun wonne,
 We hadde the feireste pris under sonne!"
 Ascopard swor, be Sein Jon,
- 2750 defeated
 A fot ne dorste he forther gon.
 Beves answerde and seide tho;
 "Ascopard, whi seistow so?
 Whi scheilt thou afered be
- 2755 Of thing that thou might nought sen?"
 A swor, alse he moste then,
 He nolde him neither hire ne sen:
 "Icham weri, ich mot have reste:
 Go now forth and do the beste!"
- must get away
 Thanne seide Beves this wordes fre:
- where are you
here; do you want

may I prosper
Gladly

steel
armed himself; sword

wondrous

companion
marvelous

Saint

Bevis of Hampton

- "Schame hit is, to terne aghe. turn back
 A smot his stede be the side,
- 2760 Aghen the dragoun he gan ride, Against
 The dragoun segh, that he cam
 Yenande aghenes him anan, *Roaring against him rapidly*
 Yenande and gapande on him so, *Yawning; gaping*
 Ase he wolde him swolwe tho. *swallow*
- 2765 Whan Beves segh that ilche sight, *the earth*
 The dragoun of so meche might,
 Hadde therthe opnede anon,
 For drede a wolde ther in han gon;
 A spere he let to him glide
- 2770 And smot the dragoun on the side; *jumped back*
 The spere sterte aghen anon, *Like; stone*
 So the hail upon the ston, *burst into*
 And to-barst on pices five. *quickly*
- His swerd he drough also blive; *noon*
 Tho thai foughte, also I yow sai, *greatly irritated*
 Til it was high noun of the dai. *one; withstand*
- The dragoun was atened stronge, *fiercely assailed him*
 That o man him scholde stonde so longe;
 The dragoun harde him gan asaile
- 2780 And smot his hors with the taile *in the middle of*
 Right amideward the hed,
 That he fel to grounde ded.
 Now is Beves to grounde brought,
 Helpe him God, that alle thing wrought!
- 2785 Beves was hardi and of gode hert, *lasted*
 Aghen the dragoun anon a stert *dark*
 And harde him a gan asaile, *thirst*
 And he aghen with strong bataile; *would burst*
 So betwene hem leste that fight
- 2790 Til it was the therke night.
 Beves hadde thanne swich thrast,
 Him thoughte his herte to-brast;
 Thanne segh he a water him beside,
 So hit mighte wel betide,
- 2795 Fain a wolde theder flen, *go*
 He ne dorste fro the dragoun ten;

Bevis of Hampton

- The dragoun asailed him fot hot,
With is taile on his scheld a smot,
That hit clevede hevene ato,
His left scholder dede also.
2800 Beves was hardi and of gode hert,
Into the welle anon a stert.
Lordinges, herkneth to me now:
The welle was of swich vertu:
2805 A virgine wonede in that londe,
Hadde bathede in, ich understande;
That water was so holi,
That the dragoun, sikerli,
Ne dorste neghe the welle aboute
2810 Be fourti fote, saundoute.
Whan Beves parsevede this,
Wel glad a was in hertte, iwis;
A dede of is helm of stel
And colede him ther in fraiche wel,
2815 And of is helm a drank thore
A large galon other more.
A nemenede Sein Gorge, our levedi knight,
And sete on his helm, that was bright;
And Beves with eger mode
2820 Out of the welle sone a yode;
The dragoun harde him asaile gan,
He him defendeth ase a man.
So betwene hem leste the fight,
Til hit sprong the dai light,
2825 Whan Beves mighte aboute sen,
Blithe he gan thanne ben;
Beves on the dragoun hew,
The dragoun on him venim threw;
Al ferde Beves bodi there
2830 A foule mesel alse yif a were;
Thar the venim on him felle,
His flesch gan ranclen and tebelle,
Thar the venim was icast,
His armes gan al to-brast;
2835 Al to-brosten is ventaile,
- quickly*
even in two
dwelling
dared not come near
forty feet
perceived
indeed
He took off his helmet
cooled; pure
from
or
called on; Saint George
eager spirit (inspiration)
arose
lasted
cut
All became (fared)
foul leper
rackle; swell
fall apart
neck armor

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | And of his hauberk a thosend maile. | <i>from his [chain mail] a thousand links</i> |
| | Thanne Beves, sone an highe | |
| | Wel loude he gan to Jesu criye: | |
| | "Lord, that rerede the Lazaroun, | <i>raised Lazarus</i> |
| 2840 | Dilivre me fro this fend dragoun!" | <i>fiend</i> |
| | Tho he segh his hauberk toren, | <i>chain mail</i> |
| | "Lord!" a seide, "That I was boren!" | |
| | That seide Beves, thar a stod, | <i>where he stood</i> |
| | And leide on, ase he wer wod; | |
| 2845 | The dragoun harde him gan asaile | <i>fiercely</i> |
| | And smot on the helm with is taile, | |
| | That his helm clevede ato, | <i>helmet; in two</i> |
| | And his basinet dede also. | <i>basinet</i> |
| | Tweies a ros and tweis a fel, | <i>Twice he rose</i> |
| 2850 | The thredde tim overthrew in the wel; | <i>third time</i> |
| | Thar-inne a lai up right; | <i>he lay face up</i> |
| | A neste, whather hit was dai other night. | <i>He did not know</i> |
| | Whan overgon was his smerte | <i>healed; injury</i> |
| | And rekevred was of is hertte, | <i>recovered; courage</i> |
| 2855 | Beves sette him up anon; | |
| | The venim was awei igon; | |
| | He was ase hol a man | <i>whole</i> |
| | Ase he was whan he theder cam. | |
| | On is knes he gan to falle, | |
| 2860 | To Jesu Crist he gan to calle: | |
| | "Help," a seide, "Godes sone, | |
| | That this dragoun wer overcome! | |
| | Boute ich mowe the dragoun slon | |
| | Er than ich hennes gon, | |
| 2865 | Schel hit never aslawe be | |
| | For no man in Cristenté!" | <i>Christianity</i> |
| | To God he made his praiere | |
| | And to Marie, his moder dere; | |
| | That herde the dragoun, ther a stod, | |
| 2870 | And flegh awei, ase he wer wod. | |
| | Beves ran after, withouten faile, | |
| | And the dragoun he gan asaile; | |
| | With is swerd, that he out braide, | <i>unsheathed</i> |
| | On the dragoun wel hard a laide, | |

Bevis of Hampton

- 2875 And so harde a hew him than,
 A karf ato his heved pan,
 And hondred dentes a smot that stonde,
 Er he mighte kerven a wonder,
 A hitte him so on the cholle
 cut in two; head pan (skull)
 2880 And karf ato the throte bolle.
 The dragoun lai on is side,
 On him a yenede swithe wide.
 Beves thanne with strokes smerte
 Smot the dragoun to the herte,
 throat-ball (Adam's apple)
 2885 An hundred dentes a smot in on,
 Er the heved wolde fro the bodi gon,
 And the gode knight Bevoun
 The tongue karf of the dragoun;
 Upon the tronsoun of is spere
 its
 2890 The tongue a stikede for to bere.
 A wented tho withouten ensoine
 Toward the toun of Coloine.
 Thanne herde he belles ringe,
 Prestes, clerkes loude singe;
 2895 A man ther he hath imet,
 And swithe faire he hath him gret,
 And asked that ilche man tho,
 Whi thai ronge and songe so.
 "Sire," a seide, "withouten faile,
 2900 Beves is ded in bataile;
 Tharfore, for sothe I saie thee:
 Hit is Beves dirige!"
 "Nai," queth Beves, "be Sein Martin!"
 And wente to Bischop Florentin.
 2905 Tho the bischop hadde of him a sight,
 A thankede Jesu ful of might
 And broughte Beves in to the toun
 With a faire prosesioun;
 Thanne al the folk that thar was,
 2910 Thankede Jesu of that gras.
 On a dai Sire Beves sede:
 "Leve em, what is to rede
 Of me stifader Devoun
 for; grace
 One day
 Dear uncle; news
 stepfather Devon

Bevis of Hampton

- That holdeth me londes at Hamtoun?"
 2915 The beschop seide anon right:
 "Kosin, Saber, thin em, is in Wight,
 And everi yer on a dai certaine
 Upon th'emerperur of Almaine
 He ginneth gret bataile take,
 2920 Beves, al for thine sake;
 He weneth wel, that thou be ded;
 Tharfore, kosin, be me red,
 An hundred men ich yeve thee wighte,
 Aghen th'emerperur to fighte,
 2925 Stalworde men and fer,
 And thou schelt wende te Saber:
 Sai, ich grette him wel ilome!
 Yif ye han nede, sendeth to me,
 Ich wile yow helpe with al me might,
 2930 Aghen th'emerperur to fight.
 While thou dost this ilche tourne,
 The levedi schel with me sojurne,
 And the page Ascopard
 Schel hire bothe wite and ward."
 2935 Forth wente Beves with than
 To his lemman Josian:
 "Lemman," a seide, "ich wile go
 And avenge me of me fo,
 Yif ich mighte with eni ginne
 2940 Me kende eritage to winne!"
 "Swete lemman," Josian sede,
 "Who schel me thanne wisse and rede?"
 Beves sede "Lemman min,
 Min em, the Bischop Florentin,
 2945 And Ascopard, me gode page,
 Schel thee warde fro damage."
 "Ye, have ich Ascopard," she sede,
 Of no man ne stant me dredre;
 Ich take thee God and seinte Marie:
 2950 Sone so thou might, to me thou highe!"
 Beves wente forth anon
 With is men everichon,
- uncle
Germany
 believes
 by; advice
I give you manfully
 Against
Stalwart; fierce
 go to
 many times
 protect; guard
lady
 my foe
 means (device)
My natural heritage
 guide; advise
 Protect; harm
 I have
 no man; I dread
put you [in the hands of]; holy Mary
 As soon as you can; return
 every one

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | That the bischop him hadde yeve. | given |
| | So longe thai hadde here wei idrive, | |
| 2955 | That hii come upon a done, | hill |
| | A mile out of South Hamtowne. | |
| | "Lordinges," to his men a sede, | |
| | "Ye scholle do be mine rede! | |
| | Have ich eni so hardi on, | |
| 2960 | That dorre to Hamtoun gon, | |
| | To th' emperor of Almaine, | |
| | And sai: her cometh a vintaine, | |
| | Al prest an hondred knighe | |
| | That fore his love wilens fighte | |
| 2965 | Both with spere and with launce, | |
| | Al fresch icome out of Fraunce! | |
| | Ac ever, an erneste and a rage, | |
| | Ever speketh Frensch laungage, | |
| | And sai, ich hatte Gerard, | |
| 2970 | And fighte ich wile be forward, | am called |
| | And of the meistri icham sure, | by agreement |
| | Yif he wile yilde min hure?" | victory I am confident |
| | Forth ther com on redi reke, | If: pay my hire |
| | That renabliche kouthe Frensch speke; | one man readily |
| 2975 | "Sire," a seide, "ich wile gon, | |
| | The mesage for to don anon!" | |
| | Forth a wente to the castel gate | |
| | The porter a mette ther-ate, | |
| | To th' emperor he hath him lad, | |
| 2980 | Al a seide, ase Beves him bad. | |
| | Th' emperor and Beves sete ifere | eloquently |
| | That ilche night at the sopere; | |
| | Th' emperor askede him, what a het; | |
| | "Gerard!" a seide alse sket | |
| 2985 | "Gerard!" a seide, "for soth iwis, | |
| | This levedi hadde her er this | together |
| | An erl to lord, er ich hire wedde, | same |
| | A sone betwene hem to thai hadde, | he was called |
| | A proud wreche and a yng, | very quickly |
| 2990 | And for sothe a lite gadling; | |
| | So was is fader of proud mode, | |
| | | young |
| | | impudent |
| | | spirit |

Bevis of Hampton

	Icomen of sum lether blode;	evil
	His sone, that was a proud garsoun,	boy
	Men him clepede Bevoun;	
2995	Sone he was of age,	<i>As soon as</i>
	A solde me his eritage	<i>inheritance</i>
	And spente his panes in scham and schonde,	<i>money in shame; disgrace</i>
	And sithe flegħ out of Ingelonde.	<i>ran away</i>
	Now hath he her an em in Wight,	<i>there; uncle</i>
3000	Sire Saber, a wel strong knight,	<i>baronage</i>
	And cometh with gret barnage	
	And cleimeth his eritage,	
	And ofte me doth her gret gile,	<i>here</i>
	And thow might yilden is while,	<i>stay for a while</i>
3005	Him to sle with swerd in felde,	
	Wel ich wolde thin here yelde!"	<i>army pay</i>
	"Sire," queth Beves anon right,	
	"Ichave knightinges of meche might,	
	That beth unarmed her of wede,	<i>armor</i>
3010	For we ne mighte non out lede	
	Over the se withouten aneighe;	<i>difficulty</i>
	Tharfore, sire, swithe an highe	<i>quickly</i>
	Let arme me knightinges echon,	<i>each one</i>
	And yef hem gode hors forth enon,	<i>right away</i>
3015	An hundred men sent thow thee self,	
	Ase mani ichave be min helf,	<i>on my behalf</i>
	Dight me the schip and thin men bothe,	<i>Prepare</i>
	And I schel swere thee an othe,	
	That I schel yeve swiche asaut	<i>assault</i>
3020	On that ilche Sabaaut,	<i>Saber</i>
	That withinne a lite while	
	Thow schelt here of a queinte gile!"	<i>hear; cunning trick</i>
	Al thus th'emerur hath him dight	<i>supplied</i>
	Bothe hors, armes, and knight,	
3025	Tharto schipes with gode vitaile;	<i>victuals</i>
	Forth thai wente and drowe saile.	
	In the schipe the knightinges seten, ywis,	<i>for sure</i>
	On of here, another of his.	
	Whan thai come amidde the forde,	
3030	Ech threw is felawe over the bord;	

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Of th'emerures knightes everichon | |
| | Withinne bord ne levede non. | <i>left none</i> |
| | Saber hem ful wel ysay, | <i>saw</i> |
| | Ase he upon his toure lay, | <i>tower</i> |
| 3035 | Mani baner he segh arered. | <i>raised</i> |
| | Tho was Saber sumdel afered, | <i>somewhat afraid</i> |
| | That th'emerur with is ost come, | |
| | Biker he made wel ylome. | <i>Fight; many times</i> |
| | Beves wiste wel and sede, | |
| 3040 | That Saber him wolde drede; | <i>dread</i> |
| | Upon the higheste mast is top there | <i>mast's top</i> |
| | He let sette up a stremere | <i>banner</i> |
| | Of his fader armure, | |
| | Saber the rather to make sure, | |
| 3045 | For mani a time thar beforen | |
| | He hadde hit in to bataile boren. | <i>carried it into battle</i> |
| | Tho the schip to londe drough, | <i>drew</i> |
| | Saber hit knew wel inough | |
| | And thoughte and gan to understande, | |
| 3050 | That Beves was come inte Ingelonde. | <i>into</i> |
| | "Lord," a sede, "hered Thow be, | <i>praised</i> |
| | That ich mai me kende lord se: | <i>lawful</i> |
| | That he wer ded, ich was ofdrad, | <i>afraid</i> |
| | Meche sorwe ichave for him had." | |
| 3055 | A wente with is knightes blive, | <i>quickly</i> |
| | Thar the schipes scholde arive; | <i>Where</i> |
| | Either other gan to kisse, | <i>Each began to kiss the other</i> |
| | And made meche joie and blisse, | |
| | And Beves tolde him in a while, | |
| 3060 | He hadde do th'emerur a gile. | <i>done; trick</i> |
| | Tho seide Beves with than: | |
| | "Have ich eni so hardi man, | |
| | That dorre to Hamtoun gon | <i>dares</i> |
| | Over the water sone anon, | |
| 3065 | And sai th'emerur anon right, | |
| | That I nam no Frensche knight, | <i>I am not named Gerard</i> |
| | Ne that I ne hatte nought Gerard, | |
| | That made with him the forward, | <i>agreement</i> |
| | And sai him, ich hatte Bevoun, | |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 3070 | And cleymeth the seinori of Hamtoun,
And that is wif is me dame,
That schel hem bothe terne to grame;
Now of hem bothe togadre
I schel fonde wreke me fadre?" | <i>rule</i>
<i>his wife is my mother</i>
<i>anger</i>
<i>together</i>
<i>try to avenge</i>
<i>hearty one</i> |
| 3075 | Up thar sterte an hardi on:
"Sire," a seide, "ich wile gon,
The mesage fordoth hem bothe,
And maken hem sori and wrothe."
Forth a wente ase hot | <i>ruins</i>

<i>at once</i> |
| 3080 | Over the water in a bot,
Forth a wente also whate
In at the castel gate;
At the soper alse a set, | <i>boat</i>

<i>quickly</i> |
| 3085 | Th' emperor he gan thus gret:
"Sire emperur, I thee bringe
A swithe certaine tiding:
Wel the grete that ilche knight,
That sopede with thee yerstene night; | <i>as he sat</i>

<i>supped</i> |
| 3090 | A saith a hatte nought Gerard,
That made with thee the forward;
A saith, that he hatte Bevoun
And cleymeth the seinori of Hamtoun,
And is icome with thee to speke, | <i>he was not called</i>

<i>agreement</i> |
| 3095 | Of his fader deth to ben awreke,
Thee te sle with schame and schonde
And for to winne is owene londe."
Th' emperor herde of him that word, | <i>avenged</i>

<i>disgrace</i> |
| 3100 | His sone stod before the bord;
He thoughte with is longe knif
Bereve that mesageres lif; | <i>[the emperor's] son</i>

<i>Take away</i> |
| 3105 | A threw is knif and kouthe nought redi
And smot his sone thourgh the bodi.
The mesager spak a gainli word
Before th' emperor is bord: | <i>aim</i>

<i>suitable</i> |
| | "Thow gropedest the wif anight to lowe,
Thow might nought sen aright to throwe;
Thow havest so swonke on hire to night,
Thow havest negh forlore the sight: | <i>the emperor's table</i>

<i>groped your wife too lowly at night</i> |
| | | <i>worked</i>

<i>almost lost your sight</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 3110 | Her thou hast lither haunsel,
A worse thee betide schel!"
And smot is hors with the spore
And arnde out at halle dore;
Wel and faire he hath him dight
And com aghen to Beves in Wight | <i>Here; a poor gift</i>
<i>pricked; spur</i>
<i>ran (hightailed)</i>
<i>conducted himself</i> |
| 3115 | And tolde a slough is sone for grame;
Beves lough and hadde gode game.
Lete we with Sire Beves thanne
And speke of Josiane, | <i>he slew [the emperor's] son in anger</i>
<i>anger; amusement</i> |
| 3120 | That in Coloine was with Beves em,
Til that he aghen theder kem.
In that londe that ilche while
Thar wonede an erl, that highte Mile; | <i>uncle</i>
<i>Miles</i> |
| 3125 | To Josian he hadde his love cast
And gan hire to wowen fast,
Faire a spak to terne hire thought,
And she seide a was aboute nought. | <i>woo</i>
<i>change her mind</i>
<i>i.e., "Nothing doing"</i>
<i>angry</i> |
| 3130 | That erl was wroth in is manere,
For Josian him nolde here,
And spak to hire with loude gret:
"For wham," a seide, "scholde ich it lete, | <i>Since; would not listen to him</i>
<i>lamentation</i>
<i>should I stop it</i> |
| 3135 | Boute ich mai have of thee me wille?
Ich wile," a seide, "who that nille!"
She seide: "While ichave Ascopard,
Of thee nam ich nothing afard, | <i>anger; army</i>
<i>threat</i> |
| 3140 | For thee wrethe ne for thin ost,
Ne for thee ne for thine bost!"
And tho thoughte that Erl Mile
To do Josian a gile: | <i>trick</i> |
| | A leter he let for to write,
In this maner he dede adite, | <i>compose</i> |
| | That Ascopard come scholde
To Beves, thar the letter him tolde,
In to a castel in an yle, | <i>isle</i> |
| | The brede of the water thre mile; | <i>width</i> |

¹ "I will," he said, "no matter who does not want me to"

Bevis of Hampton

- 3145 To Ascopard thai come snel; *quickly*
 Thai seide, Beves him grette wel
 And besoughte, for is love
 In haste a scholde to him come.
 Forth wente Ascopard ase hot *at once*
 3150 Over the water in a bot; *boat*
 Whan he was over the water come,
 Hii unlek the ghate at the frome;
 And whan he was comen withinne,
 Thai sperede him faste with ginne. *unlocked; start*
 3155 Aghen to Josiane Miles gan terne: *locked him securely; trap*
 "For wham," a seide, "schel ich it werne?" *return*
 She thoughte for to kepe hire, aplight, *hold back*
 She sente a masager to Wight,
 To Beves, be letter and tolde fore *protect herself, indeed*
 3160 Al togodre lasse and more. *[Isle of] Wight*
 Miles wolde have is wille
 And she bed him holde stille: *bade; stop*
 "Nought, thegh I scholde lese me lif,
 Boute ich were thee weddede wif;
 3165 Yif eni man me scholde wedde, *must*
 Thanne mot ich go with him to bedde.
 I trow, he is nought now here,
 That schel be me weddefere!" *husband*
 "I schel thee wedde aghenes thee wille,
 3170 Tomorwe I schel hit fulfillie!"
 And kiste hire anon right
 And sente after baroun and knight
 And bed hem come leste and meste, *ordered them; lowest and highest honor*
 To anoure that meri feste.
 3175 The night is gon, that dai comen is,
 The spusaile don hit is *espousal*
 With merthe in that toun
 And joie of erl and baroun.
 And whan hit drough toward the night,
 3180 Here soper was ther redi dight, *Their; arrayed*
 And thegh thai richelich weren ifed,
 That erl wolde ben abed.
 Josian he het lede to bour, *when commanded [that she be] led to bower*

Bevis of Hampton

	To have hire under covetour;	<i>covers</i>
3185	Upon hire bedde ther she sat, That erl com to hire with that, With knightes gret compainie With pymtent and with spisorie, With al the gamen that hii hedde,	<i>spiced wine; spices</i>
	For to make hire dronke a bedde; Ac al another was hire thought, Ne gammende hire that gle right nougnt.	<i>tricks</i>
3190	"Sire," she seide to that erl sone, "Ich bidde thou graunte me a bone,	<i>drunk</i>
3195	And boute thou graunte me this one, I ne schel thee never bedde none. Ich bidde thee at the ferste frome, That man ne wimman her in come;	<i>But</i>
	Beloく hem thar-oute for love o me, That no man se our privité!	<i>amused; gaiety not at all</i>
3200	Wimmen beth schamfast in dede And namliche maidenes," sche sede. That erl seide a wolde faine.	<i>favor</i>
	A drof out bothe knight and swaine, Levedies, maidenes, and grome, That non ne moste ther-in come,	<i>unless</i>
3205	And schette the dore with the keie. Litel a wende have be so veie. Josian he com aghen to:	<i>very beginning</i>
	"Lemman," a seide, "ichave ido, Thee bone ichave do with lawe, Me schon I mot me self of drawe,	<i>[neither] man nor; here</i>
3210	As I never yet ne dede."	<i>Lock</i>
	Adoun a set him in that stede; Thanne was before his bed itight,	<i>secret things</i>
3215	Ase fele han of this gentil knight, A covertine on raile tre, For no man scholde on bed ise.	<i>modest</i>
	Josian bethoughte on higing,	<i>particularly</i>
3220	On a towaile she made knotte riding, Aboute his nekke she hit threw And on the raile tre she drew;	<i>gladly</i>
		<i>servants</i>
		<i>young men</i>
		<i>shut; key</i>
		<i>Little he thought; doomed</i>
		<i>Your boon; in good faith</i>
		<i>shoes; take off</i>
		<i>prepared</i>
		<i>As many [servants] have done</i>
		<i>cover; rail-tree</i>
		<i>quickly</i>
		<i>a riding knot (noose)</i>

Bevis of Hampton

- Be the nekke she hath him up tight
And let him so ride al the night.
3225 Josian lai in hire bed.
No wonder, though she wer adred.
Dai is come in alle wise,
A morwe the barouns gonne arise
Sum to honten and sum to cherche,
3230 And werkmen gonne for to werche.
The sonne schon, hit drough to under,
The barouns thar-of hadde wonder;
That th'erl lai so longe a bed,
Gret wonder thar-of he hedde.
- Queth sum: "Let him lie stille!
Of Josian he hath al is wille."
Middai com, hit drough te noune,
The barouns speke ther eft sounے:
Queth the boldeste: "How mai this be?
3240 Wende ich wile up and ise!"
That baroun dorste wel speke,
To the chaumber he gan reke
And smot the dore with is honde,
That al wide opun it wonde.
- "Awake," a seide, "Sire Erl Mile,
Thow havest sleped so longe while,
Thin heved oweth to ake wel:
Dame, let make him a caudel!"
3245 "Nai," queth Josian at that sake,
"Never eft ne schel his heved ake!
Ichave so tyled him for that sore,
Schel hit never eft ake more,
Yerstendai he me wedded with wrong
3250 And tonight ichave him honge.
Doth be me al youre wille,
Schel he never eft wimman spille!"
Al hii made meche sorwe;
Anon rightes in that morwe
Sum hire demte thanne
3255 In a tonne for to branne.
Without the toun hii pighte a stake,
- In the morning
hunt
workmen
toward noon
- Said some
toward noon
again
- I will go up and see
reach
- head; ache
fortified drink
- handled; pain
- Yesterday; illegitimately
- despoil women
- condemned
- In a barrel; burn
Outside; set up

