

SIR TORRENT OF PORTINGALE

edited by
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INTRODUCTION

Sir Torrent of Portingale is a rollicking tale of love and adventure. Its action clips away at a full-tilt pace, taking its protagonists from their homes in Portugal to as far north as Norway, as far south as Jerusalem, and many other places in between. Driving the immense sweep of its action is the poem's investment in grand dynastic ambition, though at various points in the narrative this interest in lineage and accession is integrated with many of the other characteristic concerns of late Middle English romance: pious devotion to Christian duty, the prodigious and often ostentatious display of chivalric prowess, and the world-shaping force of youthful erotic love.¹ Above all, though, Sir Torrent is a warrior knight, and his tale is primarily a romance of battles. Readers who come to this text from Middle English romances such as Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, *Squire's Tale*, or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* will find relatively few comparisons by way of complex philosophical investigations or subtle psychological portraits, and to read *Torrent* with a mind to privilege such qualities is to miss the point. The author of this romance, like the authors of *Octavian*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Eglamour*, *Isumbras*, and *Ipomedon*, serves up deeds of derring-do episode after episode, his staple aesthetic being fearless chivalric heroics in the face of fearsome and surely insurmountable odds. Audiences in the fifteenth century, no doubt, came to *Torrent* expecting a tale of bash-up physical adventure, and in this respect they found exactly what they were looking for.

In many ways, then, *Sir Torrent of Portingale* offers an exemplary expression of mature Middle English romance. In nearly all elements of the author's craft — style, tone, characterization, and plot — *Torrent* shows itself to be very much aware of its status as genre fiction. The romance is also entirely uninterested in masking its abundant efforts to feed the expectations of late-medieval readers of popular literature. In terms of plot, for instance, the author seems to adopt a strategy of amplifying and multiplying established romance tropes. There are magic swords, magic horses, and token rings; lions, griffins, leopards, bears, and apes; two child abductions, three rudderless boats, three fights between father and sons; so many dragon fights that at one point Torrent loses count (line 2302), and so many giants that Torrent does not even bother keeping count (line 2303). *Torrent*, in other words, is a romance chock-full of what might be called generic accoutrement. By stuffing the tale with the furniture of romance, and that in abundance, the author anticipates an audience both well-versed in the conventions of adventure literature and hungry for something bigger and grander than anything they had seen before. If *Sir Torrent of Portingale* succeeds as a work of late-medieval vernacular fiction, it succeeds through sensational oversized patterns.

¹ On the characteristic features of late medieval English romance see Cooper, *English Romance in Time*, and Field, "Romance in England."

Perhaps as a consequence of the author's ambitious scope, *Torrent* weighs in at 2,671 lines, making it one of the longer tail-rhyme romances to survive from the Middle English period and one that nearly doubles the length of its nearest analogue and partial source, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. By the end of the fourteenth century, tail-rhyme had strong associations with both romance and popular minstrelsy in England, to the extent that the form itself triggered expectations of genre, just as it came to signal a distinctively English literary tradition. The link between tail-rhyme and a home-grown tradition of popular fiction was so strong that Chaucer could poke fun at Middle English popular romance by writing over-the-top "doggerel" tail-rhyme in his romance Tale of Sir Thopas, the Chaucer-pilgrim's own contribution to the *Canterbury Tales*' story-telling competition.² As with many other Middle English romances, the tail-rhyme in *Torrent* appears in twelve-line stanzas, rhyming *aab ccb ddb eeb*, with the couplets carrying four stresses and the tail lines only three.³ The effect of this shorter tail line is a cantering rhythm which, when read aloud (as would have been the more common form of reception in the Middle Ages), has a tendency to quicken the reader's pace and thus speed the narration along. While we have no concrete evidence that *Torrent* was ever publically performed in the fifteenth century, it is quite likely that it was, given that tail-rhyme was a favorite amongst minstrels, and that the text contains several oral tags, in which the narrator, a character in his own right, tells the audience to listen up or to stay put.⁴ Of course, given the strong links between minstrelsy and tail-rhyme romance, such allusions to oral performance may have been included by the author as a matter of convention, rather than as a genuine measure to quiet a rowdy audience.

Of the author we know nothing beyond what scant suggestions the text offers. The romance contains close verbal echoes of *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, which suggests that the author may have been composing with a copy of *Sir Eglamour* at his elbow.⁵ The author's deep familiarity with, and extensive use of, romance traditions likewise suggests that he may have had access to many more volumes besides. Such a context for composition, however, does not get us very far in terms of pinning down the author's identity, or even the author's principal vocation. So while it remains possible that the author was a minstrel, or was

² Harry Bailey, the host of the story-telling competition who often plays the role of literary critic in the *Canterbury Tales* (however ironic and subversive), calls the Tale of Sir Thopas "rym doggerel" (VII[B²] 925), and announces that the Chaucer-pilgrim's "drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord!" (VII[B²] 930).

³ The lone surviving manuscript witness of *Torrent*, Chetham's Library MS 8009 (Mun.A.6.31), does not space the stanzas separately on the page, though this is not unusual in manuscripts preserving late medieval tail-rhyme romances. More unusually, the surviving text is so fragmentary and error-ridden at the level of both the individual line and the tail-rhyme tercet, that the text's first editor, James Orchard Halliwell, mistook the structure for six-line stanzas. The subsequent editor, Erich Adam, had to frequently transpose words within lines to make the rhyme scheme work.

⁴ See the Explanatory Note for lines 7 and 10 for more on oral tags. Comparison might be drawn with *Dame Sirith*, where the sole surviving manuscript marks with a marginal T, for Testator, lines where that role might have been taken by a separate reader. Similarly, the Dublin, Trinity College, MS 432 witness of the Middle English romance *Robert of Sicily* is formatted to suggest a dramatic dialogue, as is the sole surviving copy of the fourteenth-century Latin prose romance *Arthur and Gorlagon*. See Radulescu, "Reading King Robert of Sicily's Text(s) and Manuscript Context(s)," pp. 176–78; Day, ed. *Narratio de Arthuro rege Britanniae et rege Gorlagon lycanthropo*, pp. 208–35.

