

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.

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," *Medieval 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," *Manuscripts* 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.¹ 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.²

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.³ 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

¹ Gabriel Josopovici, *The Book of God: A Response to the Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 199.

² Barron, pp. 5–6.

³ 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 reseption 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. Rymeshild — 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.⁴

⁴ 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 *Athelstan*, 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 Awowing of Arthur*, *King Horn*, and *Athelstan*, 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. Hoen is a convincing sooty beggar when he decides to approach Rymenchild in disguise. *Athelstan'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 *Athelstan* 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 *Athelstow* 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 Westemesse (identified with the Wirral peninsula near modern-day Liverpool). There the king's daughter, Rymenbild, 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 Rymenbild. 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 Hoen'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 Hoen 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*," *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* 81 (1980), 403.

⁵ Ziegler, p. 406.

⁶ See Diane Speed, "The Saracens of *King Horn*," *Spectrum* 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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McLaughlin, John. "The Return Song in Medieval Romance and Ballad: *King Horn* and *King Orfeo*." *Journal of American Folklore* 88 (1975), 304–07. [Links twentieth-century Serbo-Croatian heroic poetry, medieval French romances, and nineteenth-century Scottish ballads, by recognizing a "return song" pattern common to all.]

Nimchinsky, Howard. "Orfeo, Guillaume, and Horn." *Romance Philology* 22 (1968), 1–14. [Comparative cross-cultural study of similar passages.]

King Horn

O'Brien, Timothy. "Word Play in the Allegory of *King Horn*." *Allegorica* 7 (1982), 110-22. [Magic rings, Horn's disguises, and the love triangle "comment upon the political and psychological meanings contained in the poem's word play" (p. 121).]

Purdon, Liam. "King Horn and the Medieval Trope of Christ the Lover-Knight." *Proceedings of the PMR Conference at Villanova* 10 (1985), 137-47. [Horn is not only physically beautiful but achieves a state of moral perfection. By incorporating features of the trope of Christ the Lover-Knight the poet establishes the logic of Horn's many trials and generates the poem's suspense.]

Quinn, William A. *Jongleur: A Modified Theory of Oral Improvisation and Its Effects on the Performance and Transmission of Middle English Romance*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982. [Discusses the close relationship between oral performance and the making of written texts.]

Scott, Anne. "Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and the Configuration of Word and Deed in *King Horn*." In *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches*, Ed. D. S. Brewer. Cambridge: Brewer, 1988. Pp. 37-68. [Explores the "binding power of promises, intentions, and desires" and the poet's means of reaffirming and challenging "traditional narrative techniques" (p. 47).]

Speed, Diane. "The Saracens of *King Horn*." *Speculum* 65 (1990), 564-95. [The Saracens named in the poem are not "figures from real life," but rather a "literary phenomenon."]

Ziegler, Georgianna. "Structural Repetition in *King Horn*." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 81 (1980), 403-08. [Divides the narrative into four parts and draws attention to "the skillful interweaving of matter with form" (p. 403).]

King Horn

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

King Horn

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

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

King Horn

- With swerd other with knife,
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.
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.
125 Hi wenden towissee
Of here lif to misse,
Al the day and al the night
Til hit sprang dailight,
Til Horn sagh on the strande
130 Men gon in the londe.
"Feren," quath he, "yonge,
Ich telle you tithinge:
Ich here foyeles singe
And that gras him springe.
135 Blithe beo we on lyve;
Ure schup is on ryve."
Of schup hi gunne funde,
And settent foute to grunde.
Bi the se side
140 Hi leten that schup ride.
Thanne spak him child Horn,
In Suddene he was iborn:
"Schup bi the se flode,
Daisies have thys gode.
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,
150 Godhild, Quen the gode,
- command
been woeful
But; then
(see note)
rue (regret bitterly)
drove
were afraid
*They expected for certain
their life to lose*
- saw; share
going about
"friends," said; young
news
hear; birds
- Let us be happy [to be] alive
Our ship; share
Off; they hasten
foot to ground*
- (see note)
- 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;
- 155 And seie that hei schal fonde
The dent of myne honde."
The children yede to tane,
Bi dales and bi dune.
- Hy metten with Almair King,
160 Crist yeven him His blessing
King of Westernesse
Crist yive him muchel blisse!
He him spac to Horn child
- Wordes that were mild:
165 "Whannes beo ye, faire gumes,
That her to londe beoth icume,
Alle throttene,
Of bodic swithe kene?
Bi God that me makede,
- 170 A swich fair verade
Ne saugh ich in none stunde,
Bi westene londe:
Seie me wat ye seche."
Horn spak here speche.
- 175 He spak for hem alle,
Vor so hit moste bivalle:
He was the faireste
And of wit the beste.
"We beoth of Suddenne,
- 180 Icome of gode kenne,
Of Cristene blode,
And kynges swthe gode.
Payns ther gunne arive
And daden hem of lyve.
- 185 Hi sloghen and todroghe
Cristene men inoghe.
So Crist me mote rede,
Us hi dade lede
Into a galeie,
- say to; pagan
enemy
sound, well
here
they; experience
blow
went their way
hills
King Alymar
give
much
spoke
soft
Whence (from where); young ones
have come
thirteen
very bold
very; group of companions
never
land of the west
Tell; seek
For; befall
intelligence
are from
family
so very
did arrive
deprived, life
tore apart
enough
So help me God
galley

King Horn

190	With the se to pleis, Dai hit is agon and other, Without 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 sien and binde Ore honde bilynde. Bute yef hit beo thi wille, Helpa that we ne spille."	<i>Now; stay</i> <i>Our; hands</i> <i>die</i>
200	Thanne spak the gode kyng Iwys he nas no nithing. "Sese me, child, what is thi name? Ne schalhu have bute game."	<i>truly; villain</i> <i>Tell</i> <i>sport</i>
205	The child him answerde, Sone so he hit herde: "Horn ich am thote, Icomen ut of the bote,	<i>As soon as</i> <i>called</i> <i>Come out; boat</i>
	Fram the se side. Kyng, wel mote thee tide."	 <i>you prosper</i>
210	Thanne hym spak the gode king. "Well bruc thu thin evening. Horn, thu go wel schulle	 <i>bear; name</i>
	Bi dales and bi hulle; 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 Westermesse,	 <i>[All] about</i>
	The strengthe of thine honde Into evrech londe.	 <i>each and every</i>
220	Horn, thu art so swete, Ne may ich the folete." Hom rod Aylmar the Kyng	 <i>not abandon you</i>
	And Hom mid him, his fundling,	 <i>homewards</i>
225	And alle his ifere, That were him so dere. The kyng com into halle	 <i>with; foundling</i>
	Among his knighthes alle;	 <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 kerfe,
And of the cupe serve.
Ths tech him of alle the liste
240 That thu evre of wiste,
And his feisen thou wise
In to othere servise.
Horn thu undervonge
And tech him of harpe and songe."
- 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 weye wild:
For heo ne mighte at borde
With him speke no worde,
Ne neght in the halle
260 Among the knighthes alle,
Ne nowhar in non othere siede.
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,
- 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

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

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 so wolde."
 Athulf sede on hire ire
 So stille so hit were,
 "Thi tale nu thu lynne,
 For Horn nis nocht her inne.
 Ne beo we nocht iliche:
 Horn is fairer and riche,
 Fairer bi one ribbe
 Thane eni man that libbe:
 Thegh Horn were under molde
 Other elles wher he wolde
 Other henne a thousand mile,
 Ich nolde him ne ther bigile."
 Rymenhild hire bwente,
 And Athelbrus fule heo schente.
 "Hennes thu go, thu fule theof,
 Ne wurstu me nevre more leof;
 Went ut of my bur,
 With muchel mesaventur.
 Schame mote thu fonge
 And on highe rode anhonge.
 Ne spek ich nocht with Horn:
 Nis he nocht so unorn;
 Horn is fairer thane beo he:
 With muchel schame mote thu deie."
 Athelbrus in a stunde
 Fel anon to grunde.
 "Lefdi min oghe,
 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.
 Aylmar, the gode Kyng.
- 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
 foully; 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. Yef Horn were her abute, Sore I me dute With him ye wolden pleie	Placed; care If Greatly; fear take pleasure
350	Bitwex you selve tweie. Thanne scholde withuten othe The kyng maken us wrothe. Rymenhild, foryef me thi tene,	beyond doubt angry forgive; anger
	Lefdi, my quene, 355 And Horn ich schal thee fecche, Wham so hit recche."	
	Rymenhild, yef he cuthe, Gan lyne with hure muthe. Heo makede hire wel blithe;	Whoever may care as much as she could keep quiet
360	Wel was hire that sithe. "Go nu," quath heo, "sone, And send him after none, On a squieres wise.	She made herself (It was) well with her; time she said; soon noontime
	Whane the kyng arise 365 To wude for to pleie, Nis non that him bewreie. He schal with me beleve Til hit beo nyr eve.	dressed as a squire
	To haven of him mi wille; 370 After ne recche ich what me telle." ¹	woods; sport No one; will betray stay close to evening desire
	Aylbus wende hire fro; Horn in halle fond he tho Bifore the kyng on benche, Wyn for to schenche.	turned away from her then
375	"Horn," quath he, "so hende, To buue nu thu wende, After mete stille, With Rymenhild to dwelle;	Wine; pour gracious bedchamber; go meal quietly
	Wordes swthe bolde. 380 In herte thu hem holde. Horn, beo me wel trewe;	very them keep (i.e., be quiet)

¹ Afterwards I do not care what people say

King Horn

	Ne schal hit thee nevre rewe."	you will not regret it
	Horn in herte leide	took to heart
	Al that he him seide;	
385	He yeode in wel righte	went
	To Rymenild the brighte.	beautiful
	On knes he him sette,	
	And sweteliche hure grette.	sweetly greeted her
	Of his feire sighte	appearance
390	Al the bur gan lighte.	glow
	He spac faire speche —	
	Ne dorte him noman teche.	needed
	"Wel thu sitte and softe,	
	Rymenild the brighte,	
395	With thine maidenes sixe	
	That the sitteth nixte.	sit next to you
	Kinges stward ure	our
	Sende me in to bære;	Sent
	With thee speke ich scholde.	
400	Seie me what thu woldest:	Tell
	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	fur mantle
	Of wyn to drinke his fulle:	
	Heo makede him faire chere	
	And tok him abate the swere.	
	Oflie heo him custe,	
410	So wel so hire luste.	
	"Horn," heo sede, "withute strif,	
	Thu schalt have me to thi wif.	
	Horn, have of me rewthe,	
	And plist me thi trewthe.	
415	Horn tho him bithoghtie	
	What he speke mighte.	
	"Crist," quath he, "thee wisse,	guide
	And yive thee hevene blisse	
	Of thine husebonde,	
420	Wher he beo in londe.	Wherever

	Ich am ibore to lowe Such wimman to knowe. Ich am iscome of thralle And fundling bifalle.	bore; too low a serf <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 Rymenbild 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> <i>in much grief</i>
430	Horn in herte was ful wo And tok hire on his armes two.	
435	He gan hire for to kesse Wel ofte mid ywisse. "Lemman," he sede, "dere, Thin herte nu tha stere.	<i>kiss</i> <i>with certainty</i> <i>Beloved</i> <i>control</i>
	Help me to knighthie Bi al thine mightie,	<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 weare more, And do, leman, thi lore."	<i>grow</i> <i>instruction</i>
	Rymenbild, that swete thing, Wakede of hire swoghnning.	<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>
455	And this ryng ther uppe To Aylbris the stuard, And se he holde foeward.	<i>along with it</i> <i>see to it, keep the agreement</i>
	Seie ich him biseche, With loveliche speche, That he adan falle	<i>Say I ask him</i> <i>fall down (humble himself)</i>

King Horn

- 460 Before the king in halle,
And bidden the king arighte
Dubbe thee to knighe.
With seler and with golde
Hit wurt him wel iyolde.
immediately
- 465 Crist him lene spedē
Thin erende to bede."
Horn tok his leve,
For hit was negh eve.
Athelbrus he soghte
silver
- He will be well-rewarded
grant success
Make known your business
- 470 And yaf him that he broghte,
And tolde him ful yare
Hu he hadde ifare,
And sede him his nede,
And bïbet him his mede.
gave him what
quickly
- How: fared
what he wanted
promised; reward
as soon as possible
- 475 Athelbrus also swithe
Wente to halle blive.
"Kynge," he sede, "thu leste
A tale mid the beste.
Thu schalt bere crune
quickly
- The best of all tales
crown
- 480 Tomoreghe in this tune;
Tomoreghe is thi feste:
Ther bihoveth geste.
Hit nere noght for loren
For to knighe child Horn,
feast
- It is fitting to have a good time
It is not a lost cause
- 485 Thine armes for to weide:
God knight he schal yelde."
young man
bear
- Good; turn out to be
- The king sede sone,
"That is wel idone.
Horn me wel iquemeth;
God knight him bisemeth.
He schal have mi dubbing
good idea
pleases
- 490 And after wurt mi derling
And alle his ferem twelf
He schal knighten himself.
become; favorite
companions
- 495 Alle he schal hem knighte
Bifore me this nighte."
Til the light of day sprang
Ailmor him thughe lang.
them all
- thought to himself

King Horn

- 500 The day bigan to springe;
Horn coem bivore the kinge,
Mid his twelf yfere,
Sume hi were luthere.
Horn he dubbede to knighe
With swerd and spures brighte.
505 He sette him on a stede whit:
Ther nas no knight hym ilk.
He smot him a litel wight
And bed him beon a god knight.
Athulf fel aknes thaſ
510 Bivore the King Aylmar.
"King," he sede, "so kene
Grante me a bene:
Nu is knight Sire Horn
That in Saddene was iboren;
515 Loed he is of londe
Over us that by him stonde;
Thin armes he hath and scheld
To fighte with upon the feld:
Let him us alle knighe
520 For that is ure righte."
Aylmar sede sone ywis,
"Do nu that thi wille is."
Horn adun lighte
And makede hem alle knighe.
525 Murie was the feſte
Al of faire gestes:
Ac Rymenſhild nas noght ther,
And that hire thughte ſeve yer.
After Horn heo ſente,
530 And he to bure wenne.
Nolde he noght go one;
Athulf was his moe,
Rymenſhild on flore ſtod:
Hornes come hire thughte god:
535 And sede, "Welcomme, Sire Horn,
And Athulf knighe the bifor.
Knight, nu is thi time
- before
With; companions
Some of them; evil

spurs
white horse
was no; like him
light blow
ordered; good
on his knees

bold
favor
Now as

our
responded quickly
what
got down

Merry
entertainments
But
she thought seven years
sent for
chamber
alone
companion

Horn's coming seemed good to her
before you

King Horn

- For to sitte bi me.
Do nu that thu er of spake:
540 To thy wif thu me take.
Ef thu art trewe of dedes,
Do nu axe thu sedes.
Nu thu hast wille thine,
Unbind me of my pine."
spoke about before
i.e., a man of your word
said
- 545 "Rymenbild," quath he, "beo stille!
Ich wulle don al thi wille,
Also hit mot bitide.
Mid spere I schal furst ride,
And mi knighthod geove,
550 Ar ich thee gonne to woghe.
We beth knightes yonge,
Of o dai al isprung;
And of ure mestere
So is the manere:
555 With sume othere knighte
Wel for his lemmann fighte
Or he eni wif take;
Forthi me stondeth the more rape.
Today, so Crist me blesse,
560 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."
I will do knightly deeds
With
return alive
- 565 "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
Good: adoration
- 570 Igrave "Rymenbild the yonge":
Ther nis non betere anonder sunne
That eni man of telle cunne.
For my lufe tha hit were
And on thi finger thu him bere.
The stones beoth of suche grace
575 That thu ne schalt in none place
Engraved
under the sun
can tell of
power

King Horn

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

King Horn

		<i>Surround</i>
	Abute Horn a lone:	
	He lokede on the ringe,	
	And thought on Rimenilde;	
	He slogh ther on hastē	<i>killed; quickly</i>
620	On hundred bi the lastē,	<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 cede.	<i>On top on the point</i>
	He verde horn into halle,	<i>went</i>
630	Among the knighthes alle.	
	"Kyng," he sede, "wel thu sotte,	
	And alle thine knightes mome.	<i>with you</i>
	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 iyoerde,	<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 lefhe Fikenhild,	
	That was the wurste moder child.	<i>worst child of woman</i>
	Horn ferde into bure	<i>went; chamber</i>
	To sen aventure.	<i>seek</i>

King Horn

- 655 He saw Rymenild sitt
 Also heo were of witt.
 Heo sat on the sunne
 With tieres al binunne.
 Horn sede, "Lef, thin ore!
 660 Wi wepest so sore?"
 Heo sede, "Noght I ne wepe,
 But ase I lay aslepe
 To the se my net I caste,
 And hit nolde noght ilaste;
 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
 670 Turne thine swenvene.
 Ne schal I thee biswike,
 Ne do that thee mislike.
 I schal me make thin owe
 To holden and to knowe
 675 For everech othere wighte,
 And tharto mi treuthe I thee pligte."
 Muchel was the rathe
 That was at thare truthe,
 For Rymenild weop ille,
 680 And Horn let the tires stille.
 "Lemman, quath he, "dere,
 Thu schalt more there.
 Thi sweven schal wende
 Other sum man schal us schende.
 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 Stare,
 690 And Horn lai in bure.
 Fykenhild hadde envye
 And sede thes folye:
 "Aylmar, ich thee warne
- As if, out of her mind*
i.e., at a sunny window
tears; covered
Beloved, grant me your favor
- I do not weep for nothing*
- sea
 stay intact
 fish; immediately
 burst
 know; lose
- Interpret; dream*
deceive
displease
 own
 keep
- Above any other creature*
oath, pledge
sadness
betrothal
 bitterly
 tears stop
 my love
 hear
- dream; turn [favorably]*
Or someone will harm us
- Certainly; torment*
cause us pain
will be seen
the Mersey
chamber
- spoke these lies*

King Horn

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

King Horn

	In to uncuthe londe,	unknown
	Wel more for to fonde;	find
735	I schal wane there	live
	Fulle seve yere.	seven
	At seve yeres ende,	
	Yef I ne come ne sende,	<i>If I do not return or send a message</i>
	Tak thee husebonde;	
740	For me thu ne wonde.	wait
	In armes thu me fonge,	take
	And kes me wel longe."	kiss
	Heo custe him wel a stunde	<i>kissed; a while</i>
	And Rymenbild fool to grande.	<i>swooned</i>
745	Horn tok his leve:	
	Ne mighte he no leng bileyve;	<i>longer stay</i>
	He tok Athulf, his fere,	companion
	Al abute the swere,	neck
	And sede, "Knight so trewe,	
750	Kep wel mi lufe newe.	<i>Take care of</i>
	Thu nevre me ne forsoke:	
	Rymenbild thu kep and loke.	<i>look after</i>
	His steede he gan bistride,	<i>mount</i>
	And forth he gan ride:	
755	To the havene he ferde,	<i>harbor, went</i>
	And a god schup he hurede.	<i>good, rented</i>
	That him scholde londe	
	In westene londe.	<i>western</i>
	Athulf weop with ighe	eyes
760	And al that him isighe.	<i>he saw all of that</i>
	The whyght him gan stonde,	<i>seabreeze sustained him</i>
	And drof til Hirelonde.	<i>drove: Ireland (see note)</i>
	To londe he him sette	<i>disembarked</i>
	And fot on stirop sette.	
765	He fond bi the weie	<i>found</i>
	Kynges sones tweie:	<i>two</i>
	That on him het Harild,	<i>one called himself Harold</i>
	And that other Berild.	
	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 laddle 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 no man 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 farhede
 Ne schal thee nevre wel spede."
 805 Hit was at Cristemasse,
 Neither more ne lasse;
 Ther cam in at none
 A graunt swithe sone,
 Farmed fram paynyme
 810 And scide 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

- "Site stille, Sire Kyng,
And herkne this tything:
Her bath paens arived;
Wel mo thane five
815 Her boeth on the sonde,
King, upon thy londe;
On of hem wile fighte
Aghen thee knighthes.
Yef other thre slen 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.
But 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,
Thee Cristen men to fonde.
Size, I schal alone,
840 Withute more ymone,
With mi swerd wel ethe
Bringe hem thre to dethe."
The king aros amoreghe,
That hadde muchel sorghe;
845 And Cutberd ros of bedde,
With armes he him schredde:
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 four)

our one, three
ours

they are

What advice shall we take
believe
take

One
Against; heathen hornd
attack

companions
early

the next morning
orrow

equipped himself
armored corslet 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."
855 Right at prime tide
Hi gunnen ut ride
And funden on a grene
A geaunt swithe kene,
His feren him biside
860 Hore deth to abide.
The ilke bataille
Cutberd gan asaille:
He yaf dentes inoghe:
The knightes felle iswoghe.
865 His dent he gan withhold,
For hi were negh aslaghe:
And sede, "Knights, nu ye reste
One while ef you leste."
Hi sede hi nevre nadde
870 Of knightes dentes so harde,
Bote of the King Murry,
That wes swithe sturdy.
He was of Hornes kunne,
Iborn in Suddene.
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.
880 To him his swerd he drogh.
He lokede on his ryng
And thoughte on Rymenhilde.
He smot him thuregh the herie,
That sore him gan to smerte.
885 The paens that er were so stume
Hi gunne awei urne;
Horn and his compaynye
Gunne after hem wel swithe highe
- together will go
six a. m.
They rode out
found
giant very bold
companions beside him
Their
same battle
wage
enough blows
unconscious
withhold
they; nearly slain
now
For a moment if you desire
They never said they had
From a knight blows
Except from
Who was very (see note)
family
shudder
Before
out of the land
killed his father
Against
through
sorely; hurt
pagans, fierce
ran
in great haste

King Horn

	And sloghen alle the hundes	killed; hounds
890	Er hi here schipes funde.	Before they their; found
	To deth he hem alle broghte.	
	His fader deth wel dere hi boghne.	<i>They paid dearly for his father's death</i>
	Of alle the kynges knigtes	
	Ne scathede wer no wighte.	harmed; nor a one
895	Bute his sones tweie	Except for; two
	Bifore him he sagh dese.	die
	The king bigan to grete	weep
	And teres for to lete.	let [fall]
	Me leiden hem in bare	<i>Men; funeral bier</i>
900	And burden hem ful yare.	buried them right away
	The king com into halle	
	Among his knigtes alle.	
	"Horn," he sede, "I seie thee,	tell
	Do as I schal rede thee.	advise
905	Aslaghen beth mine heirs,	Slain are
	And thu art knight of muchel pris.	great value
	And of grete strengthe,	
	And fair o bodie lengthe.	
	Mi rengne thu schalt welde,	kingdom; rule
910	And to spuse helde	receive
	Reynild, mi daughter,	
	That sitteth on the lofte."	<i>in the upper room</i> (see note)
	"O Sire King, with wronge	
	Scholte ich hit underfonge,	accept
915	Thi daughter, that ye me bede,	offer
	Ower rengne for to lede.	realm; govern
	Wel more ich schal thee serve,	Better
	Sire Kyng, or thu sterfe.	before you die
	Thi sorwe schal wende	turn
920	Or seve yeres ende.	Before
	Whanne hit is wente,	past
	Sire King, yef me mi rente.	give; reward
	Whanne I thi daughter yembe,	desire
	Ne shalts me hire werne."	<i>Nor shall you refuse me</i>
925	Cutberd wonede there	lived
	Fulle seve yere	
	That to Rymenild he ne sente	<i>neither sent a message</i>

King Horn

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

King Horn

	Horn iherde with his ires, And spak with bidere tires: "Knav, wel thee bitide!"	heard; ears bitter tears good fortune upon you
970	Horn stondeth thee biside. 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 highdede aghen blive. The se bigan to throghe Under hire woghe.	hurried /back/ again quickly sea; tows wall
	The knave there gan adrinke; Rymenhild hit mightie ofthinke.	was drowned regret
980	The see him con ded throwe Under hire chambre wowe. Rymenhild undude the durepin Of the hus ther heo was in,	did cast him dead wall (<i>see note</i>) door pin (bolt) house where he
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.	
	Then he [Thurston] was made a-are [Horn's] own /Horn told him/ of, kin	news
995	Tho he was iknowe That Rymenhild was his oghe; Of his gode kenne The King of Sudenne, And hu he slogh in felde	how; killed
	That his fader quelde, And seide, "King the wise, Yeld me mi servise.	<i>The one who killed</i>
1000	Rymenhild help me winne, That thu noght ne linne: And I schal do to spuse Thi doghter wel to huse:	Repay me
1005	Heo schal to spuse have	may you not fail me bring about the marriage of <i>i.e.</i> , into a good family for a husband

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	writes
	Into Yrlonde	<i>Ireland</i>
	After knighting 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 Westermesse.	
	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 schip 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 palmer he thar mette	<i>pilgrim</i>
	And faire hine grette:	<i>greeted him</i>
	"Palmer, 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 Rymenbild:	

King Horn

- 1045 Ne mighte heo adrighe
That heo ne weop with ighe.
Heo sede that heo nolde
Ben ispuised with golde.
Heo hadde on husbonde
1050 Thegh he were ut of londe,
And in strong halle,
Bithinne castel walle,
Ther I was atte yate,
Nolde hi me in late.
- 1055 Modi ihote hadde
To bure that me hire ladden:
Away I gan glide:
That deol I nolde abide.
The bride wepeth sore,
- 1060 And that is muche deole."
- Quath Horn, "So Crist me rede,
We schulle chaungi wede.
Have her clothes myne
And tak me thi sclavyne,
- 1065 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:
- 1070 That nere him nocht lothe.
Horn tok burdon and scrippe
And wrong his lippe.
He makede him a ful chere,
And al bicolmede his swere.
- 1075 He makede him unbicomelich
Hes he nas nevremore ilich.
He com to the gateward,
That him answerede hard:
Horn bad undo softe
- 1080 Mani tyme and ofte;
Ne mighte he awynne
That he come therinne.
Horn gan to the yate turne
- avoid
wept; eyes
wedded; gold [ring]
one
Even if
Within
at the gate
they; let
commanded
To a chamber; men led her
I struck away
sorrow; endure
- As Christ commands me*
exchange clothing
here
give; cloak
- So that; regret*
lay down
back
(Horn's)
were not displeasing to him
staff; bag
twisted
foul appearance
dirtyed; neck
ugly
- As; never before like that*
gatekeeper (porter)
said no
ordered; quietly
- succeed*
gate

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 tobroke,	cracked
	And suthem com in atte gate.	afterwards
	He sette him wel loghe	low
1090	In beggeres rowe;	beggars' row (see note)
	He lokede him abate	around him
	With his colmie snuse;	dirty nose
	He segh Rymenchild sitte	saw
	Ase heo were of witte,	out of her mind
1095	Sore wepinge and yerme;	deeply
	Ne mighte 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, na thu ert wel longe.	now; slow [in coming]
	Rymenchild thu me toke	entrusted
1110	That I scholde loke;	look after [her]
	Ich habbe ikept hure evre;	now or
	Corn nu other nevre:	longer; her
	I ne may no leng hure kepe.	sorrow
	For soreghe nu I wepe."	off
1015	Rymenchild ros of benche,	Wine; pour
	Wyn for to schenche,	meal; ball
	After mete in sale.	
	Bothe wyn and ale.	
	On horn heo bar arhonde,	drinking horn; in her hand
1020	So laghe was in londe.	As was the law (custom)
	Knightes and squier	
	Alle drocken of the ber,	beer

King Horn

- Bute Horn alone
Nadde therof no mone.
- 1125 Horn sat upon the grunde;
Him thoughte he was ibunde.
He sede, "Quen so hende,
To meward thu wende;
Thu yef us with the furste;
The beggeres booth ofthurste."
- 1130 Hure horn heo leide adun,
And fulde him of a brun
His bolle of a galun;
For heo wende he were a glotoun.
- 1135 Heo sede, "Have this cuppe,
And this thing theruppe.
Ne sagh ich nevre, so ich wene,
Beggere that were so kene."
Horn tok hit his ifere
- 1140 And sede, "Quen so dere,
Wyn nelle ich muche ne lite
But of cuppe white.
Thu wenest I beo a beggere,
And ich am a fissere,
- 1145 Wel feor icome by este
For fissen at thi feste.
Mi net lith her bi honde,
Bi a wel fair stronde.
Hit hath ilieie there
- 1150 Fulle seve yere.
Ich am icome to loke
Ef eni fiss hit toke.
Ich am icome to fissee:
Dodynke null I of dyssh:
- 1155 Drink to Heen of horne.
Feor ich am joent."
Rymenhild him gan bihelde;
Hire heorte bigan to chelde.
Ne knew heo nocht his fissing.
- 1160 Ne Horn hymselfe nothing.
Ac wunder hire gan thinke
- had no share
ground
tied up [in emotion]
Queen; gracious
Towards me turn
give, first
very thirsty
Her vessel she laid down
filled; from a brown bowl
bowl; gallon
believed; glutton
- believe
bold
to his companion
- desire
- You think
But; fisherman
Very far; east
- lies here at hand
share
lain
- seven
- will not from
- Far, traveled
- heart; grow old
understood
- did not recognize him
But strange she began to

King Horn

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

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

King Horn

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

King Horn

- "Athulf," heo sede, "be blithe
 And to Horn thu go wel swithe.
 He is under wade boghe
 1240 And with him knightes inoghe."
 Athulf bigan to springe
 For the tithinge.
 After Horn he amde 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
 Buthute his twelf ferin
 1255 And the Kang Aylmire,
 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 tunge.
 Hi sworen othes holde,
 That nev're ne scholde
 Horn nev're 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 tunge
 That gle that ther was sunge.
 Horn sat on chaere,
 And bad hem alle there.
 1275 "King," he sede, "tha 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 mad the beste.
 I ne seie hit for no blame:
 Horn is mi name.
 Thu me to knight hove,
 And knighthod have proved
 To thee, king, men seide
 That I thee bitraide;
 Thu makedest me fleme,
 And thi lond to reme;
 1280 That I nevre ne thoghte,
 Bi Rymenbild for to ligge,
 And that I withsegge.
 Ne schal ich hit beginne,
 1285 Thu wendest that I wroghte
 That I nevre ne thoghte,
 Bi Rymenbild for to ligge,
 And that I withsegge.
 Ne schal ich hit beginne,
 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 Rymenbilde
 1300 Ligge bi the kinge." Lie
 Horn gan to schupe drage
 With his Irisse felaghes,
 Athulf with him, his brother:
 Nolde he non other.
 1305 That schup bigan to crude;
 The wind him bleu lude;
 Bithinne daies five
 That schup gan arive
 Abute middelnighe.
 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
 down
 crown
 went to the ship
 Irish men
 he wanted no other
 ship; make its way
 loudly
 Withn
 went immediately
 went
 skilled

King Horn

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

King Horn

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

King Horn

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

King Horn

- So a man that hadde rape.
 "Athulf," he sede, "felaghe,
 To schupe we mote draghe.
 1435 Fikenhild me hath idon under
 And Rymenhild to do wunder.
 Crist, for his wundes five,
 Tonight me thader drive."
 Hoen gan to schupe ride,
 1440 His feren him biside.
 Fikenhild, or the dai gan springe,
 Al right he ferde to the kinge,
 After Rymenhild the brighte.
 To wedden hure bi nighte.
 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,
 1450 Tofore the sunne upriste,
 His schap stod under ture
 At Rymenhilde bure.
 Rymenhild, litel weneth heo
 That Horn thanne alive beo.
 1455 The castel thei nt knewe,
 For he was so nywe.
 Hoen fond sittinde Arnoldin,
 That was Athulfs cosin,
 That ther was in that tide,
 1460 Horn for tabode.
 "Horn knight," he sede, "kinges sone,
 Wel beo thu to londe icome.
 Today hath ywedde Fikenhild
 Thi swete lemman Rymenhild.
 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
 1470 Noman with none ginne.
- Like a man in a hurry
 comrade
 ship; must go
 betrayed
 distress*
- there*
- companions beside him
 before; began
 immediately; went*
- wed
 led; at night
 new fortress
 festivities
 Before
 knew*
- Before; rose
 ship; tower
 chamber
 realizes
 way alive*
- it was so new [to them]
 found sitting
 Who; came in
 time
 to wait for*
- come*
- deceived; twice
 had built*
- device*

King Horn

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| | Horn, na Crist thee wisse,
Of Rymenhild that thu ne misse." | guide
lose |
| | Horn cuthe al the liste
That eni man of wiste. | knew; cunning
knew of |
| 1475 | Harpe he gan schewe,
And tok felawes fewe,
Of knigthes swithe snelle
That schrude hem at wille. ¹ | bring out
bold |
| | Hi yeden bi the gravel | went; beach |
| 1480 | Toward the castel.
Hi gunne murie singe
And makede here gleowinge. | merry
harping
hear |
| | Rymenhild hit gan ihere
And axede what hi were. | asked who they were |
| 1485 | Hi sede hi weren harpurs
And sume were gigours.
He dode 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 thoughte on Rymenhilde: | hit |
| | He yede up to borde | went; table |
| 1500 | With gode swendes orde:
Fikenhildes crune
Ther he fulde adune,
And al his men a rowe, | edge
crown (head)
tumbled
in order |
| | Hi dode adun throwe. | struck down |
| 1505 | Whanne hi weren aslaghe
Fikenhild hi dode todraghe. | killed
tear apart |

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

King Horn

- Horn makede Arnoldin thare
 King after King Aylmarr
 Of al Westernesse
 1510 For his meoknesse. *meekness*
 The king and his homage
 Yeven Arnoldin trewage. *suzals*
 Horn tok Rymenhild bi the honde
 And ladde hare to the stronde, *shore*
 1515 And ladde with him Athelbrus,
 The gode stward of his hus.
 The se began 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: *favor*
 He yaf alle the knighthes ore
 For Horn knighthes 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 dide Athulf child *caused Athulf the knight to*
 1530 Wedden made Reynild. *family*
 Horn com to Suddenne
 Among al his kenne;
 Rymenhild he makede his queene;
 So hit mighte wel beon. *grieve for*
 1535 Al folk hem mighte rew^e
 That loveden hem so trew^e: *Now, they*
 Nu ben hi bothe dede —
 Crist to hevene hem lede! *Here*
 Her endeth the tale of Horn *ugly*
 1540 That fair was and noght unorn.
 Make we us glade evre among,
 For thus him endeth Hornes song.
 Jesus, that is of hevene king,
 Yeve us alle His swete blessing. *among us*
 Amen. *Horn's song* *give*

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: *she*. L: *ick*. H: *ychulle*. There are irregularities in the use of the first-person pronoun. Elsewhere in C it appears as *ich*, but more often as *she*. 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.