Bevis of Hampton

	Thar the fur was imake, The tonne thai hadde ther iset, Thai fette wode and elet.	There; fire gathered wood and fuel
3265	Ascopard withinne the castel lay, The tonne and al the folk he say; Ful wel him thoughte that while, That him trokede a gret gile, For he was in the castel beloke,	town, saw tricked him; deceit locked
3270	The castel wal he hath tobroken; He was maroner wel gode, A stertte in to the salte flode, A fischer he segh fot hot, Ever a swam toward the bot.	shattered sailor leapt fisherman; at once
3275	The fischer wende, sum fend it were, Out of is bot he flegh for fere. Ascopard hente the bot an honde And rew himself to the londe, Toward the fur faste a schok,	thought; some fiend flew caught fire; hasten
3280	Beves com and him oftok: "Treitour," a seide, "whar hastow be? This dai thou hastest betraied me!" "Nai, sire!" Ascopard seide, And tolde, Miles him hadde betraide.	overtook have you been
3285	Toward the fur thai wente blive: The prest, that hire scholde schrive, Godes blessing mote he fonge, For that he held Josiane so longe! In hire smok she stod naked,	confess receive
3290	Thar the fur was imaked; Ase men scholde hire forbrenne, Beves on Arondel com renne With is swerd Morgelay;	came running
3295	Ascopard com be another way, And slowen in that ilche stounde Al that hii abouthe the fur founde, And that he hadde for is while, That proude erl, Sire Mile.	killed; very place found around; fire his effort
3300	A sette Josian on is palfrai, And wente forth in here wai;	their way

Bevis of Hampton

- Thai wente to schip anon righte
 And sailede forth in to Wighte.
 Wel was Saber paid with than
 Of Ascopard and of Josian.
- 3305 Beves and Saber sente here sonde message
 Wide in to fele londe,
 And hii sente an hie
 After gret chevalrie,
 Of al the londe the stringest knighte,
 That hii owhar finde mighte.
 That emperur negh daide,
 His wif confortede him and saide:
 "Sire," she seide, "doute yow nougnt!
 Of gode consaile icham bethought:
 Ye scholle sende, for certaine,
 After your ost in to Almaine,
 And whan your ost is come togadre,
 Send to the King of Scotlonde, me fadre;
 He wile come to thee an highe
 With wondergret chevalrie,
 That thow derst have no sore
 Of that thef, Saber the hore,
 Ne of Beves, that is me lothe:
 Yit ye schollen hem hangen bothe!"
 Tho the letters were yare,
 The masegers wer forth ifare.
 In Mai, whan lef and gras ginth springe,
 And the foules merie to singe,
 The King of Scotlonde com to fighte
 With thretti thosend of hardi knighte
 Of Almaine, is owene barouny,
 With wonder-gret chevalry.
 "Lordinges," a seide, "ye witeth alle,"
 Whan hii were before him in the halle,
 "That ofte this thef, Saber the hore,
 Me hath aneied swithe sore.
 Now is him come help to fighte,
 Beves of Hamtoun, an hardi knighte,
 To Sarasins was sold gon longe;
- many lands
 in haste
 most stalwart
 anywhere
 nearly died
 fear not
 good counsel
 host
 in haste
 pain
 grayhaired
 loathful to me
 ready
 gone
 leaf; begin to
 birds
 know
 annoyed
 sold long ago

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 3340 | Ich wende he hadde ben anhonge.
He me threteth for to selen
And for to winne is londe aghen;
With him he hath a geaunt brought:
Erthliche man semeth he nougant, | wish |
| 3345 | Ne no man of flesch ne felle,
Boute a fend stolen out of helle;
Ascopard men clepeth him ther oute,
Of him ichave swithe gret doute.
Ac, lordinges," a seide, "arme ye wel, | Earthly
skin
fiend

fear |
| 3350 | We scholle besege hem in here castel;
The Ascopard be strong and sterke,
Mani hondes maketh light werk!"
Forth thai wenten ase snel,
Til thai come to the castel | Though
hands
swiftly |
| 3355 | Thar Saber and Beves weren inne.
Thai pighte pavilouns and bente ginne.
Saber stod on is tour an high,
Al that grete ost a sigh;
Gret wonder ther of he hade, | <i>pitched pavilions; field machinery</i>
tower
sighted |
| 3360 | The holi crois before him he made
And swor be his berde hore,
Hit scholde some of hem rewe sore.
Saber doun of his tour went,
After al is knightes a sent: | cross
gray
regret |
| 3365 | "Has armes, lordinges!" he gan segge,
"Th'emperur ther oute us wile belegge.
Make we thre vintaine,
That be gode and certaine!
The ferste ich wile me self out lede, | To arms: say
besiege
divisions |
| 3370 | And thow that other, Beves!" a sede,
"And Ascopard the thredde schel have
With is gode, grete stave.
Be we thre upon the grene,
Wel ich wot and nougant ne wene: | lead out |
| 3375 | Mani man is thar oute kete,
This dai schel is lif forlete!"
Saber is horn began to blowe,
That his ost him scholde knowe. | field
know; doubt not
caught
be lost |

Bevis of Hampton

- “Lordinges,” a seide, “ne doute yow nought,
 3380 Ye scholle this dai be holde so drought, *brave*
 That hem were beter at Rome,
 Thanne hii hadde hidre icome.”
- Tho th’emperur herde in castel blowe,
 Tharbi he gan to knowe,
 3385 That hii armede hem in the castel;
 His knightes he het ase snel: *called; quickly*
 “Has armes, lordinges, to bataile!
 Out hii cometh, us to asaile.” *To arms; battle*
- Twei ostes thai gonue make,
 3390 He of Scotlonde hath on itake,
 Th’emperur that other ladde:
 His deth that dai ther he hadde.
- Out of the castel cam before
 Saber with is berde hore, *his gray beard*
 3395 And in is compainie
 Thre hondred knightes hardie.
 Sire Morice of Mounclere
 His stede smot aghenes Sabere;
 His spere was sumdel kene, *somewhat sharp*
- 3400 And Saber rod him aghene:
 Though is spere wer scharpe igrunde,
 Saber slough him in that stounde. *instant*
 Out on Arondel tho com Bevoun
 And mette with is stifader Devoun, *stepfather*
- 3405 And with a dent of gret fors
 A bar him doun of his hors;
 With Morgelay, that wolde wel bite,
 He hadde ment is heved of smite; *meant; his head off*
 His ost cam riding him to,
- 3410 Wel ten thosend other mo; *or more*
 So stronge were tho hii come.
 Th’emperur Beves hii benome *They took the emperor away from Bevis*
 And broughte him an horse tho;
 Tharfore was Beves swithe wo. *angry*
- 3415 Thar com in the thredde part
 With is batte Ascopard; *his club*

Bevis of Hampton

- Ever else he com than,
A felde bothe hors and man.
Tharwith was Beves wel apaide,
3420 A clepede Ascopard and to him saide:
“Ascopard, tak right gode hede:
Th’emperur rit on a whit stede;
Thin hure I schel thee yilde wel,
With that thow bringe him to me castel!”
3425 “Sire,” a seide, “I schel for sothe
In to the castel bringe him to thee!”
Ascopard leide on wel inough,
Bothe man and hors he slough;
Thar nas non armur in that londe,
3430 That mighte the geauntes strok astonde.
The King of Scotlond, with is bat
A yaf him swiche a sori flat
Upon the helm in that stounde,
That man and hors fel ded to grounde.
3435 Thanne anon, withoute sojur,
A wente to that emperur,
And hasteliche with might and main
A hente the hors be the rain;
Wolde he, nolde he, faire and wel
3440 He bar hors and man to the castel.
Of al that other, siker aplighte,
That were ensemled in that fighte,
Of Scotlond and of Almaine,
Beves and Saber with might and maine
3445 With deth is dentes gonne doun drive,
That thar ne scapede non alive.
And thus Sire Beves wan the pris
And vengede him of is enimis,
And to the castel thai wente isame
3450 With gret solas, gle and game,
And that his stifader wer ded,
Ase tit he let felle a led
Ful of pich and of bremston,
And hot led let falle ther-on;
3455 Whan hit alther swither seth,
- as
He struck down
pleased
called
rides
hire

slew

giant's stroke withstand

slap
moment

delay

grabbed; rein
Like it or not
carried
yes indeed
assembled

no one escaped
victory
avenged himself
together
satisfaction; joy; mirth
to make certain his stepfather was dead
At once; lead kettle
pitch; brimstone
molten lead
all at once seethed

Bevis of Hampton

	Th' emperor thar in a deth, Thar a lay atenende. Wende his saule, whider it wende!	<i>in death at his ending soul</i>
3460	His moder over the castel lai, Hire lord sethen in the pich she sai; So swithe wo hire was for sore, She fel and brak hire nekke therfore. Alse glad he was of hire, Of his damme, ase of is stipsire,	[Bevis'] mother seething; saw very woeful; shock broke her neck
3465	And seide: "Damme, forgheve me this gilt, I ne yaf thee nother dent ne pilt!" Thanne al the lordes of Hamteschire Made Beves lord and sire	Mother, forgive blow nor knock shire of Hampton
3470	And dede him feuté and omage, Ase hit was lawe and right usage. Tho was Beves glad and blithe And thankede God ful mani a sithe, That he was wreke wel inough Of him, that his father slough.	fealty; homage customary
3475	Wel hasteliche she let sende To Coloine after the bischop hende, And spusede Beves and Josiane. Of no joie nas ther wane; Though ich discribe nougnt the bredale,	[Josian] married lack
3480	Ye mai wel wite, hit was riale, That ther was in alle wise Mete and drinke and riche servise. Now hath Beves al is stat;	describe not the wedding know; royal estate
3485	Tweie children on hir he begat In the formeste yere, Whiles that hii were ifere. And Saber him redde thar Wende to the King Edgar;	first together advised
3490	Tho with inne a lite stounde The king a fond at Lounde. Beves a knes doun him set, The king hendeliche a gret; The king askede him, what he were And what nedes a wolde there.	Go London knelt courteously he greets

Bevis of Hampton

- 3495 Thanne answerde Bevoun:
 "Ichatte Beves of Hamtoun;
 Me fader was ther th'erl Gii;
 Th'emperur for is levedi
 Out of Almaine com and him slough;
- 3500 Ichave wreke him wel inough;
 Ich bidde before your barnage,
 That ye me graunte min eritage!"
 "Blethaliche," a seide, "sone min,
 Ich graunte thee, be Sein Martin!"
- 3505 His marchal he gan beholde:
 "Fet me," a seide, "me yerde of golde!
 Gii, is fader, was me marchal,
 Also Bevis, is sone, schal."
 His yerd he gan him ther take:
- 3510 So thai atonede withoute sake.
 In somer aboute Whitsontide
 Whan knightes mest an horse ride,
 A gret kours thar was do grede,
 For to saieng here alther stede,
- 3515 Whiche were swift and strong.
 The kours was seve mile long;
 Who that come ferst theder, han scholde
 A thosand pound of rede golde.
 Tharwith was Beves paied wel:
- 3520 Meche a treste to Arondel.
 A morwe, whan hit was dai cler,
 Ariseth bothe knight and squier
 And lete sadlen here sole.
- 3525 Twei knightes hadde the kours istole,
 That hii were to mile before,
 Er eni man hit wiste ybore.
 Whan Beves wiste this, fot hot
 Arondel with is spures a smot
- 3530 And is bridel faste a schok;
 A mide the kours he hem oftok.
 "Arondel," queth Beves tho,
 "For me love go bet, go,
 And I schel do faire and wel
- I am called
the earl
for his lady*
- avenged
baronage
heritage
Gladly
Saint
marshal
Bring; staff*
- were reconciled; strife
Pentecost*
- course; prepared
test all the steeds*
- pleased
trusted*
- horses
stolen (sneaked onto)
two; ahead
Before any man knew it was done
learned; immediately*
- shook
overtook them*

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | For thee love reren a castel!" | raise |
| 3535 | Whan Arondel herde what he spak,
Before the twei knightes he rak,
That he com rather to the tresore,
Than hii be half and more.
Beves of his palfrai alighte | reached |
| 3540 | And tok the tresore anon righte:
With that and with mor catel
He made the castel of Arondel.
Meche men preisede is stede tho,
For he hadde so wel igo; | chattel
for
<i>Many; praised</i>
<i>run well</i> |
| 3545 | The prince bad, a scholde it him yeve;
"Nay," queth Beves, "so mot I leve,
Though thou wost me take an honde
Al the hors of Ingelonde!"
Sithe that he him yeve nele, | <i>commanded</i> |
| 3550 | A thoughte, that he it wolde stele.
Hit is lawe of kinges alle,
At mete were croune in halle,
And thanne everiche marchal
His yerde an honde bere schal. | <i>Even if; let me</i>
<i>horses</i>
<i>Since; not give it to him</i>
<i>steal</i>
<i>custom</i>
<i>crowned</i>
<i>marshal</i> |
| 3555 | While Beves was in that ofice,
The kinges sone, that was so nice,
What helpeth for to make fable?
A yede to Beves stable
And yede Arondel to nighe, | <i>staff; should bear</i>
<i>i.e., as marshal</i>
<i>foolish</i>
<i>Why tell a lie</i>
<i>He went</i> |
| 3560 | And also a wolde him untighe,
And tho Arondel, fot hot,
With his hint fot he him smot
And todaschte al is brain.
Thus was the kinges sone slain. | <i>got too close to</i>
<i>then; immediately</i>
<i>hind</i>
<i>dashed out</i> |
| 3565 | Men made del and gret weping
For sorwe of that ilche thing;
The king swor, for that wronge
That Beves scholde ben anhonge
And to-drawe with wilde fole. | <i>mourning</i> |
| 3570 | The barnage it nolde nought thole
And seide, hii mighte do him no wors,
Boute lete hongen is hors; | <i>horses</i>
<i>barons; allow</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- Hii mighte don him namore,
For he servede tho the king before.
- 3575 "Nai," queth Beves, "for no catele
Nel ich lese min hors Arondele,
Ac min hors for to were
Ingelonde ich wile forswere;
Min eir ich wile make her
- This gode knight, min em Saber."
In that maner hii wer at one,
And Beves is to Hamtoun gone;
A tolde Josian and Ascopard fore
Al togedre, lasse and more.
- 3585 Beves lep on is rounci
And made is swein Terri,
That Saber is sone is;
And whan Ascopard wiste this,
Whiche wei hii wolde take,
- 3590 Aghen to Mombraunt he gan schake,
To betraie Beves, as ye mai se,
For he was falle in poverté,
For, whan a man is in poverté falle,
He hath fewe frendes with alle.
- 3595 To him seide King Yvore:
"Treitour, whar hastow be thus yore?"
"Sire," a seide, "have sought the quene,
And have had for hire miche tene!
Sire," a seide, "certeine for sothe,
- 3600 Yet ich kouthe bringe hire to thee!"
"Ich wile thee yeve a kingdom right,
Bring yow me that levedi bright!"
Queth Ascopard: "Therto I graunt,
Be Mahoun and be Tervagaunt,
- 3605 So that ichave fourti knigthes,
Stout in armes and strong in fightes;
For Beves is ful sterne and stoute,
Of him ichave swithe gret doute;
He overcom me ones in bataile:
- 3610 Me behoveth help, him to asaile."
King Yvor grauntede anon rightes;

*property
lose
protect*

heir; here

*horse
his squire
Saber's son
learned*

*hasten
betray*

*where have you been
[I] have
because of her; distress*

Okay

fear

I require

Bevis of Hampton

- He let him chese fourti knigthes
 And armede hem him in yrene wede,
 And forth with Ascopard thai yede. iron armor
- 3615 Now lete we be this Ascopard
 And speke of Beves, that rit forthward
 In is wei til Ermonie rode
 Thourgh Fraunce and thourgh Normondie;
 And Josiane, Crist here be milde! to Armenia
- 3620 In a wode was bestonde of childe
 Beves and Terri doun lighte
 And with here swerdes a logge pighte;
 Thai broughte Josiane ther inne,
 For hii ne kouthe no beter ginne. suddenly in labor
- 3625 Bevis is servise gan hire bede,
 To helpe hire at that nedē.
 "For Godes love," she saide, "nai,
 Leve sire, thow go thee wai,
 God forbede for is pitē, got down
- 3630 That no wimman is privité
 To no man thourgh me be kouthe.
 Goth and wendeth hennes nouthe,
 Thow and thee swain Terry,
 And let me worthe and Oure Levedy!" hut constructed
- 3635 Forth thai wente bothe ifere,
 For hii ne mighte hire paines here.
 Allas, that ilche cherre;
 Hii wente from hire alto ferre!
 Alse hii wer out of the weie, they knew of no better plan
- 3640 She hadde knave children tweie.
 Also she dilivered was,
 Thar com Ascopard goande a pas
 And fourti Sarasins, the Frensch seth,
 Al iarmede to the teth. offered her his service
- 3645 For al hire sorwe and hire wo
 Thai made hire with hem te go,
 And gret scorning of hire thai maked
 And bete hire with swerdes naked.
 Wo was the levedi in that stounde, return hence now
- 3650 That was so beten and ibounde; let me and Our Lady be together
- So they would not hear her pains
 [for] that decorous behavior
 too far away
- When
- gave birth to twin boys
- As
- passing by
- armed; teeth
- beat; swords
- moment
- beaten; bound

Bevis of Hampton

- And in here weſt aſt thāi gonne wende,
 She ſeide: "Aſcopard, freli frende,
 For bounté, ich dede thee while
 And ſavede thee fro perile,
 3655 Tho Beves thee wolde han ſlawe
 And ibrought of thee lif dawe,
 Ich was the bourgh, thee ſchost be trewe.
 Thar fore I praie, on me thee rewe
 And yeve me ſpace a lite wight,
 3660 For wende out of this folkes ſight,
 To do me nedes in privité,
 For kende hit is, wimman te be
 Schamfaste and ful of corteisie,
 And hate dedes of fileinie."
- 3665 Aſcopard anſwerde hire tho:
 "Whider thou wilt, dame, thou ſchelt go,
 So ichave of thee a ſight!"
 Thanne Josiane, anon right
 Out of the way ſhe gan terne,
 3670 As ſhe wolde do hire dedes derne.
 While ſhe was in Ermonie,
 Bothe fysik and ſirgirie
 She hadde lerned of meifters grete
 Of Boloyne the gras and of Tulete,
 3675 That ſhe knew erbes mani and fale,
 To make bothe boute and bale.
 On ſhe tok up of the grounde,
 That was an erbe of meche mounde,
 To make a man in ſemlaunt there,
 3680 A foule mesel alſe if a were.
 Whan ſhe hadde ete that erbe, anon
 To the Sarasines ſhe gan gon,
 And wente hem forth withoute targing
 Toward Yvore, the riche king.
- 3685 Thai nadde ride in here way
 Boute fif mile of that contray,
 She was in ſemlaunt and in ble
 A foule mesel on to ſe.
 Tho ſhe was brought to King Yvore,
- noble
favor
guarantee; should
take pity
time
natural
Modest
villainy
As long as
So that; secret
physic; surgery (medicine)
teachers
grass (herbs); Toledo
good; bad (medicines; poisons)
value
ſeem to reſemble
leper
tarrying
had not ridden
appearance; complexion
When

Bevis of Hampton

- 3690 To Ascopard a seide thore;
 "Who is this wimman, thou hast me brought?"
 "What," a seide, "knowest hire nought?
 She is Josiane, the Quene.
 Ichave had for hire meche tene." *distress*
- 3695 Thanne seide Yvor: "I pracie Mahoun
 Tharfore yeve thee is malisoun,
 Swiche a levedi me to bringe,
 So foule of sight in alle thinge!
 Led hire awai, God yeve yow schame," *give you his curse*
- 3700 Thee and hire, bothe isame!" *Lead together*
- A castel hadde King Yvor
 Fro his paleise fif mile and mor;
 Theder Yvor bad hire lede
 And finde hire that hire wer nede. *what she needed*
- 3705 Tho Ascopard withouten dwelling
 In to that castel gan hire bring,
 In wildernes upon a plaine,
 And half a yer a was hire wardaine. *delaying keeper (warden)*
- Now lete we be of this levedi
 3710 And speke of Beves and of Terri.
 Beves, aghen is wei he nam,
 In to the logge that he cam;
 Fond he ther nother yong ne elder,
 Boute twei hethene knave childer, *heathen*
- 3715 Swithe faire children with alle,
 Alse hii were fro the moder falle.
 Beves fel tha doun and swough;
 Terri wep and him up drough,
 And koursese biter that while *As when they were born swooned raised himself up*
- 3720 Ascopard is tresoun and is gile.
 Thei kottede here forers of ermin,
 The yonge children wonde ther in.
 Thar nolde hii no long abide,
 Thei lope to horse and gonre ride; *cursed bitterly at that moment Ascopard's; his cut; furs; ermine clothed*
- 3725 In the wode a forster thai mette
 And swithe faire thai him grette:
 "God the blesse, sire!" Beves sede,
 "Sighe the eni levedi her forth lede" *leaped Did you see*

Bevis of Hampton

- 3730 Owhar be this ilche way?"
 "Sire, for Gode" a seide, "nay!"
 "What dones man ertow, bacheler?"
 "Sire," a seide, "a forster!"
 "Forster, so Crist thee be milde,
 Wiltow lete cristen this hethen childe?
 Right, lo, now hit was ibore
 And yong hit hath is moder forlore.
 Wilt thou kep it for to min," a sede,
 "And I schel quite wel thee mede?"
 The forster him grauntede ther,
 To kepe hit al the seven yer.
 "Sire, what schel it hote yet?"
 "Gii," a sede, "ase me fader het.
 Right sone so he is of elde,
 Tech him bere spere and schelde!"
 That child the forster he betok
 And forth in is wei a schok.
 Another man a mette there,
 That seide, a was a fischere;
 Ten mark Beves him betok,
 And that other child to lok,
 And he himself, at the cherche stile
 He let nevene the child Mile.
 Thar nolden lengere abide,
 Thai lope to hors and gonre ride
 Over dale and over doun,
 Til thai come to a gret toun,
 And at a faire in thai lighte,
 And riche soper thai gonre hem dighte.
 Beves at a wendowe lokede out
 And segh the strete ful aboute
 Of stedes wrien and armes bright.
 A wonder him thoughte, what it be might;
 At here ostesse he askede there,
 What al the stoute stedes were.
 "Sire, a seide, "veraiment,
 Thai ben come for a tornement,
 That is cride for a maide faire,
- manner of man are you*
Christ be gentle [with] you
Will you; baptize
abandoned
on my behalf
pay; reward
be called
Guy; is named
Until; age
he hastened
fisherman
gave
look after
had named; Miles
hill
dismounted
had prepared for them
covered
hostess
places
she; truly
decreed

Bevis of Hampton

- A kinges daughter and is air. heir
 Who that thar be beste knight
 3770 And stireth him stoutliche in that fight,
 He schel have that maide fre
 And Aumbeforce, the faire contré.”
 Thanne seide Beves unto Terry:
 “Wile we tornaie for that levedy?” *tourney; for the sake of*
 3775 “Ye, sire,” a sede, “be Sein Thomas of Ynde!
 Whan were we wonded be byhinde?
 We scholle lete for non nede, refuse
 That we ne scholle manliche forth us bede!”
 A morwe the lauerkes songe, lark's
 3780 Whan that the lighte day was spongē,
 Beves and Terry gonне arise
 And greithede hem in faire queintise. *ornamented arms*
 Here armes were riale of sight,
 With thre eglen of asur bright; eagles; azure
 3785 The chaumpe of gold ful farie Tolede, *field; [made in] Toledo*
 Portraid al with rosen rede.
 And Terri, Saberes sone of Wight,
 In riche armes also was digit.
 Ase thai com ride thourgh the toun,
 3790 Erles, barouns of renoun *finely made*
 Hadde wonder of here armes slie,
 In that londe never swich thai sie.
 The trompes gonне here bemes blowe; *trumpeters; trumpets*
 The knightes riden out in a rowe,
 3795 And tho the tornement began, then
 Thar was samned mani a man, *assembled*
 The tornement to beholde,
 To se the knightes stout and bolde.
 Thai leide on ase hii were wode *clashed; mad*
 3800 With swerdes and with maces gode;
 Thar nolde no man other knowe,
 Thar men mighte se in lite throwe while
 Knightes out of sadel iboren,
 Stedes wonne and stedes loren. lost
 3805 The kinges sone of Asie Asia
 Thoughte wenne the meistrie. *Hoped to win*