⁵ For a list of these echoes see Richardson, ed., *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, pp. 141–45.

commissioned by a minstrel, this is by no means assured. Erich Adam, the editor of the Early English Text Society's 1887 edition, argued that the author was likely a monk, based on the benediction that opens the romance, the frequent prayers of the protagonists, and the poem's general attention to Christian piety.⁶ However, this attention to Christian duty and the emphasizing of God's role in the narrative would no doubt have been expected by late-medieval audiences well-versed in romance, so it is not necessary to assume clerical authorship. In any case, *Torrent* exhibits little of the theological sophistication or overt moral engineering found in the Middle English romances often associated with men of the cloisters, such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Regardless of the author's professional status, his language suggests that he was alive in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, and that, given the text's connections to other romances, namely *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, he probably composed *Torrent* very near the year 1400. As Rhiannon Purdie shows, dialectical evidence suggests an origin for the text in the northern Midlands, possibly near or around the area where the counties of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire meet: roughly speaking, near Doncaster, which was a significant hub for trans-national traffic and commerce in the fourteenth century.⁷ The northern Midlands in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was also a hotspot for the composition of tail-rhyme romance, with texts such as *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, *Sir Eglamour*, *Sir Gowther*, and *The Turke and Sir Gawain* all likely hailing from that time and place. This provenance hints at the possibility that *Torrent* was initially conceived to indulge local literary tastes, just as it suggests a context for composition in which the author may have had copies of several tail-rhyme romances to hand.⁸

Complicating any firm convictions regarding authorship, date, and provenance is the fact that the only complete — or near-complete — copy of the text survives in a manuscript dating from roughly 75 to 100 years after *Torrent* was likely composed. This is Manchester, Chetham's Library MS 8009 (Mun.A.6.31),⁹ a late fifteenth-century miscellany manuscript containing texts written solely in English, with the exception of "Liber Catonis" (item 5), which alternates between English and Latin. The manuscript is now commonly referred to as a household book — that is, a book that catered to the diverse educational, devotional, and entertainment needs of a large household.¹⁰ This book was professionally produced, most likely in London and most likely for a mercantile or gentry family. Its fourteen texts include three romances, *Torrent* (item 6), *Bevis of Hampton* (item 9), and *Ipomadon* (item 10), the latter being the longest tail-rhyme romance in Middle English, at 8,891 lines. It also contains several saints' lives — the *Life of St. Dorothy* (item 1), "The Lyf of Seynt Katerin"

⁶ See Adam, ed., *Torrent of Portyngale*, pp. xx–xxi.

⁷ For a further discussion of provenance, and relation to *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, see Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, pp. 147, 229–33. See also Montgomery's Introduction, pp. lx–lxix, for lexical and semantic evidence of *Torrent*'s predominantly Northern dialect, which he believes can be narrowed further to the Eastern North Midlands (p. lxiii).

⁸ For a survey of tail-rhyme provenance see Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, pp. 153–242.

⁹ Mun.A.6.31 is the current shelfmark, though for the sake of continuity with past scholarship 8009 continues to be the preferred reference to the manuscript.

¹⁰ On the principal characteristics of late medieval English household books see Boffey and Thompson, "Anthologies and Miscellanies." See also Boffey, "Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden B. 24."

(item 4), and “The Lyff of Seynt Anne” (item 3) — which in many ways are the ecclesiastical cousins of secular romance.¹¹ In addition to these longer narrative works, the book also includes instructional and courtesy treatises (items 5, 11), prayers and devotional texts (items 2, 7, 8), historical texts (items 12, 13), and even a satirical ballad, the comic “Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband” (item 14).¹² The text of *Torrent* was copied by two scribes: Hand 7, who copied the first 1049 lines, and Hand 5, who copied the remainder of the poem.¹³ While Hand 7 worked on no other items in the manuscript, Hand 5 appears to be the book’s principal scribe, also copying “The Lyf of Seynt Katerin,” *A Lamentation of Oure Lady* (item 7), “A Prayar of Oure Lady” (item 8), *Bevis of Hampton*, *Ipomadon*, and *The Book of the Duke and the Emperor* (item 12). Purdie’s assessment of the paper-stock, in conjunction with the copying and worn pages, leads to the conclusion that the majority of the book was put together at the same time and place, with “The Life of St. Dorothy,” “Assymptio Sancte Marie” (item 2), “Liber Catonis,” “The Namys of Wardeyns and Balyffys” (item 13), and “Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband” added later.¹⁴ While the manuscript contains a unique combination of texts and sole survivals of individual texts such as *Torrent*, as an artifact of late-medieval reading habits and literary tastes it is fairly representative in its eclecticism and its mixture of secular and religious items. There has been considerable debate amongst scholars as to how such miscellanies were assembled and how they were consumed, but at the very least Chetham MS 8009 provides a witness to a milieu of vernacular literary consumption in fifteenth-century England — a milieu in which the knockabout adventurism of *Torrent* and its fellow romances find company with texts of educational merit and sacred import.¹⁵

The surviving text of *Torrent* in Chetham MS 8009 presents several challenges to the reader, many of which stem from the conditions of its transmission. Purdie notes that Hand 5 and Hand 7 worked together, and therefore from the same copy-text, since there is no change of paper-stock across the two scribes’ copying stints. As the two scribes worked from the same exemplar, and as Hand 5 copied multiple texts in the manuscript, it is possible to say something about their copying habits. Purdie’s analysis shows that while Hand 7 appears to have been willing to alter linguistic forms to those that were familiar or preferred, Hand 5 was the more precise copyist, either because his linguistic range was of such a breadth that all the forms he encountered were familiar to him, or (more likely) because he was

¹¹ On the link between saints’ lives and romance see Wogan-Browne, *Saints’ Lives and Women’s Literary Culture*, pp. 91–122. On the connection within Chetham MS 8009 in particular, see Wade, “Romance, Affect, and Ethical Thinking,” pp. 265–79.

¹² On the manuscript’s composition, see Sánchez-Martí, “Manchester, Chetham’s Library MS 8009 (Mun.A.6.31): A Codicological Description.”

¹³ Scribal assignations follow Ker’s description of the manuscript. See Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, pp. 361–64.

¹⁴ See Purdie, ed., *Ipomadon*, pp. xviii–xxiii.