King Horn

- 10 The description of Hoen 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 Hamptow* (line 2675), and *Ipolomadon* (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 of ffliene 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: *fokenhold*; H: *ffykerylld*. 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 *Saruzins.* 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: *isoghe*. 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 be shipes bord
Sone at be firste word
And alle hise feren
Dar 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 *flowen* 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 Subdene as in *Beowulf*.

- 152 *Jesu Cristes.* C: *Jhesucristes*; L: *Ihesu crister*; 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 *Weil bruc thi 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 *fandling.* 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 be harpe.* H: *Ant toggen of be harp.* Allen: *To nachen 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 kerfe, / And of the cape 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 feire.* McKnight: *In his feiren.*
- 256 *were wild.* C: *wene 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 *were 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*, *Beves 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 *Mirror 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 ispread 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 thraille.* 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 Aylbris & stuard*. L reads *steward*. H: *And beryt houre steward*.
- 458 *With loveliche speche*. Allen notes that this reading "does not make sense since Rymenild is begging Athelbrus (through Horn) to make a persuasive appeal to her father to knight her lover." Allen prefers *liveliche*, 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 Rymenild'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 my nowne*. H: *Ant be myn oper*. Allen: *And after wurfe*. 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 be me stondeþ the more rape*. H: *Ober wyþ hymmon forewart make*. L: *Perfore me have ich be forsake*. Allen: *me stont forth ruke*. *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*, *Ipomador*, 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., *Ipomador* 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 floweren*. 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 weste.* H: *Ant to boure wes y gone.* Allen: *Horn weste.* 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 *Saint Stevne.* 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 *Stare.* 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 Rymenild's previous faint (p. 301).
- 761–62 *The whyght hōw gae stonde, / And drof til Hirleonde*. 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 *Bore of the King Murry, / That wes swithe sturdy*. These two lines are supplied by H

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

*And seyde, "kyng, so þou have rest,
Clep now forþ ofl þi beste.
And sle we þysse hounden,
Here we henne founden."
þe houndes hye of laucte,
An strokes hye þere kante.
Faste aȝen hye stode,
Aȝen dantes gode.
Help nauȝt here wonder,
Cubert hem broute al hondur.*

- 894 *Ne scathede wer.* C: *Ne scapede þer.* L: *þer nas buse few slawe.* Allen: *Ne schafed
bute fewe.*

- 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 þrofhe / Under hire woje.* 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 Edwina. 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.

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- 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: *biesce.* L: *by weste.* H: *by wester.* F&H: *bi este.* Allen: *biesce.* 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 commanded 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: *bridale suete.* Allen: *bridale swete.*

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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 britsh, / Brighter than gold ageyns the lith* (lines 2140-41).
- 1329 *Ich serve aghenes my wille.* C: *thc 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: *Put 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 *hurne* 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: *gfulde.* 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 gfulde.* L: *he hadde woned.* H: *couth er fonde.* Allen: *he wonung fonde.*
- 1529 *Ther he dide 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 Geoffroi 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 Geoffroi 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 Hoen's beauty is constantly remarked upon and celebrated, so too is Havelok's extraordinary physique and prowess.¹

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.²

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

¹ Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 36.

² 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" *Neophilologische 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. xliii).

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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 Comitatus Grimeby*; all three figures are identified by name. That the seal stands as an emblem of coeporate 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/Humber) 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 Brusne: *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. lxx.

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elements well into the late Middle Ages.¹¹

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."¹²¹³ 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 *Grimnir* 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.¹⁴

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.¹⁵ 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

¹¹ 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).

¹² 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.

¹³ Edmund Reiss, "*Havelok the Dane* and Norse Mythology," *Modern Language Quarterly* 27 (1966), 115–24.

¹⁴ 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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	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 riden on ani stede.	<i>might ride; steed</i>
	That ye mowen now yhere,	<i>may; hear</i>
	And the tale you mowen yhere,	<i>may learn</i>
	At the biginng of ure tale,	<i>our</i>
	Fil me a cuppe of ful god ale;	
15	And wile drunken, 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, withthat it mote ben so.	<i>in order that; might</i>
20	Benedicamus Domino!	<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 riden 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, deeng and thayn,	<i>hassal; retainer</i>
	Knict, bondeman, and swain,	<i>Knight; peasant; commoner</i>

Havelok the Dane

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

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 clerc or were it knieth, He dede hem sone to haven rieth; And wo dide widuen wrong.	loyal a help Whoever; harm knight whoever; widow
80	Were he nevre knieth so strong, That he ne made him sone kesten In feteres and ful faste festien; And wo so dide maydne shame Of hire bodi or beouth in blame,	cast fasten tightly
85	Bute it were bi hire wille, He made him sone of limes spille. He was the beste knith at nede That hevere miethe riden on stede, Or wepne wagge or folc ut lede;	brought Unless lose limbs
90	Of knith ne havede he nevere drede, That he ne sprong forth so sparke of glede, And lete him knawe of hise hand dede, Hu he couthe with wepne spede; And other he refte him hors or wede,	ever wield; company spark from coal (see note)
95	Or made him sone handes spede And "Louerd, merc!" loude grede. He was large and no wieth gnede. Havede he non so god brede Ne on his boord non so god shrede,	clothing Lord; cried generous; not at all stingy good shred (morsel)
100	That he ne wolde thorwit fede Poure that on fote yede, Fortho haven of Him the mede That for us wolde on Rode blede — Crist, that al kan wisse and rede	The poor who; went reward Cross guide; advise
105	That evere woneth in any thede.	dwell; country
	The king was hoten Athelwold. Of word, of wepne, he was bold. In Engeland was nevre knieth That besere held the lond to rieth.	called justly

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.
- 115 That he wel wiste and underfong
That his deth was comen him on
And saidie, "Crist, wat shal I don?
Louerd, wat shal me to rede?
I wot ful wel ich have mi mede.
- 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:
- 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 couthe welde,
- 130 And don hem of thar hire were quemme,
And hire bodi couthe yeme,
Ne wolde me nevere iveau like,
Ne though ich were in heveneriche."
- Quanne he havede this pleinte maked,
Therafter stronglike quaked.
He sende writes sone onon
After his erles everechon;
And after hisse baruns, riche and poure,
- 135 Fro Rokesburw al into Dovere,
That he shulden comen swithe
Til him, that was ful unblithe,
To that stede ther he lay
In harde bondes nicth and day.
- 140 He was so faste wit yvel fest
That he ne mouthe haven no rest,
He ne mouthe no mete hete,
Ne he ne mouchte no lythe gete,
- no heir
Except for; very fair
did not know how to
Walk; talk
violent illness
knew; realized
- what
what do You advise
reward
How
much
thoughts
I think not of myself
wonder
- knew how to
- to a proper age
rule
pleasing
take care of
Neither; not please me
heaven's realm
- When; made complaint
strongly [he]
writes (notices); very soon
For; everyone
- Roxburgh
they; quickly
To; ill
place where
restraints; night
fastened; fastenings
might not
food eat
comfort

Havelok the Dane

- Ne non of his ivel that coathe red —
Of him ne was nouth buten ded. *almost dead*
- 150 Alle that the writes herden
Sorful and sori til him ferden;
He wrungen hondes and wepen sore
And yerne preyden Cristes hore —
That He wolde turnen him *Everyone who
went to him
They; wept bitterly
earnestly; ore (grace)*
- 155 Ut of that yvel that was so grim.
Thanne he weren comen alle
Befor the king into the halle,
At Winchestree ther he lay, *they*
"Welcome," he sayde, "be ye ay!" *where he
always*
- 160 Ful michel thank kan I you
That ye aren comen to me now." *Very much*
- Quanne he weren alle set,
And the king aveden igret, *When they
had greeted*
He gretan and gouleden and gouven hem ille, *They mourned; howled; lamented*
- 165 And he bad hem alle been stille
And seyde that greting helpeth nouth,
"For al to dede am ich brouth.
Bute now ye sen that I shal deye, *quiet*
- Now ich wille you alle preye *weeping; not
death; brought*
- 170 Of mi douther, that shal be
Yure levedi after me,
Wo may yemen hire so longe,
Bothen hire and Engelonde, *beseech*
- Til that she be wman of helde *For my daughter
(sovereign) lady*
- 175 And that she mowe hir yemen and welde?" *Who; protect*
- He answereden and seyden anon,
Bi Crist and bi Seint Jon,
That th erl Godrigh of Conwayle *grown woman*
- Was trewe man wituten faile, *take care of and help*
- 180 Wis man of red, wis man of dede,
And men haveden of him mikel drede — *They; quickly*
- "He may hire altherbest yeme,
Til that she mowe wel ben quene." *advice*
- great fear
best protect

Havelok the Dane

	The king was payed of that rede.	pleased with; advice <i>(see note)</i>
185	A wol fair cloth bringen he dede, And thereon leyde the messebok, The caliz, and the pateyn ok, The corporaus, the messe-gere. Theron he garte the erl swere	misal <i>chalice; paten also</i>
190	That he sholde yemen hire wel, Withuten lac, wituten tel, Til that she were twelf winter hold And of speche were bold, And that she couthe of curteysye,	communion cloth; implements of Mass <i>made</i>
195	Gon and speken of lovedrurye, And til that she loven mathe Wom so hire to gode thouste; And that he shulde hire yeve The beste man that micthe live —	courtship <i>might</i>
200	The beste, fayreste, the strongest ok; That dede he him sweren on the bok, And thanne shulde be Engelond Al bitechen into hire hond.	Whomsoever; seemed give noblest <i>strongest also</i>
		<i>entrust</i>
205	Quarne that was sworn on his wise, The king dede the mayden arise, And the erl hire bitaucte And al the lond he evere awete — Engelonde, everi del —	When; in this way compelled entrusted her to owned part 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, And ofte dede him soee swinge	<i>might do</i> earnestly; grace <i>himself received the sacrament</i>
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 And sone gaf it everil del.	<i>I think, live</i> beat himself hard painfully strike himself from; flesh so soft bequest (will) wry
220	Wan it was goven, ne micte men finde	<i>affirmed</i> given

Havelok the Dane

- So mikel men micte him in windē,
Of his in arke ne in chiste,
In Engelond, that noman wiste;
For al was yoven, faire and wel,
That him was leved no cated.
- (see note)
coffer; chest
knew
disposed of
left; possession
- 225
- Thanne he havede been ofte swngen,
Ofte shriuen and ofte dungen,
"In manus tuas, Louerde," he seyde,
Her that he the speche leyde,
To Jesu Crist bigan to calle
- beaten
confessed; beaten
Into your hands, Lord
Here (then at this moment); lay aside
- 230
- And deyede biform his heymen alle.
Than he was ded, there micte men se
The meste sorwe that micte be:
Ther was sobbing, siking, and soe,
Handes wringing and drawing bi hor.
- died; noblemen
When
greatest
sighing; grief
pulling out hair
wept very hard
were there
- 235
- Alle gretē 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
- Ladies; bower
When; somewhat relieved
they; wept
- 240
- And he haveden longe graten,
Belles deden he sone ringen,
Monkes and peestes messe singen;
And sauteres deden he manie reden,
That God self shulde his soule ledēn
- mass
psalters (psalm books)
- 245
- Into hevene biform his Sone,
And ther wituten hende wonē.
Than he was to the erthe brouth,
The riche erl ne foryat nouth
That he ne dede al Engelond
- [his soul] should dwell*
buried
forgot not
- 250
- 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:
- seize
he placed
trust in
he made to swear
they; good faith
- 255
- He yaf alle men that god thoucte,
Liven and deyen til that him moucte,
- whatever seemed good

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
- 270 And foeto haven alle at his cri,
At his wille, at his merci,
That non durste ben him ageyn —
Erl ne barun, knict ne sweyn.
Wishlike for soth was him wel
Sheriff; beadle; reeve
Peacekeepers; lances
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
in awe
afraid
As it; beast; prod
- 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;
grew into; alive
manners
worth
called
tear wept
- 285 For hire was mani a ter igroten.

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
290 Of Engelond, of al the rike;
Tho began 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 bond? | |
| | 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; | <i>I: given; too often</i> |
| 305 | Hic have yemed hire to softe. | <i>I: guarded</i> |
| | Shal it nouth ben als sho thenkes: | <i>it shall not be</i> |
| | Hope maketh fol man ofte blenkes. | <i>foolish; blind</i> |
| | Ich have a sone, a ful fayr knave; | |
| | He shal Engelond al have! | |
| 310 | He shal king, he shal ben sire, | <i>use; pale neck (see note)</i> |
| | So brouke I evere mi blake swire!" | <i>When treason, expressed</i> |
| | Hwan this trayson was al thouth, | |
| | 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 traytar 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 hit 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 forso 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 bondes!
And leve sho mote him yse
335 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 (Godric) see
gallows*
- Although; did no wrong
- Say we now forth in hure spelle!
In that time, so it bifelle,
- 340 Was in the lond of Denemark
A riche king and swythe stark.
The name of him was Birkabeyn;
He havede mani knict and sweyn;
He was fayr man and wict,
345 Of bodi he was the beste knieth
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.
- command an army
ride a horse
- as much as
daughters
as it happened
- 350 He havede a sone, douhtres two,
Swithe fayee, as fel it so.
He that wile non forbere,
Riche ne poure, king ne kaysere,
Deth him tok than he best wolde
355 Liven, but hyse dayes were fulde,
That he ne mouchte no more live,
For gold ne silver ne for no gyve.
- caesar
when
fulfilled (ended)
might not
gift
- Hwan he that wiste, rathe he sende
After preestes, fer an hende —
360 Chanousses gode and monkes bothe,
Him for to wisce and to rede,
Him for to hoslen an for to shrive,
Hwil his bodi were on live.
- When; knew, quickly
far and near
Canons
counsel; advice
confess; above
While; alive
- Hwan he was hosled and shrien,
365 His quiste maked and for him gyven,
Hise kniectes dede he alle site,
For thoru hem he wolde wite
- When; given the sacrament
bequest (will)
- through; know

Havelok the Dane

- 370 Hwo micte yeme his children yunge
 Til that he kouthen speken wit tung,
 Spoken and gangen, on horse ridden,
 Knicthes and sweynes by here siden.
 He spoken theroffe and chosen sone
 A riche man that under mone,
 Was the trewest, that he wende —
 Godard, the kinges owne frende —
 And seyden he mouethe hem best loke
 Yif that he hem undertoke,
 Til hise sone mouthe bere
 Helm on heved and leden ut here,
 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
 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,
 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 knicth.
 Thanne biteche him tho his ricth:
 Denemark and that ther til longes —
 Casteles and tunes, wodes and wonges."
- 375
- 380
- 385
- 390
- 395
- 400
- 405
- Who; might look after
 they knew how to
 walk
 attendants at their sides
- moon
 thought
 friend
- might bear
Helmet; head; command an army
 strong
- believed what
 laid hands
 entrust to
- property
 be of age
Except that; ware
 altar; vestments
- missal
 protect
 their kin; approved
- then his rights
 belongs to it
 towns; fields
- commanded; afterwards
- very sorrowfully
 died soon
- moon
 dark night
- Protect; hell's pain
- Godard stirt up and swor al that
 The king him bad, and sithen sat
 Bi the knicthes 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;

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,
Havelok, that was the eir,
Swanborow, his sister, Helfled, the other,
And in the castel dede he hem do,
Ther non ne micte hem comen to
Of here kyn, ther thei sped were.
Ther he gretten ofte sore
Bothe for hunger and for kold,
Or he weren thre winter hold.
Feblelike he gaf hem clothes;
He ne yaf a note of his othes —
He hem clothede riþ ne fedde,
Ne hem ne dede richelike bebedde.
Thanne Godard was sikerlike
Under God the mouse swike
That evre in erthe shaped was.
Withuten on, the wike Judas.
Have he the malisun today
Of alle that evre speken may —
Of patriarch and of pope,
And of prest with loken kope,
Of monekes and hermites bothe,
And of the leve Holi Rode
That God himselfe ran on blode!
Crist warise him with His mouth!
Warised writhe he of north and suth,
Offe alle men that speken kunne,
Of Crist that made mone and sunne!
Thanne he havede of al the lond
Al the folk tilled intil his hoond,
And alle haveden sworn him oth,
Riche and poure, lef and loth,
That he sholden hise wille freme
And that he shulde him nouth greme.
He thouthe a ful strong trechery,
- boy
heir
other
he had them placed
were kept
they wept; miserably
Before; three years old
wretched clothes
not
regal bedding
surely
greatest traitor
created
Except for; wicked
curves
patriarch
fastened cloak
beloved Holy Cross
bled upon
curse
Cursed be
can
Nevertheless he (Godard)
subsidied
dear; loathsome
carry out
not trouble
designed

Havelok the Dane

- 445 A trayson and a felony,
Of the children for to make —
The devel of helle him sone take!
- Against
- Hwan that was thouth, onon he ferde
To the tour ther he worn sperde,
Ther he greten for hunger and cold.
- 450 The knave, that was sumdel bold,
Kam him ageyn, on knees him sette,
And Godard ful feyre he ther grette.
And Godard seyde, "Wat is yw?
Hwi grete ye and goulens now?"
- 455 "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,
- 460 Halvendel that we moun ete —
Wo is us that we weren born!
Weilawei! nis it no korn
That men miscle maken of bred?
Us hungreth — we aren ney ded!"
- 465 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 sorri was that sely knave.
Mikel deed he mouthe have,
For at hise herte he saw a knaf
- 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
- Muck; might
- rob
boy who

Havelok the Dane

- He knelede bifor that Judas.
And seyde, "Louerd, mercy now!
Manrede, louerd, biddi you:
485 Al Denemark I wile you yeve,
To that forward thu late me live.
Here hi wile on boke swere
That nevremore ne shal I bere
Ayen thee, louerd, sheld ne spere.
490 Ne other wepne that may you dere.
Louerd, have merci of me!
Today I wile fro Denemark fle,
Ne nevermore comen agheyn!
Sweren I wole that Bircabein
495 Nevere yete me ne gat."
Hwan the devel herde that,
Sumdel bigan him for to rewe;
Withdraw the knif, that was lewe
Of the sels children blod.
500 Ther was miracle fair and god
That he the knave nouth ne sloa,
But for rewnesse him withdraw —
Of Avelok rewede him ful sore,
And thoucste he wolde that he ded were.
505 But on that he nouth wit his head
Ne drepe him nouth, that fale fend!
Thoucste he als he him bi stod,
Starinde als he were wod,
"Yif I late him lives go,
510 He micte me wirchen michel wo —
Orith ne get I neveremo;
He may me waiten for to slo.
And if he were brouct of live,
And mine children wolden thrive,
515 Louerdinges after me
Of al Denemark micten he be.
God it wite, he shal ben ded —
Wile I taken non other red!
I shal do casten him in the she,
520 Ther I wile that he drench be,
- Lord
Homage, I offer
give
On the condition; you let me live
I will
Against; shield
harm

fathered
[Godard] heard
Somewhat; have pity
warm
innocent
good
killed
pity; withdrew
Havelok
thought he [Godard] wished; were dead
would not with his [own] hand
kill; evil demon
stood by
Staring; crazy
alive
cause
Peace
kill
killed

Lore's
they
advice
order; sea
drowned

Havelok the Dane

- Abouten his hals an anker god,
Thad he ne flete in the flod."
Ther anon he dede sende
After a fishere that he wende
525 That wolde al his wille do,
And sone anon he seyde him to:
"Grim, thou wost thu art my thrall;
Wilte don my wille al
That I wile bidden thee?"
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,
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.
540 Tho was Havelok in ful strong pine —
Wiste he nevere her wat was wo!
Ihesu Crist, that makede go
The halte and the doumbe speken,
Havelok, thee of Godard wreke!
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,
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 —
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
neck; anchor
That; float
at once
fisherman; thought
know; servant
Will you
[I]f make you
property
Provided that
you tonight
When; moonlight
throw
While
pain
Knew he never before
lame; dumb
take revenge
When; tightly bound
then; wound (see note)
thrust
gag; rags; filthy
breathe
Wherever
When
What; villain told him he needed
drown
agreement; they
bag; big; pale
And; but
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 bishotes me." Guard
drown
enough; possessions
lord; promised
- 565 Hwan Dame Leve herde that,
Up she stirte and nouth ne sat,
And caste the knave so harde adoun
That he crakede ther his crouse
Ageyn a gret ston ther it lay.
Tho Havelok miscie ses, "Weilawei,
That evere was I kinges bern —
That him ne havede grip or em,
Leoun or wlf, wlvine or bere,
Or other best that wolde him dere!"
So lay that child to middel nieth,
That Grim bad Leve bringen lict,
For to don on his clothes:
"Ne thenkestu nowt of mine othes
570 That ich have mi louerd sworen?
Ne wile I nouth be foeroren.
I shal beren him so the se —
Thou wost that hoves me —
And I shal drenchen him therinne;
Ris up swithe an go thu binne,
575 And blow the fir and lith a kandel."
Als she shulde hise clothes handel
On for to don and blawe the fir,
She saw therinne a lith ful shir,
Al so brith so it were day.
580 Aboute the knave ther he lay.
Of hise mouth it stod a stem
Als it were a sunnebem;
Al so lith was it therinne
585 So ther brenden cerges inne.
"Jesu Crist!" wat Dame Leve,
"Hwat is that lith in see cleve?" When
jumped; did not sit
down
Alas
son
vulture; eagle
Lion; wolf; she-wolf; bear
beast; harm
until midnight
When; light
put on
Are not you thinking
sworn to my lord
disgraced
know; behoves
at once; beside
stroke; fire; light
bright
as if
Surrounding
a ray emerged
sunbeam
Just as light
As if; burned candles
exclaimed
our hut

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 hisse rith shuldre a kymmerk,
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 Engelund.
He shal do Godard ful wo;
He shal him hangen or quik flo,
Or he shal him al quic grave.
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!" next to me
620 Louerd, we aren bothe thine —
Thine cherles, thine hine.
Louerd, we sholen thee wel fede
Til that thu cone ridden on stede,
Til that thu cone ful wel bere
625 Helm on heved, shield and spere.
He ne shall nevere wite, sikerlike,
Godard, that fale swike.
Thoru other man, louerd, than thoru thee
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."
Tho was Haveloc a blithe knave!
He sat him up and cravede beed,
635 And seide, "Ich am ney ded,
Hwat for hunger, wat for bondes

Havelok the Dane

- That thou 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,
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 sweereth:
'Ther God wile helpen, nouth ne dereth.'" God knows; fetch
tuck things
True
Where; nothing works injury
- 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,
655 For him hungrede swithe sore.
Thre dayes ther bisom, I wene,
Et he no mete — that was wel sene!
Hwan he havede eten and was fed,
Grim dede maken a ful fayr bed,
660 Unclosthede him and dede him therinne,
And seyde, "Slep, sone, with muchel winne!
Slep wel faste and dred thee nouth —
Fro sorwe to joie art tha brouth."
Sone so it was lith of day,
665 Grim it undertok the wey
To the wicke traitour Godard
That was of Denemarke a stiward
And saide, "Louerd, don ich have
That thou me bede of the knave:
670 He is drenched in the flod,
Abouten his hals an anker god —
He is witerlike ded.
Eteth he nevremore bred:
He lith drenched in the se.
- Heartily
Could; hide
ate; believe
before that time; believe
When
put
great joy
fear not
As soon as; light
wicked
overseer
neck
surely
He will never eat
lies

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

Havelok the Dane

- Therinne wantede nouth a nayl,
That evere he sholde therinne do.
was needed
put
- 715 Hwan he havedet greythed so,
Havelok the yunge he dede therinne,
Him and his wif, hisse sones thrinne,
And hise two doutsres that faire wore,
And sone dede he leyn in an ore,
had it prepared
put
three
daughters; were
began to steer
- 720 And drou him to the heye see,
There he math altherbeste fle.
Fro londe ween he bore a mile,
Ne were it nevere but ane hwile
That it ne bigan a wind to rise
headed for
best of all
they were
a short while
- 725 Out of the north men calleth "bise,"
And drof hem intil Engelond,
That al was sithen in his hond,
His, that Havelok was the name;
But or he havede michel shame,
(see note)
them
- 730 Michel sorwe and michel tene,
And yete he gat it al bidene;
Als ye shulen now forthward lere,
Yf that ye wilens thereto here.
later: his [Havelok's]
- But first: much
grief
completely
forthwith learn
- In Humber Grim bigan to lende,
In Lindeseye, rith at the north ende.
Ther sat his ship upon the sond;
But Grim it drou up to the lond;
And there he made a litel cote
To him and to hisse flote.
land
Lincolnshire
i.e., fishing boat
- 735 Bigan he there for to erthe,
A litel hus to maken of erthe,
So that he wel thore were
Of here herboru herborwed there.
And for that Grim that place aute,
The stede of Grim the name laute,
So that Grimesbi it calleth alle
That theroffe speken alle;
And so shulen men callen it ay,
Bitwene this and Domesday.
cottage
For: company
live
there
shelter: sheltered
owned
place: took its name
always
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 sturgeon and the qual,	<i>fisherman</i>
755	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>ned</i> <i>sturgeon; whale</i> <i>turbot; salmon</i> <i>seal; eel</i> <i>succeeded, very</i> <i>Cod; porpoise</i> <i>mackerel</i>
760	The butte, the schulle, the thornebake. Gode paniers dede he make. On til him and other thrinne Til hisc sones to beren fishe inne, Up o londe to sellie and fonge —	<i>flounder; plaice; skate</i> <i>baskets</i> <i>One for; three</i>
765	Forbar he neyther tun ne grōnge That he ne to yede with his ware. Kam he nevere horn hand-bare, That he ne brouacte bred and sowel In his shirte or in his cowel,	<i>On land; collect money</i> <i>Neglected; neither town nor farm</i> <i>wore</i> <i>empty-handed</i> <i>sauce</i> <i>hood</i>
770	In his poke benes and korn — Hise swink he havede he nowt forlorn. And hwan he took the grete lamprey. Ful wel he couthe the rithe wei To Lincolne, the gode boru;	<i>bag; grain</i> <i>work; fair</i> <i>knew</i> <i>town</i>
775	Ofte he yede it thoru and thora, Til he havede wol wel sold And therfore the penies told. Thanne he com thenne he were blithe, For hem he brouthe fele sithe	<i>traversed; through</i> <i>wool</i> <i>counted</i> <i>from there; happy</i> <i>many times</i>
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,	<i>Cakes; horn-shaped bread</i> <i>bags; flour; grain</i> <i>Ovens'</i> <i>lines [for fishing]</i> <i>for his nets</i>
785	In the se weren he ofte setes.	
	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.
 Havelok was war that Grim swank sore
 For his mete, and he lay at hom —
 Thouthe, "Ich am now no grom!
 Ich am wel waxen and wel may eten
 More than evere Grim may geten.
 Ich ete more, bi God on live.
 Than Grim an hise children five!
 It ne may nouth ben thus longe.
 Goddot! I wile with hem gange
 For to leren sum god to gete.
 Swinken ich wolde for my mete —
 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.
 God yelde him, ther I ne may,
 That haveth me fed to this day!
 Gladlike I wile the paniers bere —
 Ich woth ne shal it me nouth dere,
 They ther be inne a birthene gret
 Al so hevi als a neth.
 Shal ich nevere lengere dwelle —
 Tomorwen shal ich forth pelle."
- On the morwen, hwan it was day,
 He stirt up sone and nouth ne lay,
 And cast a panier on his bac,
 With fish giveded als a stac.
 Al so michel he bar him one,
 So he foure, bi mine mone!
 Wel he it bar and solde it wel;
 The silver he beouth the horn ilk del,
 Al that he therfore tok —
 Withheld he nouth a ferthinges nok.
 So yede he forth ilke day
 That he nevere at home lay —
 So wolde he his mestre lere.
 Bifel it so a strong dere
- OR
- 790 aware; worked hard
 stayed
 boy
 grown
- 795 for long
 God knows; go
 useful thing
 Work
- 800 stay; wrong
 reward; since
- 805 baskets
 know; harm
 burden
 as an ox
 stay here
 hurry forth
- 810 started early
 basket
 heaped like
- 815 At four men, on my word
- 820 every bit
 for it
 trimming of a farthing
 went; each
- 825 trade learn
 It happened; famine

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

Havelok the Dane

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

Havelok the Dane

- With the birthene of his croun.
The kok stod and on him low,
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!"
- "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;
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;
Ful wel kan ich dishes swilen,
And don al that ye evere wilien."
Quoth the kok, "Wile I no more!
Go thu yunder and sit thore,
And I shal yeve the ful fair bred,
And made the broys in the led.
Sit now doun and et ful yerne —
Datheit lwo the mete weorne!"
- Havelok sette him dum 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 batwen his bondes he bar it in,
Al him one, to the kichin.
Bad he non him water to fett,
Ne fro brigge to bere the mete.
- off, head
smiled
strong, enough
Will you stay with
invested
wages
said, dear
Ask; [for] wages
give
Firewood; fetch
kindle
brightly
split sticks
Eels; skin; their
wax
Said: I desire
there
broak; kettle
eagerly
Curse whoever denies you food
at once
As still as
Then; well made out
drew up
large tub
All by himself