Bevis of Hampton

- Out of the renge he com ride, rank
 And Beves nolde no leng abide; violence
 He rod to him with gret randoun, falchion
 3810 And with Morgelai, is fauchoun, struck down
 The prince a felde in the feld; home
 He was boren hom upon is scheld.
 And also Beves adoun bar
 A noble duk, that was thar. duke
 3815 In Aumbeforce cleped a wes Nubia; lie
 Balam of Nuby, withouten les;
 Taile over top he made him stoupe
 And felde him over is horses croupe,
 And seven erles he gan doun thrawe,
 3820 Sum iwonded and sum yslawe. rump
 Saber is sone, that highte Terry,
 Kedde that he was knight hardy;
 He leide on, alse he wolde awede,
 And wan his lord mani gode stede. did throw down
 3825 Alle tho that hii mighte hitte, wounded
 No man mighte here strokes sitte.
 So Beves demeinede him that dai,
 The maide hit in the tour say.
 Hire hertte gan to him acorde, rave
 3830 That she wolde have him to lorde,
 Other with love other with strif; won
 And ever a seide, he hath a wif,
 And seide, she was stolen him fro.
 Thanne saide the maide: "Now it is so,
 3835 Thow schelt al this seven yere
 Be me lord in clene manere, pure
 And yif thee wif cometh thee aghen,
 Terry, the swein, me lord schel ben!"
 Beves seide: "So I schel;
 3840 In that forward I graunte wel!" promise
 Saber at Hamtoun lai in is bed,
 Him thoughte, Beves a wonde hed; dreamed; wound
 A way he was, him thoughte that while,
 Toward Sein Jemes and Sein Gile.
 3845 Whan he awok, he was afraid, Saint James; Saint Giles

Bevis of Hampton

	To his wif is swevene a said.	<i>dream</i>
	"Sire," she seide, "thow hastest wrong, That thow dwellest her so long. Also ich am wimman ibore,	
3850	Wif or child he hath forlore.	<i>lost</i>
	Thourgh Ascopard he hath that gile."	
	Twelf knightes Saber let atile In palmer is wedes everichon,	<i>equip</i>
	And armede hem right wel anon;	<i>pilgrims' clothes</i>
3855	Here bordones were imaked wel With longe pikes of wel gode stel,	<i>pilgrims' staffs</i>
	And whan thai were so idight, To schip thai wente anon right	<i>arrayed</i>
	And pasede over the Grikische se;	<i>Greek sea</i>
3860	Gode winde and weder hadden he. Whan thai come to the londe,	<i>Good; weather</i>
	Faste thai gonnes fraine and fonde, In what londe were the quene,	<i>ask and inquire</i>
	And men tolde hem al bedene,	<i>as well</i>
3865	How the geaunt Ascopard In a castel hire hadde to ward,	<i>guard</i>
	In wildernes al be selve. Tho Saber and is feren twelve,	<i>companions</i>
	Thourgh help of God that ilche stounde	<i>moment</i>
3870	Sone thai han the castel founde. The castel ase he yede aboute,	<i>survey</i>
	For to divise the toures stoutre, Josian lay in a tour an high,	
	Saber and felawes she sigh,	<i>saw</i>
3875	And to him she gan to crie: "Help, Saber, for love of Marie!"	
	Tho Ascopard herde that stevene, How she gan Saber to nevene,	<i>voice</i>
	He wente him out with herte wroth	<i>name</i>
3880	And be Mahoun a swor his oth, To deth a scholde Saber dighte.	<i>send</i>
	His sclavin ech palmer of twighte, Tho schon here armur wel clere;	<i>pilgrim's coat; took off</i>
	Tho Saber and his felawes ifere	<i>together</i>

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 3885 | Aboute Ascopard thai thringe,
And harde on him thai gonne dinge
And hew him alle to pices smale
And broughte Josian out of bale;
And hasteliche tho, veraiment, | <i>pressed</i>
<i>strike</i> |
| 3890 | Josian with an oiniment
Hire coulur, that was lothli of sight,
She made bothe cler and bright.
Tho Saber, that was wis of dede,
Josian, hire dighte in palmers wede, | <i>trouble</i>
<i>truly</i> |
| 3895 | And forth thai wente hasteli,
To seche Beves and sire Terri.
Seve yer togedres thai him sought,
Er than hii him finde moughte. | <i>arrayed; garb</i>
<i>seek</i>
<i>Seven years</i>
<i>might</i> |
| 3900 | In grete Grese, so saith the bok,
Saber gret sikenesse tok,
That other half yer in none wise
Ne mighte he out of is bed arise,
And tresor he nadde namore, | <i>Greece</i>
<i>treasure</i> |
| 3905 | Than half a mark of olde store.
While Josian was in Ermonie,
She hadde lerned of minstralcie,
Upon a fithele for to play
Staumpes, notes, garibles gay; | <i>provision</i>

<i>fiddle</i> |
| 3910 | Tho she kouthe no beter red,
Boute in to the bourgh anon she yed
And boughte a fithele, so saith the tale,
For fourti panes of one menestrale;
And alle the while that Saber lay, | <i>Dances; notes; flourishes</i>
<i>knew; strategy</i> |
| 3915 | Josian everiche a day
Yede aboute the cité withinne,
Here sostenaunse for to winne.
Thus Josian was in swiche destresse,
While Saber lai in is siknesse. | <i>went</i>

<i>pence from a minstral</i> |
| 3920 | At that other half yer is ende
Swiche grace God him gan sende
And heled him of his maladie,
And forth thai wente hastelie,
Beves and Terry for to seche, | <i>each and every</i>

<i>Their sustenance</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|--|----------------------------|
| | Wheder that God hem wolde teche. | <i>show</i> |
| 3925 | So thourgh a toun thai com thringe,
Thar Beves was in also a kinge;
A broughte Josian at here inne
And wente te toun, here mete to winne. | <i>advance</i> |
| | Whan he com to the castel gate, | <i>food</i> |
| 3930 | Terry, is sone, a mette ther-ate,
That was stiward of al that londe,
And Saber gan to understande,
That hit was is sone Terry, | <i>realized</i> |
| | And bad him for love of Our Levedy | <i>Our Lady</i> |
| 3935 | And for the love of the gode Rode
Yeve him sumwhat of hire gode.
Terry beheld Saber ful blive | <i>good Cross</i> |
| | And seide: "Palmer, so mot I thrive,
Thow schelt have mete riche | <i>gladly</i> |
| 3940 | For love of me fader, th'ert iliche!"
"So seide thee moder, sone, that I was!"
And Terry him in armes las, | <i>choice food</i> |
| | And gonне cleppen and to kisse | <i>[whom] you are like</i> |
| | And made meche joie and blisse. | <i>embraced</i> |
| 3945 | Saber Josian wel faire gan dighte
And broughte hire to the castel righte
And tok hire Sire Beves to honde,
Ne cam him never lever sonde, | <i>arrayed</i> |
| | "Louerd Crist," queth Josian tho, | <i>a more lovely sound</i> |
| 3950 | "Swithe wel is me bego,
That ichave me lord ifonde.
Hadde ich me children hol and sonde!"
That hii were ded, wel she wende. | <i>Lord</i> |
| | Beves after hem let sende; | <i>befallen</i> |
| 3955 | Than com the fischer and the forster
And broughte the children of fair cher.
Thanne weddede Terry
Of that londe the riche levedy; | <i>countenance</i> |
| | And after mete thar it was, | |
| 3960 | The children pleide at the talvas, | <i>fenced (see note)</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- And to the justes thai gonne ride; *jousts*
 Thar was joie be everi side.
- Thanne Sire Beves and Sere Terry
 Wente hem in til Ermonie, *to*
 3965 And Josiane and Sire Sabere,
 And Miles and Gii bothe ifere.
 With that was come King Yvore,
 To yeve bataile Ermyn the hore;
 Ipight he hadde is pavilioun, *grayhaired*
 3970 To besiege him in that toun.
 With that com Beves in that tide
 With gret folk be that other side.
 Tho was Ermin afered sore, *sorely afraid*
 For tresoun he hadde don him before. *Because of the*
- 3975 Aghen Beves anon a yede
 And merci cride of his misdede,
 And Sire Beves tho, veraiment,
 Foryaf him alle is mautalent *ill will*
 And seide a wolde anon righte *he would right away*
 3980 Aghen Yvor take the fighte.
 Out of the cité Beves rod,
 And al is ost, withouten abod,
 And slowe doun rightes mani and fale,
 Sixti thosand told in tale; *army (host); delay*
slew; many
in total
- 3985 And Beves threw Yvor adoun
 And sente him Ermin to prisoun.
 He gan him take be the honde;
 The King Ermin gan understande,
 That he ne schel nought scape awai,
- 3990 Withoute gret raunsoun for to pai.
 Tho swor Yvor to King Ermin
 Be Mahoun and be Apolyn,
 That gret raunsoun paie he wolde, *ransom*
 Sixti pound of rede golde,
- 3995 Foure hondred beddes of selk echon, *beds; silk*
 Quiltes of gold thar upon,
 Four hondred copes of gold fyn *cups*
 And ase fele of maslin. *as many; brass*
 "Ye," seide Beves, "asend it me,

Bevis of Hampton

- 4000 And wend hom to the contré!"
 A masager a sente with main
 To Tabefor, his chaumberlain,
 And he him sente that raunsoun.
 Thus com Yvor out of prisoun.
- 4005 Now let we be of King Yvore
 And speke we of Ermin the hore,
 That in is bedde sike lay.
 So hit befel upon a day,
 Er he out of this world went,
- 4010 After Beves children a sent.
 He clepede to him Sire Gii
 And with is croune gan him crouny
 And yaf him alle is kenedom.
 Sone thar after hit becom,
- 4015 That a daide at the ende,
 To hevene mote his saule wende!
 Thanne Sire Beves and Sire Gii,
 Al the lond of Ermony
 Hii made Cristen with dent of swerd,
- 4020 Yong and elde, lewed and lered.
 So hit befel upon an eve,
 Saber of Beves tok leve,
 Hom te wende to his contré,
 His wif, his children for to se.
- 4025 Ne stente never Sire Saber,
 Til that he in Ingelonde were;
 Wel sore aneighed schel Beves be,
 Er than he Saber eft ise!
 The King Yvor hadde a thef.
- 4030 God him yeve evel pref,
 For that he kouthe so wel stele!
 He stel Beves Arondele
 With his charmies, that he kouthe,
 And broughte hit to Mombraunt be southe
- 4035 And presentede the King Yvore.
 The King be Mahoun hath swore
 That Beves scholde abegge sore
 The raunsoun, that he hadde before.

strength

gray

*with his crown crowned him
kingdom*

*died
soul*

blows

unlearned; learned

stopped

annoyed

thief

trial

knew how; to steal

stole

knew

pay for

Bevis of Hampton

	Now Sire Beves let we gan	leave
4040	And to Sire Saber wile we tan. Saber at Hamtoun in bedde lay; Him thoughte that he Beves say In bataile wo begon	turn
		<i>He dreamed; saw</i>
	And al to-heve, flesch and bon.	<i>cut up</i>
4045	Tho he abraide out of is swevene, To his wif a tolde hit ful evene Al togedres how him met. “O sire,” she seide withouten let,	<i>started up; dream</i>
	“Be the swevene ful wel I wat,	<i>exactly</i>
4050	That Beves is in semple stat; He hath forloren Arondel, And that I wet finliche wel.” Saber was wo for that sake;	<i>dreamed</i>
	Eft scrippre and bordoun he gan take	<i>delay</i>
4055	And tok leve of his wif And to Beves a wente belif. Beves was glad, that he was come, And tolde, his hors was him benome:	<i>know</i>
	“A roboun hit stal ful yore	<i>desperate state</i>
4060	And hath yeve hit to King Yvore.” “That,” Saber seide, “athenketh me, Boute yif ich mighte winne it aye!” Aghen to Mombraunt wente Saber	<i>lost</i>
	Thar men watredre the deistrer;	<i>intuit pretty well</i>
4065	Thar he stod and abod, A proud Sarasin ther-on rod; “Mahoun thee save!” seide Saber, “Fro whanne kometh this fair deistrer?	<i>purse; staff</i>
	Hit haveth brestes thikke and proute.	<i>taken</i>
4070	Which is the kroupe terne aboute?” Aboute he termde the deistrer; Up behinde lep Saber And smot the Sarasin ded adoun	<i>robber; stole a while ago</i>
	With the pik of his bordoun.	<i>grieves</i>
4075	To the King Ivor he gan grede: “Lo, Arondel ich a wei lede. Ye him stele with envie	<i>Unless; again</i>
		<i>watered; warhorse</i>
		<i>waited</i>
		<i>warhorse</i>
		<i>strong</i>
		<i>rump</i>
		<i>spike; staff</i>
		<i>did implore</i>

Bevis of Hampton

- And ich him feche before your eie!" *eyes*
 The King Ivor was swithe wo *so angry*
- 4080 And after Saber thai gonnew go;
 Thre thosend hath Saber beset;
 Josian stod in a toret; *turret*
 Al this folk she segh ful wel
 And Saber com ride on Arondel;
- 4085 Out of the tour she wente adoun
 And seide: "Beves of Hamtoun,
 Her cometh Saber upon thee stede.
 Jesu Crist him yilde is mede! *reward*
 Ac he is beset al aboute
- 4090 With wonderliche grete route; *host*
 Al most he is in point to spille!" *die*
 "Has armes!" Beves cride schille.
 Ferst smot out the yonge King Gii
 And Miles with gret chevalry;
- 4095 Thai come to Saber at that stour *attack*
 And broughte Saber gode sokour *help*
 And leide on with alle here might *their*
 And slowe Sarasines adoun right.
 Of al that sewede him so yerne, *slew*
- 4100 To Mombraunt gonnew never on terne,
 That thai ner ded upon the grene,
 Everi moder sone, I wene;
 And thus Saber in this wise
 Wan Arondel with is queintise. *followed; eagerly*
- 4105 Now mowe ye here forthormore
 Ful strong bataile of King Yvore;
 Ac er than we beginne fighte,
 Ful us the koppe anon righte! *return*
 The King Yvore him ros amorwe, *cunning*
- 4110 In his herte was meche sorwe.
 He let of sende an highing *Fill; cup*
 Thretti amirales and ten king.
 Thai armede hem in yrene wede,
 To Ermonie he gan hem lede. *in haste*
- 4115 Hii pighte paviliouns and bente ginne, *emirs*
 For to besiege hem ther inne, *They set up; field artillery*

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | And Yvore clepede at that cas
Morale and Sire Judos.
“Redeth me,” a seide, “aright,
Yif ich mai understande this fight
Aghen Beves of Hamtoun,
That is so stout a baroun!”
“We redeth meintene your parti!”
He lep to hors and gan to crie:
“Sire Beves of Hamtoun,” a sede,
“Thou hastest thar-inne gret ferede,
And ich her oute mani stout knight,
Ichave brought with me to fight,
And yif we bataile schel abide,
Gret slaughter worth in either side. | <i>embraced in his arms</i>
<i>Judas (Iscariot)</i>
<i>Advise</i>
<i>company</i>
<i>company</i>
<i>out here</i>
<i>on your part</i>
<i>ourselves</i>
<i>honor</i>
<i>borough</i>
<i>Their gloves</i>
<i>pledge</i>
<i>isle</i>
<i>Where</i>
<i>who command</i>
<i>prayed for</i>
<i>Saint</i>
<i>angry</i>
<i>went</i> |
| 4120 | Wiltow graunte be then helve,
That ich and thou mote fighte us selve?
Yif thou slest me in bataile,
Al min onour, withouten faile, | |
| 4125 | Ich thee graunte thourgh and thourgh,
Bothe in cité and in bourgh!”
Here gloven thai gonue up holde
In that forward, that Yvor tolde,
And armede hem in armes brighte | |
| 4130 | And lopen to horse anon righte
In an yle under that cité,
Thar that scholde the bataile be.
Over that water thai gonue ride,
To hire godes that bede in either side; | |
| 4135 | Beves bad help to Marie sone
And King Yvor to Sein Mahoune;
Ase Beves bad helpe to Marie,
To Tervagaunt Yvor gan crie,
That he scholde helpe him in that fight, | |
| 4140 | Also he was king of meche might.
With that hii ride togedres bothe,
Ase men, that were in hertte wrothe,
So harde thai gonue togedres mete
And with here launces gonue grete, | |
| 4145 | That thourgh the scheldes the speres yode; | |
| 4150 | | |
| 4155 | | |

Bevis of Hampton

- | | |
|--|--|
| At the breinies the dent withstode.
So harde thai threste togedre tho,
That here gerthes borste ato,
And felle to grounde bothe tho,

4160 A fote nedes thai moste go.
Out of here sadles thai gonne springe
And with fauchouns to gedere flinge;
Aither on other strokes set,
Of helm and scheld and bacinet | <i>coat of mail; blow</i>

<i>belts; asunder</i>

<i>On foot</i> |
| 4165 The fure brast out so brond ibrent,
So fel and eger was either dent.
Thus togederes thai gonne dinge
Fram prime til underne gan to ringe.
Alle that sighen hem with sight, | <i>fire erupted as if a torch burned</i>
<i>fierce, stroke</i>

<i>six in the morning till noon</i> |
| 4170 Seide never in none fight
So stronge bataile sigher than
Of Sarasin ne of Cristene man.

At high midday the King Yvore,
To Beves he smot a dent ful sore, | <i>before</i> |
| 4175 That sercle of gold and is crestel
Fer in to the mede fel.

Doun of the helm the swerd gan glace
And karf right doun before is face,
Doun right the viser with is swerd | <i>circle; his crest</i>

<i>grass</i> |
| 4180 And half the her upon is berd.
Ac though the help of Godes grace
His flesch nothing atamed nas.

Tho cride the Sarasins al at ones: | <i>hair</i>

<i>pierced</i> |
| 4185 "This Beves with his grete bones
Ful sone worth imaked tame!"
Tho wex Beves in gret grame
And thoughte wel with Morgelay
Yelden his strok, yif that he may. | <i>prayers</i>

<i>[will] become tamed</i>

<i>grew; anger</i> |
| 4190 To King Yvor he gan areche
Anon withoute more speche
Upon the scholder in that tide,
That half a fot hit gan in glide.
For smertte Yvor in that stounde | <i>Repay</i>

<i>reach out</i>

<i>time</i>

<i>pain</i> |
| Fel a knes unto the grounde, | |

Bevis of Hampton

- 4195 Ac up he sterte in haste than
 And in wrathe to Beves ran
 And thoughte han Beves aqueld;
 And Beves keppte him with is scheld,
 And Yvore with the strok of yre
 4200 Made fle in to the rivere
 A large quarter of his scheld,
 That never nas atamed in feld.
 Or Ivor mighete his hond withdrawe,
 Beves, the knight of Cristene lawe,
 4205 With Morgelay a smot him tho,
 That his scheld he clef ato,
 And his left hond, be the wrest
 Hit flegh awei thourgh help of Crist.
 Whan Ivor hadde his hond lore,
 4210 He faught, ase he wer wod therfore,
 And hew to Beves in that tide,
 No strok ne moste other abide.
 Tho Beves segh is strokes large,
 He kepte his strokes with is targe;
 4215 Tho Beves to Ivor gan flinge
 And thourgh the might of hevene king
 His right arm and is scholder bon
 He made fle to gronde anon.
 With that strok Yvor the Mombraunt
 4220 Cride: "Merci, Tervagaunt,
 Mahoun, Govin, and Gibiter,
 Reseve now me saule her,
 For wel ich wot, ich am dede!"
 Tho Beves herde him so grede,
 4225 He seide: "Yvor, let be that cri
 And clepe to God and to Mari,
 And let thee cristen, er thee deie,
 Or thouw schelt go the worsse weie
 And withouten ende dwelle
 4230 In the stronge peine of helle!"
 "Nay," queth Yvor, "so mot I then,
 Cristene wile ich never ben,
 For min is wel the beter lawe!"
- killed
warded him off with his shield
 anger
 fly
 tamed
Before
 wrist
 lost
could withstand
warded off; shield
 rush
Receive; soul
cry out
let yourself be baptized before you die
 prosper
 Christian

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------|
| 4235 | Tho Beves herde that ilche sawe,
A felde him doun, withouten faile,
And unlacede his ventaile,
And tok him be the heved anon
And strok hit fro the scholder bon,
And on his spere he hit pighte. | <i>pronouncement</i> |
| | | <i>helmet-front</i> |
| 4240 | And tho the Cristen sighs that sighte,
Thai thankede God in alle wise,
That Beves hadde wonne the prise.
Thanne al the Saracins lasse and more,
That was ycome with King Yvore, | <i>placed</i> |
| | | <i>when</i> |
| 4245 | Thai sighs her lordes heved arered,
Sore thai weren alle afered;
Toward Mombraunt thei wolde fain,
Ac Saber made hem terne again,
And Sire Beves and Sire Terry, | <i>raised up</i> |
| | | |
| 4250 | And Sire Miles and Sire Gii
Slough hem doun rightes thore,
That ther ne scapede lasse ne more. | <i>there</i> |
| | | |
| 4255 | Tho crounede thai Beves king in that lond,
That King Yvore held in hond,
And Josiane bright and schene,
Now is she ther twies quene. | <i>radiant</i> |
| | | <i>twice</i> |
| | On a dai thai wente a rivere; | <i>went hawking</i> |
| 4260 | Thar com ride a masagere,
And ever he askede fer and ner
After the hende knight Saber. | |
| | anon Saber gan forth springe: | |
| | "Masager," a sede, "what tiding?" | |
| | "Sire," a sede, "the King Edgare | |
| | Thee driveth to meche te bismare, | <i>to infamy</i> |
| 4265 | Desereteth Robaunt, thin eyr!" | <i>Disinherited; heir</i> |
| | "For God," queth Saber, "that is nought feir!" | |
| | And Sire Saber in haste tho | |
| | Tok leve of Beves, hom to go; | |
| | And Sire Beves corteis and hende, | <i>noble</i> |
| 4270 | A seide a wolde with him wende,
And Sire Miles and Sire Gii,
And is owene sone Terry. | |

Bevis of Hampton

- Now wendeth Beves in te Ingelonde
 With is knightes fel to fonde,
 And Terry with is knightes fale,
 Sexty thosend told in tale.
 Thai lende over the se belive,
 At Southhamtoun thai gonue up rive.
 Hervebourgh, Saber is wif,
 And Robaund anon ase blif
 Aghen Saber come tho;
 Queth Saber: "How this is igo?"
 And thai him tolde at the frome,
 That Edgar hadde here londes benome.
 Thanne seide Beves: "So mot I the,
 Thar of ich wile awreke be!"
 Anon the knight, Sire Bevoun,
 His ost he let at Hamtoun,
 And toward Londen a wente swithe;
 His quene a let at Potenhithe;
 He tok with him sex knightes
 And wente forth anon rightes,
 And in is wei forth a yode
 And pasede over Temse flode.
 To Westmenster whan he com than,
 A fond the king and mani man,
 And on is knes he him set,
 The king wel hendeliche a gret
 And bad before his barnage,
 That he him graunte is eritage.
 "Bletheliche," a seide, "sone min,
 I graunte thee, be Seinte Martin!"
 And alle the barouns, that ther were,
 On Beves made glade chere,
 Boute the stiward of the halle;
 He was the worste frend of alle.
 The king wolde have yeve him grith,
 The stiward seide nay ther with,
 And seide: "This forbanniiste man
 Is come to the land aghan,
 And hath thin owene sone slawe.
- courageous; try
many

came; in haste
to land
Saber's wife
quickly
Toward

beginning
taken
thrive
avenged

left
quickly
left; Putney

went
Thames
Westminster
found

nobly
baronage

Gladly; my son

peace

banished
returned

Bevis of Hampton

- He hath ydon aghenes the lawe,
 And yif a mot forther gon,
 A wile us slen everichon!"
- 4315 Beves that herde, a was wroth,
 And lep to hors, withouten oth,
 And rod to Londen, that cité,
 With sex knightes in meiné.
 Whan that he to Londen cam,
- 4320 In Tour strete is in he nam
 And to the mete he gan gon,
 And is knightes everichon.
- Let we now Beves be,
 And of all the stiward telle we,
 That hateth Beves, also is fo.
- 4325 Sexty knightes he tok and mo,
 In to Londene sone he cam,
 And into Chepe the wei he nam
 And dede make ther a cri
- 4330 Among the peple hasteli,
 And seide: "Lordinges, veraiment,
 Hureth the kinges comaundement.
 Sertes, hit is befalle so,
 In your cité he hath a fo,
- 4335 Beves, that slough the kinges sone;
 That tresoun ye oughte to mone.
 I comaunde, for the kinges sake,
 Swithe anon that he be take!"
- Whan the peple herde that cri,
- 4340 Thai gone hem arme hasteli,
 And hii that hadde armur non,
 Thai toke staves and gone gon;
 Thai schette anon everi gate
- 4345 And sum thai wente to the wal
 With bowes and with springal;
 Everi lane and everi strete
 Was do drawe with chaines grete,
 That, yif Beves wolde awei flen,
- 4350 The chaines scholde holde him aghen.
- company*
- Tower his lodging*
- food*
- as his enemy*
- Cheapside*
- Hear*
- so happens*
- remember*
- Very soon*
- no armor*
- bars*
- catapults*
- barricaded*

Bevis of Hampton

	Boute her of Beves weste nought.	<i>About this; knew not</i>
	Help him God, that alle thing wrought!	
	Beves at the mete sat,	
	He beheld and underyat	<i>understood</i>
4355	Al is fon, that were ther oute;	<i>foes</i>
	He was afered of that route.	
	He askede at the tavarnere,	<i>tavern</i>
	That armede folk, what it were.	
	And he answerde him at that sake:	<i>cause</i>
4360	"Thai ben ycome thee to take!"	
	Whan Beves herde him speke so,	
	To a chaumber he gan go,	
	That he hadde seghe armur inne;	<i>seen</i>
	In haste the dore he gan up winne	<i>open</i>
4365	And armede ther anon rightes	
	Bothe he and is sex knighting,	<i>his six</i>
	And gerte him with a gode brond	<i>armed himself; sword</i>
	And tok a spere in is honde,	
	Aboute his nekke a doble scheld.	<i>double</i>
4370	He was a knight stout and belde.	<i>bold</i>
	On Arondel a lep that tide,	
	In to the strete he gan ride.	
	Thanne seide the stiward to Sire Bef:	<i>Bevis</i>
	"Ayilt thee, treitour, thou foule thef!	<i>Yield</i>
4375	Thow havest the kinges sone islawe,	
	Thow schelt ben hanged and to-drawe!"	
	Beves seide: "Be Sein Jon,	
	Treitour was I never non.	
	That I schel kethe hastely,	<i>make known</i>
4380	Er than ich wende, sikerly!"	<i>certainly</i>
	A spere Beves let to him glide	
	And smot him under the right side;	
	Thourgh is bodi wente the dent,	<i>blow</i>
	Ded a fel on the pavement.	<i>Dead he fell</i>
4385	A sede anon after that dint:	
	"Treitour! now is the lif itint.	<i>lost</i>
	Thus men schel teche file glotouns,	<i>vile</i>
	That wile misaie gode barouns!"	<i>slander</i>
	The folk com with grete route,	

Bevis of Hampton

- 4390 Besette Beves al aboute;
Beves and is sex knighthes
Defendede hem with al her mightes,
So that in a lite stounde while
Five hondred thai broughte te gronde.
- 4395 Beves prikede forth to Chepe, *galloped; Cheapside*
The folk him folwede al to hepe; *as a mob*
Thourgh Godes lane he wolde han flowe, *fled*
Ac sone within a lite throwe
He was beset in bothe side,
- 4400 That fle ne mighte he nought that tide. *time*
Tho com ther fotmen mani and fale *numerous*
With grete clobbes and with smale!
Aboute Beves thai gonne thringe *throng*
And hard on him thai gonne dinge. *strike*
- 4405 Al Beves knightes, in that stounde *space of time*
Thar hii were feld to grounde
And al to-hewe flesch and bon.
Tho was Beves woebegon, *woebegone*
For he was on and hii were ded; *alone*
- 4410 For sorwe kouthe he no red; *advice*
That lane was so narw ywrought, *narrowly built*
That he mighte defende him nought, *not defend himself*
He ne Arondel, is stede, *Nor had he; his*
Ne mighte him terne for non nede.
- 4415 To Jesu he made his praire *escape*
And to Marie, is moder dere,
That he moste pase with is lif,
To sen is children and is wif.
Out of the lane a wolde ten, *go*
- 4420 The chynes held him faste aghen. *chains; held him back*
With is swerd he smot the chayne,
That hit fel a peces twayne, *two pieces*
And forth a wente in to Chepe;
The folk him folwede al to hepe, *in a mob*
- 4425 And al thai setten up a cry: *Yield*
“Ayilt thee, Beves, hastely,
Ayilt thee, Beves, sone anon,
And elles thou schelt thee lif forgon!”