¹⁵ Chetham’s MS 8009 is generally considered one of the more tightly knit miscellanies. Most recently, Sánchez-Martí has argued that the manuscript “is a clear example of careful organization, conceived as a family library in parvo” (“The Middle English Versions of *Ipomedon*,” p. 90). A more skeptical reader, however, might follow Pearsall, who has expressed suspicion at the idea that “late medieval English manuscripts of apparently miscellaneous content are somehow the product of unifying controlling intelligences” (“The Whole Book,” p. 17).

determined to reproduce his copy-text as precisely as possible.¹⁶ However, the text of *Torrent*, as it exists in the manuscript, is very imperfect. The exemplar evidently bore the effects of multiple re-copying, or of having been initially written down from memory or transcribed from oral recitation. Several of the existing lines either deviate from the tail-rhyme form, offer nonsensical syntax, or give details that clearly do not fit with the surrounding context. Certainly, Hand 5 was a diligent copyist, but as with Hand 7 he was clearly not interested in attempting to tidy up what must have seemed an error-ridden and perhaps even messy copy-text. Nevertheless, both scribes show some investment in *mise-en-page* presentation, as both achieve a clean copy of *Torrent* over eighty-five neatly ruled pages, with an elegant title and several large rubricated capitals to signal divisions within the narrative.

That the manuscript offers a text at some remove from the original composition is also suggested by the fragments of two early prints of the romance, one by Richard Pynson (c. 1505, STC 24133) and another by Wynkyn de Worde (c. 1510, STC 24133.5). The fragments are proofs, printed on the reverse of a broadside print of John Skelton's elegy on Henry VII.¹⁷ Where the prints offer different readings from that of Chetham MS 8009, they are often more coherent or formally regular where the manuscript is not. One reason for this sense of coherence is that the printers appear to have edited the text by modernizing and replacing Northern forms, but it is also almost certain that the printers were working with a more coherent copy-text, as the fragments offer superior readings that are not likely the result of editorial intervention. The evidence suggests, then, that while these prints are close to the text in Chetham MS 8009, they were not based on the manuscript or any subsequent manuscripts in its line of transmission. Rather, these printers must have had access to a manuscript or manuscripts in a separate chain of copying, and one either closer in line to the original text, one that simply did not introduce as many deviations, or both.¹⁸ The surviving prints hint at a rich history of the transmission and reception of *Torrent* in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and one that would have been imaginable but largely unsubstantiated if all that had survived from the Middle Ages had been the solitary witness of the romance in Chetham MS 8009.

Another hint of *Torrent*'s presence in the literary landscape of fifteenth-century England is that a copy of the text likely occupied a spot on the library shelf of Sir Thomas Malory. As Edward Kennedy has shown, the close echoes in Sir Marhal's fight with a giant in *Le Morte Darthur*, along with other minor narrative details and events in Malory's work, point to the likelihood that either Malory had a copy to hand, or that he had precise details from *Torrent* clearly in his mind when composing.¹⁹ Malory's likely use of *Torrent* also points to the possibility that at least one well-read fifteenth-century gentry reader took the romance seriously, or rather that it did not seem too incongruous for Malory to use it as a source alongside other serious-minded English texts such as Hardynge's *Chronicle*, the alliterative

¹⁶ See Purdie, ed., *Ipomadon*, pp. xlvi–liv.

¹⁷ See Scammell and Rogers, "An Elegy on Henry VII," p. 167.

¹⁸ See Montgomery, ed., pp. xxix–xxxii; Sánchez-Martí, "The Printed History of the Middle English Verse Romances," pp. 7, 22–23.

¹⁹ See Kennedy, "Malory and His English Sources," pp. 34–38.

Morte Arthure, and the stanzaic *Morte Arthur*.²⁰ Beyond a gentry context, too, the *Torrent*-author may have had even more lofty pretensions for the romance's possible readership. By making its principal locale Portugal, the author could have been attempting to tap into a current royal interest in the Iberian Peninsula. In 1386 England and Portugal strengthened already close ties by signing the Treaty of Windsor. In that year John of Gaunt brought his daughters, Philippa and Catherine of Lancaster, along with him during his invasion of Iberia. Catherine would later become the Queen of Castile, while Philippa, known to be well-educated and bookish, would marry João I to become Queen of Portugal. This "Portuguese connection" endured in England well into the fifteenth century, and it is entirely plausible that *Torrent* attempted to evoke a court setting that was at once foreign and familiar to English-speaking royalty.²¹ In this context, *Torrent* is a romance that might particularly appeal to women like Philippa of Lancaster, women who were noble, literate, and faced the prospect of a political marriage. After all, the romance prominently features Desonell, the Princess of Portugal, as a fundamentally virtuous but remarkably feisty heroine.

At the same time, it is also possible that for the *Torrent*-author, or for certain audiences, Portugal would have appealed more for its foreignness than its familiarity. Chaucer's mention of "greyn of Portyngale" in the Nun's Priest's Tale (VII [B²] 3459) alludes to red dye, presumably an imported luxury of rare value and splendor. This sense of the exotic seems to have seeped over into romance as well. *William of Palerne* (c. 1350–61), the earliest surviving Middle English text to mention Portugal, is a romance that features a Portuguese stepmother who has the power to transform her stepson into a werewolf. One manuscript of the Scottish romance *King Orphius*, too, sets its tale of fairy abduction in Portugal, and adding further weight to the notion of Portugal as a land of marvels and adventures is the Older Scots *Clariodus*, in which Sir Porrus of Portingal takes the form of a lion until Clariodus breaks the spell by defeating him.²² These texts suggest a vogue for Portugal's exoticism in the cultural imagination of later medieval England and Scotland, which seems to have found particular expression in romances that rely on popular tropes, and which the *Torrent*-author employs and amplifies to novel effect.

Torrent's place within the genre of popular romance is attested by the early sixteenth-century print editions of Pynson and de Worde; the early Tudor period saw a marked proliferation in the printing of Middle English romance, the pulp fictions of their age. Perhaps counterintuitively, then, the fragmentary state of these prints attests to their popularity. These books were not valuable objects to be preserved on library shelves; they were meant to be read, and as inexpensive paperbacks they were read until they literally fell apart. Sometimes, the books that survive intact from the Middle Ages are the ones that people only occasionally opened. While, however, the Pynson and de Worde prints suggest the popularity of *Torrent* in terms of the two printers' perceived demand from their readers, "popular" is often considered a fraught adjective to describe a Middle English romance, and

²⁰ See Kennedy, "Malory and His English Sources," pp. 27–28.

²¹ See the "Introduction" to *John Gower in England and Iberia*, eds. Sáez-Hidalgo and Yeager, pp. 1–14, as well as Carlson's "The English of Nájera," and Galván's "At the Nájera Crossroads" in the same volume. On Anglo-Iberian relations in the Middle Ages see also Bullón-Fernández, ed., *England and Iberia in the Middle Ages*. See also Montgomery, ed., p. lxxx.