Havelok the Dane

940	He bar the turves, he bar the star, The wode fro the brigge he bar, Al that evere shulden he nyttie, Al he drow and al he citte — Wolde he nevere haven rest	peat; star grass <i>wode</i> hauled; cut Wanted; to have Any more than if; beast
945	More than he were a best. 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.	<i>mest</i> <i>meek</i> Laughing; glad <i>mithe</i>
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,	hide child sport; play <i>wille</i> <i>their</i>
955	And with him leykeden here fille. Him loveden alle, stille and bolde, Kniectes, children, yunge and holde — Alle him loveden that him sownen, Bothen heye men and lowe.	<i>sky</i> old <i>saw</i>
960	Of him ful wide the weed 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 shrude	<i>far and wide</i> <i>great</i> <i>Except</i> nothing; wear
965	But a kovel ful unride, That was ful and swithe wicke; Was it nouth worth a fir-sticke. The cok began of him to rewe And bouthe him clothes al spannewe:	wretched cloak; cumbersome foul; very wretched stick of firewood take pity brand new
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,	socks; shoes made him put them on <i>hosed</i>
975	Non that evere moder bere; It was nevere man that yemede In kinneriche that so wel semede King or cayser for to be,	There; governed kingdom

Havelok the Dane

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

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

Havelok the Dane

- Shuldreden he ilc other and lowen.
Wolden he nomore to putting gange,
But seyde, "Thee dwellen her to longe!"
- 1060 This selkouth miithe 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,
- 1065 Hw he was wile, 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,
- 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 thouthe Godrich, "Thoru this knave
- 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
- 1080 That I shude his douther yeve
The hexte that miithe live,
The beste, the fairest, the strangest ok —
That gart he me sweren on the bok.
Hwere miithe I finden ani so hey,
- 1085 So Havelok is, or so sley?
Thou I southe hethen into Inde,
So fayr, so strong, ne miithe I finde.
Havelok is that ilke knave
That shal Goldeboru have!"
- 1090 This thouthe with trechery,
With traysoun, and wit felony;
For he wende that Havelok wore
Sam cherles sone and no more;
Ne shulde he haven of Engellond
- 1095 Onlepi foru in his hond
- They shoved each other; laughed
go
here too long
wonder; hidden
made known
threw
each of them
tall
manly (weight)
went the rumor
also*
- They, everywhere
tall
skillful
Through*
- desire
made me swear
mass implements*
- greatest (highest)
strongest also
made
Where; tall
skillful*
- searched from here to India*
- that very boy*
- (he) thought
with
surmised
ordinary person (peasant)*
- A single furrow; possession*

Havelok the Dane

- With hure 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 worse than Sathanas
 That Jhesu Crist in erthe stoc.
 Hanged woerde he on an hok!
- [frightful] heir
 very
 serf (slave)
For this reason; expected
- After Goldeboru sone he sende,
 1105 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.
- For; soon; sent*
courteous
had her brought
- He saide that he sholde hire yeve
 The fayreste man that mithe live.
 She answerede and saide anon,
 By Crist and bi Seint Johan,
 1110 That hire sholde noman wedde
- netheless; treacherous*
wed (give)
- 1115 Ne noman bringen hire to bedde
 But he were king or kinges eyr,
 Were he nevere man so fayr.
- Saint John*
- 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 —
- so angry*
suck
- rogue*
- 1125 Ne shalt thou non other louered have.
 Datheit that thee other yeve
 Everemore hwil I live!
 Tomoewe ye sholen ben weddieth,
 And maugre thin togidere beddeth.
- marry; cool's*
- 1130 Goldeboru gret and yaf hire ille;
 She wolde ben ded bi hire wille.
 On the morwen hwan day was speunten
- in spite of you*
wife

Havelok the Dane

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

Havelok the Dane

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

Havelok the Dane

- 1210 Hwan he wisten that he keme,
And maden joie swithe mikel —
Ne weren he nevere aycn hem fikel.
On knes ful fayre he hem setten
And Havelok swithe fayre gretten,
And seyden, "Welkome, louered dere!
1215 And welkome be thi fayre fere!
Blessed be that ilke theawe
That thou hire toke in Godes lawe!
Wel is hus we sen thee on live.
Thou mithe us bothe selle and yeve;
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,
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!
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,
1235 And to hondes water bringen;
He sholen bedden hire and thee,
For levedi wile we that she be."
Hwan he this joie haveden maked,
Sithen stikes broken and kraked,
1240 And the fir brouth on brenne;
Ne was ther spared gos ne henne,
Ne the hende ne the drake;
Mete he deden plentē make;
Ne wantede there no god mete,
1245 Wyn and ale deden be fete,
And hem made glade and blithe;
Wesseyl ledden he fele suthe.
- When they knew
against; disloyal
they set themselves
- dear lord
to your; companion
that very time
- Well is [it for] us; alive
may
- If
good things
oxen; sea
- great possessions
our; bequeathed
property
- Told; to entrust you
swine
- Remain; yours
- her
- our
- the commands
They shall
- bring water to her
- They; put to bed
- made
Afterwards
stoked
- goose; hen
duck
- i.e., They drank to their health often

Havelok the Dane

	On the nith als Goldeboru lay, Sory and sorwful was she ay.	Daring; night; as continually
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	thought; deceived <i>given [in marriage] out of her rank</i> One; light so bright bright; shining blaze of fire
1255	So it were a blaze of fir. She lokede noth and ek south, And saw it comen ut of his mouth That lay bi hire in the bed. No ferlike thou she were adred!	north
1260	Thouthe she, "What may this bimene? He beth heyman yet, als I wene: He beth heyman er he be ded!" On hisse shuldre, of gold red	wonder that; afraid mean nobleman; believe
	She saw a swithe noble croiz;	shoulders
1265	Of an angel she herde a voyz:	cross voice
	"Goldeboru, lat thi sorwe be! For Havelok, that haveth spuset thee, He, kinges sone and kinges eyr, That bikenneth that croiz so fayr	set aside married
1270	It bikenneth more — that he shal Denemark haven and Englund al. He shal ben king strong and stark, Of Engelond and Denemark —	betokens means
	That shal thu wit thin eyne seen,	eyes
1275	And tho shalt quen and levedi ben!"	lady
	Thanne she havede herd the stevenc Of the angel uth of hevene, She was so fele sithes blithe	When; voice
	That she ne mithe hire joie mythe,	so many times over glad
1280	But Havelok sone anon she kiste, And he slep and nouth ne wiste Hwat that aungel havede seyd. Of his slep anon he beayd,	might not; hide knew <i>out of; started</i>

Havelok the Dane

- And seide, "Lemman, slepes thou?
1285 A selkuth drem dremede me now —
- Herkne now what me haveth met.
Me thouthe I was in Denemark set,
But on on the moscie hil
That evere yete cam I til.
- 1290 It was so hey that I wel mouthe
Al the wurd se, als me thouthe.
Als I sat upon that lowe
I bigan Denemark for to awe,
The borwes and the castles stronge;
- 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 hem for to have,
- 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.
- 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;
- 1310 And that ich com til Engelond —
Al closede it intil min hond,
And, Goldeborw, I gaf thee.
Deus! lemman, what may this be?"
Sho answereerde and seyde sone:
- 1315 "Jesa Crist, that made mone,
Thine dremes turme to joye . . .
That wite thu that sittes in trone!
Ne non strong, king ne caysere
So thou shalt be, so thou shalt bere
- 1320 In Engelond corune yet.
Denemark shal knele to thi fet:
- Beloved
wondrous dream; just now
- Listen; dreamed
- one of the tallest hills
to
high
world
- As; hill
to possess
towns
- embraced; once
i.e., my long body
- Towards
Everyone who
clung
- I dreamed also
fled
- alive
Except serfs; their
- Enclosed
(England)
- God; my dear
She; quickly
moon
(see note)
throne
caesar
for; wear
crown

Havelok the Dane

- Alle the castles that aren therinne
 Shaltou, lemman, ful wel winne.
 I woth so wel so ich it sowe,
 To thee shole comen heye and lowe,
 And alle that in Denemark wone —
 Em and brother, fader and sone,
 Erl and baroun, dreng and thayn,
 Knightes and burgeys and sweyn —
 And mad king heyelike and wel.
 Denemark shal be thin evere ilc del —
 Have thou nouth theroffe douth,
 Nouth the worth of one nouthe;
 Theroffe withinne the firste yer
 Shalt thou ben king of evere il del.
 But do now als I wile rathe:
 Nim in wit lithe to Denemark bathe,
 And do thou nouth on frest this fare —
 Lith and selthe felawes are.
 For shal ich nevere blithe be
 Til I with eyen Denemark se,
 For ich woth that al the lond
 Shalt thou haven in thin hond.
 Prey Grimes sones alle thre,
 That he wenden forth with the;
 I wot he wilun the nouth weyne —
 With the wende shulen he yeme,
 For he loven thee hertelike.
 Thou maght til he aren quike,
 Hwore-so he o worde aren;
 There ship thou do hem swihe yaren,
 And loke that thou dwelle nouth —
 Dwelling haveth ofte scathe wrouth."
- Hwan Havelok herde that she radde,
 Sone it was day, sone he him cladde,
 And sone to the kirke yede
 Or he dide any other dede,
 And bifor the Rode bigan falle,
 "Croz" and "Crist" bi to kalle,

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 | who governs
mercy
avenge, enemy
eyes kill |
| 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. | deprived
Commanded
great injustice
harm
mistreated; in any way
<i>[she]</i> has
driven; beg
pain lie |
| 1370 | He hath mi lond with mikel unrih,
With michel wrong, with mikel plith,
For I ne misdede him nevere nouth,
And haved me to sorwe breouth.
He haveth me do mi mete to thigge, | / |
| 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, | drowned
lost |
| 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 — | holds
right
know |
| 1385 | Jesu Crist, thou wost it wel!" | / |
| 1390 | Thanne he havede his bede seyd,
His offrende on the aster leyd,
His leve at Jhesu Crist he tok,
And at his swete moder ok,
And at the Croiz that he bisorm lay; | prayer
offering; altar
took his leave
<i>i.e.</i> , the Virgin Mary
Cross
weeping |
| 1395 | Sithen yede sore grotinde awey.

Hwan he com hom, he wore yare,
Grimes sones, for to fare
Into the se, fishes to gete,
That Havelok mithe wel of etc.
But Avelok thoughte al another: | they were ready
to go
something else |

Havelok the Dane

- First he kalde the heldeste brother,
Roberd the Rede, bi his name,
Wiliam Wenduth and Huwe Raven,
1400 Grimes sonnes alle thre — called, eldest
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 —
1405 Denmark was al in his hond
The day that he was quik and ded.
But thanne havede he wicke red,
That he me and Denmark al
And mine sistres bitawte a theal;
1410 A develes lime he hus bitawhite,
And al his lond and al hisse authe,
For I saw that fule fend
Mine sistres slo with hise hend:
First he shar a two here throtes,
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
1420 Unto the se and drenchen me,
And wolde taken on him the sinne.
But Grim was wis and swithe hende —
Wolde he nouth his soule shende;
Levere was him to be forsworen
1425 Than drenchen me and ben forlorn.
But sone began he foeto fle
Fro Denmark for to berthen me.
For yif ich havede ther ben funden,
Havede he ben slayn or harde bunden,
1430 And heye ben hanged on a tre —
Havede go for him gold ne fe.
Forthi fro Denmark hidre he fledde,
And me ful fayre and ful wel fedde,
So that unto this day
1435 Have ich ben fed and fostred ay.
- said: Listen
Gentlemen
Danish
alive
advice
entrusted to a servant
limb (i.e., a villain); entrusted us
possessions
foul fiend
cut in two their
then [chopped] them into small pieces
[he] ordered
Solemnly
in [it]
skillful
harm
Preferable; falsely sworn
drawn, lost
protect
if; found
rightly bound
Therefore
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; Elk 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 farem 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.	in hope of success shrewd who; gave reward at a high price
1640	That sholen ye foethward ful wel heren, Yif that ye wile the storie heren.	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.	bekeld broad

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 1650 | <p>"Deus!" hwat Ubbe, "Qui se 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 —
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>God, said; Why; knight
know; very powerful</i></p> <p><i>Helmet; head
buy; goods (i.e., be a merchant)
get along</i></p> <p><i>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 —
Shal hire no man shame bede.
Bi the fey that I owe to thee,
Ther of shal I me self borw be."</p> | <p><i>as much as your life
fear
offer
faith
myself, pledge</i></p> |
| 1670 | <p>Havelok herde that he bad,
And thow was he ful sore drad
With him to ete, for hisse wif;
For him wore levere that his lif
Him wore reft, than she in blame
Felle or lauthe ani shame.
Hwanne he havede his wille yat,</p> | <p><i>what he offered
afraid
because of</i></p> |
| 1675 | <p>The stode 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:
"Loke that ye comen bethe,
For ich it wile and ich it rede."</p> | <p><i>experienced any
assented
horse; sat on</i></p> <p><i>(went) forth away
went
so that
both
I; want; advise</i></p> |
| 1680 | <p>Havelok ne durste, the he were adrad,
Nouth withsitten that Ubbe bad.
His wif he dide with him ledc —
Unto the heye curt he yede,
Roberd hire ledde, that was red,</p> | <p><i>though he were frightened
oppose what; bade</i></p> <p><i>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.
 1690 William 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,
 1695 Bisoren Ubbe and his men alle,
 Ubbe sterte hem ageyn.
 And mani a knith and mani a sweyn,
 Hem for to se and for to shewe.
 Tho stod Havelok als a lowe
 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;
 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 Denemarke that him thouthe
 That he so mikel love mouthe,
 1710 More he lovede Havelok one
 Than al Denemarke, bi mine wone.
 Loke now, hw God helpen kan
 O mani wise wif and man!
- Hwan it was comen time to ete,
 1715 Hisse 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.
 1720 In al Denemarke is wimman non
 So fayr so sche, by Seint Johan."
 Thanne were set and bord leyd,
 And the beneyson was seyd,
 Bisorn hem com the besse mete
- would have suffered death
 laid an evil hand on her
 brave
i.e., has good retainers
 went towards them
 inspect
 Then; hill
 those; were
 head
 courageous
 turn
 just as much as
 might /have/
 only
 on my word
 many /a/
 fetch inside
 to her; in jest
 together
 Who; as a flower
 no woman
 as she
 table
 blessing

Havelok the Dane

- 1725 That king or cayser wolde etc:
 Kranes, swannes, veneyson,
 Lax, lampreys, and god sturgun,
 Pyment to drinke and god claré —
 Win hwit and red, ful god plenté —
- 1730 Was ther inne no page so lite
 That evere wolde ale bite.
 Of the mete forto telle
 Ne of the win biddé I nouȝt dwelle;
 That is the storie for to lenge —
- 1735 It wolde anuye this fayre genge.
 But hwan he haveden the kilthing deyled
 And fele sithe haveden wosceyld,
 With gode drinkes seten longe,
 And it was time for to gonge.
- 1740 Elk man to ther he cam fro,
 Thouthe Ubbe, "If I late hem go,
 Thus one fourre, withuten mo,
 So mote ich brouke finger or to,
 For this wimman bes mikel wo!
- 1745 For hire shal men hire louend slo." He tok sone knithes ten,
 And wel sixti other men
 Wit gode bowes and with gleives,
 And sende hem unto the greyses,
- 1750 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,
 And wel do wayten al the nith
- 1755 Til the other day that it were lith.
 Bernard was trewe and swithe with,
 In al the borw ne was no knith
 That betere couthe on stede riden,
 Helm on heved ne swerd bi side.
- 1760 Havelok he gladlike understod
 With mikel love and herte god,
 And dide greythe a super riche
 Al so he was no with chinche
- emperor; caesar
 Cranes, swans, venison
 Salmon; good sturgeon
 claret
 Wine white
 There was; little
 request
 prolong
 annoy; company
 each; tippling shared
 toasted
 Each
 let; go
 four alone
 use; see
 woman; there will be much
 their lords
 spears
 (see note)
 as
 protect
 keep watch
 next; when; light
 powerfully strong
 prepare a sumptuous supper
 not a bit stingy

Havelok the Dane

	To his bihove evenil del,	taste
1765	That he mithe supe swithe wel.	eat
	Al so he seten and sholde soupe,	
	So comes a ladde in a joupe,	loose jacket
	And with him sixti other stronge	strong men
	With swerdes drawen and knives longe,	
1770	likan in hande a ful god gleive,	Each one; sword
	And seyde, "Undo, Bernard the greyye!	night watchman
	Undo swithe and lat us in,	
	Or thu art ded, bi Seint Austin!"	Saint Augustine
	Bernard stirt up, that was ful big,	who
1775	And caste a brinic upon his rig,	coat of mail; back
	And grop an ax that was ful god —	grabbed
	Lep to the dore so he wore wod,	as if he were crazy
	And seyde, "Hwat are ye, that ar ther-oute,	out there
	That thus biginnen for to stroute?	make a ruckus
1780	Goth henne swithe, fule theves,	Go hence
	For, bi the Louerd that man on leves,	believes
	Shol ich casten the dore open,	Should I
	Summe of you shal ich drepen,	kill
	And the othre shal ich kesten	others; cast
1785	In feteres and ful faste festen!	bind up
	"Hwat have ye seid?" quoth a ladde,	
	"Wenestu that we ben adradde?	Do you think; afraid
	We shole at this dore gonge	door go
	Maugre thin, carl, or outh longe."	Despite all of you, churl, before long
1790	He gripen sone a balder ston	boulder
	And let it fleye, ful god won,	fly with great force
	Agen the dore, that it to-rof.	broke apart
	Avelok it saw, and thider drof	ran
	And the barre sone ut drow.	quickly pulled out
1795	That was unride and gret ynow,	huge; quite big
	And caste the dore open wide	
	And seide, "Her shal I now abide!	Here
	Comes swithe unto me —	quickly
	Dathey! hwo you henne fle?"	Cursed be any who flee
1800	"No," quodh on, "that shalhou coupe;"	one; you will pay
	And began til him to loupe,	run

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 liffte 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 hisse hermes | 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 |
| | Bisfor the heved that the rith eye | greeted |
| | Ut of the hole made he fleye, | Upon; head that |
| | And sithel clapt him on the crune | eye socket; fly |
| 1815 | So that he stan ded fel thor dune. | hit; head |
| | The fiftie that he overtok | stone dead; there down |
| | Gaf he a ful sor dint ok, | fall |
| | Bitwenn the sholdres ther he stod, | Gave; hard |
| | That he spen his herte blod. | shed |
| 1820 | The sixte wende for to fle, | turned |
| | And he clapt him with the tre | |
| | Rith in the fule necke so | |
| | That he smot hisse necke on to. | in two |
| | Thanne the sixe weren doun feld, | felled |
| 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 beest, | |
| | That havede he nevere schrifte of prest | absolution |
| 1830 | For he was ded on lesse hwile | in less time |
| | Than men mouthe renne a mile. | might run |
| | Allie the othere weren ful kene; | very tough |
| | A red they taken hem bitwene | decision; among themselves |
| | That he sholde him bialve, | They; surround |
| 1835 | And beisen so that wit no salve | batter [him] |
| | Ne sholde him helen leche non. | heal; doctor |
| | They drowen ut swerdes, ful god won, | quite a number |
| | And shoten on him so don on bere | as do; bear |
| | Dogges that wolden him to-tere, | tear apart |
| 1840 | Thanne men doth the bere beyte. | 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 wei mo,
Fro the croune til the so.
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 bled 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 flimtes,
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 yeme;
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! That evere et ich bred of koren!"	said Hugh ate; grain
1880	That ich here this sorwe se? Roberd! William! Hware ar ye? Grigeth ether unker a god tre And late we nouth thise doges fle Til ure louerd wreke be.	Where <i>Grab both of you two; cudgel</i> <i>allow; nor</i> <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, "We haven ful god lith of the mone."	Cursed be [the one] who my good bay good light; moon
1890	Roberd grop a staf strong and gret, That mouthe ful wel bere a net, And Willam Wendut grop a tre Mikel grettire than his the, And Bernard held his ax ful faste	grabbed bear an ax
1895	I seye was he nouthe the laste! And lopen forth so he weren wode To the laddes ther he stode. And yaf hem wundes swithe grete; Ther mathe men wel se boyes bete,	much thicker; thigh
1900	And ribbes in here sides breke And Havelok on hem wel wreke. He broken armes, he broken knes, He broken shankes, he broken thes. He dide the blod there renne dune	rushed; as; frenzied
1905	To the fet rith fro the crune, Foe was ther spared heved non. He leyden on hevedes ful god won, And made croune breke and crake Of the broune and of the blake.	knives
1910	He maden here backes al so bloute Als here wombes and made hem rowte Als he weren kradelbames — So dos the child that moder tharnes.	avenged
1915	Datheit the recke! For he it servede. Hwat dide he thore? Weren he werewed.	legs; thighs caused; ran down feet; crown not one head quite a number crown dark; white (OE blac, be beaten soft At; stomach; roar babies loses its mother
		ruckus; they deserved it they; mauled

Havelok the Dane

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

Havelok the Dane

- 1955 "Louerd, merci," quot he sone,
"Tonicht, al so ros the mose,
Comes her mo than sixti theves
With lokene copes and wide sleeves,
Me for to robban and to pine,
And for to drepe me and mine.
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 starten up sone onos
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.
1970 He is the beste man at nede
That everemar shal ride stede —
Als helpe God, bi mine wonre
A thousand men his he worth one!
Yif he ne were, ich were now ded —
1975 So have ich don mi soule red!
But it is of him mikle sinne:
He maden him swilke woundes thrinne
That of the altherlest wounde
Were a stede brought to grunde.
1980 He haves a wunde in the side
With a gleyve ful unride;
And he haves on thoru his arum
Ther of is full mikle harum;
And he haves on thoru his the —
1985 The unndeste 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
1990 That so fauth, so he fauth thanne!
Was non that havede the hemepanne
So hard that he ne dede al to-cruhsse
- as the moon rose
fastened cloaks
torment
kill
quickly
people
wall
right away
grabbed
out; though they were fierce
As; mill
with one stroke
in time of need
in my opinion
alone
If it were not for him
my own soul's counsel
harm
such, therein
very least
horse, brought down
sword; very huge
has one through; arm
harm
one, thigh
most enormous
other
severe
since; felt, pain
boar
fought
brain-pans (skull)
utterly crash

Havelok the Dane

	And al to-shivere and al to-frusshē. He folwede hem so hund dos hare —	shiver; smash <i>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</i> <i>every</i> <i>Lie; as</i> <i>he is not to be blamed</i>
2000	Ded, or thei him havede slawen, Or al to-hewen or al to-drawen.	<i>either</i> <i>killed</i>
	"Louerd, havi nomore plith Of that ich was gretheth tonith. Thus wolde the theves me have reft; But, God thank, he havenet sure lefft! But it is of him mikel scathe — I woth that he bes ded ful rathe."	<i>I have; harm</i> <i>troubled</i> <i>robbed</i> <i>they have certainly paid for it</i> <i>know; will be soon dead</i>
	Quoth Ubbe, "Bernard, seyst thou soth?" "Ya, sire, that I ne leye o tooth!	<i>truth</i> <i>lie through my teeth</i>
2010	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>/should/ tell a lie</i> <i>hang</i> <i>citizens; stood by</i> <i>Hearty; solemn</i> <i>old</i>
2015	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</i> <i>coffer; chest</i> <i>might in sacks thrust</i>
2020	"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</i> <i>himself preserved</i> <i>lost no possessions</i> <i>#Who; stand up against</i>
2025	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>nightime</i> <i>tally</i> <i>Strong</i> <i>one</i> <i>#Who was named</i>

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 soule 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 om nithes
Tobinde bothe burgmen and knithes! | <i>Because</i>
<i>those</i>
<i>Cain's</i>
<i>They</i>
<i>their death cursed</i>
<i>Since; went; at night</i>
<i>citizens</i> |
| 2050 | For bynderes love ich neveremo —
Of hem ne yeve ich nouht a slo." | <i>outlaws; more</i>
<i>sloeberry (i.e., I do not care)</i> |
| <p>Havelok was before Ubbe browth,
That havede for him ful mikel theouth
And mikel sorwe in his herte
For his wundes, that we so smerte.</p> | | |
| 2055 | | <i>brought</i>
<i>concern</i> |
| 2060 | But hwan his wundes weren shewed,
And a leche havede knawed
That he hem mouthe ful wel hele,
Wel make him gange and fal wel mele,
And wel a palefrey bistride, | <i>examined</i>
<i>doctor; determined</i>
<i>he (the doctor)</i>
<i>walk; talk</i>
<i>sit on a palefrey</i> |
| 2065 | And wel upon a stede ride,
Tho let Ubbe al his care
And al his sorwe over fare,
And seyde, "Cum now foeth with me,
And Goldeboru, thi wif, with thee, | <i>charger</i>
<i>Then Ubbe put aside</i>
<i>pass over</i> |
| <p>And thine serjaunz alle thre,</p> | | |
| | | <i>men-at-arms</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- For now wile I youre warant be:
 Wile I non of here frend
 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
 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 firme wowe —
 Speke I loude or spek I lowe,
 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
 2085 No more than min, so God me rede!"
- He dide unto the borw bringe
 Sone anon, al with joiinge,
 His wif and his sergaunz thre,
 The beste men that mouthe be.
 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 thaer Havelok lay
 2095 Al so brith so it were day.
- "Deus!" quoth Ubbe, "Hwat may this be?
 Betere is I go miself and se
 Hwether he sitten now and wesseylen,
 Or ani sotshire to deyle,
 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,
- guarantee
their friends
- wait [in ambush]
go
loan; room
high tower
may; get around
healed
- firewood wall
- whenever you want
cover; at night
- offer; cause
counsel
- rejoicing
men-at-arms
- three
- Woke
room where
As bright
- is partying
foolishness; take part in
time of night
at behooves; pools
ditch; mud

Havelok the Dane

- 2105 Glotuns, revres, or wicke theves,
Bi Crist that alle folk onne leves!"
robbers
believe in
- He stod and tootede in at a bord
Her he spak anilepi word
And saw hem slepen faste ilkon
And lye stille so the ston;
peered in
spoke a single
- 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.
light
"Deus," quoth he, "Hwat may this mene?"
aware of
- 2115 He calde bothe arwe men and kene,
Knithes and serganz swithe sleie,
Mo than an hundred, withuten leye,
And bad hem alle coomen and se
Hwat that selcuth mithe be.
called; sky; bold
cunning
More; lie
- 2120 Als the knithes were comen alle,
Ther Havelok lay ut of the halle,
So stod ut of his mouth a gleam,
Rith al swilk so the sunne-bem.
out
issued from; gleam
Just like
- 2125 That al so lith was thare, bi hevene,
So ther brenden serges sevne
And an hundred serges ok
That durste I sweren on a book!
As if seven candles burned
also
they dared
soundly
- 2130 So he weren brouth of live;
And Havelok lay on his lift side,
In his armes his breithe bride:
Bi the pappes he leyen naked —
So faire two weren nevere makid
In a bed to lyen samen.
As if; dead
left
- 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
Down to the breast
- 2140 On his right shuldre swithe brith,
Brithter than gold ageyn the lith,
together
sport
observe
Just as
turned
cross
so bright

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 hisc eyr."
- He fallen sone at hisc fet.
Was non of hem that he ne gret —
2160 Of joye he weren alle so fawen
So he him haveden of erthe drawen.
Hisc fet he kisten an hundred sythes —
The tos, the nayles, and the lites —
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 cyn se.
Manred, louerd, bede I thee —
Thi man auht I ful wel to be;
For thu art comen of Birkabeyn,
2175 That harvede 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 —

Havelok the Dane

	Was ther inne never non so stark.	strong [as you]
2180	Tomorwen shal tu 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	swear fealty dark; light <i>tun</i> (fortified place)
	And of knith and of sweyn. And so shal tu ben mad knith Wit blisse, for thou art so with."	retainer; <i>vaissal</i>
2185		knight strong
	Tho was Havelok swithe blithe, And thankede God ful fele sithe.	very glad many times
2190	On the morwen, wan it was lith, And gom was thisternessee of the nith, Ubbe dide upon a stede A ladde lepe, and thider bede Erles, barouns, drenges, theynes,	darkness; night
	Klerkes, knithes, burgeys, sweynes, That he sholden comen anon Biforen him sone evenlikon, Al so he loven here lives And here children and here wives.	vassals, <i>thanes</i> citizens
2195		everyone their
2200	His bode ne durste he non assitte That he ne neme for to wite, Sone hwat wolde the justise; And bigan anon to rise And seyde sone, "Lithes me,	command; refuse went; know wanted
	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	<i>Listen to me</i>
2205	Was in Birkabeynes bond.	together; slave; noble
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 tauhþe	advice Entrusted protect, property
	And hise two douthters and al his auhþe.	possessions

Hawek the Dane

Alle herden ye him swree
On bok and on messe gere
That he shulde yemen hem wel,
Withouten lac, withouten tel.
Without fault; deceit (reproach)

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 2220 | He let his oth all overgo —
Evere wurthe him yvel and wo!
For the maydnes here lif
Refle 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
killed; sorry fiend (villain) |
| 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, | drown
wild |
| 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. | knew; rightful heir |
| 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 |
| 2245 | Half so strong ne half so with.
Bes of him ful glad and blithe,
And cometh alle hidre swithe,
Manrede youre louerd for to make,
Bothe brune and the blake — | earth
Be |
| 2250 | I shal miself do first the gamen
And ye sithen alle samen." | Homage to
ceremonial honor
together |