Bevis of Hampton

- 4430 Beves seide: "Ich yelde me
To God, that sit in Trinité!
To non other man I nel me yelde,
While that ich mai me wepne welde!" *weapon*
- 4435 Now beginneth the grete bataile
Of Sire Beves, withouten faile,
That he dede ayenes that cité.
Ye that wile here, herkneth to me!
This was abouthe the under tide, *noon*
The cri aros be ech a side
Bothe of lane and of strete;
- 4440 Aboute him com peple grete,
Al newe and fresch, with him to fight,
Ac Beves stered him ase gode knight,
So that in a lite thrawe *comported himself*
Fif thosend thar was islawe *while*
- 4445 Of the strengeste, that ther wore,
That him hadde yeve dentes sore; *given painful blows*
Ac ever his stede Arondel
Faste faught with hertte lel,
That fourty fote behinde and forn *loyal*
The folk he hath to grounde iborn. *before*
- 4450 Thus that fight leste longe
Til the time of evesonge. *evensong*
Tidinge com to Potenhithe,
To Josian also swithe, *Putney*
- 4455 That Beves in Londen was islawe
And ibrought of his lif dawe.
Josian thanne fel aswowe, *swooned*
Gii and Miles hire up drowe *picked*
And confortede that levedi bright
- 4460 Hendeliche with alle her might,
And askede hire, what hire were;
And she tolde hem anon there,
How Beves was in Londen slayn
And his knightes with gret payn: *Nobly*
- 4465 "Now kethe ye ben noble knightes,
And wrekeþ your fader with your mightes!" *know*
Sire Gii and Miles seide than *avenge*

Bevis of Hampton

- To here moder Josian:
 "Dame, be Him that herwede helle,
 4470 We scholle his deth wel dere selle!"
 Than Sire Miles and Sire Gii
 Gonne hem arme hasteli
 And on here knes set hem doun
 And bad her moder benesoun.
- 4475 Sire Gii lep on a rabit,
 That was meche and nothing lite,
 And tok a spere in is hond,
 Out at the halle dore a wond
 Toward the cité of Londen toun,
 4480 And Sire Miles with gret randoun
 Lep upon a dromedary,
 To prike wolde he nought spary,
 Whan thai come to Londen gate,
 Mani man thai fonde ther-ate,
 4485 Wel iarmed to the teth,
 So the Frensche bok us seth,
 Aghen the children thei yeve bataile,
 And hii aghen, withouten faile,
 And made of hem so clene werk,
 4490 That thai never spek with prest ne clerk;
 And afterward, ase ye mai hure,
 Londegate thai sette a fure.
 Whan thai come, withouten faile,
 Tho began a gret bataile
 4495 Betwene Bowe and Londen ston,
 That time stod us never on.
 Thar was a Lombard in the toun,
 That was scherewed and feloun;
 He armede him in yrene wede
 4500 And lep upon a sterne stede
 And rod forth with gret randoun
 And thoughte have slawe Sire Bevoun.
 With an uge masnel
 Beves a hite on the helm of stel,
 4505 That Beves of Hamtoun, veraiment,
 Was astoned of the dent;
- their
by; harrowed hell
purchase dearly
- mother's blessing
Arabian horse
- he departed
- violence
camel
spur; spare
- in return
- hear
on fire
- not a single one withstood us
- wicked; villainous
- strong
violence
- huge club
- dazed

Bevis of Hampton

- What for care and for howe,
He lenede to his sadelbowe. anguish
- 4510 Thanne com priken is sone Gii,
To helpe his fader, hastily;
With a swerd drawe in is hond
To that Lombard sone a wond
And smot him so upon the croun,
That man and hors he clevede doun; quickly he proceeded
- 4515 The poynt fel on the pavement,
The fur sprong out after the dent.
Thanne com ride is brother Mile
Among the peple in that while;
Al tho, that a mighty reche,
4520 Ne dorste he never aske leche, ask for a doctor
- For to hele ther is wonde,
That he ne lai ded upon the grounde.
And whan Beves segh that sighte,
In hertte he was glad and lighte
4525 And thankede Jesu, our saviour,
That hadde sent him so gode sokour, succor
- And egerliche, withouten faile,
The grete peple he gan asaile.
So meche folk was slawe and ded,
4530 That al Temse was blod red; Thames
- The nombre was, veraiment,
To and thretti thosent.
And also sone as hit was night,
To the ledene halle thai wente right; 32,000
- 4535 A fette Josian with faire meiné
To Londen, to that riche cité,
And held a feste fourtene night
To al that ever come, aplight! indeed
- Tiding com to King Edgar,
4540 That Beves hadde his men forfare; killed
- For is borgeis in is cité
He made del and gret pité citizens
- And seide: "Ichave leved me lif
Longe withouten werre and strif, grief (dole, mourning)
- 4545 And now icham so falle in elde, lived
- war
- old age

Bevis of Hampton

- That I ne may min armes welde.
 Twei sones Beves hath with him brought,
 Tharfore hit is in me thought,
 Miles, his sone, me daughter take,
 4550 In this maner is pes to make." *peace*
 Thai graunte al with gode entent,
 And King Edgar Beves of-sent,
 And Sire Saber and Sire Gii,
 And Sire Miles and Sire Terry,
 4555 And King Edgar Miles gan calle
 Before his barouns in the halle
 And yaf him is daughter be the honde,
 And after is day al Ingelonde,
 And pes and love was maked thare
 4560 Betwene Beves and King Edgare.
 The maide and Miles wer spused same *espoused*
 In the toun of Notinghamme. *Nottingham*
 Ye witeth wel, though I ne telle yow,
 The feste was riale inow, *feast; royal enough*
 4565 As scholde be at swiche a spusing *spousing (wedding)*
 And at the kinges couroning; *crowning*
 The feste leste fourtene night
 To al that ever come, aplight!
 And at the fourtene night is ende, *indeed*
 4570 Beves tok leve, hom to wende,
 At King Edgar and at Sabere,
 And Miles, is sone, a lefte here
 And kiste and yaf him is blessing,
 And wente to Mombraunt, ther he was king;
 4575 And his erldom in Hamteschire *Hampshire*
 A yaf to his em Sabere
 And schipede at Hamtoun hastily, *sailed from*
 And with him wente his sone Gii,
 And Terry with is barnage. *baronage*
 4580 The wind blew hardde with gret rage
 And drof hem in to Ermonie,
 Thar belefte his sone Gii
 With his barouns gode and hende;
 And Terry to Aumberthe gan wende,

Bevis of Hampton

- 4585 And Beves wente withoute dwelling
 In to Mombraunt, thar he was king;
 With him wente Josian, is quene,
 And levede withoute treie and tene
 Twenti yer, so saith the bok. *grief; injury*
- 4590 Thanne swiche siknesse the levedi tok,
 Out of this world she moste wende;
 Gii, hire sone, she gan ofsende,
 And Terry, the riche king,
 For to ben at here parting. *her passing*
- 4595 And whan thai were alle thare,
 To his stable Beves gan fare;
 Arondel a fond thar ded,
 That ever hadde be gode at nede;
 Tharfore him was swithe wo, *dead*
- 4600 In to his chaumber he gan go
 And segh Josian drawe to dede.
 Him was wo a moste nede,
 And er her body began to colde,
 In is armes he gan hire folde, *before*
- 4605 And thar hii deide bothe ifere. *died; together*
 Here sone ne wolde in non manere,
 That hii in erthe beried were.
 Of Sein Lauarauns he let arere
 A faire chapel of marbel fin, *son*
- 4610 That was ikast with queint engin;
 Of gold he made an high cornere
 And leide them thar in bothe ifere.
 An hous he made of riligioun,
 For to singe for Sire Bevoun *Saint Lawrence; raise up*
- 4615 And ek for Josian the fre:
 God on here saules have pité!
 And also for Arondel,
 Yif men for eni hors bidde schel,
 Thus endeth Beves of Hamtoun. *marble fine*
- 4620 God yeve us alle Is benesoun! *cast; noble art*
 Amen. *noble souls*
- house of religion (church or monastery)*
- pray*
- His*

Notes

Abbreviations: A: Auchinleck; Kö: Kölbing; E: Egerton 2862; C: Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 2.38; CC: Caius College MS 175; N: Royal Library, Naples MS XIII, B29; M: Chetham Library, No. 8009

This edition follows the text of the Auchinleck MS (A), fols. 176–201. We have followed Kölbing's edition and used E (Duke of Sutherland, now Egerton 2862) to account for the leaf that is missing in A, for the lines in our edition numbered 2289–2464. Kölbing's emendations to the MS are listed in the notes, both where we have accepted his reading and where we have preferred to follow the MS or made other choices. We should also point out that standard paleographic abbreviations in the MS are presented as emendations in the Kölbing edition, emendations he prints in italics in the text of his edition. In citing his edition in our notes, we have not maintained this distinction.

- 1 The incipit bears an illustration of a knight standing in full armor holding a lance. Perhaps this is an indication of a wealthy patronage and the making of this collection in a London bookshop. See Laura Hibbard Loomis, "The Auchinleck Manuscript and a Possible London Bookshop of 1330–1340," *PMLA* 57 (1942), 595–609.
- 11 *shire*. In the Middle Ages a shire was a province or subdivision of a county. Many cities in England retain suffixes that indicate a seat of government. A modern analogue for shire would be county.
- 15 As the notes to the other romances have reminded us, in Middle English, double and even triple negatives add emphasis. Unlike in modern English a double negative does not constitute an affirmative.
- 25 *An elde a wif he tok an honde*. A: *An elde wif*. Kö's emendation recognizes the youth of the bride. It is the bridegroom who is overly mature.
- 34–42 That the emperor of Germany is a former lover as indicated here sets up the unhappy marital relation. The bride, who is never identified except as Bevis' mother, is dissatisfied because her choice of husband has been thwarted by her father's unilateral decision.

Notes

- 62 *fight*. MS hard to read here.
- 91 *ferste dai*. A: *ferbe*. Kö's emendation is in agreement with E, S, N, and C readings as well as medieval celebrations of May Day, a day dedicated to love.
- 133 *ferste day*. A: *ferbe*. Kö's emendation is consistent with the emendation in line 91. S, N, and C: *first*.
- 143 *And thou schelt after her wedde to spouse*. A: *bow schelt after wedde to spouse*. Kö emends by adding *her* as object of the completed quest. Though the lady's desire is known, the emphasis on marriage as a reward is significant.
- 148 *Gladder icham*. A: *Glad*. E and N: *I am gladder*. The emendation is Kö's based on E and N readings.
- 173 *levedi was right wel apaid*. A: *levidi riȝt wel apaid*. Kö adds the intransitive verb, based on its presence in C.
- 190 *tresoun mest*. Treason in the Middle Ages connotes treachery or betrayal of someone to whom one owes loyalty. Treason is thus not only a personal transgression, but a political transgression as well.
- 203 The earl wears less armor than he would if he knew he were facing a combat situation.
- 245 The exaggerated number of knights is a convention of medieval romance. Often the hero performs superhuman deeds in battle killing hundreds and thousands of opponents single-handedly. See line 4532 for the extreme instance.
- 292 The messenger speaks the words he is told to speak, conveying the message verbatim. Messengers play an important role in medieval romance; they not only convey dialogue, but act as narrative links. Oftentimes the messenger takes the brunt of the recipient's anger. Bevis himself will play the role of messenger later in the poem.
- 302 *Vile hour*. Bevis calls his mother a "vile whore" and wishes her to be drawn to death. Drawing or dragging, usually accompanied by quartering, entailed tying each limb to a separate rope then pulling the body in opposing directions by four horses,

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literally tearing the victim's body into four pieces. The punishment was usually reserved for felons of the worst sort.

- 307 *thee faire ble*. The scribe regularly spells the pronoun *the*. On the assumption that the pronoun was pronounced with a long ē we have transcribed the pronoun *the* as *thee*. Although the poet generally uses *thee* in objective (dative and accusative) situations, possessive and nominative usages are likewise commonplace. For other possessive placements, see, for example, lines 310, 374, 482, 540, 557, 564, 605, 896, 918, 922, 925, 1097, 1107, 1109, 1132, 1196, 1317, 1474, 1736, 2188, 2202, 3164, 3169, 3211, 3628, 3633, 3656, 3738, 3837, 4087, 4428; for nominative use, see lines 531, 1043, 1082, 1103, 1233, 1422, 1843, 2121, 2124, 2188, 2203, 3657, 3658, 4227; and for dative of agency, which we translate with an "it is" syntax, see lines 1007, 2210; or as a reflexive pronoun, see lines 1006, 1733, 3015, 4374, 4426, and 4427. He also uses *me* in all three functions. E.g., see lines 671 and 1043.
- 310 *alle wif*. Bevis imagines his mother a madame in a brothel.
- 315 *And be of elde*. A: *ben of elde*. E and N: *be of*. C: *come to*. Kö clarifies the line.
- 320 *That child she smot with hire honde*. One of many scenes of domestic violence. Not recognized by medieval law, violence among family members was considered a private matter with parents having customary rights to corporal punishment of their children.
- 322 *The child fel doun and that was scathe*. A: *þe child fel doun and þat scathe*. Kö adds an intransitive verb.
- 323 *meister*. Although Saber is Bevis' uncle he is also his guardian, mentor, or, perhaps, teacher, which is a common gloss on ME *maister*. See also lines 487 ff. where Bevis comes to his "teacher's" defense. Saber's name may have significance (from OE *sige bush*, meaning "victory fortress"); Saber is the faithful keeper of the estate and the faith, throughout Bevis' prolonged absence, and ultimately becomes earl of Hampshire. He is not to be confused with the bishop of Cologne, Saber Florentine, who appears in lines 2926 ff.
- 325 *The knight was trewe and of kinde*. Kö adds the possessive pronoun *his* before *kinde* to confer a "nature" upon the knight. The emendation is unnecessary.

Notes

- 347 Like the huntsman in Snow White and various other folk narratives, Saber circumvents the commands of a wicked mother by slaying an animal.
- 395–99 The role of the porter is often stressful in medieval literature since it is he who decides who is worthy of entrance into the city or castle.
- 398 *Scherewe*. From this term derives “shrew.” In the Middle Ages the term connoted “rascal,” “rogue,” “wicked person,” “evil-doer,” and “unruly or ill-disciplined child.” It could also refer to an overbearing woman.
- 415–20 Bevis’ novel means of entry defies protocol.
- 443 *a smot him with*. A: *a smot him him wif*. This duplication of words is a typical scribal redundancy in A.
- 454 *Wo hem was for the childe sake*. The knights sympathize with Bevis and let him go. Perhaps, they are also afraid of him.
- 496 *painim londe*. The term could mean anyplace outside of Christian Europe. *Painim* could refer to any group of people not practicing Christianity.
- 497 Bevis’ mother is participating in an activity that goes well beyond fostering and is reminiscent of the actions of Joseph’s brothers when they sell him into slavery in Genesis. Or perhaps Orestes, when Clytemnestra puts him away. Like Orestes, Bevis will return seeking vengeance for the murder of his father. Fortunately for him the mother dies on her own so that he is not compelled to exact justice for her treason. But he does take care of her lover, his stepfather.
- 499 *mor and lesse*. A: *mor & lesse*. Kö: *mor or lesse*. We have retained the MS reading as a commonplace idiom implying “all.”
- 510 *be him mild*. A: *be us mild*. E: *him*. Kö capitalizes Him, as if to ask Christ’s mercy for Bevis rather than for “us,” as in A.
- 515 The trip is given short shrift. In the course of two lines, they have sailed out of England and arrived in the Middle East. The land, as indicated in other MSS, is called Ermony, which usually refers to Armenia.

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- 520–22 The contrast between snow and blood as well as the attention to the shoes on Josian's feet recall fairy tale motifs such as those of Cinderella, Snow White, and Rose Red. The allusion would not be farfetched since fairy tales and folk tales, then as now, were present in virtually every culture in the world. Both genres are integrally related to medieval romance.
- 531 *Mahoun* was a common name for Mohammed in Middle English. In the standard Middle English treatment of the Islamic people (most often called Saracens in Middle English), he is treated as one of many "pagan" gods, rather than as the historical prophet of the one God, whose Arabic name is Allah.
- 548 *Wikked beth fele wimmen to fonde*. Proverbial, though not cited in Whiting or Tilley. The sense is "Many women prove to be wicked."
- 558 *Apolyn* is another of the "pagan" gods of the Saracens according to medieval understanding. This treatment of Islam is commonplace in English romances, especially the English Charlemagne romances. See Alan Lupack, ed., *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990).
- 594 *I not never, what. A: I no never. C: never not.*
- 599 The Saracen finds Bevis' ignorance laughable because even he knows the significance of the day.
- 688 *Thai were aferde, hii wer nigh wode. A: Pai were hii wer niȝ wode. Aferde* is omitted in A. Kölbing emends on the basis of other MSS' readings.
- 690 *losengers*. According to the MED this term has a range of meaning including: "one who curries favor," "a flatterer," "liar," "backbiter," "calumniator," "hypocrite," "traitorous counselor," "rascal," "coward."
- 707 *Lemman*. A term of endearment usually reserved for one's beloved. Bevis' response to Josian's declaration suggests an epiphany born of love.
- 844 *seith the bok*. The poet uses a convention of medieval romance to lend authority to his narrative. Often the "book" is French. Here it may be more than convention since this poem has a French source.

Notes

- 860 *maught*. Though the usual sense is “might” or “strength,” when used to describe a weapon the sense may be “power,” “craftsmanship,” or “virtue.”
- 861 The naming of a sword is commonplace in medieval romance and epic: Arthur’s Excalibur, Gawain’s Galantyne, Beowulf’s Hrunting, Roland’s Durandal, Oliver’s Glorious, and Siegfried’s Griel are a few.
- 885 *So tho is a lite stounde*. Kö: *And tho*, on the basis of E.
- 897 Josian’s equation of love-longing as captivation is a feature of medieval ideas of courtly love. Love captures its victim with a hook or arrow and causes pain and suffering. As Andreas Capellanus explains in the *Art of Courtly Love*: “love is like an inborn suffering.”
- 899 *Thus that maide made*. A: *Pus that maide maide her mon*. Kö transforms a noun to a verb for the sake of clarity.
- 904 Bevis’ decision to take the decapitated head of the boar to the king rather than to Josian (see line 832) is no doubt related to the attack of the envious steward. He needs to prove his deed, i.e., the slaying of the beast. The steward’s plan to steal the boar’s head away from Bevis in order to claim his own prowess is thwarted when Bevis, in the process of defending himself, kills the steward and his accomplices. He then has an opportunity to bring the head of the steward to the king but decides against it. He has already been charged with treason once. Should the king misconstrue Bevis’ story, he could face another charge of treason. Josian, who witnesses the whole scene, discloses Bevis’ act later as an endorsement of his candidacy for knighthood.
- 924 Brademond threatens to deflower Josian and pass her on to a member of the lower classes, a serious threat indeed, given the value placed upon female virginity and social ranking in the Middle Ages.
- 931 *And tolde hem how Brademond him asailed hadde*. A: *And Brademond him asailed hadde*. Because A omits the first clause in the line, Kö emends following E and N: *And tolde hem how*.
- 945 *to the teth*, A: *to the dep*. To be “armed to the teeth” is a familiar aphorism. See also lines 3644 and 4485. To be “armed to the death” makes little sense.

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- 993 *ferste scheld trome.* *trome* (from OE *truma*) is a rank of warriors, a body of armed men; the *ferste scheld* is the vanguard, the first ward. Bevis leads his choice retainers into battle, a gesture to which the enemy instantly responds. In E the equivalent gesture is contained in the line *Beues gan than his horne blowe*, to which the enemy responds.
- 1010 *wod.* We have borrowed the anachronistic gloss “berserk” from Scott’s nineteenth-century usage (OED) to describe the “wodness” of medieval battle frenzy. Scott’s neologism provides a useful modern term for which there is no better equivalent.
- 1016 *sonne set in the west.* A: *sonne set riȝt.* E and N: *sonne in the west.* Kö’s emendation which completes the rhyme and mends the breech in material.
- 1041 “*Merci!*” *queth Bradmond,* “*ich me yelde.*” A: *Merci! queþ, ich me yelde.* Kö confers the speech upon Brademond, which clarifies the textual confusion.
- 1049 St. Martin, probably of Tours (316–97), was a soldier who later became a monk and bishop in Gaul. While Martin was still a soldier, he came upon a naked beggar near Amiens in Northern France and cut his cloak in half to give the poor man something to wear. Later Martin dreamed that Christ himself was the beggar. Martin’s life and frequent miracles were popular legend in the Middle Ages. His feast day, 8 November, became known in England as Martinmas. See David Hugh Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 265–66.
- 1051 *Al that ich do, it is his dede.* A: *Al þat ich do, it is dede.* Kö: *it is his dede.* The emendation is based on E and N.
- 1054 *Thow schelt warre.* E, N, and C add a negative adjective, i.e., *never* to *warre*, which is consistent with the oath Bevis demands from Brademond.
- 1066 *Mani dai a maked him feste.* E and N: *a wykked fest.* Kö retains A. The implication is that had Bevis known what Brademond would do to him he would/should have killed him rather than show mercy.
- 1098 “*For Gode,*” *queth Beves,* “*that ich do nelle!*” A: *For gode, queth, þat ich do nelle!* Here Kö confers speech upon Bevis. Also see line 1110.
- 1108 *Than al the gold.* EN: *good.*

Notes

- 1110 "For Gode," queth Beves. A: *For gode, queþ he.* Kö's emendation confers Bevis with direct address as in line 1098.
- 1132 *daunger.* This term is often related to the practices of courtly love, wherein a would-be lover could act in an aloof and distant manner. According to the MED it could also mean "domination, power, control, or possession" and "threaten to cause difficulty or damage" as Josian seems to here, at least in Bevis' perception of her declamation of love.
- 1166 *Aboute hire nede.* This is a very short line, lengthened in C: *Of þat y went about your nede.*
- 1168 *So te misain.* A: *So te misin.* Kö: *So te misain a.* Kö silently emends A here. But his reading improves the line.
- 1192 *wimmannes bolt is sone schote.* Proverbial; not in Tilley or Whiting. The proverb implies lack of discretion, *sone* suggesting "haste" or "carelessness." Compare Malory's *The Great Tournament*, where the huntress shoots *anone* and misses the hind but hits Lancelot's buttocks.
- 1210 *Hit were gode, sire.* A: *Hit gode, sire, þat he were slain.* Kö: *It were gode, sire.* Kö emends on the strength of N and C.
- 1239 *Al in solas and in delit.* A: *Al in solas in delit.* Kö: *Al in solas and in delit* on the basis of C.
- 1288 *That Sire Beves gan of-see.* A: *Beves gan of.* Kö's emendation.
- 1289 St. Julian is the patron saint of hospitality.
- 1331 *He ne wolde love me non other.* A: *He ne wolde me non oper.* Kö adds "love" to the line.
- 1344 *A cleimed his eritage.* To claim a heritage is to assert a legal right to something, to demand title to something.
- 1380 *Tervagaunt* (usually Termagant) is another member of the Saracen pantheon.