²² See Purdie, ed., *King Orphius*, p. 218n4.

the case of *Torrent* is a good example why, as the most complete copy to survive does so in a mercantile or gentry manuscript. A lone manuscript witness, however, can tell us very little about the variety of possible contexts in which a text might have been consumed in the period, and the prints of *Torrent* point to the likelihood of proliferation amongst varying socioeconomic classes. Certainly, there were no clear-cut social divisions in terms of literary tastes in fifteenth-century England, as suggested by the possible audiences for *Torrent*, which encompassed the highest echelon of English and continental royalty, as well as London gentry and mercantile readers. However, there also seems to have been a broader and possibly more numerous audience for *Torrent* that may be thought of as popular in the sense of being in the market for cheap prints, and also popular in the sense of being vast enough to make the printing of these cheap texts economically viable for their printers.²³

Another way *Torrent* could be said to be popular is that it is fundamentally invested in the conventions of genre fiction. Certainly, no immediate source for the romance is known, and unlike many of the Middle English romances, it is doubtful that it was derived from any continental original. However, as many scholars have suggested,²⁴ *Torrent* is a brilliant amplification of the earlier fourteenth-century *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, which is itself a re-imagining of numerous popular tropes found in other Middle English romances. In addition to many verbal correspondences, several of the major plot points in *Eglamour* are made bigger and better in *Torrent*: the imposition of challenges by the princess' father, the battles with exotic giants and dragons, the birth of the child while the hero is away, the child's abduction by a beast, the rescue of the princess from marriage, and the father-versus-son combat.²⁵ But *Torrent* is not simply an imitation of *Eglamour*. Where the *Torrent*-author expands, he also diversifies, or at least he amplifies in a way that further taps into the romance traditions in which *Eglamour* also participates. As in *Sir Isumbras*, for instance, the protagonists nobly and pietistically suffer hardship; as in many romances, such as *Lay le Freine*, *Emaré*, and *Generides*, it presents a version of the “calumniated queen” trope, otherwise known as the “Constance-saga” narrative;²⁶ as in *Bevis of Hampton*, noble virgins cannot be harmed by lions; as in *Octavian*, a defeated beast accompanies the hero; as in *Guy of Warwick*, there is an island combat; and as in *Ipomadon*, two brothers unwittingly joust with each other. A list of comparable details, incidents, or motifs from other Middle English romances could be much expanded, but the point is that there is a shared currency of action

²³ On “popular” romance see Putter and Gilbert, eds., *Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*; McDonald, ed., *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*; and Gray, *Simple Forms*, especially pp. 89–106. On “popular” literature in late medieval household books see Shuffelton, “Is There a Minstrel in the House?” For a study that considers the gentry manuscript contexts of Middle English romance see Radulescu, *Romance and its Contexts*.

²⁴ See Hibbard, “*Torrent of Portyngale*,” (1960) pp. 270–82; Mehl, “*Torrent of Portyngale*,” (1968) pp. 83–85; Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 147; and Dalrymple, “Literary Giants,” pp. 159–70.

²⁵ Adam’s introduction suggests the plenitude of correspondences in plot by enumerating the differences between *Torrent* and *Eglamour*, which Adam presumably took to be more efficient than listing their similarities. See pp. xxviii–xxx.

²⁶ Well-known examples of “Constance-Saga” narratives include Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale* and Gower’s *Tale of Constance* in his *Confessio Amantis*. A version of the story also survives in the *Vita offae primi*, a twelfth-century text of English origin. Hornstein discusses the principal narrative features of the story, along with Middle English examples, in “Eustace–Constance–Florence–Griselda Legends,” pp. 120–32.

across these romances, and that *Torrent* trades in this currency just as it attempts to out-sell its competitors.²⁷

This tactic of narrative appropriation has led some scholars to condemn *Torrent* as derivative: in Lillian Herland Hornstein's view, for instance, it is merely "the work of a crude hack-writer."²⁸ In fact, so far as current scholarship is concerned (excepting Roger Dalrymple and Edward Kennedy), its only contribution to literary history is its likely influence on Sir Thomas Malory.²⁹ To adopt such a critical position, however, would be to judge *Torrent* according to criteria of originality to which its author certainly did not aspire, and perhaps did not even recognize. What matters here is that the poem's depiction of betrayal and treachery, evil and corruption, is brought to a happy ending only after many painful deferrals and shocking revelations. The *Torrent*-author revels in putting his protagonists in seemingly insurmountable situations and watching them somehow struggle out. This struggle, after all, and the eventual triumph of good over evil, is what romance is all about.

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

I have based my text on Chetham's Library MS 8009 (Mun. A.6.31), the only surviving copy to preserve the romance in near-complete form. However, the manuscript frequently offers unsatisfactory readings, and I have therefore adopted readings from the print fragments when their assistance in restoring rhyme, meter, or line order is overwhelmingly persuasive. Otherwise I have offered emendations when it is obvious what has gone wrong in the process of transmission, or when the problems produce obstructions to sense. All of my emendations are described in the Textual Notes. Wherever the rhyme scheme or number of lines per stanza seem to indicate missing lines, I have marked them in the text by using ellipses; a three-point ellipsis indicates one missing line and a four-point ellipsis indicates multiple missing lines. Additional information on the content of the missing lines may be found in the Textual Notes. In keeping with the style guidelines of the Middle English Texts Series, I have expanded contractions, regularized word division, and modernized orthography, capitalization, punctuation, and *i/j* and *u/v* usage without comment.

²⁷ Adam (pp. xxii–xxvii) highlights comparisons between *Torrent* and other texts that he ties to the Legend of St. Eustache, which first appears in the eighth century. These include texts in Old French and Middle High German, along with the English romances *Sir Isumbras*, *Octavian*, and *Sir Eglamour*.

²⁸ "Eustace–Constance–Florence–Griselda Legends," p. 127.

²⁹ See Kennedy, "Malory and His English Sources," pp. 34–38.



SIR TORRENT OF PORTINGALE

fol. 76r Here bygynneth a good tale
Of Torrente of Portyngale.