Hawck the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | O knes ful fayre he him sette — | On; very |
| 2255 | Mouthe nothing him ther fro leste,
And bicam is man rith thare,
That alle sawen that there ware. | <i>Might; from that prevent
became his; there
were</i> |
| | After him stirt up laddes ten
And bicomis hise men,
And sithen everilk a baroun | <i>each</i> |
| 2260 | That evere weren in al that toun,
And sithen drentges, and sithen thaynes
And sithen knithes, and sithen sweynes;
So that, or that day was gon, | <i>servans</i> |
| | In al the tun ne was nouth on
That it ne was his man bicomis — | <i>before; done
not one</i> |
| 2265 | Manrede of alle havede he nomen. | <i>Oaths of loyalty; they taken</i> |
| | Hwan he havede of hem alle
Manrede taken in the halle, | <i>Faithly</i> |
| 2270 | Grundlike dide he hem swere
That he sholden him god feyth bere
Ageynes alle that woren on live;
Ther-yen ne wolde never on strive, | <i>Solemny
faith
Towards</i> |
| | That he ne maden sone that oth —
Riche and poure, lef and loth.
Hwan that was maked, sone he sende | <i>against that never a one would oppose</i> |
| 2275 | Ubbe writes fer and hende,
After alle that castel yemedes,
Burwes, tunes, sibbe an fremde | <i>writs far and near
governed</i> |
| | That thider sholden comen swithe
Til him and heren tithandes blithe | <i>siblings and kinmen
immediately</i> |
| 2280 | That he hem alle shulde telle.
Of hem ne wolde nevere on dwelle,
That he ne come sone plattinde; | <i>To; good news
delay
harrying</i> |
| | Hwo hores ne havede, com gangande.
So that withinne a fourtenthe | <i>Whoever had no horse: walking
fortnight (two weeks)</i> |
| 2285 | In al Denemarke ne was no knith,
Ne constable, ne shireve,
That com of Adam and of Eve,
That he ne com bifor 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 dan-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 | Loikes now, hw he is fayr:
Sikerlike he is hisc eyr.
Falles alle to his fet —
Bcomes hisc men ful sket." | <i>formerly accustomed</i>
<i>govern; defend</i> |
| | He weren for Ubbe swithe atrad | <i>Surely; heir</i> |
| 2305 | And dide sone al that he bad.
And yet he deden sumdel more: | |
| | O bok ful grundlike he swore | <i>On; gravely</i> |
| | That he sholde with him halde, | <i>remain loyal</i> |
| | Bothe ageynes stille and bolde | <i>timid</i> |
| 2310 | That evere wolde his bodi dere,
That dide he hem o boke swere. | <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 beith,
And the folk of al the lond
Bitauhte him al in his hond,
The cunniche everil del | |
| | And made him king heylike and wel. | <i>Intrusted them</i> |
| | kingdom | |
| | solemnly | |
| 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, | |
| | Wrastling with laddes, putting of ston, | <i>Thrusting</i> |
| | Harping and piping, ful god won, | <i>Fencing; swords</i> |
| | Leyk of mine, of hasard ok, | <i>short-putting</i> |
| 2325 | | <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.
 2330 Ther moutthe men se the boles beyte,
 And the bores, with hundes teyste.
 Tho mouthe men se evenil glew;
 Ther mouthe men se hw grim grew —
 Was nevere yete joye more
 2335 In al this werd than tho was thoer.
 Ther was so mikel yeft of clothes
 That, thou I swore you grete othes,
 I ne woe nowth ther of trod.
 That may I ful wel swere, bi God!
 2340 There was swithe gode metes
 And of wyn that men fer fetes,
 Rith al so mik and gret pleste
 So it were water of the se.
 The feste fourti dawes sat —
 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.
- Hwan that feste was al don,
 2355 A thousand knihtes ful wel o bon
 Withheld the king with him to lede,
 That ilkan havede ful god stede,
 Helm and sheld, and brime brith,
 And al the wepne that fel to knith.
 2360 With hem ek five thousand gode
 Sergaunz that weren to fyht wode
 Withheld he al of his genge —
 Wile I namoe the storie lenge.
 Yet hwan he havede of al the lond
- tales
minstrels; drum beat
bulls baited
dogs lively
every type of sport
excitement

world; then
much giving away

believed

wine; bring from far away
much; abundant

fear; days lasted

also

property
each one
Had in his company

equipped

that each one had
coat of mail
were appropriate
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.
- 2370 Half hundred knithes dede he calle,
And hise fif thousand sergaunz alle,
And dide sweren on the bok
Sone, and on the auter ok,
That he ne sholde nevere blinne,
- 2375 Ne for love ne for sinne.
Til that he haveden Godard funde
And breouth biforn him faste bunde.
- Thanne he haveden swor this oth,
Ne leten he nouth, for lef ne loth,
2380 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
- 2385 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
Spak, and seyde, "Hede, cavenard!
- 2390 Wat dos thu here at this pathe?
Cum to the king swithe and rathe!
That sendes he thee word and bedes,
That thu thenke what thou him dedes
Whan thu reftes with a knif
- 2395 Hise sistres here lif
And sithen bede thou in the se
Drenchen him — that herde he!
He is to thee swithe grim;
Cum nu swithe unto him
- 2400 That king is of this kunerike,
Thou fale man, thou wicke swike!
- castle wardens; placed
stop
avenged
- alas also
stop
- bound
- When they; swore
went very quickly
- strong retainers; very proud
army
- would gallop powerfully
Holt, villain
- soon
orders
- deprived
their lives
ordered
- angry
- kingdom
traitor

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
Biforn the teth a dint ful strong.
And Robert kipt ut a knif long
And smot him thora the rith arum —
Ther of was ful litel harum!
- flat; struck
teeth; blow
whipped out
arm
harm
- 2410 Hwan his folk that saw and herde,
Hwou Robert with here louerd ferde,
He haveden him wel ner browt of live,
Ne weren his two brethren and othere five
Slowen of here laddes ten.
- their lord fored*
They [would] have; murdered
if it were not for
- 2415 Of Godardes altherbeste men.
Hwan the othere sawen that, he fledden,
And Godard swithe louade gredde:
"Mine knishes, hwat do ye?
Sule ye thusgate fro me fle?
- very best
others; they
shouted
in this way
- 2420 Ich have you fed and yet shal fede —
Help me now in this nede
And late ye nouth mi bod spille,
Ne Havelok don of me hise wille!
Yif ye it do, ye do you shame
- difficulty
allow; destroy
yourselves
dishonor
- 2425 And beingeth youself in mikel blame!"
Hwan he that herden, he wenten ageyn,
And slowen a knit and a sweyn
Of the kinges oune men,
And woundeden abuten ten.
- they; returned
knight
own
- 2430 The kinges men, hwan he that sawe,
Scuton on hem, heye and lowe,
And everilk fot of hem he slowe,
But Godard one, that he flowe,
So the thef men dos henge.
- Struck them everywhere
everyone
alone whom he flayed
like
- 2435 Or hund men shole in dike slenge.
He bunden him ful swithe faste,
Hwil the bondes wolden laste,
That he rored als a bole
- hound; ditch sling
roared; bull

Havelok the Dane

	That wore parred in an hole	confined
2440	With dogges fortio 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 hond plette;	<i>cut off</i>
2445	Wolden he nouht ther foore leme	<i>stop</i>
	That he ne bounden hond and fet.	
	Datheit that on that ther foore 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 bifor 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 mese and feble drink,	<i>much; labor</i>
	And swithe wikk clothes,	
	For al hise manie grete othes.	<i>bad</i>
2460	Nu beyes he his holde blame:	
	Old sinne makes newe shame!	<i>pays for; guilt</i>
	Wan he was so shamelike	
	Brouth bifor the king, the fule swike!	
	The king dede Ubbe swithe calle	<i>When</i>
2465	Hise erles and hisse barouns alle,	<i>foul traitor</i>
	Dreng and thein, burgeis and knith,	
	And bad he sholden demen him rith,	
	For he knew the swike dam;	
	Everil del God was him gram!	
2470	He setten hem dun bi the wawe,	
	Riche and pouere, heye and lowe,	
	The helde men and ek the grom,	
	And made ther the rithe dom	
	And seyden unto the king anon,	
2475	That stille sat so the ston:	
	"We deme that he be al quic flawen	<i>old; young</i>
	And sithen to the galwes drawe	<i>judgment</i>
		<i>They set themselves; wall</i>
		<i>flayed alive</i>
		<i>then</i>

Havelok the Dane

	At this foule mere tayl,	mare's
2480	Thoru his fet a ful strong nayl,	chains
	And thore ben henged wit two fetees	
	And thare be writen thise leteres:	
	'This is the swike that wende wel	though
	The king have refst the lond ilk del,	robbed of; every par-
	And hisse sistres with a knif	
2485	Bothe refste here lif."	
	This wrat shal henge bi him thare.	
	The dom is demd — seye we namore."	judgment; decided
	Hwan the dom was demd and give,	
	And he was wit the prestes shrive,	
2490	And it ne mouhte ben non other,	absolved
	Ne for fader ne for brother.	otherwise
	But that he sholde tharne lif,	lose
	Sket cam a ladde with a knif	Quickly
	And bigan rith at the to	me
2495	For to ritte and for to flo;	est. flay
	And he bigan tho for to rore	cry out (roar)
	So it were grim or gore,	Because; gory
	That men mische thethen a mile	from there
	Here him rore, that fule file!	Hear; foul wrench
2500	The ladde ne let nowith forthi,	stopped no wit
	They he criede, "Merci! Merci!"	Although
	That ne flow him everil del	slayed him every bit
	With knif mad of grunden stel.	
	Thei garte bringe the mere sone,	had prepared to bring the mare
2505	Skabbed and ful iveau o bone,	infilm
	And bunden him rith at hire tayl	ail
	With a rop of an old seyl	dragged
	And drownen him unto the galwes,	Not; roadway; fields
	Nouth bi the gate but over the falwes,	neck
2510	And henge him thore bi the hals —	
	Datheit hwo recke: he was fals!	Cursed be any who cares
	Thanne he was ded, that Sathanas,	
	Sket was seyzed al that his was	Quickly; seized
	In the kinges hand ilk del —	every bit
2515	Lond and lith and other catel —	Land; estates; property

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.e., into Ubbe's hands
- 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
 black monks
priory; forever
Judgment Day
- 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.
 infirm of body
 promise
 knows
 buried
- 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,
 filthy man
- 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,
 army
into England
- 2540 Was comen up at Grimesbi,
 He was ful sorful and sori.
 And seyde, "Hwat shal me to rathe?
 Goddoth, I shal do slon hem bathe!
 I shal don bengen hem ful heye
 What is advisable for me to do
 have them both slain
- 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
 enjoy
Unless; out of
- 2550 Ride or helm on heved bere,
 Brini on bac, and sheld and sperr,
 Or ani other wepne bere,
 Hand-ax, sythe, gisarm, or spere,
 Or aunlaz and god long knif,
 Do they want to disinherit
 army called out
 might on horse
 helmet on head
 Coat of mail on back
- Battle axe, scythe, halberd
 dagger

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,
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 Scint Iohas,
That he sholde maken him theal,
And al his offspring forth withal.
- limb
weapons; borne
March
could; well
headstrong
they
slave
forfeit
- The Englishe that herde that,
Was non that evere his bode sat;
For he him dredde swithe soet,
So runcy spore, and mikle more.
- command resisted
they feared him
As the nag [fears] the spur
- 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
- well-equipped
warhorses
weaponry; carries
eager; to hasten
Danish; go
Listen now
- 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
- gathered; play
want to
- 2580 Hise uten laddes here comen,
And haves nu the priorie numen —
Al that evere mothen he finde,
He brenne kirkes and prestes binde;
He strangleith monkes and nunnis bothe —
- foreigners
captured
burns churches
- 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.
- advise
rules
may; overcome
hang alive or kill
- 2590 Or elles reve us ure lives
And ure children and ure wives,
But dos nw als ich wile you lere,
- rob us of our
teach

Havelok the Dane

- Als ye wile be with me dere.
Nimes nu swithe forth and rathe
2595 And helpes 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.
- Nime we swithe and do hem fle
2600 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
2605 Bi me hwil hisc armes laste!"
"Ye! lef, ye!" quoth the erl Gunter;
"Yaf!" quoth the Erl of Cestre, Reyner.
And so dide alle that ther stode
And stirte forth so he were wode.
- 2610 Tho mouthe men se the brimies 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 stande
2615 Grethet als men mithe telle a pund,
And lopen on stedes sone anon;
And toward Grimesbi, ful god won,
He fooren softe bi the sti
Til he come ney at Grimesbi.
- 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 fieste knith that he ther mette
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 —
Woilde he nevere thethen wende,
2630 Til that he havede another slawen
- Just as; faithful
set; indeed
both
strike at; forcefully
confessed; absolved
off
Get going; make them flee
follow
army
Cursed be any who do not
dear one
Chester
rushed; as if they; mad
Then
thrown; straightened
hurried
time
Equipped; count out a pound
forcefully
went quietly by the road
near to
learned
journey
army; against them
Spared
thus
head struck off
delay
skillful
from there; go*

Havelok the Dane

- With the swerd he held ut drawnen.
 Willam Wendut his swerd ut drow,
 And the threddc so soec he slow
 That he made upon the feld
 2635 His lift arm fleye with the swerd.
- third
lift
- Huwe 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
 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.
 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,
 2655 Hetelike with herte grim,
 So that he bothe felle dune
 To the erthe, first the crount.
 Thanne he weren fallen dun bothen,
 Grundlike here swerdes he ut drowen,
 2660 That weren swithe sharp and gode,
 And foughten so thei worn wode
 That the swot ran fro the crune
 To the fet right there adune.
 Ther mouthe men se to knicthes bete
 2665 Ayther on other dintes grete,
 So that with the altherlest dint
 Were al to-shivered a flint.
 So was bitwesen hem a fift
- raised
spurring [his horse]
gallop
split in two
shoulder
pass
hurt
as dead as
hesitate
Bitterly
skey
headfirst
skey
Violently
sweat
two knights
smallest
Would all be smashed to pieces

Havelok the Dane

- 2670 Fro the morwen ner to the nift,
So that thei south ne blunne
Til that to sette bigan the sunne.
Tho yaf Godrich thorw the side
Ubbe a wunde ful unzide,
So that thorw that ilke wounde
2675 Havede ben brouth to grande
And his heved al of slawen,
Yif God ne were and Huwe Raven,
That drow him fro Godrich awey
And barw him so that ilke day.
2680 But er he were fro Godrich drawnen,
Ther were a thousand knyghtes slawen
Bi bothe halve and mo ynowe,
Ther the ferdes togidere slowe,
Ther was swilk dreping of the folk
2685 That on the feld was nevere a polk
That it ne stod of blod so ful
That the strem ran intil the bul.
Tho tarst bigan Godrich to go
Upon the Danshe and faste to slo
2690 And forthrit, also leun fares
That nevere kynes best ne spares,
Thanne his gon, for he garte alle
The Denshe men bifor him fallie.
He felde browne, he felde blake,
2695 That he mouthe overtake.
Was nevere non that mouhte have
Hise dientes, noyther knith ne knave,
That he felde so dos the gres
Bifor the sythe that ful sharp es.
- ceased
ugly
very
[He] would have
cut off
were not [there]
pulled
saved; very
before
sides; plenty more
armies; clashed
such killing
pool
into the hollow (i.e., downhill)
Then first of all
as a lion goes
no kind [off] beast
(the lion) is gone; made
survive
felled them as; grass
broken
very much reduced
charging
exhort
how is it with you
do
Certainly; do wrong
- 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,
2705 That thou fare thus with me
And mine gode knyghtes slois?
Sikerlike, thou misgos!"

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | Thou wost ful wel, yif thu wilt wite, | understand |
| | That Athelwold thee dide site | <i>set</i> |
| 2710 | On knes and swreen on messe bok,
On caliz and on pateyn ok,
That thou hise douhter sholdest yelde,
Than she were wimman of elde,
Engelond evenl del. | <i>misaif</i>
<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 fift
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 diide thare undo | <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>[Godrick] should have from</i> |

Havelok the Dane

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

Havelok the Dane

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 2785 | 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
ought |
| 2790 | Sixe erles weren sone yare
After hire for to face.
He nomen onon and comen sone,
And beouthen hire, that under mone | eager
go
<i>set out immediately</i> |
| 2795 | In al the werd ne havede per
Of hendeleik, fer ne ner.
Hwan she was come thider, alle
The Englishe men bigunne falle | peer
<i>courtesy, far or near</i> |
| 2800 | 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
<i>done much wrong</i> |
| 2805 | For Englond auhne for to ben
Youres and we youre men.
Is non of us, yung ne old,
That he ne wot that Athelwold | against you have been disloyal
ought to be |
| 2810 | Was king of this kunerike
And ye his eyr, and that the swike
Haves it halden with mikel wronge —
God leve him sone to honge!" | Who does not know
kingdom
traitor
held
grant; hang |
| 2815 | Quot Havelok, "Hwan that ye it wite,
Nu wile ich that ye dounre site;
And after Godreich haves wrought,
That haves in sorwe himself broath, | Since; understand
according as; done |
| 2820 | Lokes that ye demen him rith,
For dom ne spareth clerk ne knith,
And sithen shal ich understande
Of you, after lawe of londe, | <i>Make sure; judge</i>
<i>judgment</i> |
| | 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 | <i>Homage; loyalty oaths</i>
<i>counsel</i> |
| | And demden him to binden faste | <i>no one, dared prevent</i>
<i>judged</i> |

Havelok the Dane

- Upon an asse swithe unwraste,
 Andelong, nouht overthwert,
 His nose went unto the stert
 And so to Lincolne lede,
 2825 Shame like in wicke wede,
 And, hwan he come unto the boew,
 Shame like ben led ther thoru,
 Bi southe the borw unto a grene,
 That thare is yet, als I wenc.
 2830 And there be bunden til a stake,
 Abouten him ful gret fir make,
 And al to dust be beend rith there.
 And yet demden he ther more,
 Other swikes for to warne:
 2835 That hisse children sulde tharne
 Everemore that eritage
 That his was, for hisc strage.
- Hwan the dom was demd and seyd,
 Sket was the swike on the asse leyd,
 2840 And led him til that ilke grene
 And brend til asken al bidene.
 Tho was Goldeboru ful blithe —
 She thanked God fele sythe
 That the fule swike was brend
 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."
- 2850 Havelok anon manrede tok
 Of alle Englishe on the bok
 And diðc 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.
- filthy*
Endwise; across
turned; tail
Shamefully in wretched clothes
south of
still; think
ashes; burned
traitors
should lose
heritage
crime (outrage)
judgment
to; very
ashes; right away
then
many times
burned
intended; shamed
brown
Whom; walk
avenged upon
women

Havelok the Dane

	Thanne he haveden sikernessee 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 withaten 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	
2865	The fairest thing that is o live. That is Gunnild of Grimesby, Grimes douther, bi Seint Davy, That me forth broute and wel fedde,	<i>alive Grim's daughter brought up</i>
	And ut of Denemark with me fledde	
2870	Me for to burwe fro mi ded. Sikerlike, thoru his red, Have ich lived into this day —	<i>rescue; from: death advice</i>
	Blissed worthe his soule ay! I rede that thu hire take	
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>Blessed be; always command espose noble</i>
	That shal ich ful wel shewe thee.	<i>as gracious as Moreover</i>
2880	For ich wile give thee a give That evermore, hwil ich live, For hire shal tu be with me dere, That wile ich that this folc al here."	<i>promise Because of: you shall</i>
	The erl ne wolde nouth agyn	
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,	<i>land united their lives They produced</i>
	That were the beste men at nede	

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,
earl's cook
also
- 2900 And seyde, "Frend, so God me rede,
Nu shalts have riche mede,
For wissing and thi gode dede
That tu me dides in ful gret nede.
For thanne I yede in mi cuvel
reward
guidance
- 2905 And ich ne havede bred ne sowel.
Ne I ne havede no catel,
Thou feddes and claddes me ful wel.
Have nu foorthi of Coenwayle
The erldom ilk del, withuten fayle,
cloak
sauce
- 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,
clothes
for that reason
- 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,
hue; face
- 2920 Hwan it is fayre spread ut newe,
Ageyn the sunne brith and lewe."
And girde him sone with the swerd
Of the erldom, bisorm his ferd,
And with his hond he made him knith,
As; rose bush
- 2925 And yaf him armes, for that was rith,
And dide him there sone wedde
Hire that was ful swete in bedde.
blossomed
fresh
- After that he spused wore,
Wolde the Erl nouth dwelle thore,
were married
- 2930 But sone nam until his lond
And seyded it al in his hond
And livede ther inne, he and his wif,
linger
went to
received

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 nouh chiche.
- produced
forever; happiness
- endow
property
- generous; stingy
- 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
baronry; 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 nouh 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 pleynite 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 bilesfe 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
That neyther owe mithe be anywhere
Fro other, ne no joye se away from
But if he were togidere bothe. Unless; they
Nevere yete no weren he wrothe angry at each other
For here love was ay newe — their; always
2975 Nevere yete wordes ne grewe anger
Bitwene hem hwar of ne lathe hostile
Mithe rise ne no wrathe. arise

- He geten children hem bitwene
Sones and doughtres rith fivetene, precisely fifteen
2980 Hwar-of the sones were kinges alle, Of whom
So wolde God it sholde bifalle,
And the doughtres alle quenes:
Him stondes wel that god child strenes! begets
Nu have ye herd the gest al thoru story; completely
2985 Of Havelok and of Goldeboru —
Hw he weren born and hw fedde, How they
And hwou he weren with wronge ledde wrongly
In here youthe with trecherie,
With tresoun, and with felonuye; evil
2990 And hwou the swikes haveden tiht traitors; intended
Reven hem that was here rith, To rob them
And hwou he weren wreken wel,
Have ich seyd you everil del.
Forthi ich wolde biseken you Therefore; beseech
2995 That haven herd the rim nu, rhyme now
That ilke of you, with gode wille,
Saye a Pater Noster stille quietly
For him that haveth the rym maked,
And ther-fore fele nihtes waked, rhyme
3000 That Jesu Crist his soule bringe kept awake
Bisorn his Fader at his endinge. So that
Before; father

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 *thuyw* 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 "blac." See MED *blak* n. 6. See also note to line 311.
- 64 *Was non so bold lound to Rome.* L: *non so bold lond to rome*. Sm emends *lound* to *louerd* for the sake of sense. Sk emends to: *Was non so bold [þe] 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: *þe*. F&H: *þei*. "They hid themselves and kept themselves still."
- 74 *his soule hold.* Sm notes this as an unusual expression which occurs in *Fwain and Gwain* (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 Loed preserveth the stranger; he relieveth the fatherless and widow, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."
- 85 *Bate 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 *folk w[er] lede*. The sense of *folk* 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 heilde.* L: *þat she wman of heilde.*
- 175 *And that she mowe hir yemen.* L: *And þa she mowe yemen.* Sk's emendation. F&H emend to: *And tha[if] she mowe [hit] yemen*, followed by Sa. Sm conjectures that the author wrote something like: *and þat she mowe hir-selfe weilde*.
- 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 *corporas* 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

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: *hreste man;* F&H: *hreste;* Sm: *hreste.*
- 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 Paxton, who charts the development of bedside rites for the dying in *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Rite 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 mictē him ne windē. / 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 swegen.* L: *ofte swagen.* Ho: *ofte swagen;* Sk: *ofte swungen;* Sm: *ofte swungen;*
- 228 *Louerde.* L: *Loude.* Preceded by *ie 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 thoucste*, L: *þat god thoucste*. F&H: *þat god him thoucste*.
- 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 Engleserre* — the four royal roads were under the king's peace. . ." (p. 99).
- 266 *Schireves he sette, bedels, and greyes* (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 þewes waſe 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 the ferde.*
- 288 *hw chaste.* L: *w chaste.*
- 292 *Wether* (whether) functions as an interrogative particle, which signals that a question is coming.
- 296 *Daiheir* (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 monches babe / Him for to wisse and to rabe.* To do that he has emended *babe* to *bape* and *rede* to *rabe*. There are other such emendations. See lines 693–94 and 1680–81. Sk: *betbe / 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 (*mosvrede*) 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: *þatdrow.* F&H: *windowd.* Sm: *þit-drow.* Ho: *þith-drow.* Sk: *wit-drow.* Ma: *þit-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 Sctrieson (p. 57).
- 512 *He may me witten.* 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 rest.* L: *þou se.*
- 536 *All wile I taken.* L: *All 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 *hebede.* "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 will mi lif have* save. Ho: *Also þou with mi lif save.*

Notes

- 564 *Fnow* 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 bi hoves 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 *kynwerk.* A king's birthmark attests to royal birth. Sm notes only one other example of the word (slightly modified) in the ME *Emare*, lines 503–04: "A fayr chyld boorne and a godele; / Hadde a dowbyll kyngus marke."
- 611 *Al Denemark and Engelond.* 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 Goldebora, 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; *flawves*, 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 *is* 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 *Shal tu have non other mede.* L: *Shal have non other mede.* F&H: *Shal tu have.* Sk: *Shal tu have.* Ho: *Shal tu have.*
- 691 *bethen.* L: *ethen.* F&H's emendation.
- 693 *that wicke man.* L: *þa 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 þoucste, wat shall me to rape / Wite him on live he wile us bape.* F&H follow L, supplying *[us]* before *bape.* We have returned to the MS despite the loss of rhyme.
- 702 *Hors and swin, geer 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 newere.*
- 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's 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, Havelok, 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 tan.* L: *Forbar he neyfe tan.*
- 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 offe setes.* F&H: *Dat in the se he ofte setes.* Sm: *In the se-weres he ofte setes.* Kevin Godling in "Sewere in *Havelok* 784," *Notes and Queries* 34 (1987), 151, suggests that this is a compound based on

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 werē*) 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 *wotk*. Sk emends to *wot*.

819 *ilk def.* L: *if def.* F&H's emendation.

821 *ferthinges nok*. A farthing from medieval to quite modern times was worth a quarter of a penny. A "coener" 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 neþer*.

862 *other wede*. L: *ope wede*.

864 *he cam ther*. L: *he cam þe*.

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 thw eter.* 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 *At 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: *Dot 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: *Bit 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 *hire* 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 laddle, 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 Manryng 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: *hir douthe yeve.*

Notes

- 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 dantes swithe hard and strong*. This line is supplied by Sk.
- 1158 *hire, fols and slike*. L: *hire and slike*. F&H: *hire fols 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 sni*. L: *ay þe rith*; F&H and Sm add *sni*.
- 1204 *Thanne he kamen 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 *Wessyel 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: *þat 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 *troue* in what is now numbered as 1316.
- 1337 *Nim ic wit lithe to Denemak.* L: *Nim ic witl be to Denemak.* F&H: *Nimew we to Denemak hape.* Sa: *Nimew wit to Denemak bathe,* where *wit* means "we too." Sm: *Nim ic wit lufe to Denemak hape.* Sm's note on this line is useful: "As an emendation *lithe* 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 *this bond.* L: *pin hor.*
- 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 holdes mi lond.* Our emendation agrees with that of F&H.
- 1377 *And late me wel.* L: *And late wel.*
- 1397 *he halde.* L: *he kade.*
- 1399 *and Huwe Raven.* L: *h aver.* In the *Dictionary of British Surnames*, Percy H. Reaney lists *Raven* as having derived from ON *Hrafn* 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 *William Wendut* is *William Wende*, a thirteenth-century listing, derived from OE *wende* meaning "dweller by the bend" (p. 375).

Notes

- 1410 *lime he has.* L: *lime has.*
- 1429 *Havede he been slayn.* L: *Havede been.*
- 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 *alk 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 *Thonne were set and bord leyd.* F&H and Sm add a pronoun: *Thonne 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, *For the appetites of medieval romance heroes see Susan E. Farrier, "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 *Pymest.* Meaning spiced wine, *pymest* 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 Boeade, writing in the mid-fifteenth century, says: "Ale for an Englysshe 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 deyled.* Sm: *the kilbing deyled.* F&H: *the ilk hing deyled.* 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: *ll man.* Sm: *ll man.* F&H: *lk man.* Since the distinction is important we have followed F&H's emendation.
- 1744 *bes mikel wo.* L: *bes mike wo.*

Notes

- 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 festes*. Notice how the alliteration in this line underscores Bernard's oath.
- 1794 *barre*. The sliding beam that secures the door.
- 1798 *Comes twithe 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 comes*. 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 Degaré, 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 womber.* L: *Als hee womber.*
- 1941 *or shame seyde.* L: *or same seyde.* F&H: *or shame seyde.* Sm: *or same seyde.*
- 2009 *leye o tooth.* L: *leye otte.* Si's emendation, followed by F&H and Sa.
- 2029 *Giffin 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 *Wef is set the mete he etes.* L: *We is set be mete he eter.* 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: *þat we so.*

Notes

- 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 *Mowte wayte thee to slo.* L: *Mowte wayte þe slo.*
- 2072 *I shal lene thee a bower.* 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 *kweirk* is probably an error for *kynemerk* of line 604" (p. 108). Sm, on the other hand, rejects Sk's emendation on the grounds that *kweirk* 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 feyре whose chynnyngis 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 leernes as feyре, as lied. Also it is seyd that the carbonocyl is cleped so in grek, & it is gendryd in libia amoung the tregodites. Of this carnuncul ther is xii maneris of kendes of carbuncles. But thou ben best that han the coleur of fire & tho ben closed in a wyght veyne. The best carbucul hathe this propertie: if it is throwene. In the feyре it is qwent as it were amounges dede colis. (*English Mediaeval Lapidaries*, ed. Joan Evans and Mary Serjeantson, EETS o.s. 190 [London: Oxford University Press, 1933; rpt. 1960], p. 82)
- 2195 *knithes, burgeys, sweynes.* L: *Knighes bugeys sweynes.*
- 2229 *that sor i fend.* L: *þat sor i 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 hit.* L: *evere wode hit.*
- 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 knyfes.* L: *ilker twent knyfes.*
- 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 per brette.*
- 2432 *And eversik 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 nose 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 wikkie clothes,* / *For al hisse manie grete othes.* F&H and Sm emend these lines as follows: *Wan he was brouth so shamelike / Byforn 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 besouled 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 *alk.* L: *al.* Sk's emendation, followed by F&H and Sa. So too in line 2514.
- 2492 *But that he sholde.* L: *Pat he sholde.* F&H and Sm concur on the emendation.
- 2502 *That ne flow him.* L: *That ne flow everil del.*
- 2514 *alk.* L: *al.*
- 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 *yborer, so.* L: *ye ber so.* Sk's emendation.
- 2597 *For shal I.* L: *For shal.*
- 2615 *Grethet als men mithe telle a pond.* "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 aduse.* 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 hantil.* 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 *ik 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. Hirsch "Havelok 2933: A Problem in Medieval Literary History," *Neophilologische 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.

Bevis of Hampton

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 *Boeve 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 *Bevis 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.

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.¹ 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.²

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

¹ See Judith Weiss, "The Major Interpolation in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*," *Medium Aevum* 48 (1979), 71-79. Laura [Hubbard] Looris adds a third scene to the two described by Weiss, i.e., the Christmas battle. See *Medieval Romance in England: A Study in the Source and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 116.

² 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.¹

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.² These narrative episodes in *Bevis* are largely self-sufficient, without the kind of interface that is characteristic of, for example, the French romances of Cheytien de Troyes in the twelfth century which are carefully conjoined both structurally and thematically into the larger fabric of the work.³ 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

¹ Baugh, p. 15. See also Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), p. 115.

² Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 213.

³ 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, Jossian, 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.

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.

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.⁴ 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.

⁴ W. R. J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 217.

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- Lordinges, herkneth to me tale!
Is merier than the nightingale,
That I schel singe;
5 Of a knight ich wile yow rouse,
Beves a bighte of Hamtoune,
Withouten lesing.
- Ich wile yow tellen al togadre
10 Of that knight and of is fadre,
Sire Gni.
Of Hamtoun he was sire
And of al that ilche schire,
To wardi.
- Lordinges, this, of whan I telle,
Never man of flesch ne felle
15 Nas so strong.
And so he was in ech strive.
And ever he levede withouten wive,
Al to late and long.
- Whan he was fallen in to elde,
20 That he ne mighte himself welde,
He wolde a wif take;
Sone thaſt after, ich understande,
Him hadde be lever than al this londe
Hadde he hire forsake.¹
- An elde a wif he tok an honde,
The kinges daughter of Scotlondie,

*I will sing to you
he [is] called
lying*

*al 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*

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	So faire and bright.	
	Allas, that he hire ever ches!	<i>chosē</i>
	For hire love his lif a les	<i>he lost</i>
30	With mechel unright.	<i>much evil</i>
	This maide ichave of ysold,	<i>I have</i>
	Faire maide she was and bold	
	And fre yboren;	<i>nobly born</i>
	Of Almayne that emperur	<i>Germany</i>
35	Hire hadde loved paramur	<i>as a mistress</i>
	Wel thar beforen.	
	Ofte to hire fader a sente	<i>he</i>
	And he him selve theder wente	<i>there (thither)</i>
	For hire sake;	
40	Ofte gernede hire to wive;	<i>desired</i>
	The king for no thing alive	
	Nolde hire him take. ¹	
	Sithe a yaf hire to site Gui,	<i>Then he gave</i>
	A stalword erl and hardi	
45	Of Southhaemtoun.	
	Man, whan he falleth in to elde,	<i>old age</i>
	Feeble a wexeth and unbeldi	<i>Feeble he grew; unbold</i>
	Thourgh right resoun.	
	So longe thai yede togedres to bedde,	<i>they were</i>
50	A knave child betwene hem thai hedde,	
	Beves a het.	<i>he was called</i>
	Faire child he was and bolde,	
	He nas boute seve winter olde,	<i>not quite seven</i>
	Whan his fader was ded.	
55	The levedi hire misbethoughte	<i>lady; had evil thoughts</i>
	And meche aghen the right she wroughte	<i>much against</i>
	In hire tour:	<i>tower</i>

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

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

work
rather

was not
As
He

Embrace; his

will not allow; t
do not
trick

Soon; lady fierce
counsel called; messenger

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

Bevis of Hampton

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

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 bouri,
And he hire clepede doceamur
And gan to rous: *be found, chamber*
embraced sweetly
began to talk secretly
- "Dame," a seide, "I thee tel:
That emperur thee grette wel
With love mest: *greet you well*
Glad he is for that tiding,
A wile be prest at that fighting
In that forest. *greatest love*
He will be ready for
- 170 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 node; *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: sympathized*
if: desired anything
might comfort her
boar

Bevis of Hampton

- 185 I wene, me mineth, boutie for
Al of the fevre!¹¹
- "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 boutie the ferthe some
Toward that feed.
- 205 Alias, that he nadde be war
Of is fomen, that weten that,
Him forte schende:
With tresoun worth he ther islawe
And ibrought of is lif-dawe,
210 Er he hom wende!
- Whan he com in to the forest,
Th' emperor 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
stain
from his life
Before
- he found all ready
spurred; his host

¹¹ 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 arhanged be
And the wif, that is so fire,
To me lemmen 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 fire,
Yif thow thenkest beneme hem me,
Ich schel hem defende!"