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- 1398 *kende*. We have glossed the term as “gentle,” which seems to be closest to the primary sense of the term in this unctuous usage; “noble,” “lordly,” “spirited,” “courageous,” “brave,” “dutiful,” or “loyal” might do as well. See MED *kinde* (adj.) 4 and 5.
- 1412–18 Though a scoundrel, Brademond has some sense of honor; since Bevis once defeated him but did not kill him, Brademond will imprison Bevis rather than execute him. Had Bevis not previously shown his prowess, Brademond says that he would have executed him before sundown.
- 1422 *under the fet*. The point is that Bevis will no longer eat from a table. His prison is a pit twenty fathoms deep. Food and drink are dropped to him. That the stench would be suffocating is no harder to imagine than it would be to endure. Entrance and egress is by rope, which later proves to be his salvation. See lines 1537 ff.
- 1424 A quarter was an actual unit of measurement for grain. According to the OED it was equal to eight bushels of wheat.
- 1448 *What dai awai whanne a wolde wende*. A: *What dai whanne*. Kö adds *awai*.
- 1468 *That I lovede ase min hertte blode*. Josian’s expression of love is intensified by the anatomical reference.
- 1469–72 Magic rings are commonplace in romance traditions. Lunette gives one to Yvain in Chrétien de Troyes’ *Yvain: The Knight with the Lion* to protect him from harm. Rings are also used as means of identification or for signifying a courtly relation. Lapidary was a subject of great interest in the Middle Ages and gemstones often had symbolic meaning as proof of their power.
- 1483 *Of that feste*. A: *If þat feste*. Kö: *Of þat feste*. In the MS, the “I” is one of the large decorated initials.
- 1487 *Men graithede cartes and somers*. A: *Men graicede cartes and somers*. Kö: *graipede*.
- 1571 *His browe stank*. Apparently the wound on his forehead putrifies before forming the scar.

Notes

- 1584 The suffering servant motif seems to be operating here. Exegetical tradition holds Christ to be the prototype. Bevis' descent and eventual ascent may mark him as a Christ figure or at the very least a mythic hero in Northrop Frye's sense of the term. See *The Secular Scripture*.
- 1612 *With a strok me doth adoun falle.* A: *Wip a strok me adoun falle.* Kö's emendation is based on E and N.
- 1614 *ther-of may ben awreke.* A: *per of ben me awreke.* Kö's emendation is based on C.
- 1630 *by the rop.* A: *be rop.* Kö's emendation based on N.
- 1733 *fox welp.* An insult equivalent to *heathen hound*.
- 1756 *undertide.* A: *undetide.* Kö's emendation. The time designated by this term is noon, thought to be a particularly significant moment during the day, i.e., the time at which demons could tempt vulnerable humans. See John Block Friedman, "Eurydice, Heurodis, and the Noon-day Demon," *Speculum* 41 (1996), 22–29.
- 1799 *ase wel also man.* Kö adds the *wel*.
- 1800 In this somewhat convoluted comparison, a contrast is made between the innocence of fish, who as creatures lacking reason are not able to sin, and the perfidy of Saracens, who are thought by implication to be guilty of the death of Christ.
- 1872 Bevis is making a grim and ironic joke about the tonsure, the "close shave" that identified medieval clerics.
- 1951–53 The sense is "if King Brademond and all his offspring were right there."
- 2058–66 The beggar's or pilgrim's disguise is a popular practice in medieval romance as well as epic poems such as Homer's *Odyssey*. An effective strategy for entering a hostile city, it suggests the "invisibility" of those members of society at the bottom of the social ladder.
- 2128 *quene to eche palmare.* A: *quene to palmare.* Kö adds *eche* to maintain the meter as well as to indicate direct, individual contact since the noun is singular.
- 2161 *made miche pride.* A: *made made miche pride.* Kö deletes the redundant verb.

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- 2164–66 Perhaps the sense is that “it is many a man’s bane to be laughed at today before the steed is caught,” that is, many will try and fail (before Bevis comes along).
- 2203–06 The sense here is that if in England anyone can testify that Josian is married, she will return to her homeland with nothing but the smock on her back. She is suggesting that the marriage is unconsummated, which would render the relation invalid.
- 2210 *do be rede*. Kö emends to *do be me rede* on the authority of E and N. In so doing he clarifies Bonefas’ directive, i.e., to take his advice on an escape strategy, though emendation may not be necessary.
- 2217 *chevalrie*. The term might be glossed as “chivalry,” but in the sense of “horsemanship” rather than “courtesy,” which subsequently displaces the earlier meaning.
- 2286 *that we wer thore*. A: *bat were þore*. Kö’s emendation; the first-person plural pronoun clarifies the line.
- 2289 *Cité of Diablen*. From here to line 2464 the narrative is missing in A. We follow Kö’s usage and use E for the intervening lines. The E scribe has a propensity for capitalization which has been emended here according to modern usage.
- 2352 *Ascopard*. Giants enjoy a long and varied history in Scripture and medieval romance. They are depicted usually as villains, apostates, arrogant, threatening monsters, and descendants of Cain (e.g., Nimrod, Goliath, Grendel, and the giants of Rabelais). There is at least one exception to the negative portrayal of giants through the ages: St. Christopher, a benevolent giant, is said to have carried the Christ child across a treacherous river. In *Bevis*, Ascopard is remarkable in that he falls in between.
- 2379 The lions seem to be in a rampant position similar to how they would appear in heraldry.
- 2390–94 A commonplace of medieval lore was that virginity could confer invulnerability. Also, the taming of wild beasts occurs through their recognition of the virgin queen. Only a female virgin could lure the wild unicorn into her presence. In iconography the unicorn lies blissfully with its head in the virgin’s lap.
- 2485 *And be the right leg she him grep*. A: *he him grep*. Kö restores gender to the lion grabbing Bevis by the right leg.

Notes

- 2503 *upon a mule*. Where this mule comes from is not explained. It simply appears when needed as the knight and his lady set out. Given the recent fact of Josian's conversion, the trope perhaps suggests female virtue. Compare Gower's Constance in *Confessio Amantis* as she rides out to meet her father "Upon a Mule whyt amblaunt" (II.1506) and Una's mount as she sets out with Redcrosse Knight in the *Faerie Queene*, I.i.29 Or it may simply be an appropriate mount for a royal woman as in *King Alexander*, where Cleopatra "rod on a mule white so milk" (line 1031). Religious connotations are also possible as seen in Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem; riding on an ass rather than a warhorse denotes him as the Prince of Peace, not a conquering military hero. The Virgin Mary is also depicted in iconography riding an ass toward Jerusalem to give birth, then later during the flight into Egypt. The "wild ass" was associated with Ishmael and became a symbol of conversion.
- 2569–70 *come withouten ensoine / To the haven of Coloine*. Compare *Richard the Lion Hearted*, ed. Brunner (1913): *Fforþ þey wenten wiþuten ensoyne / To þe cyte off Coloyne*, as cited by MED *ensoine* (n.). That MS dates from c. 1475. Not many words rhyme with *ensoine* (or *Coloine*), which may be a factor. See also lines 2657–58 and 2891–92, where the words are rhymed.
- 2585 *Who is this with the grete visage*. The bishop is referring to Ascopard.
- 2601 *dragoun*. The dragon ("drake" or serpent) is one of the most vivid beasts created by the medieval European imagination. As serpent it represents the archetype of temptation in the Garden of Eden. In its more imaginative manifestations it becomes the beast of *Revelation*, a symbol of pure evil, who opposes the archangel Michael and his angelic forces. Its presence in medieval romance usually points to the hero's extraordinary prowess.
- 2603–07 Wade, Lancelot, and Guy of Warwick are great heroes in the romance tradition. By comparing Bevis' exploits to theirs, the author is authenticating Bevis' credentials as a hero of the first rank, and is also exemplifying the fact that the romance is a self-conscious genre, with individual romances constantly referring to characters and incidents in other romances and to their own sources. Notice, for example, the number of times in *Bevis* that we are given lines such as "as the book saith," or "as the French book saith." Such lines also remind us that medieval writers held written authority in high esteem. A reference to an earlier book is not simply a footnote, but a validation from an "auctor." (This Latin word means both author and authority at the same time.)

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- 2611 Apulia is in Southern Italy, as is Calabria. One of the distinguishing features of *Bevis* is a kind of geographical sweep. Italy here joins with Germany, the near east, and many parts of England as part of that sweep.
- 2637 *Toke here flight.* A: *To here fliȝt.* Kö restores the appropriate verb.
- 2640 Tuscany is in north-central Italy. It is the region of such cities as Florence, Siena, and Pisa.
- 2665 The *cholle* is that part of a dragon's anatomy which extends from the chin to the throat and from ear to ear.
- 2673 *wintonne.* A wine tun is a wine barrel.
- 2693 *Thanne a herde.* Bevis' vision comes in two phases: first a vision of one wounded by a mad king who is saved by a virgin; and second of one swollen with venom from a dragon. Both visions pertain to his own precarious situation.
- 2698 *me never non.* A: *me never mo.* Kö's emendation which improves the sense and rhyme.
- 2747 There are many saints named John. Perhaps the invocation is to John of Patmos, who, in the Middle Ages, is often credited with the writing of the *Book of Revelation*. The apocalyptic, cosmic battle depicted there features a fierce, seven-headed dragon.
- 2749 *Beves answerde.* A: *Beves answeðe.* Kö clarifies the action.
- 2762 *anan.* A: *anan.* More usually *anon*, this may be scribal error. Kö retains the variance, nonetheless, and so have we.
- 2802 Bevis' taking of refuge in the healing well as he fights the dragon is echoed in Redcrosse Knight's retreat to the well of virginal virtue after the first and second days of fighting in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Note Bevis' second venture in the well in lines 2850 ff. It is not mere coincidence that in line 2817 Bevis calls upon St. George for strength. See note to line 2817.
- 2815 *of is helm a drank thore.* The line is perhaps echoed in Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas (*CT* VII.15), though there the parallel is attributed to "sire Percyvell."

Notes

- 2817 St. George is the martyr and patron of England. The story of George and the dragon was immensely popular, disseminated through the twelfth-century *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine which was then translated by William Caxton in the fifteenth century. But, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, the story was known in England as early as the seventh century. Edmund Spenser's portrayal of Redcrosse Knight in the *Fairie Queene* reiterates St. George's status as patron saint of England.
- 2838–39 The story of Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead is told in the Gospel according to John, ch. 11. Because it was considered one of Jesus' definitive miracles, it is often used when asking God's help in extremely precarious, not to say seemingly hopeless, situations.
- 2848 *bacinet*. A basinet is a supplementary cap worn under the helmet.
- 2852 *dai other night*. A: *dai the niȝt*.
- 2879 See note to line 2665.
- 2882 *yenede swithe wide*. Because of its armor plate the only way that Bevis can get to the dragon's heart is through its throat; thus the dragon's wide-mouthed gasp proves fatal to the beast.
- 2897 *And asked that*. A: *And asked at*. Kö replaces the thorn.
- 2967 *Ac ever, an erneste and a rage*. Perhaps this suggests that he was not only serious, but angry as well.
- 2976 *mesage for to don anon*. A: *message for don anon*. Kö adds *to don anon* on the basis of M.
- 2985–06 Note the irony of giving Bevis a version of his own history.
- 3105–08 The sense of this passage seems to be that because the emperor has sex with his wife too frequently, his aim has been affected. Distorted vision, thought to be an effect of sexual excess, is also used as a metaphor by some medieval writers.
- 3180 *Here soper was ther redi dight*. A: *Here soper wer redi diȝt*. Kö restores the meter on the evidence of E and N.

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- 3187 ff. It was not unusual for witnesses to observe a newly married couple in bed in order to validate the marriage. The issue of whether consent or sexual intercourse were necessary for a valid marriage was vexed in the Middle Ages. David Herlihy writes: "The most common opinion was that consent alone was sufficient, but some experts continued to affirm that physical union perfected the marriage and rendered it binding" (*Medieval Households* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985], p. 80).
- 3217 Kö provides the following explanation of "rail-tree": "On bed curtains, see *Our English Home*, p. 101: 'Bed-curtains hung upon rails of 'tre' or metal were in use [at this time] . . .' (p. 323).
- 3244 *That al wide opun it wonde.* A: *upon.* Kö: *opun* on the basis of N.
- 3248 A caudle is a drink, often taken for medicinal purposes, consisting of thin gruel, wine, and spices.
- 3289 *In hire smok.* A: *In hire hire smok.* Kö eliminates the redundant pronoun.
- 3340 *Ich wende he hadde ben anhonge.* A: *Ich wende hadde ben anhonge.* Kö adds *he* for the sake of clarity.
- 3352 *Mani hondes maketh light werk.* Whiting cites *Bevis* (c. 1300) as the earliest recorded instance of this proverb.
- 3356 A pitched battle is a particular strategy in medieval warfare.
- 3362 *Hit scholde some of hem rewe sore.* A: *some of rewe sore.* Kö adds *hem* to restore the meter.
- 3391 *that other ladde.* A: *bat ope ladde.*
- 3392 As Kö notes, the King of Scotland dies later at the hands of Ascopard. According to the French text, Saber murders the Scottish king.
- 3453 *Ful of pitch and of bremston.* A: *Ful of bich.* Kö emends the pitch based on the other MSS.

Notes

- 3511 Whitsunday is the English name for Pentecost, the Christian feast, coming fifty days after Easter, which celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and is considered the “birthday” of the Christian church. It is described in Acts of the Apostles, ch. 2.
- 3513–42 Horse races for the accumulation of wealth are not often found in medieval romance. But they were common in practice. See, for example, *The Voyage of Ohtere*, where the one with the swiftest horse gets the most. Here the race functions as a demonstration of Arondel’s “horsepower.”
- 3590 Ascopard’s betrayal is ostensibly caused by Bevis’ fall into poverty, but is just as likely a jealous response. The proclivities of fairweather friends appear in other Middle English romances. See, for instance, *Sir Cleges* in *Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995). Nonetheless, Ascopard does have trouble maintaining credibility, despite his good deeds.
- 3622 *swerdes a logge pighte*. A: *swerdes logge piȝte*. Kö’s emendation based on other MSS.
- 3629 *God forbede*. A: *For for bed*. Kö restores the deity based on E, N, C, and M: *God for-bede*.
- 3630–31 Childbirth was strictly the provenance of women in the Middle Ages. Josian’s rejection of male interference reflects that custom. Also, the birth of twins is notable since medieval folklore sometimes held that multiple births were the consequence of many fathers rather than one. Often, because of the social stigma the birth of twins accrued, one twin could be subject to death or exile. See *Lay le Freine*, for instance.
- 3634 Josian is invoking the Virgin’s help in childbirth.
- 3640–50 The abduction of the heroine is particularly violent. Other abductions such as that of Guenevere have not been depicted as brutally as this scene. Adding to the brutality is the fact of Josian’s recent parturition and the abandonment of her twins.
- 3714 “Heathen” seems to be a curious way to describe the children. As we find out a few lines later (line 3734), however, it refers to the fact that they have not yet been baptized, a condition that is swiftly remedied.

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- 3749 A mark was an accounting measure (not an actual coin) used in medieval England, equal to thirteen shillings fourpence.
- 3772 Though it is not clear whether *Aumbeforce* is a real or an imagined place from the text, A. C. Baugh points out that in the Anglo-Norman original Aumberforce is the city of Seville (p. 21).
- 3775 St. Thomas of India is actually one of the twelve original apostles, most famous as “doubting Thomas,” because of the story in John’s Gospel (ch. 20) in which he refuses to believe the resurrection of Christ until he can put his fingers in Christ’s wounds. According to ancient tradition he brought the gospel to India, where he was martyred.
- 3776 Terri’s answer to Bevis is a way of saying that they have never been cowards, that is, they have never been afraid to fight face to face.
- 3785 The Spanish city of Toledo was famous for the manufacture of steel and weapons. The form of the word is French, indicating the influence of the Anglo-Norman version of *Bevis*.
- 3844 St. James and St. Giles are both important pilgrimage saints. James, one of the twelve original apostles, was thought to have preached in Spain. Santiago de Compostela, in northwestern Spain, where his body was thought to be found, was one of the most important pilgrimage centers of the Middle Ages, the most important in western Europe. Giles, a hermit from either the sixth or eighth century, is the patron saint of cripples and beggars. His shrine — Saint-Gilles, in Provence — was also an important pilgrimage center in the Middle Ages.
- 3859 This probably refers to the entire eastern Mediterranean, rather than to anything more specific.
- 3871 *ase he yede aboute.* A: *ase yhe yede aboute.* Kö’s emendation clarifies gender.
- 3910 Josian’s entrepreneurial activity, i.e., “as a minstrel,” recalls an episode in the romance of *Apollonius of Tyre* in which Apollonius’ abducted daughter escapes service in a foreign brothel by thwarting the desire of those seeking her services by her rhetoric. Once out, she takes up harp playing and pedagogy to support herself.

Notes

- 3960 *pleide at the talvas.* A *talevas* is a round shield, or buckler. To play at the talevas is an idiom for fencing. See MED *talevard*.
- 3978 *mautalent.* A: *mauntalent*, with the *n* by abbreviation. MED ignores the *n* but cites the passage as an “erroneous” spelling of the term.
- 3990 This refers to a king’s ransom. By comparison Chaucer was ransomed for £16 when he was captured by the French during the Hundred Years War. This was considered a significant amount of money in the fourteenth century.
- 4028 *Er than he Saber eft ise.* A: *Er than he Beves eft ise.* Kö restores Saber to his role.
- 4034 *And broughte hit to Mombraunt be southe.* A: *And brouȝt it Mombraunt.* Kö’s preposition restores clarity and meter.
- 4037 *That Beves scholde abegge sore.* A: *abegged sore.* Kö maintains a sensible verb tense: *abegge sore*.
- 4040 *tan.* A northern form of *taken*, the sense being to “turn attention to” (MED *taken* 23a); “to embrace,” “consider,” “pick up,” “proceed,” “perceive a course,” “assent,” “apply ourselves,” or “follow counsel,” “take up the thread,” or “deliberate.”
- 4054 The purse and staff here signify that Saber is going in the guise of a pilgrim.
- 4082 *Josian stod in a toret.* A: *Josian stond.*
- 4088 *Jesu Crist him yilde is mede.* A: *him yilde him his mede.*
- 4091 *he is in point to spille.* A: *he is point to spille.* Kö’s emendation.
- 4168 As the notes to the earlier romances indicate, time was usually measured according to the monastic offices or prayer services. Prime is the first of the monastic offices, which takes place at 6 a.m. Prime can thus refer specifically to 6 a.m. or to the time between 6 and 9 a.m. Undern refers to the time between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., or sometimes noon to 3 p.m..
- 4185 The sense of this is that Bevis’ prayers have tamed the valor of Yvor.

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- 4266 "For God," queth Saber, "that is noughtfeir." A: *For god, queþ, that is noughtfeir.* Other MSS assign the quotation to Saber.
- 4272 *is owene sone Terry.* That is to say, we are back talking about Saber's own son, not Bevis' sons, who are mentioned in the previous verse.
- 4437 See note for line 4168.
- 4453 *Tidinge com to Potenhithe.* A: *Tidyngē to potenhīþe.* Kö's emendation.
- 4469 The Harrowing of Hell is the medieval English term for Christ's descent into hell after His death to defeat the powers of evil. This is also one of the most widely depicted scenes in medieval literature, art, and drama, often vividly presenting Christ opening the jaws of hell-mouth and leading the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets to salvation. See, for example, William Langland's *Piers Plowman* B.XVIII.270 ff. (Skeat 1.538–40) for a powerful Middle English version of this event.
- 4490 This seems to be an especially roundabout way of saying that they killed them.
- 4522 ff. *That he ne lai ded upon the grounde. / And whan Beves segh that sighte, / In hertte he was glad and lighte.* The order here is difficult and convoluted. Perhaps it goes something like this: "So that he might get there [without delay], he did not dare ask for a doctor to heal his wound so that he should not lie dead on the ground." The final line here starts to move off on a tangent.
- 4534 *ledene halle.* Kö capitalizes *Ledene*. MED does cite *Ledynhall* as a specific place name, noting that the place was also called Laurence Hall.
- 4608 *Sein Lauarauns.* Saint Lawrence died as a deacon and martyr in Rome in 258 A.D. He is usually depicted with a gridiron, on which he was reputed to have been executed by roasting. Relics of St. Lawrence were sent from Rome to King Oswin of Northumbria in the seventh century.

Athelston

Introduction

It would seem that *Athelston*, a relatively brief romance of 812 lines dating from the late fourteenth century, should pose few problems for the modern editor, existing as it does without any known direct source and surviving in only one manuscript. But that is not the case. Rather, this short romance perhaps even more than the longer romances presented in this volume raises a number of questions about historical backgrounds, sources and analogues, the poet's agenda, as well as textual and aesthetic matters. Early scholars, for instance, have seen in it references to events ranging in date from the tenth to the late fourteenth centuries, including the struggle between Henry II and Thomas Becket and the challenge of the barons to Richard II.¹ Still others point to a historical Wymound, found guilty of simony in 1102, or to the events taking place during the reign of King John. The poem's source is also contested. A. M. Trounce claims repeatedly that there is a French original lurking in the archival shadows, despite the obvious local colors, place names, and details of English custom and law.² Laura Hibbard Loomis argues that the poem's origin resides in the legend of Queen Emma and the Ploughshares, a story of the mother of Edward the Confessor.³ A frequently mentioned literary analogue is the Middle English *Amis and Amiloun*, but several of the poem's motifs are common to other works. The diversity of scholarly views on these matters suggests the presence of an amazingly complex intertextuality and interpretive potential for this seemingly simple romance.

Neither is the plot as straightforward as it appears to be at first. Rather, the poem's unfolding of betrayal and treachery is brought to a happy resolution only after a series of deferrals and unveilings, made more suspenseful by the intensified action and heightened

¹In *Athelston: A Middle English Romance*, EETS o.s. 224 (London: Oxford University Press, 1951) A. M. Trounce argues that Alryke resembles Stephen Langton more than Thomas Becket but also sees a strong historical resemblance between Alryke and William Bateman of Norwich (1344–53).

² See also Kurt Beug, "Die Sage von König Athelstan," *Archiv* 148 (1925), 181–95, for a discussion of the relevance of the Queen Emma legend and the existence of a historical Wymound found guilty of simony in 1102.

³ See Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England: A Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cycle Metrical Romances* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1960), pp. 143–46.

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psychological intrigue, an effect the poet gains by mirroring characters' identities and constructing vivid and dramatic narrative events. The poem begins simply enough: four men, described as messengers, swear an oath of brotherhood and truth to each other. One of them, Athelston, becomes king when the king his cousin dies. Athelston then makes two of his sworn brothers earls and the third Archbishop of Canterbury. Here is where the intrigue begins with something akin to sibling rivalry. One of these earls, the Earl of Stone, remains true to him; the other, however, the Earl of Dover, is false, betraying his brother by accusing him of treachery to the king. The king believes the Earl of Dover, and resolves to kill the alleged traitor and his family, but before he does the queen sends a messenger to the Archbishop who comes to London to plead for the life of his friend. The king first refuses to listen, and there follows a fierce struggle between the king and the archbishop. It seems as though the king is going to win, but he relents when the archbishop gains support from the people. An ordeal by fire establishes the innocence of the Earl of Stone and the guilt of the traitor; the romance ends with the spectacle of the traitor's death.

In his introduction to his edition Donald Sands implies that *Athelston* has an overly high reputation. He suggests that the poem is indeed very impressive on first reading but that the closer one looks, the less one sees.⁴ As an introduction to the poem, this is not a bad characterization, suggesting as it does that the poem depends on a kind of surface attraction, which is surely there. But it is probably not an altogether just estimation. Sands is no doubt correct when he states that one will not find overly subtle character portraits in the work, though the credulity of the king, the resoluteness of the archbishop, and the villainy of the traitor all show touches which go beyond simple fairy tale opposition between good and evil. Dieter Mehl is not wrong when he says that the characters are both memorable and individualized.⁵

Not only are the four main characters — Athelston the King, the Earls of Dover and Stone, and the Archbishop — memorable for their powerful positions, personalities, and confrontations with one another, but the supporting characters are also unforgettably drawn. The messenger, who is employed by the king, the queen, and several earls, is described early in the poem as a "foundling" but later, as a "noble man," stands in stark contrast, even acts as an alter-ego, to the king whose name he bears.⁶ His stalwart endurance and professional integrity in delivering messages to the right people at the right time despite the grueling distances between stops exposes the lack of steadfastness in the

⁴ Donald B. Sands, ed., *Middle English Verse Romances* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), p. 130.

⁵ Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 148.

⁶ A. Inskeep Dickerson, "The Subplot of the Messenger in *Athelston*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 12 (1976), 121.