- God that ys worthy and bold
Heven and erthe have in hold,
Fyld, watyr, and wynde,
Yeve us grace hevyn to wyne,
5 And brynge us owt of dedly synne,
And in Thy servyse to ende.
A stounde and ye woll lyst be-dene,
Ale dowghty men that evyr hathe byn,
Wher so that they lende.
10 I schall yow tell, ore I hense pase,
Of a knyght that dowghty wase,
In Rome ase clarkys fynde.
- In Portyngall, that ryche londe,
An erell that wase wonande,
15 That curtese wase and dowghty.
Sone aftyr he had a sone,
The feyerest that on fot myght gon,
Tyrrant, men seyd, he hyght.
Be tyme he wase eighteen yer old,
20 Of dedds of armys he wase bold,
To felle bothe kyng and knyght.
And now commythe dethe appon a day,
And takythe hys father, ase I yow sey,
For God ys most of myght.
- 25 The kyng of Portyngall wase fayne,
To warde hym he takythe Torrayne,¹
That dowghty ys in dedde.
And ther he fesomnyd in hys hond
A good eyrldom in that lond,
fol. 76v Bothe forest and downe.
- Land*
Give; win
- [In] a short time; hear immediately*
valiant
remain
- scholars*
- Portugal*
earl; dwelling
courteous; manly
Soon
- Torrent; was called*
- strike down*
- glad*
- gathered fief*
- highland plains*

¹ *He [the king] took Torrent under his guardianship*

- 31 The kyng hath a dowghtyr feyer ase flowyr,
Desonell wase her name,
Worthyest in wede.¹
When Torrent had of her a syght
35 More he loyvd that swet wyte
Than all ys fathyrys londe. *person*
- For love of thyss lady deyr,
In dede of armys far and nere
Aventorrs gan he take. *Adventures*
- 40 With heve tymbyr and ovyr-ryde,
Ther myght no man hys dent abydde,
But to the erthe he them strake.
Her father and other knyghtts mo
Had farly how he ryd soo, *marveled*
- 45 And on a day to hym spake.
He seyd, “Torrent, howe may thyss byne,
That thow dysplesyst thes knyghtts kene,
And ordurrs non woll take?” *be
displease; brave
orders [of knighthood]*
- 50 Torrent sayd, “So mut I thee,
And other sayment woll I see,
Ore I take ordor of knyght.” *As I may prosper
exploits
Before
Then*
- 55 Tho he sware by hevyn kyng,
Ther wase told hym a wondyr thynge
In hys chambyr to nyght:
“For the love of my doughter dere
Thow makyst good, far and nere, *succeed*
- 60 In dedde of armys bryght.
And wyt thow wyll, so God me save,
Thow schalt her wyne, yf thow her have,
Be thow never so wyttht.” *know; well
strong*
- fol. 77r Torrent sayd, “Be Mary dere,
And I were of armyse clere,²
Yowr dowghtyr me leve were.” *would be dear to me*
- 65 The kyng seyd, “Yf yt be soo,
Ore seven yere be a-go, *have gone by*
- More schall we here.
Durst thow, for my dowghtyr sake,
A poynt of armys for to take, *Dare
feat of arms*
- With owt helpe of fere?” *companions*
- 70 Than seyd Torrant, “So God me sped, *So God help me*

¹ *Most noble in apparel*

² *If I were entitled to bear arms*

- With anny man that sytthe on stede
Other far ore nere.”
- 75 Ther-of the kyng for tene wax wode:
“Yf thou wylt make thy body good
Be trew and hold thy contnace
- grew mad from anger; (see note)
prove your strength
maintain your composure; (see t-note)
- Tho seyd Torrant, “So God me sped ere!
And I wyst in what sted they were,
Fore no man wold I chaunce.”
- before
knew; place
deviate from my purpose
- 80 “Into the Greks See a mylle
Ther lyghtthe a gyant in an yle,
Full evyll thow dourst hym stand.
My fayer forests fellythe downe he,
And ryche castells in that contré,
No ston lytthe he stand.”¹
- comes
dare; stand (remain)
- 85 Terrent sayd, “Be Marre bryght,
Yt ys gret sorrow that he hathe syght,
The devyll of hell hym blynd.”
- The kyng sayd, “Par la more le dewe,
Thow darryst full evyll with thy ey hym sewe,
- 90 He wold fell thee with hys wynde.”
- “Now be my trowthe,” seyd Torrent than,
“Als I ame a jentylman,
Yf I may hym fynd
Won fot woll I not from hym pase,
- 95 fol. 77v Thow he be stronger than Samson wase,
96 Or anny man of hys kynd.”
- By the love of God
eye; see
truth (honor)
gentleman
One foot
nature (i.e., any human man)
- Hys squyerys, they mornyd sore,
Withowt fere that he schold fare
To that gret jorney,
100 With the gyant heigh for to fyght.
Begonmese that gyant hyght
That fyndds fare for aye.
To arme hym Torrant goos,
Hys good stede with hym he takythe,
105 Withowt squyer that day.
He takythe leve at lorddys hend,
And on hys wey gan he wynd,
For hym all they prayd.
- companion; travel
battle
tall giant
was called
fiends' companion forever
of courteous lords
he went

¹ *He allowed no stone to stand*

- 110 Lytill wyst Desonell that jente,
For whos love that he went,
To fyght with that knave.
Now God, that dyed appon a Rode,
Strengithe hym both bone and blod,
The fylf for to have.
- 115 He that schall wend soche a wey,
Yt were nede for hym to pray,
That Jesu hym schuld save.
Yt ys in the boke of Rome,
Ther was no knyght of Kyrstendome,
120 That journey durst crave.¹
- Six days rydythe he
By the cost of the feyer see,
To seke the gyant kene.
fol. 78r By the cost, as he rode,
125 In a forest longe and brode
And symly wase to see,
Hey sperrys ther he fonde,
And gret olywys growonde,
Coverd in levys grene.
- 130 Sone wase he ware, ase Y yow say,
Upon a mounteyn ther he laye
On slepe, ase I wene.
- Torrent on kne knelyd he,
And be-sowght Jesu so fre,
135 That bowght hym with Hys blod:
“Lord, ase Thow dyd ryght for Maré,
Let me never take velony,
And gef me of Thy fode.
Sertts, yf I hym slepyng slone,
- 140 Manfull ded were yt none,
For my body, be the Rode.”
Tho Terrant blewe hys bugell bold,
To loke that he awake wold,
And sythe ner hym rode.
- 145 So fast aslepe he wase browght,
Hys hornys blast awoke hym nowght,
He swellyd ase dothe the see.
Torrent saw he woll not wake,
He reynyd hys sted unto a stake,
- 150 Ase a jentyll man in fere.
- gentlewoman
villain
Cross
It is [recorded]
pleasing
Tall trees
olive trees growing
believe
prayed
Mary
dishonor
give; [spiritual] food
Certainly; struck (killed)
deed
make sure
sea
tied his steed [by the reins]