Tho prikede is stede Sire Gui,
A stalwoed 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 grunde.

"Treitour," a seide, "thow ert to bolde!
Wenestow, thegh ich bo olde,
To ben afred?
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,
Naddē 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

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

Bevis of Hampton

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

Bevis of Hampton

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

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
345 After hire sawe:
The child with him hom he nam,
A swin he tok, whan he hom cam,
And dede hit of dawe.
- The childes clothes, that were gode,
350 Al a bisprengde with that blode
In many stede,
Ase yif the child were to-hewe,
A thoughte to his moder hem schewe.
And so a dede.
- 355 At the laste him gan adrede,
He let clothen in poser wede
That hende wight,
And seide: "Sone, thou most kepe
Upon the felde mine schepe
- 360 This fourte night!"
- And wham the feste is come to th'ende,
In to another londe I schel thee sende
Fer be southe,
365 To a riche erl, that schel thee gie
And teche thee of cortessie
In the youthe.
- And whan thou ert of swich elde,
That thou might the self wilde,
370 And ert of age,
Thanne schel low come in te Ingelonde,
With were winne in to thin honde
Thin eritage.
- I schel thee helpe with alle me might,
With dent of swerd to gete thee right,
375 Be thou of elde!"
The child him thankede and sore wep,
- Nevertheless
command
he took home
swine
killed it
- sprinkled
places
cut apart
He; show
he did
- to be afraid
poor clothes
gentle person
- sheep
fornight (two weeks)
- guide you
teach you courtesy
your
- such [an] age
govern
- return to England
win back
Your heritage
- all my
your rights
[Until] you are of age
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 sede, "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,
Swtne sorri 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." | <i>very sore</i> |
| 410 | "For Gode," queth Beves, "natholes,
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. | <i>A whore's son</i>
<i>lifted; club</i>
<i>Quickly</i> |
| 415 | Beves withoutate the gate stod.
And smot the porter on the hod,
That he gan falle;
His heved he gan al to clev
And forth a wente with that leve
In to the halle. | <i>outside; stood</i>
<i>hood</i>
<i>head</i>
<i>permission</i> |
| 420 | Al aboute he gan beholde,
To th' emperor he spak wordes bolde
With meche grame:
"Sire," a sede, "what dostow here?
Whi colles thou aboute the swire
That ilche dame?" | <i>anger</i>
<i>are you doing</i>
<i>embraces; neck</i>
<i>name</i> |
| 425 | Me moder is that thou hastest an honde:
What dostow her upon me londe
Withouten leve? | <i>permission</i> |
| 430 | Tak me me moder and mi fe,
Boute thou the rather hennes te,
I schel thee greve! | <i>Take [from] me my; property</i>
<i>Unless; sooner go</i>
<i>make trouble for you</i> |
| 435 | Nastow, sire, me fader slawe?
Thow schelt ben hanged and to-drawe,
Be Godes wille!
Aris! Fle hennes, I thee rede!"
Th' emperor to him sede:
"Foul, be stille!" | <i>Have you not; slain</i>
<i>drawn</i>
<i>Arise; advise</i>
<i>Fool</i> |

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 swoye adoun,
 Thar a sat.
The levedi, is moder, gan to grede:
"Nemeth that treitour!" she sede,
 "Anon with that!"
- 450 Tho doest Beves no leng abide;
The knighting up in ech a side,
 More and lasse,
Wo hem was for the childes sake,
Boute son 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,
460 And he him askede with blithe mod:
"Beves!" a seide, "for the Rode,
 What destow her?"
- 465 "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!"
- 470 "Beves," queth Saber, "thow ert to blame:
The levedi wile now do me schame
 For thine sake!
Boute thow be me comaire 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 spirit
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 wrape!" both trouble
- 475 Saber Beves to his hous laddle,
Meche of that levedi him dradde.
The levedi out of the tour cam,
To Saber the wei she nam.
"Saber," she seide, "whar is Bef,
480 That wike treitour, that fule thef?"
"Dame," a seide, "ich dede him of dawe
Be thee red and be thee sawe:
This beth his clothe, thow her sixl."
The levedi seide: "Saber thow lixt!
485 Boute thow me to him take,
Thow scheilt abegge for is sake."
Beves herde his meister threte;
To hire a spak with hertie grete
And seide: "Lo, me her be name!
490 Do me meister for me no schame!
Yif thow me sext, lo, whar ich am here!"
His moder tok him be the ere;
Fain she wolde a were of live.
Foure knightes she clepede blive:
495 "Wendeth," she seide, "so the stronde:
Yif ye seth schipes of painim londe,
Sell eth to hem this ilche hyne,
That ye for no gode ne fine,
Whather ye have for him mor and lesse,
500 Sell eth him right in to hethenesse!"
Forth the knightes gonre te,
Til that hii come to the se.
Schipes hii fonde ther stonde
Of hethenesse and of fele londe;
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.
Forth thai wente with that child,
510 Crist of hevene be him mild!
- led
he was very afraid
- the made her way
- wicked; foul thief
- By your advice; by your command
as you can see
- you lie
- Unless
- pay
- teacher (mentor); threatened
- Lo, I am here, by name
- Do not shame my teacher on my behalf
- call for me; here I am
- Eagerly she wished he were dead
- called quickly
- Go; shore
- ships; heathen land
- Sell to them; very boy
- fine possessions
- began to go
- they
- found standing there
- many
- they offered to sell
- Merchants; very many
- a good price
- delivered

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

Bevis of Hampton

- 550 That ich mowc 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 isolde,
555 And seide: "I nave non eir after me dai,
Boute Jossian, this faire mai;
And thow wile thee god forsake
And to Apolyn, me lord, take,
Hire I schel thee yeve to wive
560 And al me lond after me live!"
"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.
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,
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 dobbet knight,
Me baner bere in to everi fight!"
575 Beves answerde al with skil:
"What ye me hoten, don ich will!"
Beves was ther yer and other,
The king him lovede also is brother,
And the maide that was so sligh.
580 So dede everi man that him sigh.
Be that he was fiftene yer olde,
Knight ne swain thar nas so bolde,
That him doestey aynes ride
Ne with wrethe him abide.
- might
lance shatter
avenge
heart grew
- have no heir
Except, maiden
If you forsake your god
- give [her] to you to marry
when I die
would not
silver
- Neither
- redeemed
dumb; deaf
- loved him
endured no other man's sorrow
servant
- dubbed
My banner bear
- command; I will do
a year and a second (two years)
as his
clever
saw
By the time
- ride against him (challenge)
anger tolerate him
- 585 His ferste bataile, for soth te say
A dede a Cristes messe day;
Ase Beves scholde to water ride
He did on Christmas

Bevis of Hampton

- And fiftene Saracins be in 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,
 Asc ever Gii, me fader was,
 Ich wolde for me Lordes love,
 That sit high in hevene above,
 Fighte with yow everschon.
 Er than ich wolde hennes gon!"
 The Sarasin seide to his felawes:
 "Lo, brethern, here 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 treitor slon?"
 Al aboute thai gonnes thringe,
 And hard on him thai gonnes 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 [af] shield
as strong; [my] place
every one
Before leaving
Lissen; these boasts
He; defeat is
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 soore, | 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 | suffer
hurt
pluck up his courage
Quickly; he turned
took |
| 635 | And beeide a swerd out of is honde,
And fifti Sarasins, in that stonde
Thar with a yaf hem dedli wonde,
And sum he strok of the swire, | place
them deadly wounds
some; severed; neck
head flew |
| 640 | That the heved flegh in to the rivere,
And sum he clef evene asonder;
Here hors is fet thai laine under;
Ne was ther non, that mighte escape, | Their horses' feet: they lay
There were none
them hastily
home |
| | So Beves slough hem in a rape.
The stedes horne to stable ran
Withoutke kenning of eni man. | guidance from |
| 645 | Beves horne began to ride,
His wondes bledde be ech side;
The stede he graithed up anon,
In to his chaumber he gan gon | put onto the stable |
| 650 | And leide him deueling on the grounde,
To kolen his hertte in that stounde.
Tiding com to King Ermyn
That Beves hadde mad is men tyn; | himself flat
calm; place
Word
perish |
| | The king swor and seide is sawe.
For thi a scholde ben to-drawe. | his sentence
That he should |
| 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, | know; mind |
| 660 | Be Mahoun ne be Tervagaunt.
Boute hit were himself defendant!
Ac, fader," she saide, "be me red,
Er thou do Beves to ded, | Unless he were defending himself
And: advice
Before you put; death |
| | Ich priae, sire, for love o me,
Do bringe that child before thee! | pray |

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,
 Whether thow wilt him slen or save?"
 King Ermyn seide: "Me daughter fre,
 Ase thow hastest seid, so it schel be!"
 Josiane tho anon rightes
 Clepede to hire twei knighthes:
 "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 knighthes 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 knighthes, 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 knighthes wenien out in rape,
 Thai were fain so to ascape.
 To Josian thai wenie 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 sonies 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
dare
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

- 705 And ich wile your waraunt be!"
 Forth thai wente al isame,
 To Beves chaumber that he came.
 "Lemman," she seide, "gent and fre,
 For Godes love, spek with me!"
 She keste him bothe moth and chin
 710 And yaf him confort gode aſin,
 So him solaste that mai,
 That al is care wente awai,
 And seide: "Lemman, thin ore?
 Icham iwondred swithe sore!"
 715 "Lemman," she seide, "with gode entent
 Ichave brought an oyntment,
 For make thee bothe hol and fere;
 Wende we to me fader dere!"
 Forth thai wenten an higing
 720 Til Ermyn, the riche king.
 And Beves tolde unto him than,
 How that stour ended and gan,
 And schewed on him in that stounde
 Fourti grete, grisl wounde.
 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
 And prove to hele, aſe thou can,
 730 The wondes of that doughti man!"
 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.
 735 Thanne was he aſe fresch to fight,
 So was the faulkoun to the flight.
 His other prowesse who wile lere,
 Hende, herkneth, and ye mai here!
 A wilde bor that was aboute,
 740 Ech man of him hadde gret doute.
 Man and houndes, that he tok,
 With his toſkes he al toſchok.
- guarantee
together

Sweetheart

kissed; mouch
throughout
gave solace; maiden
his
mercy
I am wounded very

ointment
To make you whole; sound
Let us go
in haste
To

conflict; began
showed; place
Forty; gruesome
grayhaired
do not wish

bring to health
brave

healthful
in a short time
whole and sound

At; falcon
learn
Nobles
boar
fear

ranks; shook to pieces

Bevis of Hampton

- Thei him hontede knigtes 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.
- 745
- Beves lay in is bedde a night
And thoughte, a wolde ketthen is might
Upon that swin himself one,
That no man scholde with him gone.
- 750
- 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
- 755
- 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;
- 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,
- 770
- That Beves hadde to lemmann koren!"
- 775
- Tho Beves in to the wode cam,
His scheld aboute is nekke a nam
And tide his hoes to an hei thorn
And blew a blast with is horn;
Thre motes a blew al arowe,
- 780
- 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,
eten here flesch and dronke her blode.
- hunted [the boar]; ten
gave he not a bean (did not care)
- five
- Each; inches wide
- bristles
- fierce; knew how to
- his
- dreamed; he would prove his
swine; alone
- In the morning
- saddled; horse
decided; hast
armed himself; sword
- forest
watched
felt
- as the stood there
- chosen
- he took
tree
- notes; in a row
boar; bear
- Then; boar's den
- saw
slain
- Eaten their; drunk their blood

- "Aris!" queth Beves, "corsede gast,
And yem me bataile wel in hast!"
Sone so the bor him sigh,
A nerde is brosteles wel an high
785 And starede on Beves with eien holwe,
Also a wolde him have awolwe;
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 fles.
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 weni 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 praiser
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 venu,
Thourgh Godes grace and is vertu
With swerd out a slinte
Twei toskes at the ferste dent;
815 A spanne of the groin beform
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
- eversong
fighting
cared
- his prayer
- without fail
Against; give
- foam; wondrously
very place
His virtue
sliced
- Two tasks; stroke
hand's breadth of the snow
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	loathly
825	The swerd a beeide 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	thrust carved; exactly in two brandished again quickly
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 made fre, Him com strokes so gret plenté,	offsmote handle head; stuck flourish; known
835	That fain he was to weren is hed And save himself fro the ded.	eager; defend from; death steward
	A stiward was with King Ermin, That hadde tight to sle that swin; To Beves a bar gret envie, For that he hadde the meistrie;	Who; hoped bare
840	He dede arme his knighting stout, Four and twenti in a route, And ten forsters also he tok And wente to wode, seith the bok.	mastery stout
845	Thar-of ne wiste Beves nougth. Helpe him God, that alle thing wrought! In is wei he rit pas for pas. Herkneth now a ferli cas:	the book says knew
	A wende pasi in grith and pes, The stiward criðe: "Leith on and sles!"	who created all things rides step for step
850	Beves seigh that hii to him ferde, A wolde drawe to is swerde: Thanne had he leved it thor, Thar he hadde slawe the bor.	Listen; marvelous event He (Bevis) went walking in peace; security Attack; strike down drew
855	He nadde nothing, himself to were, Boute a tronsoun of a spere. Tho was Beves sore desmeid, The heved fro the tronsoun a braid,	left it there Where defend handle dismayed took

Bevis of Hampton

- And with the bor is heved a faught
And wan a swerd of mische maught,
That Morgelai was cleped, aplight.
Beter swerd bar never knight.
- Tho Beves hadde that swerd an hond,
Among the heithene knighting a wond,
And sum upon the helm a hitte,
In to the sadel he hem slitte,
- And sum knight Beves so ofraughte,
The heved of at the ferste draughte,
So harde he gan to lein aboue
Among the heithene knighting stout,
- That non ne pasede hom, aplight;
So thourgh the grace of God almighty
The kinges stiward a hitte so,
That is bodi a clef aro.
- The dede kors a gulte adoun
And lep himself in to the arsoun.
That strok him thoughte wel iset
For he was horsed meche bet.
- He thoughte make pes doun rightes
Of the forsters ase of the knighting;
To hem faste he gan ride;
Thair gonnes schete be ech a side,
- So mani arwes to him thair sende,
Unnethe a mighte himself defende,
So tho is a lite stounde
The ten forsters wer feld te grounde,
- And hew hem alle to pices smale:
So hit is fonde in Frensch tale.
Josian lai in a castel
And segh that sconfit everich del.
- "O Mahoun," she seide, "oure drighe,
What Beves is man of meche mighte?
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?
Lovelonging me hath becought,
- boar's head he
great power
was called, indeed
- When
turned
- them slit
a certain; reached
stroke
rush
- be clef in two
corpse; pulled down
saddle
placed
much better
wanted to make a certain peace
With
then
shoer
arrows
Scarcely
- conflict
lord
- if I had it
would wed him
Unless
your advice
captivated

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 that the folk believed
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 eride, 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, thow 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 enough.
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
- cartier; worn out
- lie
- they advise

Bevis of Hampton

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

Bevis of Hampton

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

Bevis of Hampton

- 1015 And ever hit 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,
 ready
 moment
 Sixty thousand
 Damascus
- 1020 That never on homward ne went;
 Tho Brademond segh is folk islayn,
 A flegh awei with myghte and mayn.
 Ase he com ride be a cost,
 Twei knightes a fond of Beves ost;
 When; saw
 fled
 coast
 hast
 dismount
- 1025 Of his stede he gan doun lighte
 And bond hem bothe anon righte,
 And thoughte hem lede to his prisoun
 And have for hem greet raunsoun.
 Ase he trosede hem on is stede,
 ransom
 trusted; steed
 took heed
 time
- 1030 Beves of hem nam gode bede,
 And hasteliche in that tide
 After Brademond he gan ride
 And seide: "Brademond, olde wreche,
 Ertow come Josiane to feche?
 Are you; fetch
 First
- 1035 Erst thou schelt pase thourgh min bond
 And thourgh Morgelay, me gode brond!"
 Withouten eni wordes mo
 Beves Brademond hitte so
 Upon is helm in that stounde,
 place
- 1040 That a felde him flat to grounde.
 "Merci!" queth Brademond, "ich me yelde,
 Recreant to thee, in this felde,
 So harde thee smitest upon me kroun,
 Ich do me all in the bandoun,
 I acknowledge myself
 Defeated by
 crown
- 1045 Sexti cites with castel tour
 Thin ownen, Beves, to thin onour,
 With that thou lete me ascape!"
 Beves answeerde tho in rape:
 "Nay!" a seide, "be sein Martyn!
 relinquish; your power
- 1050 Icham iswoee to King Ermin.
 Al that ich do, it is his dede;
 Tharfore, sire, so God me spede,
 Thou schelt swere upon the lay,
 Your own; honor
 Providing that; escape
 then in haste
 for him
 law

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
1060 Ne aghen thee, Beves, armes bere!"
And whan he hadde swore so,
Beves let King Brademond go.
Alas, that he nadde him slawe
And ibrought of is life dawe!
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 red hom and gan to singe
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,
1075 Londes and ledes, al that he walt,
A saith, sire, of thee hem halt!"
Thanne was King Ermin at that sithe
In is herte swithe blithe;
A clepede is doughter and saide:
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 inn.
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
1090 And on the maidenes bed isete,
That mai, that was so bright of hiwe,
Thoughte she wolde hire consaile schewe,
- war, [*neither*] day nor night
homage
- Thereunto
harm
- Neither against you*
- For later despite all his fair promise*
feast
- henceforth hear*
- command
- As long as he lives*
- people, possesses
- He says; holds them for you*
- time
- food (dinner)*
- cease
- lodging*
- gave
- servings [of various dishes]*
- eater*
- hue (complexion)*
- counsel; show*

Bevis of Hampton

- And seide: "Beves, lemmen, thin ore!
Ichave loved thee ful yore,
1095 Sikerli can I no rede,
Boute thow me love, ieham dede,
And boate thow 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 lemmen,
Thee bodi in thee scherte naked,
Than al the gold, that Crist hath maked,
And thow 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 thow, cherl, me hastest forsake;
Mahoun thee yeve tene and wakē!
Beter become the iliche
1120 For to fowen an olde dicē
Thanne for to be dobbēd knight,
Te gon among maidenes bright,
To other contrē thow 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 contrē ich wile te:
1130 Scheltow me namore ise!
Thow yeve me an hōes: 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
- paine; 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 sas him, ich wile amende
 1145 Al togedre 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 togedres 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 yerme,
 Horn aghen he gan terne;
 A fond that maide in sorwe and care
 And tolde hire his answare,
 1165 That he ne mighte nought spedē
 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
at 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, If
The wei to his chaumber I wil neme, take
And, what ever of me befalle, befalls me
Ich wile wende in to is halle!"
- Beves herde that maide ther-oute.
- 1180 Ase yif aslep, he gan to route. snare
- "Awake, lemmant!" she seide, "Awake!
Icham icome, me pes to make. my peace
- Lemman, for the coeteisie,
Spek with me a word or tweie!" two
- 1185 "Damesele," queth Beves thanne,
"Let me ligge and go the wei benne! lie; go away
Icham weri of-foughte sore, I am weary
- Ich faught for thee, I nel namore." if you please
- "Merci," she seide, "lemmant, thin ore!"
- 1190 She fel adoun and wep wel sore: sayings
"Men saith," she seide, "in olde riote, woman's arrow; shot
That wimmannes bolt is sone schote. Forghem me, that ichave misede,
And ich wile right now to mede as a reward
- 1195 Min false godes al forsake My
And Cristendom for thee love take!" your
- "In that maner," queth the knight,
"I graunte thee, me swete wight!" creature
- And kiste hire at that coedement. covenant
- 1200 Tharfore he was negh after schent. nearly overcome
- The twei knighthes, that he unbond,
That were in Brademondes hond.
He made that on is chaumberlain. one
Him hadde be beter, he hadde hem stein! It would have been better
- 1205 Thei wente to the king and swot othe: oath
"No wonder, sire, thegh ye be wrothe,
No wonder, thegh ye ben agreved.
Whan Beves, scherewe misbelieved,
The doughier he hath now forlain. that you are angry
wicked infidel
deflowered

- 1210 Hit were gode, sire, that he wer slain!"
 Hii lowe, the schrewes, that him gan weie.¹
 In helle mote thai hongen beie!
 He dede nothing, boute ones hire kiss,
 Nought elles bi hem men ne wiste.
- kiss her once
Nothing else about him; knew
- 1215 Tharfore hit is soth isaid
 And in me rime right wel ilaid.
 Delivre a thef fro the galwe,
 He thee hateth after be alle halwe!
 "Alias!" queth Ermin, the King,
- my rhyme; places
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 foelaie!"
- 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 scrit!
 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 preme 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>trustfully</i>
	Have ich Arondel, me stede,	
	Ich wile fare in to that thede,	<i>country</i>
	And Moergelai, 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	"Ae nim a lighter hakenai	<i>take; hackney</i>
	And lef her the swerd Mergelai,	<i>leave here</i>
	And thow schelt come to Brademonde	
	Sone withinne a lite stounde!"	
	Beves an hakenai bestri	<i>a little while</i>
1260	And in his wei forth a rit	<i>mounted</i>
	And bereth with him is owene deth,	<i>he rode</i>
	Boute God him helpe, that alle thing seth!	<i>own</i>
	Teme we aghen, thar we wer er,	<i>Unless; sees</i>
	And speke we of is em Saber!	<i>earlier</i>
1265	After that Beves was thus sold,	<i>uncle</i>
	For him is hertie was ever cold.	<i>when</i>
	A clepede to him his sone Terri	<i>called</i>
	And bad him wenden and aspie	<i>go; search</i>
	In to eveni 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 bryyende Inde!"	<i>beyond</i>
	Terri, is sone, is forth ifare,	<i>has gone away</i>
	Beves a soughte everiwhare;	
	In al heithenes nas tous non,	<i>all pagan lands</i>
1280	That Cristene man mighte ther in gos,	
	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,	
	That Terri com beside Damas;	<i>Damascus</i>

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!"
1290 Is it thee wille, come nere and dine?"
Beves was of-hongred sore
And kouathe him gret thank therfore,
For twei dawes he haddle ride
Fastande in that ilche wede.
- 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
- 1300 Terri askede at Sire Bevoun,
Yif a herde telle yong or olde
Of a child, that theder was sole.
His name was ihote Bevoun
I bore a was at South-Hamtown.
- 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 swoong,
- 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 borene!
Is me loed Beves forloren!"
- 1315 Beves tok him up at that cas
And gan him for to solas:
"Wend hom," a seide, "to thee contref!
Sai the frendes so ichave thee.
Though thou him seche thes seve yer,
- 1320 Thou woest that child never the ner!"
Terri on Beves beheld
And segh the boiste with a scheld.
"Me thenketh, thou ert a masager,
- place
dined; in armor
medlar tree

Saint Julian
If you would like
very hungry
showed
days
Garbed; same clothes
pilgrim; supplies

Bread; meat; bag
flagons; wine
abundance

Whether

called
Born
laughed

not; long ago
hang
fell down; swooned
hair; sore

sighed

lost
event

Return home
Tell your friends what I have told you
sought; seven
were; nearer

saw; letter case; seal

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 Ile of Wight,
 How him tolde a gentil knight,
 That Sarsins hadde Beves forfare
 And hangede him, while he was there.
 Saber wep and made drem.
 1340 For he was the childe's em,
 And ech yer on a dai certaine
 Upon th' emperor of Almaine
 With a wel gret baronage
 A cleimedde his eritage.
 1345 Let we now ben is em Saber
 And speke of Beves, the maseger!
 Foorth 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
 masque; 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;
god
- 1365 Unnethe I scapede among that thring,
For to bringe thee tiding!"
Scarcely; strong
- Brademond quakede at the boord
And seide: "That is Beves, me lord!"
trembled with fear; table
- 1370 Beves wente in at the castel ghat,
His hoers he lefte ther-ate
And wente forth in to the halle
And grete hem in this maner alle:
greeted them
- "God, that made this world al ronde,
Thee save, Sire King Brademond,
Save you
- 1375 And ek alle thine fere,
That I se now here,
companions
- And yif that ilche blessing
Liketh thee right nothing,
very
- Mahoun, that is god thin,
- 1380 Tervagaunt and Apolin,
Termagant
Thee blessti and dighte
blesst; save
- Be alle here mighte!
their
- Lo her, the King Ermin
Look here
- The sente this letter in parchemin,
parchment
- 1385 And ase the letter thee telleth to,
He bade
A bad, thou scholdest swithe do!"
kneaded
- Beves knealed and nolde nought stonde
farthered
- And yaf up is deth with is owene honde.
fear
- Brademond quakede al for drede,
- 1390 He undede the letter and gan to rede
hide
- And fond iwritten in that felle,
kil
- How that he scholde Beves aquelle.
- Thanne seide Brademond to twenti king,
banquet
- That were that dai at is gisning.
- 1395 A spak with tresoun and with gile:
gentle
- "Ariseth up," he seide "a while,
Everich of yow fro the bord,
And wolcometh your kende lord!"
- Alle hii gonnen up right stonde,
- 1400 And Brademond tok Beves be the honde
for that purpose
- And held him faste at that sake,

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 gone aboute him scheve,
Ase don ben aboute the heve.
So withinne a lite stounde
moment
quickly
shave
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 schest 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 misease.
Ne scheltow have, til thow be ded,
fathoms
mis-ease (discomfort)
- 1420 Boute ech a dai quarter of a loaf bred;
Yif thow wilt drinke, thegh it be nought swet,
Thee schelt hit take under the fet!"
A dede Beves binde to a ston gret,
That wegh seve quarters of whet,
loaf of bread
great stone
wheat
- 1425 And het him caste in to prisoun,
That twenti teise was dep adoun.
At the prisoun dore Beves fond
A tronsoun, that he tok in is bond.
Tharwith a thoughte were him there
ordered
fathoms
club
to protect himself
- 1430 Fram wormes, that in prisoun were.
Now is Beves at this petes grounde.
God bringe him up hol and sonde!
Now speke we of Josian, the maide,
That com to hire fader and seide:
snakes
pit's bottom
- 1435 "Sire," she seide, "whar Beves be,
That me mighte him nought fern ise?"
"Doughter," a seide, "a is ifare
In to his londe and woneth thare,
In to is owene eritage,
where is Bevis
see for a long time
has gone
dwells
- 1440 And hath a wif of gret parage,
birth

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

Bevis of Hampton

1480	That him scholde omage bringe, And bad hem come lest and meste, To comoure that meri fesse. 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	<i>prepared: packhorses</i>
1490	Theder was brought in hire chare. King Ermin nom Arondel And let him sadien faire and wel, A wente to Beves chaumber, ther he lay, And nom his swerd Morgelay;	<i>Thather; chariot</i> took
1495	With Arondel agan it lede To King Yvor, and thus a sede: "Sone," a sede, "have this stede, The beste sole, that man mai fede, And this swerd of stel broun,	began <i>Son</i> <i>best horse: feed</i> <i>shining</i>
1500	That was Beves of Hamoun. 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> <i>Nor</i>
1505	That thow 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 Mombraunst,	<i>guard</i> <i>use</i>
1510	A swor is oth be Tervagaunt, That he wolde in to his cité ride Upon Arondel before is bride. Arondel thar he bestrit;	<i>sar upon</i> <i>understands</i>
1515	That hors wel sone underyit, 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;	<i>back</i> <i>pay for</i> <i>grain</i>

Bevis of Hampton

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

Bevis of Hampton

- The brein clevede on is staf.
Doun fel the nadder, withouten faille,
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
1565 And bet hire al to pises smale,
As hit is sondre in Frenscze tale.
Tho he hadde slawe the foule fendes,
Be that hadde Beves lein in bendes
Seve yer in peines grete,
1570 Line idronke and lasse iete;
His browe stank for defaut of yeme,
That it set after ase a seme,
Wharthourgh that made ne knew him nougħt,
Whan hii were eft togedre brought.
1575 On a dai, ase he was mad and feint,
To Jesu Crist he made is pleint
And to his moder, seunte Marie,
Reuliche he gan to hem crie:
"Lord," a seide, "Hevēne King,
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?
1585 Ich bedde Thee, Loed, for Thee pitē,
That Thow have merci on me
And yeve grace, hennes to gange
Or sone be drawen other anhange!
Me roughte never, what dieth to me come,
1590 With that ich were hennes nome!
The galers, that him scholde yeme,
Whan hii berde him thus reme,
"Thef! cherl!" seide that on tho:
- brain stuck to his
out of; swoon
beat; small pieces
fiends
bonds
great pain
Little; less [he] ate
lack; care
scar (seam)
delirious; sick
Mournfully
Maker
done so wrong
see; will allow
enemies; foes
your
hither; go
drawn or hanged
I do not care
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,
your life's days are done
caesar; sorrow
Very soon
lamp
- 1600 And be the cord he gan doun glide
And smot him with that other hond,
And Beves to the grunde a wond.
"Allas," queth Beves, "that ilche stounde!
Wo is the man, that lith ybounde
fell
very time of suffering
lies
- 1605 Medel bothe fet and honde!
Tho ich com ferst in to this londe,
Hadde ich had me swerd Morgelay
And Arondel, me gode palfray,
For Dames, nadde be tresoun,
Middle (waist); feet
saddle horse
Damascus; had it not been for
give a button (would not care)
- 1610 I nolde have yeve a botoun,
And now the mestre wreche of alle
With a strok me doth adeoun falle,
Bidde ich never with Jesu speke,
Boute ich ther-of may ben awreke!"
avenged
- 1615 A smot the gailer with is fest,
That is nekke him to-berst.
His felawe above gan to crie:
"Highe hidre, felawe," queth Beves, "highe!"
"Yif thou most have help," a sede,
flat
bursts
companion
Come
- 1620 "Ich come to thee with a gode spede!"
"Yis!" queth Beves, al for gile,
And knette the rop thar while
Ase high ase a myghte reche.
Tho queth Beves with ruful speche:
knotted
reach
ruful resort
- 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,
Saint Mohammed
By; glide quickly
thief
said
longer
- 1630 Boute by the rop adoun he glod.
Whan the rop failede in is bond,
Beves held up that gode bronde
slid
missed
weapon