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king. The messenger does not waiver in his moral obligations — the king does. The very office of messenger resonates with the four main characters; described as messengers from “dyvers contré” they come into England to fulfill the obligations of their profession — one of which is the necessity for conveying the truth, the very oath they swear to seal their bond of brotherhood. A subsequent elevation in status — a result of Athelston’s fortuitous rise to kingship — confers political power on those who otherwise would not have it and prepares the way for testing the integrity of their oath to one another. The inevitable corruptive forces accompanying such a quick rise in prestige follow, as Wymound soon falls prey to envy; true nobility is not associated with rank and social status, but rather with moral character.

The typical tail-rhyme stanza in *Athelston* consists of four rhymed couplets, each of which is followed by a tail rhyme which remains constant throughout the stanza, so that the rhyme scheme of the twelve-line stanza in the poem is *aab ccb ddb eeb*. Perhaps taking his cue from Chaucer’s parody of romance in The Tale of Sir Thopas, Sands is also critical of the rhyme scheme of the work, objecting both to what he sees as the monotony of tail rhyme and also to the apparent inconsistency of several irregular stanzas. Here too his judgment is probably overly harsh. Kevin Kiernan contends that this stanzaic structure helps account for the integrated character of the work and that variations in the poem are purposeful. He stretches his point, perhaps, when he says that the poem is more closely knit than *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but he nonetheless makes a convincing case for the artistry of the work.⁷ A. M. Trounce sees tail rhyme as an opportunity to exercise the imagination; poetic diction often generates a number of interpretative possibilities. The tail-rhyme poets also have a flare for the dramatic — the scene of cruelty to the queen, the unrobing and extended trial by ordeal, including the testing of the earl’s two sons and pregnant wife, the birth of St. Edmund immediately following the ordeal, the spectacular execution of Wymound, a traitor every bit as treacherous as Ganelon or Judas. His body, singed by fire, hanged, and left dangling by decree, marks the point at which the poet makes his conventional exit.

Like the noble messenger, the female characters are models of integrity and perseverance. Dame Edyff, awaiting the impending birth of a third child when Wymound’s false message arrives, refuses to stay at home where safe delivery would be more certain. Rather, she decides to accompany her husband and sons to London in order to witness what she expects to be a great honor. Instead, the entire family is taken into custody at the order of a king whose good judgment, by this time, has been transformed by Wymound’s treachery. Despite the hardship of captivity, however, Dame Edyff not only manages to

⁷ Kevin S. Kiernan, “*Athelston* and the Rhyme of the English Romances,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 36 (1975), 340–41.

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survive but shortly thereafter endures the onset of labor in the midst of the ordeal by fire. It is only after she has successfully walked over the burning ploughshares that she gives birth to another son, the child-saint Edmund. Just as the deeds of the noble messenger reveal the lack of integrity in Wymound, the birth of Edmund recalls the cruelty of the king to his pregnant wife and her subsequent miscarriage of the rightful heir to the throne. Like Edyff, the queen endures great suffering. Unlike Edyff, however, her purpose in the narrative is to dramatize the extent to which the king has fallen from rational judgment. As Elizabeth Ashman Rowe argues, the queen's miscarriage signifies beyond the tragedy of the event itself; it points directly to the king's miscarriage of justice.⁸

In the struggle between the king and the archbishop, an English audience would no doubt be reminded of the encounter between Henry II and Thomas Becket, the famous conflict which ended with the murder of Becket in 1170. Other probable historical analogues in the poem would include the name Athelston itself (hero of the battle of Brunanburh), and the reference to the birth of St. Edmund (of East Anglia) at the end of the poem. Rowe locates the poem in a specific fourteenth-century context. For Athelston the King we may substitute the tyrannical Richard II, who dispensed with due process for his rivals, whom he then unlawfully imprisoned, exiled, or executed.⁹ The specificity of these historical allusions should not allow us to overlook the larger issues which the poem embodies. Indeed, one of the signal strengths of the poem is that the legendary material out of which it is constructed has become the vehicle for embodying some of the large concerns of the Middle Ages. Clearly the most central of these is the relationship between the secular and the ecclesiastical spheres. This struggle provides the central dramatic conflict in the poem in its vivid and energetic presentation of threat and counter threat by king and bishop. Its implications are far wider than the probable specific allusion to the Becket controversy, however much it may follow the contours of that controversy in insisting on distinct limits to royal power and in seeing ecclesiastical privilege as a check on royal tyranny. As W. R. J. Barron has pointed out, the defiance of tyranny in the name of brotherhood and the importance of the rule of law emerge as key themes in the work.¹⁰

Another of the larger issues is contained in the way the poem handles the question of good and evil. The poem provides a clear statement of the cause of the betrayal of King Athelston and the Earl of Stone. The Earl of Dover committed his sin not out of greed, but out of envy. As he poignantly tells us immediately before his death (speaking of the king's relationship to the Earl of Stone and to himself): "He lovyd him to mekyl and me to

⁸ Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, "The Female Body Politic and the Miscarriage of Justice in *Athelston*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995), 79–98.

⁹ Rowe, p. 88.

¹⁰ W. R. J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 81.

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lyte; / Therfore envye I hadde" (lines 799–800). At this point, the moral implications are more important than the political ones, or perhaps to put it in slightly different terms, this ending shows us how, as in most significant medieval narratives, the moral and the political cannot be meaningfully separated from each other.

Sands states that the audience of *Athelston* must have been made up of small tradesmen, "very conscious of the history of their country, very well aware of its traditions, and very sensitive to the authoritarian habit of kings."¹¹ It is not necessary to be quite this restrictive in recreating the audience of *Athelston*, especially since the poem is one of many poems written in English for an emerging, influential middle-class.¹² There is, in fact, some evidence of a middle-class perspective, particularly if we look to the amusing presentation of the hard-working messenger. Of all the characters a middle-class audience might identify with in the poem, he is the most probable, since the king himself, in his rashness, gullibility, and stubbornness, is not especially sympathetic.¹³ Whether or not we want to accept this parallel, it should at least open us to the possibility of a work which is very carefully structured and whose structure, like many medieval romances, is dependent on the careful paralleling of large and small units of meaning.

¹¹ Sands, p. 131.

¹² See Derek Pearsall, "The Development of Middle English Romances," *Medieval Studies* 27 (1965), 91–116.

¹³ Dickerson, p. 121.

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- Lord that is off myghtys most,
Fadyr and Sone and Holy Gost,
Bryng us out of synne
And lene us grace so for to wyrke
To love bothe God and Holy Kyrke
That we may hevene wynne.
Lystnes, lordyngys, that ben hende,
Of falsnesse, hou it wil ende
A man that ledes hym therin.
Of foure weddyd bretheryn I wole yow tell
That wolden yn Yngelond go dwel,
That sybbe were nought of kyn.
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 25
- 30
- powers greatest
grant
Church

gracious
will bring about an end to
a man [who] leads himself
sworn

relative; family

their occupation
did; meet
by a road
By a leaf; linden (tree)

Each; different
(see note)
their
themselves
an oath

them all
called

a [blood] relative
uncle's
approached
well
- And all foure messangeres they were,
That wolden yn Yngelond lettrys bere,
As it wes here kynde.
By a forest gan they mete
With a cros, stood in a strete
Be leff undyr a lynde,
And, as the story telles me,
Ylke man was of dyvers cuntré,
In book iwaren we fynde —
For love of here metyng thare,
They swoor hem weddyd bretheryn for evermare,
In trewthe trewely dede hem bynde.
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 25
- 30
- relative; family

their occupation
did; meet
by a road
By a leaf; linden (tree)

Each; different
(see note)
their
themselves
an oath

them all
called

a [blood] relative
uncle's
approached
well
- The eldeste of hem ylkon,
He was hyght Athelston,
The kyngys cosyn dere;
He was of the kyngys blood,
Hys eemes sone, I undyrstood;
Therefore he neyghyd hym nere.
And at the laste, weel and fayr,

Athelston

	The kyng him dyyd withouten ayr.	died; heir
	Thenne was ther non hys pere	equal
	But Athelston, hys eemes sone;	uncle's
35	To make hym kyng wolde they nought schone, To corowne hym with gold so clere.	refuse (shun)
	Now was he kyng semely to se:	handsome
	He sendes afftyr his bretheryn thre	[sworn] brothers
	And gaff hem here warysoun.	them their reward
40	The eldest brothir he made Eerl of Dovere —	recover
	And thus the pore man gan covere —	tower
	Lord of tour and toun.	Stone
	That other brother he made Eerl of Stane —	
	Egelond was hys name,	
45	A man of gret renoun —	
	And gaff him tyl hys weddyd wyff	to be
	Hys owne sustyr, Dame Edyff, With gret devocyoun.	
	The ferthe brothir was a clerk,	fourth; cleric
50	Mekyl he cowde of Goddys werk. Hys name it was Alyke.	Much; knew
	Cauntrybry was vacant	
	And fel into that kyngys hand;	
	He gaff it hym that wyke,	office
55	And made hym bysschop of that stede, That noble clerk, on book cowde rede —	place
	In the world was non hym lyche.	
	Thus avaunsyd he hys brother thorwgh Goddys gras,	like
	And Athelston hymselfen was	advanced; grace
60	A good kyng and a ryche.	powerful
	And he that was Eerl of Stane —	
	Sere Egeland was hys name —	
	Was trewe, as ye schal here.	
	Thorwgh the myght off Goddys gras,	grace
65	He gat upon the countas Twoo knave-chyldren dere.	begat; countess
	That on was fyfftene wyntyr old,	boys
		years

Athelston

- That other thryttene, as men me told:
 In the world was non here pere — *their equal*
 70 Also whyt so lylle-flour,
 Red as rose off here colour,
 As bryght as blosme on brere. *As white as [a] lily flower*
briar
- Bothe the Eerl and hys wyff,
 The kyng hem lovede as hys lyff,
 75 And here sones twoo;
 And oftensythe he gan hem calle
 Bothe to boure and to halle,
 To counsayl whenne they scholde goo. *their often-times inner chamber*
- Therat Sere Wymound hadde gret envye,
 80 That Eerle of Dovere, wyttyrlye. *certainly aggrieved*
 In herte he was ful woo.
 He thoughte al for here sake *on their account*
 False lesyngys on hem to make,
 To don hem brenne and sloo. *lies cause them [to be] burned and slain*
- 85 And thanne Sere Wymound hym bethoughte:
 "Here love thus endure may noughe;
 Thorwgh wurd oure werk may spryne." *thought to himself Their Through word; advance*
 He bad hys men maken hem yare;
 Unto Londone wolde he fare *ready go*
- 90 To speke with the kynge.
 Whenne that he to Londone come,
 He mette with the kyng ful sone. *right away*
 He sayde, "Welcome, my derelyng." *friend*
 The kyng hym fraynyd seone anon, *questioned soon*
- 95 By what way he hadde igon,
 Withouten ony dwellyng. *delaying*
- "Come thou ought by Cauntrybury,
 There the clerkys syngen mery *Where*
 Bothe erly and late?"
- 100 Hou faryth that noble clerk,
 That mekyl can on Goddys werk? *much knows of what his condition is*
 Knowest thou ought hys state?
 And come thou ought be the Eerl of Stane, *by*

Athelston

- That wurthy lord in hys wane? *residence*
 105 Wente thou ought that gate? *out of; way*
 Hou fares that noble knyght,
 And hys sones fayr and bryght
 My sustyr, yiff that thou wate?" *if; know*
- "Sere," thanne he sayde, "withouten les, *falsehood*
 110 Be Cauntrybery my way I ches; *chose*
 There spak I with that dere.
 Ryght weel gretes thee that noble clerk,
 That mykyl can of Goddys werk; *knows much*
 In the world is non hys pere. *equal*
- 115 And also be Stane my way I drowgh;
 With Egelond I spak inowgh, *took*
 And with the countesse so clere. *enough*
 They fare weel, is nougnt to layne, *beautiful*
 And bothe here sones." The king was fayne *well; nothing to conceal*
 120 And in his herte made glad chere. *their; happy*
- "Sere kyng," he saide, "yiff it be thi wille *go to*
 To chaumbyr that thou woldest wenden tylle,
 Consayl for to here,
 I schal thee telle a swete tydande, *report*
 125 There comen nevere non swyche in this lande *such*
 Of all this hundryd yere."
 The kyngys herte than was ful woo *sad*
 With that traytour for to goo;
 They wente bothe forth in fere; *together*
- 130 And whenne that they were the chaumbyr withinne,
 False lesyngys he gan begynne *lies; began*
 On hys weddyd brother dere.
- "Sere kyng," he saide, "woo were me,
 Ded that I scholde see thee, *Dead; [it] should*
 135 So moot I have my lyff! *As I may*
 For by Hym that al this worl wan,
 Thou has makyd me a man,
 And iholpe me for to thryff. *world redeemed*
 For in thy land, sere, is a fals traytour. *helped; thrive*

Athelston

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 140 | He wole doo thee mykyl dyshonour
And bryng thee of lyve.
He wole deposen thee slyly,
Sodaynly than schalt thou dy
By Chrystys woundys fyve!" | <i>much
kill you
depose you
Suddenly</i> |
| 145 | Thenne sayde the kyng, "So moot thou the,
Knowe I that man, and I hym see?
His name thou me telle."
"Nay," says that traytour, "that wole I nought
For al the gold that evere was wrought — | <i>might; thrive
if I</i> |
| 150 | Be masse-book and belle —
But yiff thou me thy trowthe will plyght
That thou schalt nevere bewreye the knyght
That thee the tale schal telle."
Thanne the kyng his hand up raughte, | <i>Unless; vow; pledge
betray</i> |
| 155 | That false man his trowthe betaughte,
He was a devyl of helle! | <i>[to] you
raised
faith entrusted</i> |
| 160 | "Sere kyng," he sayde, "thou madyst me knyght,
And now thou hast thy trowthe me plyght
Oure counsayl for to layne:
Sertaynly, it is non othir
But Egelane, thy weddyd brothir —
He wolde that thou were slayne;
He dos thy sustyr to undyrstand
He wole be kyng of thy lande, | <i>pledged
conceal</i> |
| 165 | And thus he begynnes here trayne.
He wole thee poysoun ryght slyly;
Sodaynly thanne schalt thou dy,
By Him that suffryd Payne." | <i>wishes
to lead her astray</i> |
| 170 | Thanne swoor the kyng be Cros and Roode:
"Meete ne drynk schal do me goode
Tyl that he be dede;
Bothe he and hys wyf, hys soones twoo,
Schole they nevere be no moo
In Yngelond on that stede." | <i>Cross
[Neither] food</i> |
| 175 | "Nay," says the traytour, "so moot I the, | <i>place
thrive</i> |

Athelston

- Ded wole I nought my brother se;
 But do thy beste rede." advice
 No lengere there then wolde he lende;
 He takes hys leve, to Dovere gan wende. remain
 180 God geve hym schame and dede! began to go
death
- Now is that traytour hom iwent.
 A messanger was afftyr sent afterward
 To speke with the kyng.
- I wene he bar his owne name:
 185 He was hoten Athelstane; believe; bore
called
 He was foundelyng. a foundling
 The lettrys were imaad fullyche thare,
 Unto Stane for to fare fully there
go
 Withouten ony dwellyng,
 190 To fette the eerl and his sones twoo, delaying
 And the countasse alsoo, fetch
 Dame Edyve, that swete thyng.
- And in the lettre yit was it tolde,
 That the kyng the eerlys sones wolde also
 195 Make hem bothe knyght; seal
 And therto his seal he sette.
 The messanger wolde nought lette; delay
 The way he rydes ful ryght.
- The messanger, the noble man,
 200 Takes hys hors and forth he wan, went
 And hyes a ful good sped. hastens
 The eerl in hys halle he fande; found
 He took hym the lettre in his hande
 Anon he bad hym rede: bade
 205 "Sere," he sayde also swythe, quickly
 "This lettre oughte to make thee blythe: glad
 Thertoo thou take good hede. heed
 The kyng wole for the cuntas sake countess'
 Bothe thy sones knyghtes make —
 210 To London I rede thee sped. advise; hurry

Athelston

- The kyng wole for the cuntas sake
 Bothe thy sones knyghtes make,
 The blythere thou may be. happier
- 215 Thy fayre wyff with thee thou bryng —
 And ther be ryght no lettyng — delaying
 That sygthe that sche may see.”
- Thenne sayde that eerl with herte mylde,
 “My wyff goth ryght gret with chylde,
 And forthynkes me, I regret [that]
 Sche may nought out of chaumbyr wyn, go
 To speke with non ende of here kyn no part
 Tyl sche delyveryd be.”
- But into chaumbyr they gunne wende, began to go
 To rede the lettrys before that hende courteous lady
- 225 And tydingys tolde here soone.
 Thanne sayde the cuntasse, “So moot I the, thrive
 I wil nought lette tyl I there be, stop
 Tomorwen or it be noone. before
- To see hem knyghtes, my sones fre, noble
 230 I wole nought lette tyl I there be; delay
 I schal no lengere dwelle. requite
 Cryst foryelde my lord the kyng, their dubbing
 That has grauntyd hem here dubbyng.
 Myn herte is gladyd welle.”
- 235 The eerl hys men bad make hem yare; ready
 He and hys wyff forth gunne they fare, began to go
 To London faste they wente.
 At Westemynstyr was the kyngys wone; dwelling
 There they mette with Athelstone,
 240 That afftyr hem hadde sente. Who
- The goode eerl soone was hent seized
 And feteryd faste, verrayment, chained; truly
 And hys sones twoo.
 Ful lowde the countasse gan to crye,
 245 And sayde, “Goode brothir, mercy!

Athelston

- Why wole ye us sloo? slay
 What have we ayens yow done, against
 That ye wole have us ded so soone?
 Me thynkith ye arm ourn foo." enemy
- 250 The kyng as wood ferde in that stede; *insane behaved; place*
 He garte hys sustyr to presoun lede — *ordered*
 In herte he was ful woo.
- Thenne a squyer, was the countasses frende, friend
 To the qwene he gan wende, did go
- 255 And tydyngys tolde here soone.
 Gerlondes of chryyes off sche caste, *Garlands of cherries; off*
 Into the halle sche come at the laste,
 Longe or it were noone. before
- "Sere kyng, I am before thee come
 260 With a child, doughtyr or a sone.
 Graunte me my bone, request
 My brothir and sustyr that I may borwe *act as surety for*
 Tyl the nexte day at morwe,
 Out of here paynys stronge; pain
- 265 That we mowe wete by comoun sent *might know by unanimous assent*
 In the playne parlement."
 "Dame," he saide, "goo fro me!
 Thy bone shall nought igaunted be, request (boon)
 I doo thee to undyrstande.
- 270 For, be Hym that weres the corowne of thorn,
 They schole be drawen and hangyd tomorn,
 Yyff I be kyng of lande!" by; wears
- And whenne the qwene these wurdes herde,
 As sche hadde be beten with yerde, been; stick
 275 The teeres sche leet doun falle. let
- Sertaynly, as I yow telle,
 On here bare knees doun she felle,
 And prayde yit for hem alle.
- "A, dame," he sayde, "verrayment truly
 280 Hast thou broke my comaundement *[If] you have broken*
 Abyyd ful dere thou schalle." *Pay for*

Athelston

- With hys foot — he wolde nought wonde — refrain
 He slowgh the chyld ryght in here wombe; slew; her
 She swownyd amonges hem alle. swooned
- 285 Ladyss and maydenys that there were,
 The qwene to here chaumbyr bere, bore
 And there was dool inowgh. dole (sorrow) enough
 Soone withinne a lytyl spase space of time
 A knave-chyld iborn ther wase, miscarried
- 290 As bryght as blosme on bowgh.
 He was bothe whyt and red;
 Of that dynt was he ded — From that blow; dead
 His owne fadyr hym slowgh! slew
 Thus may a traytour baret rayse strife raise
 295 And make manye men ful evel at ayse,
 Hymselff nought afftyr it lowgh. ill at ease
after; laughed (see note)
- But yit the qwene, as ye schole here,
 Sche callyd upon a messangere,
 Bad hym a lettre fonge. take
 300 And bad hym wende to Cauntyrbery,
 There the clerkys syngen mery go
 Bothe masse and evensonge. Where
 "This lettre thou the bysschop take,
 And praye hym for Goddys sake,
 305 Come borewe hem out off here bande. rescue; bonds
 He wole doo more for hym, I wene,
 Thanne for me, though I be qwene — believe
 I doo thee to undyrstande.
- An eerldom in Spayne I have of land;
 310 Al I sese into thyn hand, give as a possession
 Trewely, as I thee hyght, promise
 And hundryd besauntys of gold red. besant (a coin)
 Thou may save hem from the ded, death
 Yyff that thyn hors be wyght." valiant
 315 "Madame, brouke weel thy moregeve, use; morning gift
 Also longe as thou may leve. live
 Therto have I no ryght.

Athelston

- But of thy gold and of thy fee,
Cryst in hevene foryelde it thee;
I wole be there tonyght.
- 320 *property
reward*
- Madame, thrytty myles of hard way
I have reden syth it was day.
Ful sore I gan me swynke;
And for to ryde now fyve and twenti ther too
An hard thyng it were to doo,
Forsothe, ryght as me thynke.
- 325 *thirty miles
since
work*
- Madame, it is nerhande passyd prime,
And me behoves al for to dyne,
Bothe wyn and ale to drynke.
- 330 *nearly past six a.m.*
- Whenne I have dynyd, thenne wole I fare.
God may covere hem of here care,
Or that I slepe a wynke."
- 330 *relieve; their
Before*
- Whenne he hadde dynyd, he wente his way,
Also faste as that he may,
He rod be Charynge-cross
- 335 *Charing Cross*
- And entryd into Flete-strete
And sithen thorwgh Londone, I yow hete,
Upon a noble hors.
- 340 *Fleet Street
promise*
- The messanger, that noble man,
On Loundone-brygge sone he wan —
For his travayle he hadde no los —
- 340 *London bridge; reached
work; praise (fame)*
- From Stone into Steppyngebourne,
Forsothe, his way nolde he nougnt tourne;
Sparyd he nougnt for myre ne mos.
- 345 *not alter
mud nor bog*
- And thus hys way wendes he
Fro Osprynge to the Blee.
Thenne myghte he see the toun
- 345 *place*
- Of Cauntrybery, that noble wyke,
Therin lay that bysschop ryke,
- 350 *powerful*
- That lord of gret renoun.
- And whenne they runngen undermbelle,
He rod in Londone, as I yow telle:
- morning bell*

Athelston

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| | He was non er redy; | earlier |
| | And yit to Cauntrybergy he wan, | reached |
| 355 | Longe or evensong began; | before six p.m. |
| | He rod mylys fyfftyn. | fifty miles |
| | The messanger nothing abod; | delayed |
| | Into the palays forth he rod, | |
| | There that the bysschop was inne. | |
| 360 | Ryght welcome was the messanger, | radiant |
| | That was come from the qwene so cleer, | |
| | Was of so noble kynne. | |
| | He took hym a lettre ful good speed | such |
| | And saide, "Sere bysschop, have this and reed," | take; read |
| 365 | And bad hym come with hym. | |
| | Or he the lettre hadde halff iredde, | Before; read |
| | For dool, hym thoughte hys herte bledde; | sorrow |
| | The teeres fyl ovyr hys chyn. | chin |
| | The bysschop bad sadele hys palfray: | |
| 370 | "Also faste as thay may, | As |
| | Bydde my men make hem yare; | themselves ready |
| | And wendes before," the bysschop dede say, | go before |
| | "To my maneres in the way; | manors |
| | For nothyng that ye spare, | |
| 375 | And loke at ylke fyve mylys ende | each |
| | A fresch hors that I fynde, | |
| | Schod and nothing bare; | Shod |
| | Blythe schal I nevere be, | |
| | Tyl I my weddyd brother see, | |
| 380 | To kevere hym out of care." | recover |
| | On nyne palfrays the bysschop sprong, | nine |
| | Ar it was day, from evensong — | Before |
| | In romaunce as we rede. | |
| | Sertaynly, as I yow telle, | |
| 385 | On Londone-brygge ded doun felle | dead |
| | The messangeres stede. | messanger's horse |
| | "Alas," he sayde, "that I was born! | |
| | Now is my goode hors forlorn, | utterly lost |

Athelston

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 390 | Was good at ylke a nede;
Yistyday upon the grounde,
He was wruth an hundryd pounde,
Ony kyng to lede." | <i>at each need</i> |
| 395 | Thenne bespak the erchebysschop.
Oure gostly fadyr undyr God,
Unto the messangere:
"Lat be thy menyng of thy stede,
And thynk upon oure mykyl nede,
The whylys that we ben here;
For yiff that I may my brother borwe
And bryngen hym out off mekyl sorwe,
Thou may make glad chere;
And thy warysoun I schal thee geve,
And God have grauntyd thee to leve
Unto an hundryd yere." | <i>archbishop</i>
<i>spiritual</i>
<i>Desist your lamenting; horse</i>
<i>great need</i> |
| 400 | | <i>save</i>
<i>great</i> |
| 405 | The bysschop thenne nought ne bod:
He took hys hors, and forth he rod
Into Westemynstyr so lyght;
The messanger on his foot also:
With the bysschop come no moo, | <i>remained no longer</i>
<i>nimbly</i>
<i>no others</i> |
| 410 | Nether squyer ne knyght.
Upon the morwen the kyng aros,
And takes the way, to the kyrke he gos,
As man of mekyl myght. | <i>church</i> |
| 415 | With hym wente bothe preest and clerk,
That mykyl cowde of Goddys werk,
To praye God for the ryght. | <i>Who knew much</i> |
| 420 | Whenne that he to the kyrke com;
Tofore the Rode he knelyd anon,
And on hys knees he felle:
"God, that syt in Trynyté
A bone that thou graunte me,
Lord, as Thou harewyd helle —
Gyltless men yiff thay be,
That are in my presoun free, | <i>Cross</i>
<i>boon (i.e., favor)</i>
<i>harrowed</i>
<i>Guiltless; if they</i> |