¹ *Who dared to desire that battle*

	So hy, he say, wase the mounteyne,		<i>saw</i>
	Ther myght no horse wynd hym agen,		<i>toward</i>
fol. 78v	But yf he nowyd wold be. ¹		
	Thowe the wey never so wykkyd were,		<i>dangerous (wicked)</i>
155	On hys wey gan he fare,		
	In gret perayll went hee.		<i>peril</i>
	Torent went to that mounten,		
	He put hys spere hym agayne,		<i>against [the giant]</i>
	“Aryse, fellow,” gan he saye.		
160	“Who made thee so bold here to dwell,		
	My lords frethe thus to fell?		<i>woods; chop down</i>
	Amends thee behovythe to pay.”		<i>it is necessary</i>
	The gyant rysythe as he had byn wod,		<i>mad</i>
	And redyly by hym stode,		
165	Besyd hym on a lay,		<i>field</i>
	And seyd, “Sertes, yf I leve,		<i>if I am allowed</i>
	Soche a wed I woll thee gef,		<i>amends (tribute); give</i>
	To meve thee evyr and ay.”		<i>move; ever and always (i.e., to kill)</i>
	Thow the chyld were nevyr so yonge,		<i>noble youth</i>
170	The fynds spere sparrythe hym no-thyng,		<i>held him back</i>
	In the holts horee.		<i>dark woods</i>
	Who had fare and nere byne,		
	And never had of ftyng seyn,		
	He myght a lernyd there.		<i>have</i>
175	The gyant, the fyrst stroke to hym he cast,		
	Hys good schyld all to-brast,		<i>burst in pieces</i>
	In schevyrs spred wase there.		<i>splinters</i>
	Tho coud he no better ryd, ²		
	But stond styll tyll one were ded;		
180	The gyant lefte hym ther.		
	Torrent undyr hys spryt he sprent ³		
fol. 79r	And abowght the body he hym hente,		<i>grasped</i>
	As far as he myght last.		<i>long</i>
	“A! Fellow, wylt thou so?”		
185	And to the grownd gan they goo,		
	Of the mounteyn bothe downe gan they passe.		
	Ase the boke of Rome tellys,		
	They tornyd xxxii tymys,		<i>turned thirty-two times</i>
	In armys walloyng fast.		<i>tumbling from side to side together</i>

¹ Unless [the horse] was distressed (?spurred)

² Then he knew no better plan

³ Torrent moved quickly under his [the giant's] staff

- 190 Yt tellythe in the boke of Rome,
Evyr ase the gyant above come,
Hys gutts owt of hys body brast. burst
- 195 At the fot of the mounteyn
Ther lay a gret ragyd ston, serteyn, hard (rough)
Yt nyhed ys schulder bon injured
- 200 And also hys ryght syd.
Ther to that gyant fell that tyd, time
Ase I herd in Rome.
Thorrow Hyme, that mad man, By means of Him (i.e., God); made
205 Torrent sone abovyn wane, moved above [the giant]
And fast he gan him warke
With a knyfe feyer and bryght.
Torrent with all hys myght
Therewith he gard hym dwell. put an end to him
- 210 Torent knelyd on hys kne,
To Jesu Cryst prayd he,
That hathe thys world to wyld: wield
“Lord, loyed, evyr loyed Thowe be,
The feyer fyld Thou hast lent me”
- fol. 79v (Upp bothe hys hands held)
- 211 “All onely without any knave,
Of the fynd the maystry to have,
Of hym to wyn the fyld.” alone; squire
fiend (i.e., the giant)
- 215 Now ys ther none other to say,
Of hym he wane the fyld that day. won
I pray God hym schyld.
- 220 Torrent went uppe ageyne
To the mount, ase I gan sayne,
The londs to se far and nere.
In the see a myle, hym thought,
An hold wase rychly wrot, palace; built
In that lond wase not here perre.
The see wase ebbyd, I yow sey,
Torrent thether toke the way,
225 Werry all thow he were.
And ther he fownd ryche wayes, rooms
Towrrs endentyd with presyos stony,
Schynyng ase crystall clere. adorned; precious
Shining
- 230 The gattys of yron ther he fond,
Ther in Torrent gan wonde,
A nyghts rest there in he take.
And at the hale dore ther wase

- A lyon and a lyonesse,
 Ther men betwene them twayne,
 235 Fast etyng, ase ye may here. *Quickly*
- Crystyn man thow he were,
 fol. 80r Hys browys be gan to blowe,
 And wit yow will, Lord God yt wote,
 He durst go no fote,
 240 Lest they wold hyme sle. *brow; turn pale*
well; knows
- Torrant stod and beheld,
 And prayd to God, that ale may wyld,
 To send hyme harborrow good. *control (wield)*
shelter
heard; wall
- 245 Sone hard he within a whalle
 The syghyng of a lady smalle,
 Sche weppete ase sche were wod.
 Sche mornyd sore and sayd, “Alas,
 That evyr kyngs dowgħttr wase
 250 Overcome of so jentyll blod,
 For now ame I holdyn here
 In lond with a fynds fere.” *company*
heard
- Torrant hard, wher he stod.
- “Dere God,” seyd Torrant than,
 “Yf ther be anny Crystyn man
 255 In thys hold of ston, *enclosure*
 That woll, for the love of God of myght,
 Harbourrow a jentylman thys nyght,
 For I ame but on.” *one*
- “Seynt Marry,” seyd that lady clere,
 260 “What Crystyn man axithe harburrow here?” *asks*
 Nere hym sche gothe anon.
 “I wold harburrow thee full fayne,
 But a gyant wyll thee slayne.” *gladly*
 To hym sche mad here mone. *made her complaint*
- fol. 80v “Say me now, fayer lady wyght,
 266 Who owte of thys plase schall me hyght,
 Thes tourrs that are so feyer and bryght?” *shall I call*
- Ther sche seyd, “Be hevyn kyng,
 Here ys a gyant dwellyng,
 270 That meche ys of myght.
 Be my trowthe, and he thee see,
 Were there twenti lyvys in thee,
 Thy dethe than wyll he dyght. *if he*
lives
prepare
- Jesu Cryst yef me grace
 275 To hyde thee in some preve plase,
 Owt of the fynds syght.” *secret place*

....