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|------------------------------------|
| | And feldie 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> |
| | Tofoee that, for soth to sai | |
| 1640 | A was woned, ech other dai | <i>accustomed: every other day</i> |
| | Of berelef 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 gonnes breke | <i>fetters</i> |
| | And of his medel the grete ston. | <i>off, belly</i> |
| 1650 | Jess 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 knighthes 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, | |
| | And priveliche he gan in reke | <i>unfastened</i> |
| 1665 | And armede him in yrne wode, | <i>did indeed go in</i> |
| | The beste, that he fond at nede, | <i>iron clothes (chain mail)</i> |
| | And gerte him with a gode bronde | <i>best; handy</i> |
| | 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 nougnt wrain,
Under his hond he made him plai.
And whan the Sarassins wer islawe,
The besse stede he let forth drawe
And sadelede hit and wel adight.
1680 And weate him forth anon right
And gan to crie with loude steven
And the porter he gan nevessen:
"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.
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 hoes to a chesteine
1700 And felle aslepe upon the pleine;
And also a slep, in is swenvene
Him thoughte, Brademond and kinges seven
Stod over him with swerdes drawe,
Al slepande him wolde han slawe.
1705 Of that sweven he was of-drad;
He lep to hoes 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,

many
their worsomess

betray
fight
stain

dressed

voice
did name

Make haste; open
escaped
I am
capture
confused

Armenia

away from
got very sleepy

tied; chestnut tree

dream

have slain
afraid
crazy
indeed
short while

Bevis of Hampton

- That Beves was ascaped so,
In is herte him was ful wo.
That time be commin acent
Thar was commin parlement,
1715 Erles, barouns, lasse and more,
And fifbene kinges were sumned 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 selver wight,
Er he that hors have might.
He armede him in yrene wede,
Seve knightinghe 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 though min hondes one,
For sothe, thow schelt thee lif forgom!"
"So helpe me God!" queth Beves tho,
"Hit were no meistri, me to alo,
For this is the ferthe dai agon,
1740 Mete ne drinke ne bot i nom:
Ac natholes, 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 togodre mete,
With here launces thei gonnes mete,
That hit gonnens 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 knighting stout
And figheth faste, it is no doute;
The medwe squaughte of her dentes,
The fur fleght out, so spark o flintes;
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,
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,
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 wreast,
1770 Hit fleght awai though help of Crist.
Tho Grander hadde his scheld sleet,
He faught ase he wer wode therfore;
A yaf Beves strokes that tide,
Non ne moste other abide.
1775 Beves ther-of was agreved
And smot of King Grander is heved,
The dede kores in that theowe
Fel out over the sadel bowe.
Tho King Grander was islawe,
1780 The seve knightes of hethen lawe
Beves slough that ilche stounde,
So hit is in Frensch yfounde.
For nought Beves nolde belave,
The beter hors a wolde have;
1785 Beves Trenchefis bestrit,
And in is wese forth a rit,
And Brademond with al is ost
Com after with meche bost;
- burst; pieces
Their
meadow torn by their strokes
fire flies: from flint
morning; noon
angered greatly
withstood
armor; quilted jacket
saddlebow
foot
Then
well done
I will do you one better
his; falchion
at; wrist
taken away
time
cut off; his head
corpse at that moment
When
would not remain
bestrode
rode
host

Bevis of Hampton

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

Bevis of Hampton

	His gode stede he gan bestride And rod over dale and doun,	mount
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.	lady soon saw her
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:	rode
1840	Yeve me today a meles met!" The levedi answerde him thoc "Boute thow fro the gate go, Thee wer beter elleswhar than her; Go, or the tit an evel diner!	meal's measure
1845	Me lord," she seide, "is a geaunt And leveth on Mahoun and Tervagaunt And felleth Cristene men to grunde, For he hateth hem ase hounde!" "Be God!" queth Beves, "I swere an othe:	Unless elsewhere; here receive giant believes in
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	like dogs oath lovable or loathsome fear, whichever
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,	would not go from the gate Before
1860	Rome thretti fote long; He tok a leavour in is bond, And forth to the gate he wond. Of Beves he nam gode hede, Ful wel a knew Beves is stede:	In length thirty feet lever (club)
1865	"Thow ert nome thef, ywis: Whar stele thow stede Trenchefis,	Bevis' horse caught thief Where did you steal

Bevis of Hampton

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

³ 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,
 1905 That his scheld flegh from him thore
 Thee akres brede and sumdel more.
 Tho was Beves in strong erur
 And karf ato the grete levolur
 And on the geauntes brest a wonde,
 1910 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 down to Beves fet,
 1915 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 doughti man,
 And smot ato his nekke bon;
 1920 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!"
 1925 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.
 1930 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
 1935 In that ilche stounde.
 To stoppe misde is wonde.
 "Dame, dame," Beves sede.
 "Let sadele me a gode stede,
 For hennes ich wile ride,
 1940 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
 hated
 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,
And Beves, that hendi knight,
1945 Into the sadel a lippit,
That no strop he ne drippit.
Foeth him wente Sire Bevoun,
Til he com withoute the toun
In to a grene mede.
1950 "Now, lorded Crist," a sede,
"Yeve it, Brademond the king,
He and al is offspring.
Wer right her upon this grene:
Now ich wolde of me tene
1955 Swithe wel ben awreke,
Scholde he never go ne speke:
Now min honger is me aset,
Ne liste me never fighten bet!"
Forth a wente be the steem,
1960 Til a come to Jurisalem;
To the patriarch a wente cof,
And al his lif he him schrof
And tolde him how hit was bego,
Of is wele and of is wo.
1965 The patriarch hadde reuthe
Of him and ek of is treuthe
And forbod him upon his lif,
That he never toke wif,
Boute she were clene maide.
1970 "Nai, for sothe!" Sire Beves saide.
On a dai aghenes the eve
Of the patriarche he tok is leve;
Erliche amorwe, whan it was dai,
Forth a wente in is wai;
1975 And also a rod himself alone:
"Lord," a thoughtie, "whar mai I gone?
Whar ich in to Ingelonde fare?
Nai," a thoughtse, "what sholde I thare,
Boute yif ichadde oit to gader,
Unless: virgin
toward evening
Early
Unless: an army assembled

Bevis of Hampton

- 1980 For to sle me stufader?"
He thoughte, that he wolde an hie
In to the londe of Ermonie,
To Ermonie, that was is bane,
To his leman 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
- 1995 Thourgh King Ermynes 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,
- 2000 Ac in is prisoun with meche wo
Ichave leie this seven yare,
Ac now icham from him ifare
Thourgh Godes grace and min engyna,
Ac al ich wite it King Ermyn,
- 2005 And, ne wer is daughter Josiane,
Series, ich wolde ben is bane!"
"Josiane," queth the knight, "is a wif
Aghen hire wille with meche strif.
Seve yer hit is gon and more,
That the riche King Yvore
- 2010 To Membraunt hath hire wedde
Bothe to bord and to bedde,
And hath the swerd Moegelai
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
- each asked about the other's situation*
laughed
have
Suffered; chill
pains
Through; deceit
yield; well (a good idea)
time
for
ingenuity
credit it all
were it not for his
his slayer
Against
since
amusement

Bevis of Hampton

- 2020 Toward Mombraunt on Arondel;
The hors was nought spaired wel:
He arned awai with the king
Thourgh felde and wode, withouten lesing,
And in a mure don him cast,
Almest he hadde deyed in hast.
- 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 ameid that tide;
- 2030 Sithe dorste no man on him ride!"
For this tiding Beves was blithe,
His joie kouthe he no man kith.
"Wer Josiane," a thoughte, "ase lele,
Alse is me stede Arondel,
- 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,
- 2040 Thow most terne al aghen noorth!"
Beves termede his stede
And rod north, Gode sped;
- 2045 Mombraunt is a riche cité;
In al the londe of Sarsine
Nis ther non therto iliche
Ne be fele parti so riche.
- 2050 And whan that hende knight Bevoun
Come withouten the toun,
Tharwith a palmer he mette,
And swithe faire be him grette:
- 2055 "Palmer," a sede, "what is the king?"
"Sire," a sede, "an honting
With kinges fistene."
"And whar," a sede, "is the quene?"
"Sire," a sede, "in hire bout."
- contented
bolted
in truth
more
gathered
[Arondel] annoyed
happy
self
as loyal
As
Yonder
God [let him] prosper
be; moving on
none like it
pilgrim
bedchamber

- “Palmer,” a seide, “paramour,
Yem me thine wede
For min and for me stede!”
“God yeve it,” queth the palmar,
“We hadde drive that chefare!”
Beves of is palfrei alighte
And schrede the palmer as a knighe
And yaf him is hors, that he rod in,
Foe 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,
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.
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!
Meche she loveth palmar;
Al that she mai finden here.
Everiche dai in the yere,
Faire she wile hem fede
And yeve hem riche wede
For a knigtes 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?”
A seide: “Betwene middai and noun.”
Beves, hit ful wel he sai,
Hit nas boutie yong dai;
A thoughte that he wolde er than
Wende aboute the barbican,
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 off lands
goods
feed them
soon
saw
early
before then
Walk (turn); tower

Bevis of Hampton

- Yif he the castel wolde becke,
Whar a mighte best in reke;
And also a com be a touret,
2100 That was in the castel iset,
A hende 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 wonded 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 amour,
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
- wore 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

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

Bevis of Hampton

- 2175 Beves to the hors tegh;
Tho the hoes 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, "lemman 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,
gone away
- Thai wolde after us everichon
everyone
- With wondergret chevalrie,
horsemanship
- And do us schame and vilenie;
harm
- Ac formeste, sire, withouten fable.
first; lie
- 2220 Led Arondel im to the stable,
at; wait
- And ate the gate thow him abide,
Til the king cometh bi the ride;
right then
- A wile thee asken at the frome,
Whider thow schelt and whannes thow come;
Who are you
- 2225 Sai, that thow havest wide iwent,
traveled widely
- And thow come be Dablenet,
from
- That is hennes four jurné:
[days'] journey
- Sai, men wile ther the king sle,
Unless
- Boute him come help of sum other;
And King Yvor is his brother,
And whan he hereth that tiding.
in haste
- 2230 Theder a wile an highing
With al is power and is ost:
Thanne mai we with lite bost
host
- 2235 Thanne mai we with lite bost
effort
- Forth in oure we go!"
Beves seide: "It schel be so!"
And Arondel to stable lad,
led
- And Bonefas him bad;
bade
- And to the gate Beves yode
went
- 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
staff and parse by
- His berd was yelw, to is brest wax
pilgrim's cloak rough and unfitted
- And to his geedel heng is fax.
yellow; [down] to his breast
- 2245 Al thai seide, that hii ne sighc
waist; hair
- So faire palmer never with eighc,
Ne com ther non in that contré:
eyes
- Thus wondred on him that him gan se;
And so stod Beves in that thring.
- 2250 Til noun belle began to ring.
throng
- noon

- Fram honting com the King Yvore,
 And fiftene kinges him before,
 Dukes and erles, barouns how fale
 I can nought telle the righte tale.
- 2255 Mervaile thaſ 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 Egippe, 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 land of Dabulent.
 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 besieged in that castel:
- 2285 To hors and armes, lasse and more,
 In haste swithe, that we wer thore!"
 Thai armeſ hem anon bedene,
 Yvor and his kinges fiftene,
 And to the Cite of Diabulent
- 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

- 2290 Alle samen forth they went.
But an old king, that hight Garey,
At home he lefte to kepe the lady.
Thoo seid Beves: "Make yow yare,
Yif that ye wille with me fare!"
2295 Sir Bonefas answered thoo:
"Yif ye wil by my consaile do:
Here is an olde king Garey.
That musche can of nygremancy;
He may see in his goldryng.
2300 What any man dooth in alle thing.
I know an erbe in the forest.
Now wille I sende thereafter peest
And let brochen Reynessah wyne
And do that yerbe anoon therynne.
2305 And what he be, that ther-of doth drynke,
He shal lerne for to wynke
And slepe anon after ryght
Al a day and al a nyght."
Sir Bonefas dide al this thing;
2310 They resen up in the dawnyng:
Inowgh they toke what they wolde,
Both of silver and of golde,
And other tresoure they toke also,
And in hur way they gunne goo.
2315 And when they were went away,
Garey awaked a morow day
And had wonder swith stronge,
That he hadde slept so longe.
His ryng he gan to him tee,
2320 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, loedinges, for to fyght!"
2325 And tolde his folke, verament,
How the queene was awey went.
They armed hem in ryche wede
And every knyght lep on his stede,

*together**guard**ready**go**accromancy**gold ring**herb**quickly**broach (a cask) of Rhenish**herb**nod off**on their**very**take**saw**gone**cried out**To arms**truly**armor*

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.
2335 I wil fonde, what I do may,
I have rested me moony a day.
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,
2345 Theyghe men hadden his deth sworn,
He myght him kepe wel therform!"
Into the cave he hath hem brought;
Garcy, the Kyng, hem couth fynde nought,
Therfore him was swith woo;
2350 He and his ost bethought hem thoo,
Hoom agheyn for to wende
And sende Ascopard hem to shende.
In the cave they were al nyght
Withoutte mete or drynke, aplight.
2355 Twoo dayes it was goon,
That mete ne drynke had they noon.
Josian was afyngered soore
And told anoon Beves therfore.
Beves seid, "How darst thou of me meete crave?
2360 Wel thou wotest, that noon I have."
Josian answered sone anoon
And bade Sir Beves to wood goon:
I have herde of savagenes,
Whenne yonge men were in wyldernes,
2365 That they toke hert and hinde
And other bestes, that they myght fynde;
They slowen hem and soden hem in her hide;
- go
try
many days
stuff
Thought
could not find them
so angry
destroy
indeed
passed
starved
food [ask for]
you know
forest
savageness
stag; doe
prepared

Bevis of Hampton

- Thus doon men that in wood abyde.
 Sir, thou myghtest bestes lyghtly take,
 For cause good I wyl thee make!"
- 2370 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.
 Als sone as he was forth yfare,
 Two lyouns ther com yn thare,
 Grennand and rampand with her feet.
- 2380 Sir Bonefas then als skeet
 His hoes 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,
 And the twoo lyouns at hur feete,
 Grennand on hur with muche grame.
- 2390 But they ne myght do hur no shame,
 For the kind of lyouns, ywis,
 A kynges daughter, that maide is,
 Kinges daughter, quene and maide both,
 The lyouns myght do hur noo wroth.
- 2395 Beves com sone fro huntynge
 With three hertes, without lesyng,
 And fonde an hoes gnawe to the boos,
 And Josian awey was goon.
 He sowned soone for sorow and thought,
- 2400 Fro cave to cave he her sought,
 To wete how that eas myght be,
 And in a cave he gan to see,
 Where Josain sate in grete doute
 And twoo lions hur about.
- 2405 Too Sir Beves gan she speke:
 "Sir, thyn help, me to awreke
- live
 easily
 sauce
 shear; ready
Crashing; standing (as lions rampant)
 very quickly
 shut /herself/
 ferocity
 nature
 virgin
 queen
 harm
 stags
 bone
 swooned
 understand what happened
 fear
 To
 avenge

Bevis of Hampton

- Of these two liouns, that thy chamberleyne,
Ryght now han him slayn?"
- She seide, she wolde that oon hoolde,
2410 While that he that other quelde.
Aboute the nekke she herst that oon,
And Beves bade let him goon,
And seide: "Dame, foesoth, ywys,
I myght yelp of lytel prys,
2415 There I had a lyon quelde,
The while a woman another helde!
Thow shalt never umbraide me,
When thou comest hoorn to my contré:
But thou let hem goo both twoo,
2420 Have good day, fro thee I goo!"
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 romauance 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 begynnnyng
To Beves hondes she gan spryng
And al to peces rent hem there,
Or Beves myght ther-of be were.
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.
Tho was Beves in her grome,
For the lioun had do him shame;
As he were wood, he gan to fyght;
The lionesse seyge that sight
2445 And taught to Beves, without faile,
- steward*
- killed*
- held*
- boast; worth*
- reproach*
- cruel*
- listen carefully to the end*
- may their souls go*
- Before, beware*
- vehemently*
- thigh*
- discouraged*
- mad*
- rushed*

- Both at oones they gan him assaile.
 Thoo was Beves, in strong tempestes,
 So strong and eyre were these beestes,
 That nyghe they hadde him there queld;
 great trouble
 2450 Unnethe he kept him with his sheld.
 With Morgelay, that wel wold byte,
 To the lioun he gan smyte:
 His ryght foot he shroe asonder,
 Sir Beves shilde the Lyoun ranne under
 2455 And with his teeth with sory happe
 He kitte a pece of his lappc,
 And Beves that ilke stounde
 For anguysse fel to the grounde,
 And hastely Beves than up stert,
 2500 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.
 2550 Stoutliche the liounesse than
 Asailede Beves, that doughti man,
 And with hire mouth is scheld tok
 So sterneliche, saith the bok,
 That doune it fel of is left hond.
 2600 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,
 2650 And swor be God in Trinité,
 Boute she lete that lioun be,
 A wolde hire sle in that destresse
 Ase fain ase the liounesse.
 2700 Tho she ne mosste him noughe helpe fighte,
 His scheld she broughte him anen righte
 And yede hire site adoun, saun faile,
 And let him worthe in that bataile.
 The liounesse was stout and steme,
 Aghen to Beves she gan erne
 2750 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 sparlike;
Tho was Beves in gret yee,
And in that ilche selve venu
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 kith,
And ofte he thankede the king in gloei
When they (the lions)
could: show
- 2500 Of his grace and is vikton;
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
- 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
- 2510 A space of fot betwene is browe;
His clob was, to yeve a strok,
A lite bodi of an ok.
In length
shaggy
brow
club
small trunk; oak
- 2515 Beves hadde of him wonder gret
And askede him, what a het,
And yef men of his contré
Were ase meche ase was he.
he was called
whether
large
- "Me name," a sede, "is Ascopard:
Garci me sente hideward,
For to bringe this quene aghen
2520 And theo, Beves, her of-slen.
Icham Garci is chaumpioun
And was idrive out of me toun;
Al for that ich was so lite,
here to slay
Garci's
driven

Bevis of Hampton

- 2525 Everi man me wolde smite;
Ich was so lite and so menagh,
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 slantie
2540 And fel with is owene dentie.
Beves of is palfray 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 betray!"
"Sire, ich wil ben is bourgh, nai!"
Thar a dede Beves omage
2550 And becom is owene page.
Forth thai wenten alle thee,
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

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

- 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 knighting 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 distrueede hit al aboute;
Thai hadde mani mannes kours.
- 2620 Wharthourgh hii ferdan wel the wors;
Tharfoore hii deide in dedli sinne
And belle 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;
- 2630 To Jesu Crist a bed a bone,
That he dilivre the dragouns sone
Out of that ilche stede,
That hii namore harm ne dede.
- 2635 And Jesu Crist, that sit in hevene,
Wel herde that ermites stevene
And grauntede him is praiere.
- 2640 Anon the dragouns bothe ifere
Toke here flight and flowe awai,
That never eft man hem ne sai.
That on fleght anon with than,
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 nought 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;
- 2660 Thar the dragoun gan arive
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,
- 2665 The leste was seventene inch about,
The her, the cholle under the chin,
He was bothe leith and grim;
A was imaned ase a stede;
- 2670 The heved a bar with meche pride,
Betwene the scholder and the taile
Foure and twenti fot, saunfaile.
- 2675 His taile was of gret stringethe,
Sextene fot a was a lingthe;
His bodi ase a wintonne.
Whan hit schoen the brighte sonne,
His wingges schon so the glas.
- 2680 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
- flow
- delay
- cliff
ears; rough
forehead (whole face)
- inches around
hair; throat
loathsome
maned
- without fail
strength
it was in length
wine tan
- 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 toges and with candel light.
 Whan he was in bedde ibrought,
 On Jesu Crist was al is thought.
- 2685 Him thoughte, a king, that was wod,
 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.
 Whan he of is sleep abraid,
 Of is svevenc he was afraid.
 Thanne a herde a reuli cri,
 And besoughte Jesu merci:
- 2695 "For the venim is on me theowe,
 Her I legge al to-blowe,
 And roteth me flesh fro the bon,
 Bote ne tit me never non!"
 And in is cri a seide: "Allas,
- 2700 That ever yet I maked was!"
 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,
 In bataile he was holden wight;
 Alse a wente him to plaie
 Aboute her in this contrai,
 In this contré aviroun
- 2710 A mette with a vle dragoun,
 And venim he hath on him throwe:
 Thar a lith al to-blowe!
 "Loed Crist," queth Beves tho,
 "Ma eni man the dragoun slo!"
- 2715 His men answerde, withouten lesing;
 "Thar nis neither emperur ne king,
 That come thar the dragoun wore,
 An hundred thosend men and more,
- soches
- A vision came to him; mad*
- He thought he might not remain*
it seemed to him
suffering
[abruptly] awakened
dream
mourful
- lie; swollen*
- Nor do I have any remedy at all*
- ever I was born*
- immediately*
- valiant
- fight
- hereabout
- he lies; swollen
- lying
- where the dragon was

- That he nolde sien hem everichon,
 2720 Ne scholde hii never thannes gon."
 "Ascopard," a seide, "whar erow?"
 "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 ynene 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 pleging.
 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 Forther dorste he go namore;
 A seide to Beves, that was is fere:
 "A wonderthing ye mai here!"
 Beves saide: "Have thow no doute,
 The dragoun lith her aboute;
 2745 Haddie we the dragoun wonne,
 We hadde the feireste pris under sonne!"
 Ascopard swor, be Sein Jon,
 A fot ne dorste he forther gon.
 Beves answerde and seide tho;
 2750 "Ascopard, whi seistow so?
 Whi schelt thou afered be
 Of thing that thou might nougnt sen?"
 A swor, alse he moste then,
 He nolde him neither hire ne sen:
 2755 "Icham wen, ich mot have rese:
 Go now forth and do the besse!"
 Thanne seide Beves this wordes fre:
- where are you
here; do you want
may I prosper
Gladly
steel
armed himself, sword
wondrous
As if
afraid
companion
marvelous
is close
defeated
fairest prize
Saint
must get away
tired; must

Bevis of Hampton

- "Schame hit is, to terne aghe.
A smot his stede be the side,
2760 Aghen the dragoun he gan ride,
The dragoun segh, that he cam
Yenande aghenes him anan,
Yenande and gapande on him so,
Ase he wolde him swolwe tho.
2765 Whan Beves segh that ilche sight,
The dragoun of so meche might.
Hadde therthe opned anon,
For drede a wolde ther in han gon;
A spere he let to him glide
2770 And smot the dragoun on the side;
The spere sterte aghen anon,
So the hail upon the ston,
And to-barst on pices five.
His swerd he drough also blive;
2775 Tho thai foughte, also I yow sai,
Til it was high noun of the dai.
The dragoun was atened stronge,
That o man hem scholde stonde so longe;
The dragoun harde him gan asaile
2780 And smot his hors with the taile
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,
Aghen the dragoun anon a stert
And haerde him a gan asaile,
And he aghen with strong bataile;
So betwene hem leste that fight
2790 Til it was the therke night.
Beves hadde thanne swich thrast,
Him thoughte his herte to-beast;
Thanne segh he a water him beside,
So hit mighte wel betide.
2795 Fain a wolde theder flen,
He ne dorste fro the dragoun ten;
- turn back
Against
Roaring against him rapidly
Fowling; gaping
swallow
the earth
jumped back
Like; stone
burst into
quickly
noon
greatly irritated
one; withstand
fiercely assailed him
in the middle of
lasted
dark
thirst
would burst
go

Bevis of Hampton

- The dragoun asailed him fot hot,
With is taile on his scheld a smot,
That hit clevede hevene ato,
2800 His left scholder diede also.
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 aboue
2810 Be fourti fote, saundoute.
Whan Beves parsevede this,
Wel glad a was in hertie, 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 nemendre Stein George, 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 spong 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 tebellie,
Thar the venim was icast,
His armes gan al to-brast;
2835 Al to-brosten is ventaille,
- 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
ruckle; swell
fall apart
neck armor

Bevis of Hampton

- And of his hauberk a thosend maile.
 Thanne Beves, sone an highe
 Wel loude he gan to Jesu criye:
 "Lord, that rerede the Lazaroun,
 2840 Dilivre me fro this fend dragoun!"
 Tho he segh his hauberk toren,
 "Lord!" a seide, "That I was booren!"
 That seide Beves, thar a stod,
 And leide on, ase he wer wod;
 2845 The dragoun harde him gan asaile
 And smot on the helm with is taile,
 That his helm clevode ato,
 And his bacinet dede also.
 Tweies a nos and tweis a fel,
 2850 The thredde tim overthrew in the wel;
 Thar-inne a lai up right;
 A neste, whather hit was dai other night.
 Whan overgon was his smerte
 And rekevred was of is hertie,
 2855 Beves sette him up anon;
 The venim was awei ignon;
 He was ase hol a man
 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 wet overcome!
 Boute ich mowē the dragoun slon
 Er than ich hennes gon,
 2865 Schel hit never aslawe be
 Foe no man in Cristentē!"
 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,
 On the dragoun wel hard a laide,
- from his [chain mail] a thousand links*
raised Lazarus
fiend
chain mail
where he stood
fiercely
helmet; in two
bascinet
Twice he rose
third time
he lay face up
He did not know
healed; injury
recovered; courage
whole
Christianity
unsheathed

Boris 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 | <i>cut in two; head pan (skull)</i>
<i>stroke, time</i> |
| 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, | <i>throat</i>
<i>throat-ball (Adam's apple)</i>
<i>its</i>
<i>gaped very</i> |
| 2885 | An hondred dentes a smot in on,
Er the heved wolde fro the bodi gon.
And the gode knight Bevoun
The tonge karf of the dragoun;
Upon the tronsoun of is spere | |
| 2890 | The tonge a stikede for to bere.
A wented tho withouten ensoine
Toward the toun of Coloine.
Thanne herde he belles ringe,
Prestes, clerkes loude singe; | <i>handle</i>
<i>delay</i> |
| 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 faille, | <i>greeted</i> |
| 2900 | Beves is ded in bataile;
Tharfore, for sothe I saie thee:
Hit is Beves dirige!" | |
| | "Nai," queth Beves, "be Sein Martin!" | <i>dirge</i> |
| | 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 thaer was, | |
| 2910 | Thankede Jesu of that gras.
On a das Sire Beves sede:
"Leve em, what is to rede
Of me stifader Devoun | <i>for; grace</i>
<i>One day</i>
<i>Dear uncle; news</i>
<i>stepfather Devon</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- That holdeth me londes at Hamoun?"
- 2915 The beschop seide anon right:
"Kosin, Saber, thin em, is in Wight,
And everi yer on a dai certaine
Upon th' emperor 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 hondred men ich yeve thee wighte,
Aghen th' emperor 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' emperor 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 lemmian 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!"
"Swese lemmian," Josian seide,
"Who schel me thanne wisse and rede?"
- 2945 Beves seide "Lemman min,
Min em, the Bisshop Florentin,
And Ascopard, me gode page,
Schel thee warde fro damage."
"Ye, have ich Ascopard," she seide,
- 2950 Of no man ne stant me drede;
Ich take thee God and seine Marie:
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 off); holy Mary*
- As soon as you can; return*
- every one

Bevis of Hampton

- That the bischop him hadde yeve. gives
 So longe thai hadde here wei idrive,
 2955 That hii come upon a done, kill
 A mile out of South Hamtowne.
 "Loedinges," to his men a sede,
 "Ye scholle do be mine rede!
 Have ich eni so hardi on,
 2960 That dorre to Hamtoun gon, take my counsel
 To th' emperor of Almaine, anyone so hardy
 And sai: her cometh a vintaine, dares
 Al prest an hondred knighthie
 That foote his love wilien fightie
 2965 Both with spere and with launce,
 Al fresch icome out of Fraunce! here; division
 Ac ever, an erneste and a rage,
 Ever speketh Frensch laungage,
 And sai, ich batte Gerard, ready
 2970 And fighte ich wile be forward,
 And of the meistri icham sure,
 Yif he wile yilde min hure?" am called
 Forth ther com on redi reke,
 That resabliche kouthe Frensch speke; by agreement
 2975 "Sire," a seide, "ich wile gon,
 The mesage for to don anon!" victory I am confident
 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. eloquently
 Th' emperor and Beves sete ifere together
 That ilche night at the sopere; same
 Th' emperor askede him, what a hot;
 "Gerard!" a seide alse sket he was called
 2985 "Gerard!" a seide, "for soth iwis, very quickly
 This levedi hadde her er this
 An erl to lord, er ich hire wedde,
 A sone betwene hem to thai hadde,
 A proud wreche and a yng. young
 2990 And for sothe a line gadling; impudent
 So was is fader of proud mode, spirit

Bevis of Hampton

	Icomen of sum lether blode;	evil
	His sone, that was a proud garsoun,	bey
	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 fleght 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 sile with swerd in felde,	<i>army pay</i>
	Wel ich wolde thin here yelde!"	
	"Sire," queth Beves anon right,	
	"Ichave knighthes 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 knighthes 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 mans 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 Sabaaunt,	<i>Saber</i>
	That withinne a lite while	
	Thow schelt here of a queinte gile!"	<i>hear; cunning trick</i>
	Al thus th' emperor 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 knighthes seten, ywis,	<i>for sure</i>
	On of here, another of his.	
	Whan thai come amiddle the forde,	
3030	Ech theew is felawc over the bord;	

Bevis of Hampton

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

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?" rule
his wife is my mother
anger
together
try to avenge
hearty one
- 3075 Up thar sterte an hardi on:
"Sire," a seide, "ich wile gon,
The mesage fordoth hem bothe,
And maken hem sori and wrothe."
ruins
- 3080 Over the water in a bot,
Forth a wente also whate
In at the castel gate;
At the soper alse a set,
Th' emperor he gan thus gret: at once
boat
quickly
- 3085 "Sire emperor, I thee bringe
A swithe certaine tiding:
Wel the grete that ilche knight,
That sopede with thee yerstene night;
A saith a hatte nougat Gerard, supped
he was not called
- 3090 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.
agreement
- 3095 Of his fader deth to ben awreke,
Thee te sle with schame and schonde
And for to winne is owene londe."
avenged
disgrace
- 3100 Th' emperor herde of him that word,
His sone stod before the bord; [the emperor's] son
He thoughte with is longe knif
Bereve that mesageres lif; Take away
A threw is knif and kouthe nougat redi
And smot his sone thorough the bodi.
aim
- The mesager spak a gainli word
Before th' emperor is boed:
suitable
- 3105 "Thow gropedest the wif anight to lowe,
Thow might nougat sen aright to throwe;
Thow hast so swoake on hire to night,
Thow hast negh forlore the sight:
groped your wife too lowly at night
- worked
almost lost your sight

Bevis of Hampton

- Her thow hastest lither haunsel,
A woesse thee betide schel!"¹ *Here; a poor gift*
- 3110 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 *pricked; spur
run (hightailed)
conducted himself*
- 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, *he slew [the emperor's] son in anger
anger; amazement*
- That in Coloine was with Beves em,
3120 Til that he aghen theder kem.
In that londe that ilche while
Thar wonede an erl, that highte Mile:
To Josian he hadde his love cast
And gan hire to woken fast, *uncle
Miles
woo*
- 3125 Faire a spak to terme hire thought,
And she seide a was aboute nought.
That erl was wroth in is manere,
For Josian him nolde here,
And spak to hire with loude gret: *change her mind
i.e., "Nothing doing"
angry
Since; would not listen to him
lamentation
should I stop it*
- 3130 "For wham," a seide, "scholde ich it lete,
Boute ich mai have of thee me wille?
Ich wile," a seide, "who that nille?"¹
She seide: "While ichave Ascopard,
Of thee nam ich nothing afard,
3135 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:
A leter he let for to write,
3140 In this maner he dede adite,
That Ascopard come scholde
To Beves, that the letter him tolde,
In to a castel in an yle,
The brede of the water thre mile; *anger; army
threat
trick
compose
idle
width*

¹ "I will," he said, "no master who does not want me so."