Athelston

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 425 | Forcursyd there to yelle,
Of the gylt and thay be clene,
Leve it moot on hem be sene,
That garte hem there to dwelle." | Condemned; shriek
if; innocent
Grant; seen [by them]
<i>Who made them to dwell there</i> |
| 430 | And whenne he hadde maad his prayer,
He lokyd up into the qweer;
The erchebysschop sawgh he stande.
He was forwondryd of that caas, | choir |
| | And to hym he wente apas,
And took hym be the hande. | astonished at; situation
quickly
by; hand |
| 435 | "Welcome," he sayde, "thou erchebysschop,
Oure gostly fadyr undyr God."
He swoor be God levande,
"Weddyd brother, weel moot thou spede, | spiritual
by; living
prosper |
| | For I hadde nevere somekyl nede,
Sith I took cros on hande. | Since |
| 440 | Goode weddyd brother, now turne thy rede;
Doo nought thyn owne blood to dede
But yiff it wurthy were.
For Hym that weres the corowne of thorn, | change your mind
[cause] to die
Unless |
| | Lat me borwe hem tyl tomorn,
That we mowe enquere,
And weten alle be comoun asent
In the playne parlement | be surety for
might have an inquiry
know; agreement
full
punished |
| 445 | Who is wurthy be schent.
And, but yiff ye wole graunte my bone,
It schal us rewe bothe or none,
Be God that alle thyng lent." | |
| | Thanne the kyng wax wrothe as wynde,
A wodere man myghte no man fynde
Than he began to bee:
He swoor othis be sunne and mone: | grieve us both; before noon
gave |
| | "They scholen be drawen and hongyd or none —
With eyen thou schalt see!
Lay doun thy cros and thy staff,
Thy mytyr and thy ryng that I thee gaff; | grew angry; wind
An angrier
oaths by; moon
before noon
eyes
mitre |
| 450 | | |
| 455 | | |
| 460 | | |

Athelston

- Out of my land thou flee!
 Hyghe thee faste out of my syght!
 Wher I thee mete, thy deth is dyght;
 Non othir then schal it bee!"
- Get
decided
- 465 Thenne bespak that erchebysschop,
 Oure gostly fadyr undyr God,
 Smertly to the kyng:
 "Weel I wot that thou me gaff
 Bothe the cros and the staff,
 470 The mytyr and eke the ryng;
 My bysschopryche thou reves me,
 And Crystyndom forbede I thee!
 Preest schal ther non syngge;
 Neyther maydynchyld ne knave
 475 Crystyndom schal ther non have;
 To care I schal thee brynge.
- I schal gare crye thorwgh ylke a toun
 That kyrkys schole be broken doun
 And stoken agayn with thorn.
 480 And thou shalt lygge in an old dyke,
 As it were an heretyke,
 Allas that thou were born!
- Yiff thou be ded, that I may see,
 Assoylyd schalt thou nevere bee;
 485 Thanne is thy soule in sorwe.
 And I schal wende in uncouthe lond,
 And gete me stronge men of hond;
 My brothir yit schal I borwe.
- I schal brynge upon thy lond
 Hungyr and thyrst ful strong,
 490 Cold, drougthe, and sorwe;
 I schal nought leve on thy lond
 Wurth the gloves on thy hond
 To begge ne to borwe."
- spiritual
Sharply
know
- also
bishopric; deny
forbid
- girl; boy
- proclaim
churches
stuck
- lie; ditch
if you; heretic
- Absolved
- go; unknown
- save
- leave
Worth

Athelston

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 495 | The bysschop has his leve tan.
By that his men were comen ylkan:
They sayden, "Sere, have good day."
He entryd into Flete-strete;
With lordys of Yngelond gan he mete
Upon a noble aray. | <i>leave taken</i>
<i>each one</i> |
| 500 | On here knees they kneleden adoun,
And prayden hym of hys benysoun,
He nykkyd hem with nay.
Neyther of cros neyther of ryng
Hadde they non kyns wetyng; | <i>blessing</i>
<i>refused them by saying no</i> |
| 505 | And thanne a knyght gan say.

A knyght thanne spak with mylde voys:
"Sere, where is thy ryng? Where is thy croys?
Is it fro thee tan?" | <i>kind of knowing</i>
<i>began to speak</i> |
| 510 | Thanne he sayde, "Youre cursyd kyng
Hath me refft of al my thyng,
And of al my worldly wan;
And I have entyrdytyd Yngelond:
Ther schal no preest synge Masse with hond, | <i>mild voice</i>
<i>cross</i>
<i>taken</i> |
| 515 | Chyld schal be crystenyd non,
But yiff he graunte me that knyght,
His wyff and chyldrym fayr and bryght:
He wolde with wrong hem slon." | <i>bereft</i>
<i>goods</i>
<i>interdicted England</i>
<i>celebrate Mass</i>
<i>No child shall be christened</i>
<i>Unless; release to me</i>
<i>slay</i> |
| 520 | The knyght sayde, "Bysschop, turne agayn;
Of thy body we are ful fayn;
Thy brothir yit schole we borwe.
And, but he graunte us oure bone,
Hys presoun schal be broken soone, | <i>glad</i>
<i>rescue</i> |
| 525 | Hymselff tomekyl sorwe.
We schole drawe doun both halle and boures,
Bothe hys castelles and hys toures,
They schole lygge lowe and holewe. | <i>violated</i>
<i>[driven] to great</i>
<i>chambers</i> |
| 530 | Though he be kyng and were the corown,
We scholen hym sette in a deep dunjoun:
Oure Crystyndom we wole folewe." | <i>razed</i>
<i>wear</i>
<i>dungeon</i> |

Athelston

- Thanne, as they spoken of this thyng,
 Ther comen twoo knyghtes from the kyng,
 And sayden, "Bysschop, abyde, wait
 And have thy cros and thy ryng,
 535 And welcome whyl that thou wylt lyng, stay
 It is nought for to hyde.
 Here he grauntys thee the knyght,
 Hys wyff and chyldryн fayr and bryght;
 Again I rede thou ryde. advise you return
 540 He prayes thee pur charyté by pure charity
 That he myghte asoylyd be, absolved
 And Yngelond long and wyde."
- Hereof the bysschop was ful fayn, Of this; eager
 And turnys hys brydyl and wendes agayn —
 545 Barouns gunne with hym ryde — did
 Unto the Brokene-cros of ston;
 Thedyr com the kyng ful soone anon,
 And there he gan abyde.
 Upon hys knees he knelyd adoun,
 550 And prayde the bysschop of benysoun, for blessing
 And he gaff hym that tyde. gave it to him
 With holy watyr and orysoun,
 He asoylyd the kyng that weryd the coroun, prayer
 And Yngelond long and wyde. absolved; who wore
- 555 Than sayde the kyng anon ryght:
 "Here I graunte thee that knyght,
 And hys sones free, noble
 And my sustyr hende in halle. courteous
 Thou hast savyd here lyvys alle: their lives
 560 Iblessyd moot thou bee."
- Thenne sayde the bysschop also soone:
 "And I schal geven swylke a dome — judgment
 With eyen that thou schalt see! your own eyes
 Yiff thay be gylty off that dede,
 565 Sorrere the doome thay may drede, More grievous
 Thanne schewe here schame to me."

Athelston

- Whanne the bysschop hadde sayd soo,
 A gret fyr was maad ryght thou,
 In romaunce as we rede —
- fire; immediately
- 570 It was set, that men myghte knawe,
 Nyne plowgh-lengthe on rawe,
 As red as ony glede.
- know
ploughshares; in a row
coal
- Thanne sayde the kyng: "What may this mene?"
 "Sere, of gylt and thay be clene,
 This doom hem thar nought drede."
- from; if; innocent
ordeal; need not fear
- 575 Thanne sayde the good Kyng Athelston:
 "An hard doome now is this on:
 God graunte us alle weel to spedē."
- judgment; one
succeed
- They fetten forth Sere Egelan —
 A trewere eerl was ther nan —
 Before the fyr so bryght.
- fetched
truer; none
- From hym they token the rede scarlet,
 Bothe hosyn and schoon that weren hym met,
 That fel al for a knyght.
- hose; shoes; suitable
were appropriate
- 580 Nyne sythe the bysschop halewid the way
 That his weddyd brother scholde goo that day,
 To praye God for the ryght.
- times; consecrated
- He was unblemeschyd foot and hand;
 That sawgh the lordes of the land,
 And thankyd God of Hys myght.
- 590 They offeryd him with mylde chere
 Unto Saint Powlys heyghe awtere,
 That mekyl was of myght.
- gentle bearing
Paul's; altar
- Doun upon hys knees he felle,
 And thankyd God that harewede helle
 And Hys modyr so bryght.
- harrowed
- 595 And yit the bysschop tho gan say:
 "Now schal the chyldryn gon the way
 That the fadyr yede."
- then
went
- 600 Fro hem they tooke the rede scarlete,
 The hosen and schoon that weren hem mete,
 And al here worldly wede.
- shoes; fit
clothes

Athelston

- The fyr was bothe hydous and rede,
The chyldryн swownyd as they were ded; hideous
as if
605 The bysschop tyl hem yede;
With careful herte on hem gan look;
Be hys hand he hem up took:
“Chyldryн, have ye no drede.” *to them went*
fear
- Thanne the chyldryн stood and lowgh:
“Sere, the fyr is cold inowgh.” *laughed*
610 Thorwghout they wente apase. *quickly*
- They weren unblemeschyд foot and hand:
That sawgh the lordys of the land,
And thankyd God of His grace.
- 615 They offeryd hem with mylde chere
To Seynt Poulys hyghe awtere
This myracle schewyd was there. *miracle*
again
- And yit the bysschop efft gan say:
“Now schal the countasse goo the way
620 There that the chyldryн were.”
- They fetten forth the lady mylde;
Sche was ful gret igon with chylde *fetched*
very pregnant
In romaunce as we rede —
- 625 Before the fyr whan that sche come,
To Jesu Cryst he prayde a bone, *favor*
That leet His woundys blede:
- “Now, God lat nevere the kyngys foo
Quyk out of the fyr goo.” *Alive*
- Theroft hadde sche no drede.
- 630 Whenne sche hadde maad here prayer,
Sche was brought before the feer, *fire*
burned
That brennyd bothe fayr and lyght.
Sche wente fro the lengthe into the thrydde; *end; third [ploughshare]*
- 635 Styllе sche stood the fyr amyddle,
And callyd it merye and bryght.
Hard schourys thenne took here stronge *[labor] pains*
Bothe in bak and eke in wombe; *back; also*
And sithen it fell at syght. *(see note)*

Athelston

- Whenne that here paynys slakyd was,
And sche hadde passyd that hydous pas,
Here nose barst on bloode.
Sche was unblemeschyd foot and hand:
That sawgh the lordys of the land,
And thankyd God on Rode.
- They comaundyd men here away to drawe,
As it was the landys lawe;
And ladyys thanne tyl here yode.
She knelyd doun upon the ground
And there was born Seynt Edemound:
IblesSED be that foode!
- And whanne this chyld iborn was,
It was brought into the plas;
It was bothe hool and sound
Bothe the kyng and bysschop free
They crystnyd the chyld, that men myght see,
And callyd it Edemound.
"Halff my land," he sayde, "I thee geve,
Also longe as I may leve,
With markys and with pounde;
And al afftyr my dede —
Yngelond to wysse and rede."
Now iblessyd be that stounde!
- Thanne sayde the bysschop to the Kyng:
"Sere, who made this grete lesyng,
And who wroughte al this bale?"
Thanne sayde the kyng, "So moot I thee,
That schalt thou nevere wete for me,
In burgh neyther in sale;
For I have sworn be Seynt Anne
That I schal nevere bewreye that manne,
That me gan telle that tale.
They arn savyd thorwgh thy red;
Now lat al this be ded,
And kepe this counseyl hale."
- After; pain abated
walk
burst

move away from here
law of the land (customary)
to her went

child

place
whole (healthy)
noble
christened
Edmund

As
marks
death
guide; advise
time

lie
evil
thrive
know
town; hall

betray

are; counsel
dead
hold (keep secret); entirely

Athelston

- 675 Thenne swoor the bysschop, "So moot I the,
Now I have power and dignyté
For to asoyle thee as clene
As thou were hoven off the fount-ston.
Trustly trowe thou therupon,
And holde it for no wene:
I swere bothe be book and belle,
But yiff thou me his name telle,
The ryght doom schal I deme:
Thyselff schalt goo the ryghte way
That thy brother wente today,
Though it thee evele beseme."
- 685 Thenne sayde the kyng, "So moot I the,
Be schryffe of mouthe telle I it thee;
Therto I am unblyve.
Sertaynly, it is non othir
But Wymound, oure weddyd brother;
He wole nevere thryve."
"Allas," sayde the bysschop than,
I wende he were the treweste man,
That evere yit levyd on lyve.
And he with this ateynt may bee,
He schal be hongyd on trees three,
And drawen with hors fyve."
- 695 And whenne that the bysschop the sothe hade
That that traytour that lesyng made,
He callyd a messangere,
Bad hym to Dovere that he scholde founde,
For to fette that Eerl Wymounde:
(That traytour has no pere!)
- 700 Sey Egeland and hys sones be slawe,
Bothe ihangyd and to-drawe.
(Doo as I thee lere!)
- 705 The countasse is in presoun done;
Schal sche nevere out of presoun come,
But yiff it be on bere."
- 710
- thrive
absolve; guiltless
lifted from; baptismal font
Truly believe
guess
Unless
judgment; pronounce
ill befits you

thrive
By confession
reluctant
sworn
thought
If; guilty
horses

truth
lie
hasten
fetch
teach
Unless; bier

Athelston

- Now with the messanger was no badde;
He took his hors, as the bysschop radde,
 To Dovere tyl that he come.
The eerl in hys halle he fand:
 He took hym the lettre in his hand
 On hygh, wolde he nought wone:
“Sere Egelane and his sones be slawe,
Bothe ihangyd and to-drawe:
 Thou getyst that eerldome.
- 715 The countasse is in presoun done;
Schal sche nevere more out come,
 Ne see neyther sunne ne mone.”
- Thanne that eerl made hym glade,
And thankyd God that lesyng was made:
 “It hath gete me this eerldome.”
He sayde, “Felawe, ryght weel thou bee!
Have here besaunty good plenté
 For thyn hedyr-come.”
- 725 Thanne the messanger made his mon:
“Sere, of youre goode hors lende me on:
 Now graunte me my bone;
For yystyrday deyde my nobyl stede,
On youre arende as I yede,
 Be the way as I come.”
- 730 “Myn hors be fatte and cornfed,
And of thy lyff I am adred.”
 That eerl sayde to him than,
“Thanne yiff min hors sholde thee sloo,
My lord the kyng wolde be ful woo
 To lese swylk a man.”
- 735 The messanger yit he broughte a stede,
On of the beste at ylke a nede
 That evere on grounde dede gange,
Sadelyd and brydelyd at the beste.
The messanger was ful preste,
 Wyghtly on hym he sprange.
- 740 delay
commanded

found

In haste; delay

lie

besants (coins)
coming hither
complaint
one

died
business; went

anxious

slay

lose; such

One; this very need
go

ready
With agility

Athelston

- "Sere," he sayde, "have good day;
 Thou schalt come whan thou may;
 I schal make the kyng at hande." aware
 750 With sporys faste he strook the stede;
 To Gravysende he come good spedē,
 Is fourty myle to fande. spurs; struck
travel
- There the messanger the traytour abood,
 And sethyn bothe insame they rod awaited
 755 To Westemynstyr wone. then; together
 town
- In the palays there thay lyght;
 Into the halle they come ful ryght,
 And mette with Athelstone. alighted
immediately
- He wolde have kyssyd his lord swete.
 He sayde: "Traytour, nought yit! lete!
 Be God and be Seynt Jhon!
 760 For thy falsnesse and thy lesyng
 I slowgh myn heyr, scholde have ben kyng,
 When my lyf hadde ben gon." [allow] it not! desist!
John
Because of
heir
- 765 There he denyyd faste the kyng,
 That he made nevere that lesyng, strongly denied
 Among hys peres alle. ever made that lie
- The bysschop has hym be the hand tan;
 Forth insame they are gan taken
 770 Into the wyde halle. together
- Myghte he nevere with crafte ne gynne,
 Gare hym shryven of hys synne, trick
 For nought that myghte befalle. Have himself absolved
- Thenne sayde the goode Kyng Athelston:
 775 "Lat hym to the fyr gon,
 To preve the trewthe with alle."
- Whenne the kyng hadde sayd soo,
 A gret fyr was maad thoo, then
 In romaunce as we rede.
- 780 It was set, that men myghten knawe,
 Nyne plowgh-lenge on rawe, lengths; row
 As red as ony glede. coal

Athelston

	Nyne sythis the bysschop halewes the way That that traytour schole goo that day: The wers him gan to spedē.	times; blessed <i>worse; happened</i>
785	He wente fro the lengthe into the thrydde, And doun he fell the fyr amydde: Hys eyen wolde hym nouȝt lede.	<i>lead (guide)</i>
790	Than the eerlys chyldryn were war ful smerte, And wyghtly to the traytour sterte, And out of the fyr him hade;	fully aware <i>quickly; ran</i>
	And sworen bothe be book and belle: "Or that thou deye, thou schalt telle Why thou that lesyng made."	<i>Before</i> <i>made that lie</i>
795	"Certayn, I can non other red, Now I wot I am but ded: I telle yow nothyng gladde —	<i>know no other</i> <i>nearly dead</i> <i>reluctantly (without joy)</i>
	Certayn, ther was non other wyte: He lovyd him tomekyl and me to lyte; Therfore envye I hadde."	<i>injury</i> <i>much; little</i>
800	Whenne that traytour so hadde sayde, Fyve good hors to hym were tayde, Alle men myghten see with yghe —	<i>tied</i> <i>eye</i>
805	They drowen him thorwgh ylke a strete, And sethyn to the Elmes, I yow hete, And hongyd him ful hyghe.	<i>drew; each</i> <i>then; assure</i>
	Was ther nevere man so hardy, That durste felle hys false body: This hadde he for hys lye.	<i>bold</i> <i>dared take down</i>
810	Now Jesu, that is Hevene-kyng, Leve nevere traytour have betere endyng, But swych dome for to dye.	<i>better</i> <i>judgment</i>

Explicit

Notes

Abbreviations: C: Caius College Library, Cambridge, MS 175; F&H: French and Hale; Tr: Trounce; Sa: Sands; Z: Zupitza

- 1–6 The invocation is typical of tail-rhyme romances. Tr notes the similarity in two ME Breton lays — *Sir Gowther* and *Emaré*. Chaucer's The Tale of Sir Thopas offers an amusing send up of exhortations to pay attention.
- 6 *That we may hevene wynne.* C: *That may heven wynne.* Z adds *we*; Tr follows, as do F&H. The addition maintains the integrity of the meter and heals a headless clause.
- 8 *Of.* C: *Off.* F&H note that the copyist is “prodigal with the letter F, frequently doubling it after a long vowel (*wyff*), and using it initially when no capital could have been intended” (p. 179). But he also does so after short vowels as in *affier* and *gyff*. We have reduced double *ff* to simple *f* in all instances of *of*, to clarify the distinction between *of* and *off*, which in C are spelled the same way.
- 9 *A man that ledes hym therin.* As Tr notes, *man* is dative, *hym* reflexive. Thus the invocation requests listeners to pay attention to the consequences of disloyalty, a theme that is central to the poem.
- 10 *weddyd bretheryn.* Sworn brotherhood or “blood” brotherhood, as it is sometimes called, is an ancient custom, whereby men bound themselves with an oath to be faithful to each other till death. Herodotus reports, for example, that the Scythians participated in a ritual whereby they cut their fingers, let the blood run into a chalice, dipped the tips of their swords in the blood, and drank it (see John Boswell, *Same Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* [New York: Villard Books, 1994], p. 94). Tr notes that this bond among men was “superior to the marriage tie,” evidence of which appears in lines 306–07 when the calumniated queen expresses the disparity between these two oaths of loyalty, expecting that the bishop will honor the king before he will honor her: *He wole doo more for hym, I wene, / Thanne for me, though I be qwene.*

John Boswell also notes the multiple meanings for the term: in fact, the relationships called “blood brotherhood,” “sworn-brotherhood,” “spiritual brotherhood” and so

Notes

on, vary enormously from culture to culture (and sometimes within a single society) in their mode of formation, in their social, legal, and religious significance, and in their personal (e.g., affective) aspects" (p. 272). Sworn brotherhood is also a central theme in *Amis and Amiloun*, the analogue Tr considers so closely related to *Athelston*. Elizabeth Ashman Rowe sees the phrase "sworn brother" as a cynical substitution for an "opportunistic brotherhood" who "join in pursuit of political opportunity rather than economic profit" (p. 81). Rowe compares this alliance to the false brotherhood of Chaucer's The Pardoner's Tale.

- 11 *That wolden yn Yngelond go dwel.* Z emends to *wilen yn Yngelond gon dwel*. Tr rejects Z's emendation on the grounds that the "phrase 'of dyvers cuntry' [in line] strengthens the idea of strangers from widely separated parts meeting and joining themselves in brotherhood" (pp. 93–94). Because sworn-brotherhood is a central theme of the poem, Tr's return to the MS has been retained. George Taylor, "Notes on *Athelston*," suggests that *wilen* is preferred in line 11, while *wolden* is preferable for line 14: "to assume that the messengers were foreigners, as does T[rounce] only leads to further difficulties" (p. 20).
- 17 Wayside crosses were common in the Middle Ages, though here there is undoubtedly added religious significance, since the poem is preoccupied with ecclesiastical authority, *Goddys werk*, and the phenomenon of miracle.
- 21 *In book iwareten we fynde.* A conventional phrase often repeated in the poem in variant forms, that is a probable reason scholars still seek a lost source.
- 26 *Athelston.* The name could allude to at least three historical persons: Athelstan I, an obscure king of East Anglia and Kent in the ninth century, Athelstan II, the Danish prince Guthrum conquered by King Alfred and renamed Athelstan at baptism, and Athelstan III, victor at the Battle of Brunanburh in the year 937. (See Laura A. Hibbard, "Athelston, A Westminster Legend," *PMLA* 36 [1921], 223–44.)
- 30 *neyghyd hym nere.* The usual meaning of *neyghyd*, "to approach," makes "sound sense" according to George Taylor: "Athelston, being the king's cousin, considered it advantageous to be about the Court, and his expectation was realised as we see in the vv. following where he succeeds his cousin" (p. 20).
- 40 *Eerl of Dovere.* Just as Egeland is given the castle at Stone, Wymound is given the castle at Dover, a strategically important site.

Athelston

- 43 Stone is on the road from London to Canterbury. As F&H point out, nearly all the place names mentioned in the poem are on this road.
- 47 *Edyff*. The name may suggest a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon saint whose veneration continued into the fourteenth century. The name might also allude to Edward the Confessor's wife.
- 56 *That noble clerk, on book cowde rede*. Literacy in late medieval England meant those who could read Latin, i.e., members of the clergy.
- 67 Tr draws a parallel between the precocious growth of the children in *Amis and Amiloun* and that of the children here, all of which seems to suggest nobility. The growth of the hero in *Sir Gowther* is also precocious, but is considered an effect of demonic paternity.
- 77 *to boure and to halle*. F&H suggest that the meaning is "both to public and to private counsel." The bower was a relatively secluded area used for sleeping. For a more complete explanation, see the explanatory note for *Havelok*, line 239.
- 84 *To don hem brenne and sloo*. Tr notes that this is a "conventional punishment, especially of women, in the French *chansons de geste*, and, since it differs from the drawing and hanging with which offenders are later threatened, it may point to confusion of an old tale with a newer one" (pp. 98–100).
- 97–98 F&H's comment that "the monks of St. Augustine's in Canterbury were reputed to be gay fellows and good singers" is challenged by Tr who asserts that the merry monks are not engaged in frivolity, but rather are experiencing the "pleasant effect of the chanting of the services" (p. 182).
- 99 *erly and late*. A tag meaning throughout the day or perhaps, like line 302, suggesting matins and evensong.
- 101 *on Goddys werk*. Tr notes the variation between this line and line 50, *of Goddys werk*. The terms are interchangeable, but *Goddys werk* may be a specific reference to the Benedictine Rule.
- 136 *worl*. Tr notes the probable meaning (world) as correct. Z shows a parallel in *Layamon* in line 23081.