- “Evyr me thynkythe by thy tale,
 The song of the burds smale
 On slepe hathe hyme browght.”
- 280 “Ye,” seyd Torrent, “ore he be wakyn,
 I schall thee tell soche a tokyn,
 Of hym thou have no thowght.
 But woldds thou for thy gentry
 Do the lyonnys downe lye,
 285 That they nyee me nowght?”
 By the hand sche ganne hym tane
 And led hyme in betwe them twayne,
 Ryght ase sche wold, they wroght.
- The lady wase nevyr so a-drad,
 Into the hale sche hym lad,
 That lemyred ase gold bryght.
- 290 fol. 81r Sche byrlyd whyt wyne and rede:
 “Make use myrre ageyne owre dedd,¹
 I wot will, yt ys so dyght!”
- 295 “Be my trowthe,” seyd Torrent,
 “I wole be thy warrant,
 He comythe not here thys nyght.
 On soche a slepe he ys browght,
 All men of lyve wakythe hym nowght,
 300 But onely God on hyght!”
- Blythe then wase that lady jent,
 For to onharnes Torrent,
 That dowghty wase and bold.
- 305 “For sothe,” sche seyd, “I wot wher ys
 The kyngs sone of Provense,²
 Fast put in hold
 In a dongon that ys dyn.
 Fowyre good erylls sonnys be with hym,
 Ys fet in fere and fold.³
- 310 The gyant wan theme in a tyde,
 Ase they rane be the watyr syd,
 And put them in preson cold.
- before
sign of evidence
gentility (i.e., noble lineage)
Make (cause)
approach
took (did take) him
[the lions] behaved just as she wished*

¹ *Let us be merry before our deaths*

² *The king of Provence's son*

³ *Are shackled in prison together*

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 315 | In an yron cage he hathe them done." | |
| | Torrent went thether sone: | |
| | "Are ye yet levand?" | <i>living</i> |
| | The kyngs sone askyd than, | |
| | Yf ther were anny Crysten man, | |
| | "Wold bryng use owt of bond?" | |
| | "Lord," he seyd, "God all-myght, | |
| fol. 81v | I had levyr on a day to fyght, | <i>rather</i> |
| 321 | Than all my fathyrys lond." | |
| | With an iryn mall styff and strong | <i>iron mace</i> |
| | He brake upe an yron dore or longe, | <i>before long</i> |
| | And sone the keyes he fond. | |
| 325 | Owt he toke thys chyldryn fyve, | |
| | The feyrest that were on lyve, | |
| | I-hold in anny sted. | <i>place</i> |
| | The lady wase full glad, | |
| | Sche byrlyd whyt wyn and redd, | |
| 330 | And sethyn to soper sone they yed. | <i>then; went</i> |
| | "Lords," he seyd, "syn yow are her, | |
| | I red yow make ryght good cher, | <i>advise</i> |
| | For now ys all thy nede." | |
| | Thus he covyrd owt of care. | <i>recovered; trouble</i> |
| 335 | God that sofyrd wondds sore, | |
| | Grante use well to sped. | <i>succeed</i> |
| 340 | Lordds, and ye wol lythe, | <i>if; listen</i> |
| | The chyldyr namys I woll tell blythe, | <i>knight's names; happily tell</i> |
| | Herekyn, how they were me told. | <i>Pay attention</i> |
| | The kyngs sone, that dowghtty wase, | |
| | Wase clepyd Verdownys, | <i>called</i> |
| | That dowghtty wase and bold. | |
| | The kyngs dowghttyr of Gales lond, | <i>Galicia</i> |
| | Elyoner, I undyrstond, | |
| 345 | That worthy wase in hold. | |
| | And an erylls son that hyght Torren, | |
| | Another Jakys of Berweyne, | |
| fol. 82r | The forthe wase Amyas bold. | |
| 350 | Into hys chambyr sche hym led, | |
| | Ther gold and sylvyr wase spred, | |
| | And asur, that wase blewe. | <i>azure; blue</i> |
| | In yron ther he gan stand, | |
| | Body and armys lyghtand, | |
| | In powynt to trusse and goo. | <i>get ready; depart</i> |
| 355 | Into a stabyll sche hym led, | |
| | Eche toke a full fever sted, | |

- They were redy to goo.
 And wote ye well and undyrstond,
 Had the gyant be levand,
 360 They had not partyd soo. *living*
departed
- They woll not to bed gan,
 Tyll on the morrow the day spongē,
 Thus awey to fare. *go*
 365 Torrant sperryd the gattys, i-wyse,
 All that he lyst he clepyd hys,
 The keys and thyng he bare.
 The lyons at the dore *journey*
locked; indeed
liked; called (i.e., claimed)
carried away
- Were led to her maysteer that wase befor;
 On hym thay fed them ther. *their master (i.e., the giant)*
 370 Upp won of the horse that wase ther levyd,
 On hym thei trussyd the gyantts hed. *tied*
 Thus helpt hym God ther.
- But ore thre weks wer commyn to end,
 To Portyngall gan he wend, *before*
 375 Ther ase the kyng gan lye. *Where*
 The porter ther sawe he stood,
 He fled awey ase he were wod,
 fol. 82v Flyngyng ase a fynd. *Flying*
death
 “Syr kyng,” he seyd, “be Godds dede,
 380 Torrant bryngythe a devyll ys hed,
 Therwith he woll yow present.” *a devil’s head*
 Desonell seyd, “Porter, be styll.” . . .
 In hys walke ther ase he went.
- The kyng to the gatys gan pase,
 385 Gret lords that ther wase, *went*
 Bothe knyghts and squyerres,
 Lords wase full sore a-dred *grievously afraid*
 Fore the lyonyts that he had,
 They durst not come hymē ner. *Because of*
 390 The kyng seyd, “I wyll thee kysse,
 Durst I for thy bests, i-wysse.” *beasts*
had
 Torrent dyd them ly ther,
 And kyssyd the kyng with joy and blyse,
 And aftyr other lords of hys,
 395 And aftyr other ladys clere. *beautiful ladies*
- Messengyrs toke the weye,
 To the kyng of Provyns to sey,
 Hys sone ys owt of hold. *Provence*
 “Yoynge Torrent of Portyngall