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:
 "For wham," a seide, "schel ich it weme?" locked him securely; trap
 She thoughte for to kepe hire, aplight, return
 She sente a masager to Wight,
 To Beves, be letter and tolde fore hold back
 3160 Al togedre lasse and more.
 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,
 Thanne mot ich go with him to bedde. must
 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 fulfille!"
 And kiste hire anon right
 And sente after baroun and knight
 And bed hem come leste and meste,
 To anoure that meri feste. ordered them; lowest and highest honor
 3175 The night is gon, that dai comen is,
 The spusaile don hit is
 With merthe in that town
 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

	To have hire under covertour;	<i>covers</i>
3185	Upon hire bedde ther she sat, That erl com to hire with that, With knightes gret compainie With pyment 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 nought.	<i>tricks</i>
	"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 tha-oute for love o me,	<i>amused, gaiety not at all</i>
3200	That no man se our prívite! 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, And schette the dore with the keie.	<i>unless</i>
	Litel a wende have be so veie. Josian he com aghen to:	<i>very beginning</i>
3210	"Lemman," a seide, "ichave ido, Thee bone ichave do with lawe, Me schon I mot me self of drawe, As I never yet ne dede."	<i>[neither] man nor, here</i>
	Adoun a set him in that stede;	<i>Lock</i>
3215	Thanne was before his bed itight, Ase fele han of this gentil knight, A coverteine on raile tre, For no man scholde on bed ise.	<i>secret things</i>
	Josian bethoughte on higing,	<i>modest</i>
3220	On a towiale she made knotte riding. Abounte his nekke she hit threw And on the raile tre she drew;	<i>particularly</i>
		<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>

- 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 gonre arise
Sum to honten and sum to cherche,
- 3230 And werkmen gonre for to werche.
The scene schoen, hit drough to under,
The barouns thar-of hadde wonder;
That th'erl lai so longe a bed,
Gret wonder thar-of he hedde.
- 3235 Queth sum: "Let him be stille!
Of Josian he hath al is wille."
Middai com, hit drough to nounre,
The barouns speke ther eft sounre:
Queth the boldesste: "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 wondre.
- 3245 "Awake," a seide, "Sire Erl Mile,
Thow hastest slept so longe while,
Thin heved oweth to ake wel:
Dame, let make him a caudel!"
- "Nai," queth Josian at that sake,
3250 "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
And tonight ichave him horng.
- 3255 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
- 3260 In a tonne for to branre.
Withoutou the town hii pighe 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

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

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 Wide in to fele londe, And hir sente an hic After gret chevalrie, Of al the londe the stringest knighte,	message many lands in haste
3310	That hir owhar finde myghte. That emperur negh daide, His wif confortede him and saide: "Sire," she seide, "doute yow nougnt! Of gode consaile icham bethought:	most stalwart anywhere nearly died
3315	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	host in haste
3320	With wondergreet 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!"	pain grayhaired loathful to me
3325	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	ready gone leaf: begin to birds
3330	With thremi thousand of hardi knighte Of Almaine, is owene barouny, With wonder-gret chevalry, "Lordinges," a seide, "ye witeth alle," Whan hir were before him in the halle,	know
3335	"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 Saracins was solde gon longe;	annoyed sold long ago

Bevis of Hampton

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 3340 | Ich wende he hadde ben anhonge.
He me theeteth for to slem
And for to winne is londe aghen;
With him he hath a geaunt brought:
Erthliche man semeth he sought, | 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, | <i>Earthly</i>
skin
<i>fiend</i> |
| 3350 | We schoille besege hem in here castel;
The Ascopard be strong and sterk,
Mani hondes maketh light werk!"
Forth thai wenten ase snel,
Til thai come to the castel | <i>Though</i>
<i>hands</i>
<i>swiftly</i> |
| 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;
Geet wonder ther of he hade, | <i>pitched pavilions; field machinery</i>
tower
<i>sighed</i> |
| 3360 | The holi crois before him he made
And swor be his bende hoee,
Hit scholde some of hem rwe sore.
Saber down of his tour went,
After al is knighting a sent: | <i>cross</i>
<i>gray</i>
<i>regret</i> |
| 3365 | "Has armes, lordinges!" he gan segge,
"Th' emperor ther oute us wile beleuge,
Make we thre vintaine,
That be gode and certaine!
The ferste ich wile me self out lede, | <i>To arms; say</i>
<i>beseige</i>
<i>divisions</i> |
| 3370 | And thow that other, Beves!" a sede,
"And Ascopard the threddle schel have
With is gode, grete stave.
Be we thre upon the grene,
Wel ich wot and nought ne wene: | <i>lead out</i> |
| 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. | <i>field</i>
<i>know; doubt not</i>
<i>caught</i>
<i>be lost</i> |

Bevis of Hampton

- "Lordinges," a seide, "ne doute yow noughe,
3380 Ye scholle this dai be holde so drought, brave
That hem were beter at Rome,
Thanne hii hadde hider icome."
Tho th' emperor heide in castel blowe,
Tharbi he gan to knowe,
3385 That hii armede hem in the castel;
His knighting he het ase snel: called; quickly
"Has armes, lordinges, to bataile!
Out hii cometh, us to asaile."
Twei ostes thai gonme make,
3390 He of Scotlond hath on itake,
Th' emperor 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 igrounde,
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 hoers;
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' emperor Beves hii benome
And broughte him an horse tho; *They took the emperor away from Bevis*
Tharfore was Beves swithe wo. angry
3415 Thar com in the thredder part
With is batte Ascopard; his club

- Ever alse 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' emperor rit on a whit stede;
Thin hure I schel thee yilde wel,
With that thow bringe him to me castell!"
3425 "Sire," a seide, "I schel for sothe
In to the castel bringe him to thee!"
Ascopard leide on wel inough,
Bothe man and boes he slough;
Thar nas non armur in that londe,
3430 That mighte the geauntes strok astondre.
The King of Scotlondre, with is bat
A yaf him swiche a sor flat
Upon the helm in that stoundre.
That man and hors fel ded to grounde.
3435 Thanne anom, withoute sojur,
A wente to that emperor,
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 Scotlondre 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 pitch and of bremston,
And hot led let falle ther-on;
3455 Whan hit alther swither seth,
- as
He struck down
pleased
called
rider
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
puck; brimstone
molten lead
all at once seethed

- Th' emperor thar in a deth,
Thar a lay atenende.
Wende his saule, whider it wende!
His moder over the castel lai,
3460 Hire lord sethen in the pich she sai;
So swithe wo hire was for sore,
She fel and brak hire nekke therfore.
Also glad he was of hire,
Of his damme, ase of is stipsire,
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
And dede him feuté and omage,
3470 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.
3475 Wel hasteliche she let sende
To Coloine after the bischop hende,
And spusede Beves and Jossane.
Of no jroe nas ther wane;
Though ich discribe nougnt the bredale,
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;
Tweie childeon on him he begat
3485 In the formeste yere,
Whiles that hii were ifere.
And Saber him redde tha
Wende to the King Edgar;
Tho with inne a lite stounde
3490 The king a fond at Lounde.
Beves a knes down him set,
The king hendeliche a gret;
The king askede him, what he were
And what nedes a wolde there.
- in death
at his ending
soul
(Bevis') mother
seething; saw
very woeiful; shock
broke her neck
mother; stepfather
Mother, forgive
blow nor knock
shire of Hampton
fealty; homage
customary
avenged
[Josian]
married
lack
describe not the wedding
know; royal
estate
first
together
advised
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'empetur 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!"
 "Bletheliche," a seide, "sone min,
 Ich graunte thee, be Stein 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 tha was do grede,
 For to saien here alther stede,
- 3515 Whiche were swift and strong.
 The kours was seve mile long;
 Who that come ferst theder, han scholde
 A thousand 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 lene 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
marskal
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*

- For thee love reran a castel!" raise
 3535 Whan Arondel herde what he spak,
 Before the twei knigtes he rak, reached
 That he com rather to the tresore,
 Than hii be half and more.
 Beves of his palfrai alighte
 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;
 3545 The prince bad, a scholde it him yeve;
 "Nay," queth Beves, "so mot I leve,
 Though thow wost me take an honde
 Al the hors of Ingelonde!"
 Sathe that he him yeve nele,
 3550 A thoughte, that he it wolde stèle.
 Hit is lawe of kinges alle,
 At mete were croune in halle,
 And thanne everiche marchal
 His yerde an honde bere schal.
 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,
 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.
 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.
 3570 The barnage it nolde nought thole
 And seide, hii mighte do him no wors,
 Boute lete hongen is hors;

- 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
- 3580 This gode knight, min em Saber."
In that maner hii wer at one,
And Beves is to Hamoun gone;
A tolde Josian and Ascopard fore
Al togedre, lasse and more.
- 3585 Beves lep on is rounct
And made is swain 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 mische 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 Maheun and be Tervaguant,
- 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 knigtes
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
Thourgh Fraunce and thourgh Normondie;
And Jossiane, Crist here be milde!
rode
to Armenia
- 3620 In a wode was bestonde of childe
Beves and Terri doun lighte
And with here swerdes a logge pighte;
Thai broughte Jossiane ther inne,
For hii ne kouthe no beter ginne.
suddenly in labor
got down
hat constructed
- 3625 Bevis is servise gan hire bede,
To helpe hire at that ned.
"For Godes love," she saide, "nai,
Leve sire, thow go thee wai,
God forbede for is pité,
they knew of no better plan
offered her his service
- 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!"
return hence now
- 3635 Forth thai wente bothe ifere,
For hii ne mighte hire paines here.
Allas, that ilche cherre;
Hii wente from hire alto ferre!
Aise hii wet out of the weie,
So they would not hear her pains
[for] that decorous behavior
- 3640 She hadde knave children tweie.
Also she dilivered was,
Thar com Ascopard goande a pas
And fourti Saracins, the Frensch seth,
Al iarmode to the teth.
too far away
When
gave birth to twin boys
As
passing by
armed; teeth
- 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,
beat; swords
moment
- 3650 That was so beten and ibounde;
beaten; bound

Bevis of Hampton

- And in here wei ase thai gonnewende,
 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 foore I peiae, on me thee rewé
 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 filemie."
 3665 Ascopard answerde hire tho:
 "Whider thow wilt, dame, thow 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 meisters grete
 Of Boloyn 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 grunde,
 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 Yvoee, 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,
- nobie
favor
- guarantee; should
take pity
time
- natural
Modest
villaney
- As long as*
- So that; secret
- physic, surgery (medicine)
teachers
- grass (herbs); Toledo
- good; bad (medicines; poisons)
- value
- seem to resemble
- leper
- carrying
- had not ridden
- appearance; complexion
- When

- 3690 To Ascopard a seide thore:
 "Who is this wimman, thow hast me brought?"
 "What," a seide, "knowest hire nouȝt?
 She is Josiane, the Quene.
 Ichave had for hire meche tene." distress
- 3695 Thanne seide Yvor: "I prae Maheoun
 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 node.
- 3705 Tho Ascopard withouten dwelling
 In to that castel gan hire bring,
 In wilderness upon a plaine,
 And half a yer a was hire wardaine. what she needed
delaying
 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,
- 3715 Swithe faire children with alle,
 Also hi were fro the moder falle.
 Beves fel thar doun and swoough;
 Terri wep and him up drough,
 And koursese biter that while
- 3720 Ascopard is tresoun and is gile.
 Thei kottede here forers of ermin,
 The yonge children wonde ther in.
 Thar nolde hi no long abide,
 Thei lope to horse and gonne ride; As when they were born
- 3725 In the wode a forster tha mette
 And swithe faire tha him grette:
 "God the blesse, sire!" Beves sede,
 "Sigh the eni levedi her forth lede swooned
raised himself up
cursed bitterly at that moment
Ascopard's; his
est; furs; ermine
clothed
leaped
Did you see

- 3730 Owhar be this ilche way?"
 "Sire, for Gode" a seide, "nay!"
 "What dones man ertow, bacheler?"
 "Sire," a seide, "a foester!"
 "Foester, so Crist thee be milde,
 Wiltow lete cristen this heilhen childe?
 3735 Right, lo, now hit was iboec
 And yong hit hath is moder forloec.
 Wilt thou kep it for to min," a sede,
 "And I schel quite wel thee mede?"
 The forster him grauntecde thor,
 3740 To kepe hit al the seven yer.
 "Sire, what schel it hote yet?"
 "Guy," a sede, "ase me fader het.
 Right sone so he is of elde,
 Tech him bere spere and schelde!"
 3745 That child the forster he betok
 And forth in is wei a schoek.
 Another man a mette there,
 That seide, a was a fischere;
 Ten mark Beves him betok,
 3750 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
 3755 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 wendowc lokede out
 3760 And segh the strene 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.
 3765 "Sire, a seide, "veraiment,
 Thai ben come for a tormentment,
 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,
Who that thar be beste knight
3770 And strest 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?"
3775 "Ye, sire," a sede, "be Sein Thomas of Ynde!
Whan were we wonded be byhinde?
We scholle lete for nom nede,
That we ne scholle manliche forth us bede!"
A morwe the lauerkes songe.
3780 Whan that the lighte day was sponge,
Beves and Terry gonre arise
And greithede hem in faire queintise.
Here armes were riale of sight,
With thre eglen of asur bright;
3785 The chaumpe of gold ful farie Toledē,
Portraid al with rosen rede.
And Terri, Saberes sone of Wight,
In niche armes also was dight.
Ase thai com ride thourgh the toun,
3790 Erles, barouns of renoun
Hadde wonder of here armes slie,
In that londe never swich thai sie.
The trompes gonre here bemes blowe;
The knightes riden out in a rowe,
3795 And tho the tornement began,
Thar was samned mani a man,
The tornement to beholde,
To se the knightes stout and bolde.
Thai leide on ase hii were wode
3800 With swerdes and with maces gode;
Thar nolde no man other knowe,
Thar men mighte se in lite throwe
Knightes out of sadel iboren,
Stedes wonne and stedes loren.
3805 The kinges sone of Asie
Thoughte wenne the meistrie.
- heir
tourney; for the sake of
refuse
lark's
ornamented arms
eagles; azure
field; [made in] Toledo
finely made
trumpeters; trumpets
then
assembled
clashed; mad
while
lost
Asia
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 thaer. 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 hoeses croupe,
And seven erles he gan doum thrawe,
3820 Sum iworded 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.
3825 Alle tho that hi mighte hitte, raze
No man mighte here strokes sitte.
So Beves demeinede him that dai,
The maide hit in the tour say.
Hire bertie gan to him acorde,
3830 That she wolde have him to lorde.
Other with love other with strif; either; or
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 pure
Be me loed in clene manere.
And yif thee wif cometh thee aghen,
Terry, the swain, 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 sweweſe a ſaid.	<i>dream</i>
	"Sire," ſhe ſeide, "thow havest wrong, That thow dwelleſt her ſo long. Alſe ich am wimman ibore,	
3850	Wif or child he hath forloref.	<i>lost</i>
	Thourgh Ascopard he hath that gile."	
	Twelf knightes Saber let atile In palmer is wedes everichon, And armeſe hem right wel anon;	<i>equip</i>
3855	Here bordones were imaked wel With longe pikes of wel gode ſtel, And whan thai were ſo idight, To ſchip thai wente anon right	<i>pilgrims' clothes</i>
	And paſede over the Grikiche ſe;	<i>Greek ſea</i>
3860	Gode wiſe and weder hadden he. Whan thai come to the londe, Faste thai gonue fraine and fonde, In what londe were the queene,	<i>Good: weather</i>
	And men tolde hem al bedene,	<i>ask and inquire</i>
3865	How the geaunt Ascopard In a caſtel hire hadde to ward, In wildeſſe al be ſelue.	<i>as well</i>
	Tho Saber and is ferens 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, For to diſiſe the toures ſtoute, Josian lay in a tour an high,	<i>survey</i>
	Saber and felawes ſhe sigh,	<i>saw</i>
3875	And to him ſhe gan to crie: "Help, Saber, for love of Marie!"	<i>voice</i>
	Tho Ascopard herde that ſtevene, How ſhe gan Saber to nevene,	<i>name</i>
	He wente him out with herte wroth	
3880	And be Mahoun a ſwor his oth,	<i>send</i>
	To dethe a ſcholde Saber dighte. His ſclavin ech palmer of twighte,	<i>pilgrim's coat; took off</i>
	Tho ſchon here armur wel clere;	
	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,
3890 Josian with an oiniment
Hire coulur, that was lothly of sight,
She made bothe cler and bright.
Tho Saber, that was wis of dede,
Josian, hire dighte in palmers wede,
3895 And forth thai wente hasteli,
To seche Beves and sire Terri.
Seve yer togedres thai him sought,
Er than hi him finde moughte.
In grete Greese, so saith the bok,
3900 Saber gret sikenesse tok,
That other half yer in none wise
Ne mighte he out of is bed arise,
And tresor he nadde namore,
Than half a mark of olde store.
3905 While Josian was in Ermonie,
She hadde lerned of minstracie,
Upon a fithele for to play
Staumpes, notes, garbles gay;
Tho she kouthe no beter red,
3910 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,
Josian everiche a day
3915 Yede aboute the cité withinne,
Here sostenaunse for to winne.
Thus Josian was in swiche destresse,
While Saber lai in is siknesse.
At that other half yer is ende
3920 Swiche grace God him gan sende
And heled him of his maladie,
And forth thai wente hasteli,
Beves and Terry for to seche,

Bevis of Hampton

	Wheder that God hem wolde teche.	<i>show</i>
3925	So though a toun thai com thringe, Thar Beves was in also a kinge; A broughte Josian at here inne And wenite 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.	
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>embraced</i>
	"Loserd Crist," queth Josian tho,	<i>hugged</i>
3950	"Swithe wel is me bego, That ichave me loed ifonde. Hadde ich me children hol and sonde!"	<i>arrayed</i>
	That hit were ded, wel she wende.	<i>a more lovely sound</i>
	Beves after hem let sende;	<i>Lord</i>
3955	Than coms the fischer and the foester And broughte the children of fair cher.	<i>befallen</i>
	Thanse weddede Terry Of that londe the riche levedy;	<i>Would that I; sound</i>
	And after mete that it was,	<i>thought</i>
3960	The children pleide at the talvas,	<i>countenance</i>
		<i>fenced (see note)</i>

Bevis of Hampton

- And to the justes thai gonne ride; *justs*
Thar was joie be even side.
- Thanne Sire Beves and Sere Terry
Wente hem in til Ermonie. *to*
- 3965 And Jossiane and Sire Sabere,
And Miles and Gis bothe ifere.
With that was come King Yvore,
To yeve bataile Ermyn the hore;
Ipight he hadde is paviloun. *grayhaired*
3970 To besiege him in that toun. *Patched*
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, veraisment,
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. *army (host); delay*
Sixti thosand told in tale; *slew; many*
3985 And Beves threw Yvor adoun *in total*
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*
3995 Sixti pound of rede golde,
Four hundred beddes of selk echon, *beds; silk*
Quiltes of gold thar upon,
Four hundred copes of gold fyn
And ase fele of maslin. *cups*
"Ye," seide Beves, "asend it me, *as many; brass*

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 hoe,
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
Hi 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 charmes, 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
4040 And to Sire Saber wile we tan.
Saber at Hamtoun in bedde lay;
Him thoughte that he Beves say
In bataile wo begon
And al to-heve, flesch and bon.
4045 Tho he abraide out of is swene,
To his wif a tolde hit ful evene
Al togedres how him met.
"O sire," she seide withouten let,
"Be the swene ful wel I wat,
4050 That Beves is in semple stat;
He hath forloren Arondel,
And that I wet finliche wel."
Saber was wo for that sake;
Eft scrippe and bordoun he gan take
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:
"A roboun hit stal ful yore
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
Thar men watredre the deistrer;
4065 Thar he stod and abod,
A proud Sarasin ther-on rod;
"Mahoun thee save!" seide Saber,
"Fro whanne kometh this fair deistrer?
Hit haveth brestes thikke and proute.
4070 Which is the kroupe terne aboute?"
Aboute he ternde the deistrer;
Up behinde lep Saber
And smot the Sarasin ded adoun
With the pik of his bordoun.
4075 To the King Ivor he gan grede:
"Lo, Arondel ich a wei ledc.
Ye him stede with envie
- leave
turn
He dreamed; saw
cut up
started up; dream
exactly
dreamed
delay
know
desperate state
lost
inair pretty well
purse; staff
with haste
taken
robber; stole a while ago
grieves
Unless; again
watered; warhorse
waited
warhorse
strong
rump
spike; staff
did implore

Bevis of Hampton

- And ich him feche before your eie!" eyes
The King Ivor was swithe wo so angry
4080 And after Saber thai gonue go; turre
Thre thosend hath Saber beset;
Josian stod in a toret; turre
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 aboune
4090 With wonderliche grete route; host
Al most he is in point to spille!" die
"Has armes!" Beves cride schille.
To arms: shrilly
Ferst smot out the yonge King Gui
And Miles with gret chevalry;
4095 Thai come to Saber at that stour
And broughte Saber gode sokour
And leide on with alle here might
And slowe Sarazines adoun right.
Of al that sewede him so yerne.
4100 To Mombraunt gonue 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.
4105 Now mowe ye here forthormore
Full strong bataile of King Yvore;
Ac er than we beginne fighte,
Full us the koppe anom righe!
The King Yvoee him ros amorwe,
4110 In his herte was meche sorwe.
He let of sende an highing
Thretti amirales and ten king.
Thai armeade hem in yrne wede,
To Ermonie he gan hem lede.
4115 Hii pighte paviliouns and bente gunne,
For to besiege hem ther inne,
They set up; field artillery

Bevis of Hampton

- And Yvore clepede at that cas
Morable and Sire Judos.
"Redeth me," a seide, "aright,
4120 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:
4125 "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,
4130 Gret slaughter worth in either side.
Wiltow graunte be then helve,
That ich and thou mote fighte us selve?
Yif thou slest me in bataile,
Al min onour, withouten faille,
4135 Ich thee graunte thorough and thorough,
Bothe in cité and in boragh!"
Here gloven thai gonue up holde
In that forward, that Yvor tolde,
And armede hem in armes brighte
4140 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;
4145 Beves bad help to Marie sone
And King Yvor to Seim Mahound;
Ase Beves bad helpe to Marie,
To Tervagaunt Yvor gan erie,
That he scholde helpe him in that fight,
4150 Also he was king of meche might.
With that hir ride togedres bothe,
Ase men, that were in herte wrothe,
So harde thai gonue togedres mete
And with here launces gonue grete,
4155 That thorough the scheldes the speres yode;
- embraced in his arms*
Judas (Iscariot)
Advise
company
company
out here
on your part
ourselves
honor
borough
Their gloves
pledge
isle
Where
who command
prayed for
Saint
angry
went

Bevis of Hampton

- At the breinies the dent withstode. *coat of mail; blow*
 So harde thai threste togodre tho.
 That here gerthes borste aro,
 And felle to grounde bothe tho.
- 4160 A fote nedes thai moste go. *On foot*
 Out of here sadles thai gonre springe
 And with fauchouns to gedere flinge;
 Aither on other strokes set,
 Of helm and scheild and bacinet
- 4165 The fure brast out so brond ibrent, *fire erupted as if a torch burned*
 So fel and eger was either dent.
 Thus togederes thai gonre dinge
 From prime til underme gan to ringe.
 Alle that sighen hem with sight,
- 4170 Seide never in none fight *before*
 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,
- 4175 That sercle of gold and is crestel *circle; his crest*
 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
- 4180 And half the her upon is berd. *hair*
 Ac though the help of Godes grace
 His flesch nothing atamed nas.
 Tho cride the Sarasins al at ones:
 "This Beves with his grete bones
- 4185 Ful sone worth imaked tame!" *prayers*
 Tho wex Beves in gret grame
 And thoughte wel with Moegelay
 Yelden his strok, yif that he may.
 To King Yvor he gan areche
- 4190 Anon withoute more speche *Repay*
 Upon the scholder in that tide,
 That half a fot hit gan in glide.
 For smerte Yvor in that stounde
 Fel a knes unto the grounde, *reach out*
time
pain

Bevis of Hampton

- 4195 Ac up he sterte in haste than
And in wrathe to Beves ram
And thoughte han Beves aqueld;
And Beves keppte him with is scheid,
And Yvore with the strok of yre
4200 Made fle in to the riveere
A large quarter of his scheid,
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 scheid 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 anoa.
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 thou schelt go the worse 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 ventail,
And tok him be the heved anon
And strok hit fro the scholder bon,
And on his spere he hit pighte.
4240 And tho the Cristen sighe 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 Yvoe,
4245 Thai sighe her lordes heved arered,
Sore thai weren alle afered:
Toward Mombraunt thei wolde fain,
Ac Saber made hem teme again,
And Sire Beves and Sire Terry,
4250 And Sire Miles and Sire Gii
Slough hem doun rightes thore,
That ther ne scapede lasse ne more.
- Tho crounede thai Beves king in that lond,
That King Yvoe held in bond,
- 4255 And Josiane bright and schene,
Now is she ther twies quene.
On a dai thai wente a rivere;
Thar com ride a masagere,
And ever he askede fer and ner
4260 After the hende knight Saber.
Anon Saber gan forth springe:
"Masager," a sede, "what tiding?"
"Sire," a sede, "the King Edgar
Thee driveth to meche to bismare,
4265 Desereteth Robaunt, thin eyr!"
"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,
4270 A seide a wolde with him wende,
And Sire Miles and Sire Gii,
And is owene sone Terry.

*pronouncement**helmet-front**placed
when**contest**raised up**there**radiant
twice**went hawking**to infamy**D disinherited; heir**noble*

Bevis of Hampton

- Now wendeth Beves in te Ingelonde
With is knightes fel to fonde,
courageous; try
4275 And Terry with is knightes fale,
many
Sexty thosend told in tale.
Thai lende over the se belive,
came; in haste
At Southhamtoun thai gonue up rive.
to land
Hervebourgh, Saber is wif,
Saber's wife
4280 And Robaund anon ase blif
quickly
Aghen Saber come tho;
Toward
Queth Saber: "How this is igo?"
beginning
And thai him tolde at the frome,
taken
That Edgar hadde here londes benome.
4285 Thanne seide Beves: "So mot I the,
thrive
Thar of ich wile awreke be!"
avenged
Anon the knight, Sire Bevoun,
His ost he let at Hamtoun,
left
And toward Londen a wente swithe;
quickly
4290 His quene a let at Potenhithe;
left; Putney
He tok with him sex knightes
And wente foeth anon rightes,
west
And in is wei forth a yode
Thames
And pasede over Temse flode.
Westminster
4295 To Westmenster whan he com than,
found
A fond the king and mani man,
And on is knes he him set,
nobly
The king wel henedliche a gret
baronage
And bad before his barnage,
4300 That he him graume is eritage.
Gladly; my son
"Bletheliche," a seide, "sone min,
I graunte thee, be Seinte Martin!"
And alle the barouns, that ther were,
On Beves made glade chere,
4305 Boute the stiward of the halle;
He was the woesie frend of alle.
The king wolde have yeve him grith,
peace
The stiward seide nay ther with,
And seide: "This forbanniste man
4310 Is come to the land aghan,
banished
And hath thin owene sone slawe,
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 knighthes in meiné.
Whan that he to Londen cam,
- company
- 4320 In Tour strete is in he nam
And to the mete he gan gon,
And is knighthes everichon.
Let we now Beves be,
And of all the stiward telle we,
- Tower his lodging
food
- 4325 That hateth Beves, also is fo.
Sexty knighthes he tok and mo,
In to Londene sone he cam,
And into Chepe the wei he nam
And dede make ther a cri
- as his enemy
- 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,
- Cheapside
- 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,
- Hear
so happens
- 4340 Thai gone hem armie hasteli,
And hii that hadde armur non,
Thai toke staves and gone gon;
Thai schette anon everi gate
With the barres, thai founde ther-at;
- remember
- 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,
- Very soon
- 4350 The chaines scholde holde him aghen.
- no armor
- bars
- catapults
- barricaded

- Boute her of Beves weste nought.
Help him God, that alle thing wrought!
Beves at the mete sat,
He beheld and underyat
4355 Al is fon, that were ther oute;
He was afered of that route.
He askede at the tavarne,
That armede folk, what it were.
And he answerde him at that sake:
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;
In haste the dore he gan up winne
4365 And armede ther anon rightes
Bothe he and is sex knyghtes,
And gerte him with a gode brond
And tok a spere in is honde,
Aboute his nekke a doble scheld.
4370 He was a knight stout and belde.
On Arondel a lep that tide,
In to the strete he gan ride.
Thanne seide the stiward to Sire Bev:
"Ayilt thee, treitour, thow foule thef!
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,
4380 Er than ich wende, sikerly!"
A spere Beves let to him glide
And smot him under the right side;
Thourgh is bodi wente the dent,
Ded a fel on the pavement.
4385 A sede anon after that dint:
"Treitour! now is the lif itint.
Thus men schel teche file glotonous,
That wile misaie gode barouns!"
The folk com with grete route,
- About this; knew not
understood
foes
tavern
cause
seen
open
his six
armed himself; sword
double
bold
Bevis
Tield
make known
certainly
blow
Dead he fell
lost
vile
slander*

- 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 thaï 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 thaï gonue thringe strong
 And hard on him thaï gonue dinge. strike
- 4405 Al Beves knighthes, in that stounde space of time
 Thar hii were feld to grounde
 And al to-hewe flesch and bon.
 Tho was Beves wobegon, 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 praiere 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 pecces twayne, two pieces
 And forth a wente in to Chepe;
 The folk him folwede al to hepe, in a mob
- 4425 And al thaï settē up a cry: Yield
 "Ayilt thee, Beves, hastely,
 Ayilt thee, Beves, sone anon,
 And elles thow 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
- Now beginneth the grete bataile
Of Sire Beves, withouten faile,
That he dede ayenes that cité.
Ye that wile here, herkneth to me! noote
- This was abouthe the under tide,
The cri aros be ech a side
Bothe of lane and of strete;
Abouthe him com peple grete, comported himself
- Al newe and fresch, with him to fight,
Ac Beves stered him ase gode knight,
So that in a lite thrawe while
- Fif thousand thar was islawe
Of the strengeste, that ther wore, given painful blows
- That him hadde yeve dentes sore;
Ac ever his stede Arondel
Faste faught with herte lel, loyal
- That fourty fote behinde and form before
- 4450 The folk he hath to grounde iborn.
Thus that fight leste longe
Til the time of evesonge. evensong
- Tidinge com to Potenhuthe,
To Josian also swithe, Putney
- That Beves in Londen was islawe
And ibrought of his lsf dawe, swooned
- Josian thanne fel aswowe,
Gis and Miles hire up drowe picked
- And confortede that levedi bright
4460 Hendeliche with alle her might, Nobly
- And askede hire, what hire were;
And she tolde hem anon there,
How Beves was in Londen slayn
- And his knighting with gret payn:
4465 "Now kethe ye ben noble knighting,
And wrekeþ your fader with your mightes!" know
avenge
- Sire Gis and Miles seide than

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 Fren sche 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 bare,
Londlegate thai settie 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 armende him in yrne wede
4500 And lep upon a stern 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 Hamoun, 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.
Thanne com priken is soone Gui,
To helpe his fader, hastely;
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;
- 4510
4515
4520
4525
4530
4535
4540
4545
- anguish
quickly he proceeded
clove
fire
ask for a doctor
succor
eagerly
Thames
32,000
hall [with the] lead roof
brought, resuisse
indeed
killed
citizens
grief (dole, mourning)
lived
war
old age
- That 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,
Ne dorste he never aske leche,
For to hele ther is wonde,
That he ne lai ded upon the grunde.
And whan Beves segh that sight,
In hertte he was glad and lighte
And thankede Jesu, our saviour,
That hadde sent him so gode sokour,
And egerliche, withouten faile,
The grete peple he gan asaile.
So meche folk was slawe and ded,
That al Temse was blod red;
The nombre was, veraiment,
To and thretti thosent.
And also sone as hit was night,
To the ledene halle thai wente right;
A fette Josian with faire meiné
To Londen, to that riche cité,
And held a feste fourtene night
To al that ever come, aplight!
Tiding com to King Edgar,
That Beves hadde his men forfare;
For is borgeis in is ciné
He made del and gret pité
And seide: "Ichave leved me lif
Longe withouten werre and sinif,
And now icham so falle in elde,

Bevis of Hampton

- That I ne may min armes welde.
Twei sones Beves hath with him brought,
Tharfoore 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 Notingham.
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! *indeed*
And at the fourtene night is ende,
4570 Beves tok leve, hom to wende,
At King Edgar and at Sabere,
And Miles, is sone, a lefle here
And kiste and yaf him is blessing.
And wente to Mombraunt, ther he was king; *Hampshire*
4575 And his erldom in Hamteschir *sailed from*
A yaf to his em Sabere
And schipede at Hamtoun hastily,
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 Ermonse,
Thar belefte his sone Gii
With his barouns gode and hende;
And Terry to Aumberthe gan wende,

Bevis of Hampton

- 4585 And Beves wente without dwelling
In to Mombraunt, thar he was king;
With him wente Josian, is quene,
And levede without 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;
Gri, hire sone, she gan ofisende,
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.
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, *Saint Lawrence; raise up
marble fine*
- 4610 That was ikast with queint enginc,
Of gold he made an high coenere
And leide them thar in bothe ifere.
An hous he made of riligioun,
For to singe for Sire Bevoun *cast; noble art*
- 4615 And ek for Josian the frē:
God on here saules have pite!
And also for Arondel,
Yif men for eni hors bidde schel,
Thus endeth Beves of Hamtoun. *noble
souls*
- 4620 God yeve us alle ls benesoun!
Amen. *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 *flight*. MS hard to read here.
- 91 *ferste dai*. A: *ferfe*. Kō'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: *ferfe*. Kō'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: *pow schelt after wedde to spouse*. Kō 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 Kō's based on E and N readings.
- 173 *levedi was right wel apaid*. A: *levidi rīgt wel apaid*. Kō 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 howre*. 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,

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 *e*, 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*. Kō clarifies the line.
- 320 *That child she smot with hire bonde*. 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 down and that was scathe*. A: *De child fel down and þat scathe*. Kō 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 *sigebast*, 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*. Kō 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 lownde*. 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*. Kō: *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*. Kō 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 nor 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 *That were aferde, hit wer nigh wode.* A: *Pat were hit wer nij wode.* *Aferde* is omitted in A. Kölbing emends on the basis of other MSS' readings.
- 690 *Iosengers.* 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 *Lewman.* A term of endearment usually reserved for one's beloved. Bevis' response to Josian's declaration suggests an epiphany born of love.
- 844 *seuth 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 Glorous, and Siegfried's Griell are a few.
- 885 *So tho is a lite stounde*. Kō: *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*. Kō 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 assailed hadde*. A: *And Brademond him assailed hadde*. Because A omits the first clause in the line, Kō emends following E and N: *And tolde hem how*.
- 945 *to the teeth*. 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.