Notes

- 139 *For in thy land, sere, is a fals traytour.* The omission of *sere* in this line would improve the meter. Tr notes the many times this expression appears in *Bevis of Hampton* as well as in *Athelston*.
- 142 *deposen.* Tr retains as do F&H. Z's emendation to *ploysoun*, in Taylor's opinion, is to be preferred.
- 145 *So moot thou the.* This phrase, repeated regularly throughout the text, has something of the force of the modern "So help me God."
- 149–50 Tr determines these lines to constitute "padding"; similar expressions may be found in the well-padded *Bevis of Hampton* and virtually all other English verse romances.
- 154 *Thanne the kyng his hand up raughte.* The raising of the hand, usually the right hand, indicates an ancient ritual of oathtaking that originally involved placing the right hand on a sacred object, sometimes a sword, while speaking the oath.
- 155 Several lines in the poem indict and, according to Tr, vilify the "false man," a "constant habit of medieval narrative, including Chaucer" (p. 105).
- 166 Tr notes that despite the popularity of poisoning in literature as well as in life, "it seems to have been less used in England than elsewhere" (p. 105).
- 172–74 Tr attributes what seems to be gratuitous punishment of wife and children to ordeal stories derived from German and Scandinavian sources. Laura Hibbard Loomis, on the other hand, sees the *Queen Emma and the Ploughshare* story as indigenous to England, which suggests that such cruelty is not always culturally bound.
- 176 Wymound's attitude, fostered by envy, is typical of literary traitors. Tr notes that the name Wymound connotes "rascality." He points to the third executioner in a York Mystery play with the same name. Also, in a poem in the *Reliquiae Antiquae* the "wimorant" is a pejorative term for the rascally rabbit. George Taylor sees connotations in ME *wighel*, "deceit," *wicke*, "wicked," and *wik-hals* "rogue" (see "Notes on *Athelston*," p. 20).
- 184–85 *I wene he bar his owne name: / He was hoten Athelstane.* The messenger is also named Athelston. This practice of reduplicating names is evident in Celtic tradition. Sa suggests that this is a possible indication of a lost source.

Athelston

- 208–09 *The kyng wole for the cuntas sake . . . knyghtes make.* The couplet is repeated in lines 211–12, a linking strategy frequently found in tail-rhyme romance.
- 238 *Westemynstyr.* A feature of the poet's attempt to adapt the narrative to an English environment, says Tr, who assumes a French source.
- 256 According to Thomas Wright's *Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), cherries "appeared to have been one of the most popular fruits in England during the Middle Ages" (p. 299). In romances such as *Sir Cleges*, the fruit is miraculous and instrumental in restoring Cleges' status in the world.
- 266 *playne parlement.* At this point Tr and others have noted a lacuna occurring similar to another at line 448, where the phrase appears again and the rhyme scheme and the sense of the poem are disrupted. See Kevin Kiernan's article listed in the bibliography. George Taylor's explanation for the break is that "the scribe was beginning a new page" (p. 22). Because the poem exists in a single MS, such defects are difficult to verify.
- 281 *Abyyd.* Z notes that this early example of ME *abye* "to pay for" leads to confusion with *abyde*, "to abide" (p. 22).
- 282–83 Many critics have commented on the cruelty in this passage. Gordon Hall Gerould suggests that the behavior is Angevin in nature; he looks for a source in Walter Map. Tr remarks at the commonplace of this sort of treatment of women in the Middle Ages. As Elizabeth Ashman Rowe argues, "Despite its appearance to modern eyes, Athelston's kicking his wife would not have been a crime in fourteenth-century England, and the resulting death of his child was not one for which he would have been likely to have been convicted" (p. 87). See Select Bibliography.
- 288–89 *Soone withinne a lytle spase / A knave-chyld iborn ther wase.* The end rhyme in this couplet is a favorite of East Midlands romance.
- 291 *He was bothe whyt and red.* A curious class distinction is made by F&H who suggest that white and red, conventional descriptions of flesh and blood, are "colors of the aristocracy," and therefore distinct from the *blac and brown* used in *Havelok* (line 1009) to describe the lower classes. Tr points out other uses of the latter term in his rejection of F&H's determination.

Notes

- 294 *baret.* Tr notes that this is a word found frequently in West Midlands poems. He offers no explanation for its presence here, suggesting the difficulty of locating poems within specific dialect areas.
- 296 The implication here is that he will be paid back in the end.
- 309 The mention of *Spayne* in this line has led to speculation among scholars concerning a historical model for Edyff. Among those considered are Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I, and Constance of Castile, second wife of John of Gaunt, despite the fact that she was never a queen. Tr insists that this is evidence of a French original since in the *chansons* dealing with the “enfances of Charlemagne, his wife whom he ill-treats and who needs a rescuer, is a Spanish princess” (p. 110).
- 312 *besauntys.* A bezant (*byzantium nummus*) was a gold coin of the Byzantine Empire in widespread circulation in medieval Europe through the fifteenth century.
- 315 *moregeve.* A gift given a bride by the groom on the morning after the wedding. It is not part of a dowry, which would be provided by the bride’s family as a gift to her husband. Rather, it is proffered directly to the bride by her husband.
- 324 *fye and twenti thertoo.* Tr conjectures that the five and twenty added to thirty miles announced in line 321 equals the distance from Canterbury to London.
- 327–30 Around 6 a.m., or less exactly, very early in the morning. For a more complete explanation, see the explanatory note for *Horn*, line 855. Tr makes a curious comment in response to the messenger’s putting his personal needs before duty: “John Bull wants his dinner” (p. 110).
- 335 *Charynge-cross.* Charing Cross is an area between modern Whitehall and Trafalgar Square now lending its name to a nearby London commuter train station. One of a series of thirteen memorial crosses erected by command of Edward I along the funeral procession route of his wife, Eleanor of Castile, in 1291. The route began and ended at Westminster Abbey.
- 336 *Flete-strete.* Named from the Fleet River, first recorded in 1280, it became a center of journalism in the modern era until most British newspapers moved to outlying areas of London.

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- 340 *Loundone-brygge*. The original bridge was built in 994 A. D., but is now found in Lake Havasu, Arizona. Tr notes that this is the bridge over which Wat Tyler and his followers entered the city during the Rising of 1381. He dates the poem to about that time, though according to A. V. C. Schmidt and Nicolas Jacobs, it could have been written as late as 1399. Elizabeth Ashman Rowe concurs, suggesting that the poem points to Richard II and his troubled reign.
- 341 *los*. Tr rejects the F&H gloss on *los* as “praise” because it “gives no sense; whereas ‘loss’ provides us with just such an expression as medieval popular poets loved — the restatement of a fact in a negative form” (p. 111). But to our way of thinking “praise,” “glory,” or “repute” makes much better sense than loss in that the messenger loses — his time, his horse, and his effort — neither can he get any recognition from the church or aristocracy for this hard work. His perpetual frustration is a key part of the bourgeois humor of the poem.
- 342 *Stone into Steppyngebourne*. Stone Castle was a resting place for the bishops of Rochester on their journeys to and from London. *Steppyngebourne* is probably Sittingbourne.
- 344 *Sparyd he nought for myre ne mos*. Tr omits *nought* for the meter. We have retained it for the sense.
- 346 *Fro Osprynge to the Blee*. Ospringe is a resting place on the Canterbury pilgrim route. *Blee* refers to the ancient forest of Blean on the plain above Canterbury.
- 349 *bysschop ryke*. Z suggests that *ryke* be understood as an adjective rather than as a suffix for *bysschop*.
- 364 *have this and reed*. Recalls the famous *tolle lege* passage in Book 8 of Augustine’s *Confessions* exhorting the Bishop of Hippo to take and read a Scriptural passage that subsequently changes his life (8.12.29). The archbishop’s tearful response here makes the allusion all the more probable.
- 369 For more on *palfrey*, see the explanatory note to *Havelok*, line 2060.
- 391 A horse worth a hundred pounds would be very valuable in the Middle Ages. Perhaps the messenger is given to exaggeration.

Notes

- 394 *Oure gostly fadryr undyr God.* Tr points out the similarity of this expression with what Becket says in the *Early South-English Legendary* (EETS o.s. 87 [London: Trübner, 1887], p. 136): "Also dignete of the preost, herre than the kyngus is, and is gostliche fader ich am."
- 402–04 *And thy warysoun I schal thee geve . . . hundryd yere.* Tr would like to omit *and* to improve the meter and logic of the passage. We have retained it because it is unlikely to have been an inadvertent insertion by a minstrel or copyist as Tr contends. *Warysoun* is an interesting term here. The archbishop tantalizes the messenger with more than a simple reward or payment, implying that he will be permitted to enjoy it even though he lives to a very old age. Perhaps it is a pension of some sort that is implied, or an annuity, or a land holding which would be in his name until death.
- 407 *so lyght.* The phrase could signify the bright illumination of Westminster in the morning sun.
- 412 *kyrke.* Probably the chapel within Westminster Abbey.
- 423 *Gyltless men yiff thay be.* The MS shows a word replacement — *yiff* for *that* — which is crossed out. We have retained the scribal correction.
- 424 *presoun free.* Tr disagrees with F&H who suggests that this term means "on parole." Instead, Tr believes that it means "strong prison," which would make it more consistent with the following line and an earlier reference to fettering.
- 437 *He swoor be God levande.* There is a disagreement over who is swearing by God. While Z says that *he* refers to the king, Tr prefers to assign the gesture to the archbishop, which is more in keeping with the office and the urgency of the matter. S agrees with Tr.
- 448 *In the playne parlement.* As in line 266, a lacuna is suspected here.
- 456 Edith Rickert refers to *Kyng Alisaunder* (line 1750) — *He laughwith and swerith by the sonne* — as evidence of pre-Christian influence on oath taking.
- 459–60 See note for line 470.
- 465 Tr makes a lengthy comparison between Alryke and Bishop William Bateman who was a champion of the church and an opponent of the king's power.

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- 469–70 The cross, staff, miter, and ring are symbols of the archbishop's office. The king is implying that since he gave these symbols to the archbishop, he also has the right to take them away. The struggle over the right to invest a bishop with the symbols of his office in the Middle Ages was called the Investiture Controversy — an extremely important power struggle between ecclesiastical and secular authority.
- 472 The archbishop is talking here about the formal process of Interdiction, in which the sacraments of the church were forbidden to those under its ban. The medieval church used the Interdict as a weapon in its struggles with secular authority, sometimes applying it to whole countries.
- 480 Heretics were denied burial in consecrated ground, as were criminals and prostitutes.
- 483–94 Tr notes an unusual repetition of the same rhymes in this stanza.
- 513 *entyrdytyd*. Tr suggests *entyrdyt* to improve the meter.
- 516–17 *But yiff he graunte me that knyght, / His wyff and chyldryn fayr and bryght.* These lines repeat in lines 537–38. Such repetition is not uncommon in ME romance. See, for example, *Emaré*, line 45.
- 546 *Brokene-cros*. The history of this important landmark has been a source for determining the poem's date. The landmark acquired its name in 1379 and was removed in 1390. Despite this fact Schmidt and Jacobs contend that the poem could have been written "during or after the deposition crisis of 1399 and still have referred to a famous landmark removed a mere ten years or so previously" (*Medieval English Romances*, p. 194). Elizabeth Ashman Rowe notes that "neither Trounce nor Schmidt and Jacobs read Taylor's 'Notes on *Athelston*', which revives Z's identification of the cross with the Chester Cross. Not only was the Chester Cross located in the correct place (it was in the Strand, which lies between Fleet Street and Westminster) but it also marked the bounds of Westminster and the liberty belonging to the house of Lancaster, making it a suitable place for the Archbishop of Canterbury to wait for the king" (p. 95). Rowe also notes that nothing known about Chester Cross contributes to the dating of the poem.
- 571 The ordeal by ploughshare leads Laura A. Hibbard [Loomis] to conclude that the source for the poem resides in a Westminster legend of Queen Emma, mother of Edward the Confessor. The story is told in the *Annales of Wintonia* as follows:

Notes

In 1042 Emma, once known as the Flower of Normandy and the widow successively of the English king, Athelred the Redeless (978–1016), and of the Danish conqueror, Canute, was living at Winchester. She was possessed of great treasures many of which she gave to the great church of Saint Swithin whose bishop Alwyn was her most familiar friend. To her English sons, Athelred, Alfred and Edward, later known as the Confessor, she had given little or nothing, all her favor having been lavished on Harthacnut, her son by Canute. When, therefore, Edward came to the throne in 1042, he showed her no honour. Instead he surrounded himself with those Norman friends who had aided him in his long exile, and among them he especially honoured Robert of Jumieges whom he made Bishop of London and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The king was a man of wonderful simplicity and at last he would believe Robert even if the latter told him a black crow was white. In time Robert poisoned Edward's mind against the good bishop Alwyn and Queen Emma.

The queen, who was imprisoned at Wherwell, promptly wrote a letter to those bishops whom she could trust and begged them to persuade the king that she might clear herself by an ordeal to take place at Saint Swithin's. In a long speech which uninvited he made to the bishops, Robert accused the queen not only of evil conduct with Alwyn but of having consented to the murder of Alfred, the king's brother, and of having planned to poison the king himself.

On the day of the trial a great concourse of people gathered in Saint Swithin's church where in a row were placed nine red hot plough-shares. The queen, who had passed the previous night in prayer before the shrine of Saint Swithin and had been comforted by beholding the saint in a dream, walked forth bravely. Having cast off her mantle she closed her eyes and was led by two bishops across the burning metal while the people cried aloud: "Swithune, Sancte Swithune, tu illam adjuva!" Unconscious that she had passed the ordeal the queen opened her eyes and beheld the miracle. She prayed to be taken to the king who, overwhelmed with holy penitence, lay prostrate on the floor. Willingly he confessed his fault, willingly he restored Bishop Alwyn to highest favor. Joyous was the tumult of the people.

From Dover, where he had waited to hear the result of the ordeal, Robert fled to Jumieges where presently he died. In Winchester king and queen and bishop vied with each other in giving treasure and manors to the church of the holy saint who had saved them all. (As quoted in Laura A. Hibbard, "Athelston, A Westminster Legend," pp. 227–28)

- 575 The *doom*, or ordeal, was a method of testing guilt or innocence by means of direct physical trial. The accused was "subject to some physical test, such as the plunging of a hand into boiling water" (OED). The result was thought to represent the immediate judgment of God. Trial by ordeal was no longer used by the time *Athelston* was written, but it continued to be an important literary convention. One thinks of a work such as Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*, where Isolde's ordeal is one of the central episodes in the narrative.

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- 582–83 It was customary to remove the clothes of ordeal victims, though here the queen retains her garments.
- 592 The high altar of St. Paul's was famous for its elaborate adornment. Sa suggests that the offering may be part of the ordeal ceremony.
- 611 *Thorwghout they wente apase.* C: *þorwghout he went apase.* Z's emendation is followed universally.
- 617 *schewyd.* Often used in relation to miracles, it indicates the suspension of natural phenomena by God, here to demonstrate innocence. Divine intervention is usually initiated by prayer in medieval romance.
- 625 *To Jesu Cryst he prayde a bone.* On general grounds this should be a prayer uttered by the queen. Tr argues that *he* refers to the archbishop.
- 638 *And sithen it fell at syght.* Tr notes that he can make nothing of this line. Sa also finds the line a mystery. Z, on the other hand, translates "It came to pass that she sighed." Taylor suggests that the scribe may have mistook "sighed" for "sight" (p. 25). But it may mean that the baby has dropped into the birthing position.
- 646 *As it was the landys lawe.* This may refer to the custom whereby women had exclusive rights to witness and participate in the birthing process. Only under extraordinary circumstances would a man be allowed to intervene. A similar expression for privacy in birth is spoken by Josian in *Bevis of Hampton* (lines 3627–31).
- 649 The St. Edmund mentioned here is St. Edmund of East Anglia. Born of Saxons, raised a Christian, he became king of the East Angles in the ninth century. During a Viking raid he was killed either by scourging or shot with arrows as tradition relates, or by being offered to the gods in accord with Viking ritual practices. His body, later found to be incorrupt, was transferred to Bedricsworth (Bury St. Edmunds). In 925 King Athelstan founded a community of priests and deacons to take care of the shrine. One of the most famous representations of Edmund is in the Wilton Diptych where he and Edward the Confessor are depicted as two royal patrons of England. Together they present King Richard II to the Virgin and Child. His traditional emblem is the arrow, the instrument of his passion, but he is occasionally depicted with a wolf, believed to have guarded his head after death. See the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, pp. 120–21; also see Lord Francis Hervey, *Corolla*

Notes

Sancti Eadmundi: The Garland of Saint Edmund King and Martyr (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1907).

- 652 *into the plas.* Edith Rickert and F&H take this to mean “open square.” Tr thinks it means simply “thither,” just as *in that plas* is used for “there.”
- 669 *Seynt Anne.* The traditional name of the mother of the Virgin Mary; St. Anne does not appear in the Gospels, but her cult is popular in late medieval England. She is also the patron saint of childbirth. (See Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, eds. *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society* [Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990].)
- 676–78 From what has the king to be absolved? Z suggests that the king’s sin is breaking his oath to his sworn brother. The rhetorical question posed by Tr is thus answered since he agrees with Z. But perhaps the absolution is necessary to eradicate his participation in the death of his unborn son. Though the act would not be considered criminal, it could be construed as immoral.
- 697–98 *trees three . . . hors fyve.* F&H suggest that “trees three” refers to the two uprights and crossbar of the gallows. *Fyve*, Tr remarks, is nothing more than a “popular number [used] as a rhyme word” (p. 130). Legal dragging usually required only one horse. Taylor suggests a relation to an incident involving Thomas Becket as described in L. F. Salzman’s *English Trade in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931):

When Thomas Becket went to Paris in 1158, as Chancellor and Ambassador of Henry II, it is true that twelve well-appointed pack-horses formed part of his imposing Cavalcade, but there were also eight splendid chariots each drawn by five horses no less strong and shapely than war-horses. (p. 204)
- 705 *Sey. Z: Sere; Tr: Sere.*
- 733 *youre arende.* The messenger’s journey to Canterbury and back is his “business” in a double sense according to Tr, concerning both Egeland’s imprisonment and Wymound’s trial by ordeal.
- 751 *Gravysende.* The town of Gravesend on the road from London to Dover.

Athelston

- 760 *nought yit! lete!* Sa remarks on the king's imperious retort. "[E]ssentially it says something like 'Do not indeed allow,' to which we might add 'yourself familiarities with me'" (p. 152).
- 776 *To preve the trewthe with alle.* C: *To preve the trewþe in dede.* Z emends to maintain the meter. Tr adopts the emendation "because it is convenient for the text and is a pleasant example of his [Z's] unfailing ingenuity" (p. 134). We have maintained Z's emendation for the sake of the rhyme.
- 784 *schole.* Z alters to *scholde*; Tr rejects it, as do we.
- 803 *Alle men.* I.e., the citizens of London.
- 805 *the Elmes.* Thought to be west of Smithfield, a place where many elm trees grew. It was also a place of execution; such luminaries as William Wallace and Roger Mortimer met their fate there. Tr argues that Tyburn is a more likely site and the reference to the Elmes is based upon an OF phrase — *juges de dessous l'orme* (judges without tribunal) — as well as the frequent use of elm trees for hanging.

Glossary

This is a select glossary, designed to help readers with words not always glossed in the margins. It is also intended to help with words which, in particular contexts, need to be distinguished from synonyms, homonyms, and words with similar spellings.

a <i>a; he; all; to</i>	baldelike <i>securely</i>
abide <i>wait</i>	baret <i>fighting</i>
aboute (n), abuten <i>around, at about, approximately, regarding</i>	barfot <i>unshod</i>
aboven <i>towering above</i>	barnage <i>king's vassals of high rank</i>
ac <i>but</i>	barre <i>bar used to fasten a door</i>
adoun, adune <i>down</i>	bat <i>club</i>
adrad, adraddē, adred <i>afraid</i>	bathe <i>both</i>
afin <i>altogether</i>	bedden <i>lodge in bed</i>
ageyn, ayeyn <i>again; against; back, facing, reflecting; towards, to meet</i>	bede <i>a prayer, announce</i>
ageyn-come <i>come to meet, encounter</i>	bedel <i>messenger of justice</i>
ageynes <i>against</i>	beite <i>bait (worry, as with dogs)</i>
ageyne stonde <i>resist</i>	beneysun <i>grace at a meal</i>
aghen <i>again; against</i>	bermen <i>porters</i>
altherbeste <i>best of all, very best</i>	bern <i>child</i>
altherleste <i>slightest of all</i>	berwen, burwe <i>protect, save the life of</i>
and <i>and; if</i>	bidden <i>enjoin, command</i>
andelong <i>lengthways, the length of</i>	bidene <i>completely</i>
anilepi, onlepi <i>a single</i>	bihote <i>promise</i>
anuye <i>bore</i>	bihove <i>for the benefit of</i>
are-dawes <i>days of yore</i>	bimene <i>signify</i>
arkē <i>coffer</i>	birde, birthe, bire <i>had cause to</i>
arwe <i>timorous</i>	birthene <i>load</i>
asken <i>ashes</i>	bise <i>north wind, whirlwind</i>
astirte <i>leap</i>	bi-southe <i>on the south of</i>
atsitte <i>oppose</i>	bi-stond, bi-stod <i>stood alongside</i>
auhte <i>property, possessions</i>	bistride <i>sit astride</i>
aunlaz <i>a dagger</i>	biswike <i>treated tracherously</i>
auter <i>altar</i>	bitaken <i>hand over to</i>
awayleden <i>attacked</i>	bite <i>bite, drink</i>
ayther <i>either, each</i>	bitechen <i>hand over, entrust to, commit to commed to the care of</i>
	blac <i>black, clad in black, grimy; fair-complexioned, pale</i>

Glossary

blakne <i>turn pale</i>	harde <i>fiercely</i>
blame <i>disrepute, reprobation, transgression</i>	he <i>he; they</i>
bleike <i>pale</i>	helde <i>age, adulthood</i>
blenkes <i>tricks</i>	hem <i>them</i>
blinne <i>desist, cease from effort</i>	hende <i>courteous; gentle</i>
blisse <i>happiness, general rejoicing</i>	heo <i>she, her</i>
blithe <i>happy</i>	here <i>their; army</i>
blome <i>fairest flower</i>	heved <i>head</i>
bloute <i>soft</i>	hevere <i>ever</i>
bode <i>summons, command</i>	highte <i>was called</i>
boute <i>unless, but, except; remedy, reward</i>	hihi <i>they</i>
 	hire <i>their</i>
child <i>youth, squire; knight</i>	hit <i>it</i>
clepede/clepe <i>called</i>	
 	i-, y- <i>past participle prefix (e.g., i-caught)</i>
datheit <i>cursed be</i>	ich <i>I</i>
dawe <i>dawn; day</i>	ilk <i>each</i>
del <i>part</i>	icham <i>I am</i>
dere <i>precious; harm</i>	ichave <i>I have</i>
dighte <i>prepare, make worthy; rule, govern, direct; save</i>	is <i>is; his</i>
don <i>do, does, did, etc.</i>	
doute <i>fear</i>	kynmerk <i>a birthmark signifying royalty</i>
eft <i>soon, again</i>	leman <i>sweetheart, dear one</i>
ek(e) <i>also</i>	levedi <i>lady</i>
eyr <i>heir</i>	lith <i>light; limb</i>
 	lith(e) <i>relief, pleasure, rest; gently, kindly, obedient; quickly, easily</i>
fale <i>many</i>	lough <i>laughed</i>
fel(e) <i>many</i>	loverd <i>lord</i>
ferde <i>went</i>	
feren, (y-)fere <i>companions</i>	masager/messenger <i>messenger</i>
forthi <i>because, for that reason, therefore</i>	mekel/mikel <i>great</i>
fre <i>generous, noble</i>	mouthe <i>mouth; might; must</i>
 	muthe <i>mouth</i>
gan <i>intensifier (translate as did)</i>	
geilers <i>jailors</i>	nam <i>took; (I) am not</i>
Goddot <i>God knows</i>	nas <i>(I) was not (contraction of ne was)</i>
	ne <i>not</i>
	nolde <i>would not (contraction of ne wolde)</i>

Glossary

nouthe <i>not</i>	wende <i>go, turn, travel; think</i>
nu <i>now</i>	wiste <i>knew</i>
ok <i>also</i>	wit <i>intelligence; with</i>
onon <i>soon, quickly</i>	wite/witen <i>know</i>
payn(e) <i>pagan</i>	wost <i>know</i>
pine <i>suffering, pain</i>	wreke(n) <i>avenge</i>
recke <i>reckons, cares</i>	yaf <i>gave</i>
reke/rake <i>reach, go; reached, gone</i>	yeme(n) <i>take care of, protect</i>
ri[c]th <i>right, justice</i>	y-nowe <i>enough</i>
rit <i>rode</i>	yow <i>you</i>
sagh <i>saw</i>	ywis <i>truly, certainly, indeed</i>
samen <i>together</i>	
schupes <i>ships</i>	
sithen <i>since, because; next, afterwards</i>	
sket <i>quickly</i>	
stounde <i>hour</i>	
stronde/stonde <i>beach, shore</i>	
sumdel <i>somewhat</i>	
swike <i>traitor, scoundrel</i>	
swilke <i>such</i>	
swithe <i>very; quickly</i>	
tale <i>tale; tally, in number</i>	
te <i>go; take [myself]; to</i>	
tene <i>pain, suffering, anxiety; anger</i>	
than <i>then; when</i>	
the <i>the, you; they; though</i>	
ther <i>there; where</i>	
tho <i>then, when; though</i>	
thusgate <i>in this regard</i>	
til <i>to, until</i>	
to gadre <i>together</i>	
trome <i>rank of warriors, body of armed</i>	
<i>men</i>	
tun <i>town, fortified area, village, hamlet,</i>	
<i>populated area</i>	
ure <i>our</i>	
ut(h) <i>out</i>	