- 993 *fersle scheld trome.* *trome* (from OE *truma*) is a rank of warriors, a body of armed men; the *fersle 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 right.* E and N: *sonne in the west.* Kō'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.* Kō confers the speech upon Bradmond, 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 Aisoens 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 þar ich do, it is dede.* Kō: *it is his dede.* The emendation is based on E and N.
- 1054 *Thow schelþ werre.* E, N, and C add a negative adjective, i.e., never to warre, which is consistent with the oath Bevis demands from Bradmond.
- 1066 *Mani dai a maked him feste.* E and N: *a wykkið fest.* Kō retains A. The implication is that had Bevis known what Bradmond would do to him he would/should have killed him rather than show mercy.
- 1098 "*For Gode,*" queth Beves, "*that ich do nelli!*" A: *For gode, queth, þat ich do nelli!* Here Kō 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.* Kō'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 misair.* A: *So te misir.* Kō: *So te misain a.* Kō silently emends A here. But his reading improves the line.
- 1192 *wimmanes bolt is zone schote.* Proverbial; not in Tilley or Whiting. The proverb implies lack of discretion, *zone* suggesting "haste" or "carelessness." Compare Malory's *The Great Tournament*, where the huntress shoots *zone* and misses the hind but hits Lancelot's buttocks.
- 1210 *Hit were gode, sire.* A: *Hit gode, sire, þat he were slain.* Kō: *It were gode, sire.* Kō emends on the strength of N and C.
- 1239 *Al in solas and in delit.* A: *Al in solas in delit.* Kō: *Al in solas and in delit* on the basis of C.
- 1288 *That Sire Beves gan of-see.* A: *Beves gan of.* Kō'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 oþer.* Kō 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 *Tervagant* (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 *kende* (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 dat awai whanne a wolde wende*. A: *What dat whanne*. Kō adds *awai*.
- 1468 *That I lovede ase min herne 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*. Kō: *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*. Kō: *graithede*.
- 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 adown falle.* A: *Wif a strok me adown falle.* Kō's emendation is based on E and N.
- 1614 *ther-of may ben awreke.* A: *þer of ben me awreke.* Kō's emendation is based on C.
- 1630 *by the rop.* A: *be rop.* Kō's emendation based on N.
- 1733 *fox welp.* An insult equivalent to *heathen hound*.
- 1756 *undertide.* A: *undetide.* Kō'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 alse man.* Kō 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.* Kō 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.* Kō 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*. Kō 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: *þat were þore*. Kō's emendation; the first-person plural pronoun clarifies the line.
- 2289 *Cte of Diablenr*. From here to line 2464 the narrative is missing in A. We follow Kō'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*, Ascopaed 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*. Kō restores gender to the lion grabbing Bevis by the right leg.

Notes

- 2503 upon a male. 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" (ll.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 wenter wiþuton ensoine / 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 dragour. 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.* Kō 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 *wintowne.* A wine tun is a wine barrel.
- 2693 *Thatne 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.* Kō'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: *Bever answede.* Kō clarifies the action.
- 2762 *anan.* A: *anar.* More usually *anon*, this may be scribal error. Kō 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 *ofis 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 *bascinet*. A basinet is a supplementary cap worn under the helmet.
- 2852 *dai other night*. A: *dai the nigt*.
- 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*. Kō 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*. Kō 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 dist*. Kō restores the meter on the evidence of E and N.

- 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 Kō 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 opon it wondre.* A: *apon.* Kō: *open* 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.* Kō eliminates the redundant pronoun.
- 3340 *Ich wende he hadde ben anhonge.* A: *Ich wende hadde ben anhonge.* Kō 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 *Hu scholde some of hem rewe sore.* A: *some of rewe sore.* Kō adds *hem* to restore the meter.
- 3391 *that other ladde.* A: *bat ope ladde.*
- 3392 As Kō 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 pick and of bremston.* A: *Ful of bich.* Kō 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 "hoesepower."
- 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 Cleger* 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 piste*. Kō's emendation based on other MSS.
- 3629 *God forbede*. A: *For for bed*. Kō 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 Tern'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*. Kō'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 talevas.* A *talevas* is a round shield, or buckler. To play at the talevas is an idiom for fencing. See MED *talevard*.
- 3978 *mountalent.* A: *mountalent*, 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.* Kō restores Saber to his role.
- 4034 *And broughte hit to Mombraunt be southe.* A: *And brought it Mombraunt.* Kō's preposition restores clarity and meter.
- 4037 *Thar Beves scholde abegge sore.* A: *abegged sore.* Kō maintains a sensible verb tense: *abegge sore*.
- 4040 *tan.* A northern form of *taken*, the sense being to "turn attention to" (MED *takes* 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.* Kō'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 Yvoe.

Bevis of Hampton

- 4266 "For God," queth Saber, "that is nought feir." A: *For god, queþ, that is nought feir.* 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 Postenhithe.* A: *Tidynge to postenhithe.* 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 hertie 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 *Ledynghall* as a specific place name, noting that the place was also called Laurence Hall.
- 4608 *Sein Lawrance.* 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.

Athelstan

Introduction

It would seem that *Athelstan*, 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 Amilour*, 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 *Athelstan: A Middle English Romance*, EETS o.s. 224 (London: Oxford University Press, 1951) A. M. Trounce argues that Alyke resembles Stephen Langton more than Thomas Becket but also sees a strong historical resemblance between Alyke 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.

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 unforgettable 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 *Athelstan* 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, "*Athelstan* and the Rhyme of the English Romances," *Modern Language Quarterly* 36 (1975), 340-41.

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.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

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

⁹ Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, "The Female Body Politic and the Miscarriage of Justice in *Athelston*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995), 79–98.

¹⁰ Rowe, p. 88.

¹¹ 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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Athelston

- | | | |
|----|---|----------------------------|
| | Lord that is off myghtys most, | powers greatest |
| | Fadyr and Sone and Holy Gost. | |
| | Bryng us out of synne; | |
| 5 | And lene us grace so for to wyrke | grant |
| | To love bothe God and Holy Kyrke | Church |
| | That we may heveme wynne. | |
| | Lystnes, lordyngys, that ben hende, | gracious |
| | Of falsnesse, hou it wil ende | will bring about an end to |
| | A man that ledes hym therin. | a man [who] leads himself |
| 10 | Of fourre weddyd bretheryn I wole yow tell | sworn |
| | That wolden yn Yngelond go dwel, | |
| | That sybbe were nought of kyn. | relative; family |
| | And all fourre messangeres they were. | |
| | That wolden yn Yngelond lettrys bere, | |
| 15 | As it wes here kynde. | their occupation |
| | By a forest gan they mete | did; meet |
| | With a cros, stood in a strete | by a road |
| | Be leff undyr a lynde, | By a leaf, linden (tree) |
| | And, as the story telles me, | |
| 20 | Ylike man was of dyvers cuntré, | Each; different |
| | In book iwareten we fynde — | (see note) |
| | For love of here metyng thare, | their |
| | They swoor hem weddyd bretheryn for evermore, | themselves |
| | In trewthe trewely dede hem bynde. | an oath |
| 25 | The eldeste of hem ylkon, | them all |
| | He was hyght Athelston, | called |
| | The kyngys cosyn dere; | |
| | He was of the kyngys blood, | a [blood] relative |
| | Hys eemes sone, I undyrstood; | uncle's |
| 30 | Therefore he neyghyd hym nere. | approached |
| | And at the laste, weel and fayr, | well |

Athelstan

	The kyng him dyyd withouten ayr.	died; heir
35	Thenne was ther non hys pere But Athelston, hys eemes sone; To make hym kyng wolde they nought schone, To cocowne hym with gold so clere.	equal uncle's refuse (thun)
	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 — And thus the pore man gan covere — Lord of tour and toun.	recover
	That other brother he made Eerl of Stane — Egelond was hys name,	lower
	A man of gret renoun —	Stone
	And gaff him tyl hys weddyd wyff	to be
	Hys owne sustyr, Dame Edyff, With gret devocyoun.	
45	The ferthe brothir was a clerk, Mekyl he cowde of Goddys werk. Hys name it was Alyke.	fourth; cleric
	Cauntyrbury was vacant And fel into that kyngys hand;	Much; knew
	He gaff it hym that wyke,	office
50	And made hym bysschop of that stede, That noble clerk, on book cowde rede — In the world was non hym lyche.	place
	Thus avaunsyd he hys brother thorwgh Goddys gras,	like
	And Athelston hymselfen was	advanced; grace
55	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.	
60	Thorwgh the myght off Goddys gras, He gat upon the countas	grace
	Twoo knave-chyldren dere.	begat; countess
	That on was fyfiteme wyntyr old,	boys
65		years

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

	That wyrthy 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 Cauntyrbery my way I ches;	chos
	There spak I with that dere.	Where; dear [person]
	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;	took
	With Egelond I spak inowgh,	enough
	And with the countesse so clere.	beautiful
	They fare weel, is nought to layne,	well; nothing to conceal
	And bothe here sones." The king was fayne	their; happy
120	And in his herte made glad chere.	
	"Sere kyng," he saide, "yiff it be thi wille	
	To chaumbyr that thou woldest wenden tylle,	go to
	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,	world redeemed
	Thou has makyd me a man,	
	And iholpe me for to thryff.	helped; thrive
	For in thy land, sere, is a fals traytour.	

Athelstan

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 140 | He wole doo thee mykyl dyshonour
And beyng thee of lyve.
He wole deposen thee slyly.
Sodaynly than schalt thou dy
By Chrystys woundys fyve!" | much
kill you
depose you
Suddenly |
| 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 — | might; thrive
if I |
| 150 | Be masse-book and belle —
But yiff thou me thy trowthe will plyght
That thou schalt nevare bewreye the knyght
That thee the tale schal telle."
Thanne the kyng his hand up raughte, | Unless; vow; pledge
betray |
| 155 | That false man his trowthe betaughte,
He was a devyl of helle! | raised
faith entrusted |
| 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 — | pledged
conceal |
| 165 | He wolde that thou were slayne;
He dos thy sustyr to undyrstand
He wole be kyng of thy lande,
And thus he begynnes here trayne.
He wole thee poysoun ryght slyly; | wishes
to lead her astray |
| 170 | Sodaynly thanne schalt thou dy,
By Him that suffryd Payne." | Cross
{Neither} food |
| 175 | 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 nevare be no moo
In Yngelond on that stede."
"Nay," says the traytour, "so moot I the, | place
thrive |

Arbetsstäm

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------------------|
| | 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 horne iwent.
A messenger was afflyr sent | |
| | To speke with the kyng. | afterward |
| | I wene he bar his owne name: | believe; bore |
| 185 | He was hoten Athelstane; | called |
| | He was foundelyng. | a foundling |
| | The lettrys were imaad fullyche thare, | fully there |
| | Unto Stane for to flare | go |
| | Withoutien ony dwellyng. | delaying |
| 190 | To fetle the eerl and his sones twoo,
And the countasse alsoo, | fetch |
| | Dame Edyve, that swete thyng. | |
| | And in the lettere yit was it tolde,
That the kyng the eerlys sones wolde | also |
| 195 | Make hem bothe knyght; | |
| | And thereto his seal he sette. | seal |
| | The messenger wolde nought lettse; | delay |
| | The way he rydes ful ryght. | |
| 200 | The messenger, the noble man,
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 lettere in his hande | |
| | Anon he bad hym rede: | bade |
| 205 | "Sere," he sayde also swythe, | quickly |
| | "This lettere oughte to make thee blythe: | glad |
| | Thertoo thou take good heede. | heed |
| | The kyng wole for the cuntas sake | countess' |
| | Bothe thy sones knyghtes make — | |
| 210 | To London I rede thee sped. | advise; hurry |

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | The kyng wole for the cuntas sake
Bothe thy sones knyghtes make,
The blythere thou may be. | <i>happier</i> |
| 215 | Thy fayre wyff with thee thou bryng —
And ther be ryght no lettyng —
That syghte that sche may see." | <i>delaying</i> |
| | Thenne sayde that eerl with herte mylde,
"My wyff goth ryght gret with chylde,
And forthynknes me, | <i>I regret [that]</i> |
| 220 | Sche may nought out of chaumbyr wyn,
To speke with non ende of here kyn
Tyl sche delyveryd be." | <i>go
no part</i> |
| | But into chaumbyr they gunne wende,
To rede the lettrys before that hende
And tydingys tolde here soone. | <i>began to go
courteous lady</i> |
| 225 | Thanne sayde the cuntasse, "So moot I the,
I wil nought lette tyl I there be.
Tomorwen or it be noone. | <i>thrive
stop
before</i> |
| | To see hem knyghtes, my sones fre,
I wole nought lette tyl I there be;
I schal no lengere dwelle. | <i>noble</i> |
| 230 | Cryst foryeerde my lord the kyng,
That has grauntyd hem here dubbyng.
Myn herte is gladyd welle." | <i>delay
requite
their dubbing</i> |
| | The eerl bys men bad make hem yare;
He and hys wyff foeth gunne they fare,
To London faste they wente. | |
| 235 | At Westemynstyr was the kyngys wone;
There they meste with Athelstone,
That afftyr hem hadde sente. | <i>ready
began to go
dwelling</i> |
| | The goode eerl soone was hem
And feteryd faste, verrayment,
And hys sones twoo. | |
| 240 | Ful lowde the countasse gan to crye,
And sayde, "Goode beothir, mercy! | <i>Who
seized
chained, truly</i> |

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

Athelstan

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

Athelstan

	But of thy gold and of thy fee, Cryst in hevene foryeilde it thee; I wole be there tonyght.	<i>property reward</i>
320	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 twentyn thertoo An hard thyng it were to doo, Fesothe, ryght as me thynke. Madame, it is nerhande passyd prime, And me behoves al for to dyne, Bothe wyn and ale to drynke. Whenne I have dynyd, thenne wole I fare. God may covere hem of here care, Or that I slepe a wynke."	<i>thirty miles since work nearly past six a.m.</i>
330	Whenne he hadde dynyd, he wente his way, Also faste as that he may, He rod be Charynge-cross And entryd into Flete-strete And sithen thorwgh Londone, I yow hete, Upon a noble hors. The messanger, that noble man, On Loundone-brygge sone he wan — For his travayle he hadde no los — From Stone into Steppyngeboume, Forsythe, his way nolde he nought tourne; Sparyd he nought for myre ne mos.	<i>Charing Cross Fleet Street promise London bridge; reached work; praise (flame) not alter mud nor bog</i>
340	And thus hys way wendes he Fro Ospryng to the Blee. Thenne myghte he see the toun Of Cauntrybery, that noble wyke, Therin lay that bysschop ryke, That lord of greet renoun.	<i>place powerful</i>
350	And whenne they runngen underbelles, He rod in Londone, as I yow telle;	<i>morning bell</i>

Athelstan

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

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

- 425 Forcursyd there to yelle,
Of the gyld 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]*
Who made them to dwell there
- 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,
 And to hym he wente apas,
 And took hym be the hande.
- astonished at; situation*
quickly
by; hard
- 435 "Welcome," he sayde, "thou erchebysschop,
Oure gostly fadyr undyr God."
 He swoor be God levande,
"Weddyd brother, weel moot thou spede,
For I hadde nevree somekyl nede,
- spiritual*
by; living
prosper
- 440 Sith I took cros on hande.
- Since*
- 445 Goode weddyd brother, now turne thy rede,
Doo nougth thyn owne blood to dede
 But yiff it worthy were.
For Hym that weres the corowne of thorn,
Lat me borwe hem tyl tomoern,
- change your mind*
[cause] to die
Unless
- That we mowe enquere,
And weten alle be comoun asent
In the playne parlement
 Who is worthy be schent.
- be surety for*
might have an inquiry
know; agreement
full
punished
- 450 And, but yiff ye wole graunte my bone,
It schal us rewe bothe or none,
 Be God that alle thyng lent."
- grieve us both; before noon*
gave
- 455 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:
- grew angry; wind*
An angrier
- "They scholen be drawen and hongyd or none —
 With eyen thou schalt see!
Lay down thy cros and thy staff,
Thy mytyr and thy ryng that I thee gaff;
- oaths by; moon*
before noon
eyes
mire

- 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,
- spiritual
Sharply
know
- 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
- also
bischopric; deny
forbid
- 475 Crystyndom schal ther non have;
 To care I schal thee brynge.
- girl; boy
- I schal gare crye thorwgh ylike a toun
 That kyrkys schole be broken doun
 And stoken agayn with thoen.
 And thou shalt lygge in an old dyke,
 As it were an heretyke,
 Allas that thou were born!
- proclaim
churches
stuck
lie; ditch
if you; heretic
- 480 Yiff thou be ded, that I may see,
 Assoylyd schalt thou nevere bee;
- Absolved
- 485 Thanne is thy soule in sorwe.
 And I schal wende in uncouthe lond,
 And gete me stronge men of hond;
 My brothur yit schal I borwe,
 I schal brynge upon thy lond
- go; unknown
save
- 490 Hungyr and thyrist ful strong.
 Cold, drougthe, and sorwe;
 I schal nought leve on thy lond
 Wurth the gloves on thy hond
 To begge ne to borwe."
- leave
Worth

- 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
500 Upon a noble aray.
On here knees they kneleden adoun,
And peyden hym of hys benysoun,
He nykkyd hem with nay.
Neyther of cros neyther of ryng
505 Haddle they non kyns wetyng;
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?"
- 510 Thanne he sayde, "Yeore cursyd kyng
Hath me refil of al my thyng.
And of al my worldly wan;
And I have entyrdytyd Yngelond:
Ther schal no preest synge Masse with hond,
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."
- The knyght sayde, "Bysschop, turne agayn;
520 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,
Hymselff tomekyl sorwe.
525 We schole drawe down both halle and boures,
Botbe hys castelles and hys toures,
They schole lygge lowe and holewe.
Though he be kyng and were the corown,
We scholen hym sette in a deep dunjoun;
530 Oure Crystyndom we wole folewe."
- leave taken
each one
- blessing
refused them by saying no
- kind of knowing
began to speak
- mild voice
cross
taken
- bereft
goods
- interdicted England
celebrate Mass
- No child shall be christened
Unless; release to me
- slay
- glad
rescue
- violated
(driven) to great
chambers
- razed
wear
dungeon

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

Athelstan

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | Whanne the bysschop hadde sayd soo,
A gret fyr was maad ryght thoo.
In romauunce as we rede — | <i>fire; immediately</i> |
| 570 | It was set, that men myghte knawe,
Nyne plowgh-lengthe on rawe,
As red as oyn glede. | <i>know
ploughshares; in a row
coal</i> |
| | Thanne sayde the kyng: "What may this mene?"
"Sere, of gylt and thay be clene,
This doom hem that nought drede." | <i>from; if; innocent
ordeal; need not fear</i> |
| 575 | Thanne sayde the good Kyng Athelston:
"An hard doome now is this on:
God graunte us alle weel to spedē." | <i>judgment; one
succeed</i> |
| | They fetten forth Sere Egelan —
A trewere eerl was ther nam —
Before the fyr so bryght.
From hym they token the rede scarlet,
Bothe hoseyn and schoon that weren hym met,
That fel al for a knyght. | <i>fetched
truer; none
hose; shoes; suitable
were appropriate
times; consecrated</i> |
| 580 | Nyne sythe the bysschop halewid the way
That his weddyd brother scholde goo that day,
To praye God for the ryght.
He was unblemeschyd foot and hand;
That sawgh the lordes of the land,
And thankyd God of Hys myght. | |
| 585 | They offeryd him with mylde chere
Unto Saint Powlys heyghe awtere,
Thatmekyl was of myght.
Doun upon hys knees he felle,
And thankyd God that harewede helle | <i>gentle bearing
Paul's; after
harrowed</i> |
| 590 | And Hys modyr so bryght. | |
| | And yit the bysschop tho gan say:
"Now schal the chyldryn gon the way
That the fadyr yode." | <i>then
went</i> |
| 595 | Fro hem they tooke the rede scarlete,
The hosen and schoon that weren hem mete,
And al here worldly wede. | <i>shoes; fit
clothes</i> |

- The fyr was bothe hydous and rede,
The chyldryн swownyd as they were ded;
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." *fear*
- Thanne the chyldryн stood and lowgh:
610 "Sere, the fyr is cold inowgh."
Thorwghout they wenite apase. *laughed*
They weren unblemeschyд foot and hand:
That sawgh the loedys of the land,
And thankyd God of His grace.
- 615 They offeryd hem with mylde chere
To Seynt Powlys hyghe awtere
This myracle schewyd was there. *miracle*
And yit the bysschop efft gan say:
"Now schal the countasse goo the way
620 There that the chyldryн were." *again*
- They fetten forth the lady mylde;
Sche was ful gret igon with chylde
In remaunce as we rede — *fetched*
Before the fyr whan that sche come,
625 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*
Therof hadde sche no drede.
- 630 Whenne sche hadde maad here prayer,
Sche was brought before the feer,
That brennyd bothe fayr and lyght.
Sche wenite fro the lengthe into the thrydde;
635 Styllie sche stood the fyr amyddle,
And callyd it merye and bryght.
Hard schourys thenne took here stronge
Bothe in bak and eke in wombe;
And sithen it fell at syght. *(see note)*

Athelstan

- Whenne that here paynys slakyd was,
 640 And sche hadde passyd that hydous pas,
 Here noise 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,
 645 As it was the landys lawe;
 And ladyys thanne tyl here yode.
 She knelyd down upon the ground
 And there was born Seynt Edemound:
 Blessed 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
 655 They crystnyd the chyld, that men myght see,
 And callyd it Edemound.
 "Halif my land," he sayde, "I thee geve,
 Also longe as I may leve,
 With markys and with pounde;
 660 And al afflyr 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,
 665 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
 670 That I schal nevere bewreye that manne,
 That me gan tellie that tale.
 They arm 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 west

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.
Trusty trewe thou therupon,
680 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
685 That thy brother wente today,
Though it thee evelē beseme."
- thrive
absolve; guiltless
lifted from; baptismal font
Truly believe
guess
Unless
judgment; pronounce
ill befits you
- Thenne sayde the kyng, "So moot I the,
Be schryffle of mouthe telle I it thee;
Therto I am unblyve.
690 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,
695 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."
- thrive
By confession
reluctant
sworn
thought
if: guilty
horses
- And whenne that the bysschop the sothe hadde
700 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!)
- truth
lie
hasten
fetch
- 705 Sey Egeland and hys sones be slawe,
Bothe ihangyd and to-drawe.
(Doo as I thee lere!)
- teach
- The countasse is in presoun done;
Schal sche nevere out of presoun come,
710 But yiff it be on bere."
- Unless; bier

- Now with the messenger was no badde;
He took his hors, as the bysschop radde,
 To Dovere tyl that he come.
The eerl in hys halle he fand:
 delay
715 He took hym the lettre in his hand
 commanded
 On hygh, wolde he nought wone:
"Sere Egelane and his sones be slawe,
Bothe ihangyd and to-drawe:
 found
 Thou getyst that eerldome.
720 The countasse is in presoun done;
Schal sche nevere more out come,
 In haste; delay
 Ne see neyther sunne ne mone."
- Thanne that eerl made hym glade,
And thankyd God that lesyng was made:
 lie
725 "It hath gete me this eerldome."
He sayde, "Felawe, ryght weel thou beef
Have here besauntys good plenté
 besants (coins)
 For thyn hedyr-come."
Thanne the messenger made his mon:
730 "Sere, of youre goode hors lende me on:
 coming hither
 Now graunte me my bone;
For yystyrday deyde my nobyl stede,
 complaint
 On youre arende as I yede,
 one
 Be the way as I come."
- 735 "Myne hors be fatte and comfed,
And of thy lyff I am adred."
 anxious
 That eerl sayde to him than,
"Thanne yiiff min hors sholde thee shoo,
 slay
 My lord the kyng wolde be ful woo
740 To lese swylk a man."
 lose; such
- The messenger yit he broughte a stede,
On of the beste at ylike a nede
 One; this very need
 That evere on grunde dede gange,
Sadelyd and brydelyd at the beste.
 go
- 745 The messenger was ful preste,
Wyghtly on hym he sprange.
 ready
 With agility

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

	Nyne sythis the bysschop halewes the way That that traytour schole goo that day:	<i>times; blessed</i>
785	The wers him gan to spedē. He wente fro the lengthe into the thrydde, And doun he fell the fyr amyddē: Hys eyen wolde hym nouȝt lede.	<i>worse; happened</i> <i>lead (guide)</i>
790	Than the eerlys chyldryn were war ful smerte, And wyghly to the traytour sterte, And out of the fyr him hadde; And sworen bothe be book and belle:	<i>fully aware</i> <i>quickly; ran</i>
	"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 nothyn gladdē — Certayn, ther was non other wytē:	<i>know no other</i> <i>nearly dead</i> <i>reluctantly (without joy)</i> <i>injury</i>
	He lovyd him to mekyl and me to lyte; Therfore envye I hadde."	<i>muck; little</i>
800	Wherme that traytour so hadde sayde, Fyve good hors to hym were tayde, Alle men myghten see with yghe — They drowen him thorwgh ylike a strete,	<i>tied</i> <i>eye</i> <i>drew; each</i>
805	And sethym to the Elmes, I yow hete, And hongyd him ful hyghe. Was ther nevere man so hardy, That durste felle hys false body:	<i>then; assure</i> <i>bold</i> <i>dared take down</i>
	This hadde he for hys lyc. Now Jesu, that is Hevene-kyng. Leve nevere traytour have betere endyng, But swych dome for to dye.	
810		<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 *Emare*. 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 hevene wynne.* Z adds *we*; Tr follows, as do F&H. The addition maintains the integrity of the meter and heals a headless clause.
- 8 *Oy.* 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 *offier* 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 bretkeryn.* 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 gwene.*

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

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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 *Athelstan*. 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 *wileyn yn Yngelond gow dwel*. Tr rejects Z's emendation on the grounds that the "phrase 'of dyvers cunstre' [in line] 20 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 *Athelstan*," suggests that *wileyn* is preferred in line 11, while *woldew* is preferable for line 14: "to assume that the messengers were foreigners, as does T[rance] 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 twretten 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 *Athelstan*. 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, "*Athelstan*, 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: "Athelstan, 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.

- 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 *ow 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.

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- 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 *poytown*, in Taylor's opinion, is to be preferred.
- 145 *So moor 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 *Thaene the lyng his hand up raughte.* The raising of the hand, usually the right hand, indicates an ancient ritual of oathsaking 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 Athelstone.* 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.

- 208–09 *The kyng wole for the cantas 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 abyde "to pay for" leads to confusion with abide, "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 spuse / A knave-chyld iborn ther wase.* The end rhyme in this couplet is a favorite of East Midlands romance.
- 291 *He was bothe whyr and red.* A curious class distinction is made by F&H who suggest that white and red, conventional descriptions of flesh and blood, are "coes 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 terms in his rejection of F&H's determination.

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- 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 *besantys.* A bezant (*byzantium nummar*) 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 preferred directly to the bride by her husband.
- 324 *fyve and twenti ther too.* 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.

- 340 *Loudone-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 Ospryng 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.

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- 394 *Oure gostly fadryr andyr 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 . . . handryd 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 yaff thay be.* The MS shows a word replacement — *yaff* 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 parlment.* As in line 266, a lacuna is suspected here.
- 456 Edith Rickert refers to *Kyng Alisawnder* (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.

- 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 *entyrdytysd*. Tr suggests *entyrdyt* to improve the meter.
- 516–17 *But yiff he graunte me that knyght, / His wyff and chyldyn fayr and bryght*. These lines repeat in lines 537–38. Such repetition is not uncommon in ME romance. See, for example, *Emare*, 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 Jumièges 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 Jumièges 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.

- 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 *Thorughout they wente apase.* C: *Dorwghour 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 Crist 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 saken 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 Edmundi: 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 *you're 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.

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

Glossary

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

Glossary

nouth nor	wende go, turn, travel; think
nu now	wiste knew
ok also	wit intelligence; with
oan soon, quickly	wite/witen know
payn(e) pagan	west know
pine suffering, pain	wreke(n) avenge
recke reckons, cares	
reke/rake reach, go; reached, gone	
ri[e]th right, justice	
rit rode	
sagh saw	yaf gave
samen together	yeme(n) take care of, protect
schupes ships	y-nowe enough
sithen since, because; next, afterwards	yow you
sket quickly	ywis truly, certainly, indeed
stounde hour	
stronde/stomde beach, shore	
sundel somewhat	
swike traitor, scoundrel	
swilke such	
swithe very; quickly	
tale tale; tally, in number	
te go; take /myself; to	
tene pain, suffering, anxiety; anger	
than then; when	
the the, you; they; though	
ther there; where	
tho then, when; though	
thusgate in this regard	
til to, until	
to gadre together	
trome rank of warriors, body of armed	
men	
tun town, fortified area, village, hamlet,	
populated area	
ure our	
ut(h) out	