- 400 Hathe browght hym owt of balle
And slayne the jeyant bold." *torment*
The kyng seyd, "So mot I thee,
I woll geff thee towynnys three
For the talls thow hast me told." *towns*
tales
- 405 Lytyll and mykyll that ther wer,
fol. 83r All they mad good cher,
Her prynse fayne see wold. *Lowborn and highborn (i.e., everyone)*
- 410 Than seyd they, that to Gales yede,
Yeftys to hym were no ned, *went*
Gifts; not lacking
Then Verdownys had they.
Ase they seylid on a tyde, *sailed*
At Perrown on the see syd . . .
The kyng of Probyn seyd: "So mot I thee,
Yftles schall they not be, *So may I prosper*
Giftless
That dare I sothely sey. *truly*
The kyng of Gales proferd hym feyer:
"Wed my dowghtry and myn eyer, *heir*
When so evyr thow may!"
- 420 The kyng of Pervense seyd, "So mot I thee,
Thys seson yeftles schall thow not be, *occasion*
Have here my ryng of gold,
My sword, that so wyll ys wrowyt, *well; made*
A better that yt know I nowght *than*
Within Crystyn mold. *lands*
- 425 Yt ys ase glemmyrryng ase the glase,
Thorrow Velond wroght yt wase,
Bettyr ys non to hold.
I have syne sum tyme in lond, *seen*
Loke thou hold yt with fulle hond,
- 430 Whoso had yt of myn hond,
I fawght therefore it bold." *fought; boldly*
- 435 Tho wase Torrent blythe and glad,
The good swerd ther he had,
The name was Adolake.
A gret mayney let he make, *celebration*
That lest all a fortnyght, *lasted*
fol. 83v Who so will hys met take. *food*
- 440 Evyry man toke ys leve, as I yow say,
Homward to wend ther wey,
Every man ys rest to take. *man's*
Tyll yt befell uppon a day,
Ase they went be the wey,
The kyng to hys dowghtry spake:

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 445 | "Ye schall take hed of a jeentyll man,
A feyer poynt for yow he wane,
Desonell, at the last." | heed
fight
most recently |
| 450 | "Syr," sche seyd, "be hevyn kyng,
Tyll ye me told I knewe no thyng,
For who ys love yt wase." | whose |
| 455 | "Desonell, so mut I thee,
Yt wase for the love of thee
That he trovylld so fast.
I warne yow, dowghtyr, be the Rode,
Yt ys for yow bothe good,
Ther to I red yow trust!" | labored so vigorously
assure
advise |
| 460 | Forthe sche browght a whyt sted,
And whyt as the flowyr in med,
Ys fytte blac ase slo. ¹
"Leman, have here thys fole,
That dethe ys dynt schalt thou not have,
Whyll thou settyste hym appon,
And yf thou had persewyd be,
And hadyst ned fore to fle,
Fast for to gone. | meadow
charger
death's blow |
| 465 | The kyng of Nazareth sent hym me,
Torrent, I wet-safe hym on thee, | vouchsafe |
| fol. 84r | For better love may I none." | |
| 470 | Aftyrward upon a tyd,
Ase they went be the watyrs syd,
The kyng and yong Torrent,
The kyng wold fayne that he ded were,
And he wyst in what maner,
How he schuld be schent. | thought
destroyed |
| 475 | A false lettyr mad the kyng
And dyd messengyrs forthe yt bryng,
On the rever, ase they went,
To Torrent, that was trew ase styll,
Yf he love Desonell wyll,
Get her a facon jent. | On the river (i.e., while hunting)
steel |
| 480 | Torrent the letter began to red,
The kyng lestyned and nere yed,
Ase he yt nevyr ad syne.
"Syr," he seyd, "what may thys be?
Loo, lord, come ner and see, | came near
As if; had seen |
| 485 | Abowght a facon schene. | precious falcon |

¹ His hooves [were] black as sloe berries

- I ne wot, so God me sped,
 In what lond that they bred.”
 The kyng answerd, “I wene,
 In the forrest of Maudelayne,
 490 Ther be hawks ase I herd seyne,
 That byn of lenage gene. *suppose*
- And than seyd the kyng ontrew:
 “Yf thou get hawkys of gret valew,
 Bryng on of them to me.” *dishonest king*
- fol. 84v Torrent seyd, “So God me save,
 496 Yf yt betyd that I may have,¹
 At yowr wyll they schal be.” *one*
- Hys squyer bode he ther,
 Aftyr hys armor for to far,
 500 In the fyld byddythe he.
 They armyd hym in hys wed,
 Tho he bestrod a noble sted,
 And forthe than rod hee.
- Torrent toke the wey ageyn
 505 Into the forest of Mawdleyne,
 In the wyldsome way. *wild (desolate)*
- Berys and apes there founde he,
 And wylde bestys great plenté,
 And lyons where they lay.
- 510 In a wod that wase tyght,
 Yt drew nere-hand nyght,
 By dymmynge of the day.
 Lysten, lordes, of them came wo,
 He and his squyer departed in two;
 515 Carefull men then were they. *dense* *Sorrowful*
- At the schedyng of a rome,
 Eche partyd other frome,
 For sothe, ase I undyrstond.
 Torrent toke a fulful wey,
 520 Downe in a depe valey,
 Besyd a well strong.
 A lytill before mydnyght,
 Of a dragon he had syght
 That grysly wase to fyght.
- 525 He had hym nowght to were,
 fol. 85r But hys schyld and hys spere,
 That wase in hys squyers hond. *sorrowful* *powerful spring* *terrifying* *nothing to protect himself*

¹ *If it happens that I may capture [the falcons]*

- | | | |
|----------|--|---|
| 530 | Torrent knelyd on hys kne,
To Jesu Cryst prayd he:
"Lord, mykyl of myght,
Syne I wase in meche care,
Let me nevuyr owt of thys world far,
Tyll I take order of knyght.
Ase I ame falsely hether sent,
Wyldsom weyes have I went,
With fynds for to fyght.
Now, Jesu, for Thy holy name,
Ase I ame but man alone,
Than be my helpe tonyght!" | great
<i>travel (i.e., die)</i> |
| 535 | | |
| 540 | Ase Torrent Jesu gan pray,
He herd the dragon, ther he lay,
Undyr-nethe a clough.
Off and on he wase stronge,
Hys tayle wase seven yerds long,
That aftyr hym he drewe.
Hys wynggs was long and wyght,
To the chyld he toke a flyght,
With a howge swowe.
Had he nether schyld ne spere, | <i>small mound</i>
<i>yards</i>
<i>powerful</i>
<i>huge onrush</i> |
| 545 | But prayd to God he schold hyme were,
For he wase in dred i-nowthe. | <i>protect</i>
<i>enough</i> |
| 550 | On the tayle an hed ther wase,
That byrnyd bryght as anny glase,
In fyer whan it was dyght. | <i>head</i>
<i>ready (i.e., when it wished)</i> |
| fol. 85v | Abowght the schyld he lappyd yt ther,
Torrent the bowght asondyr schere,
Thurrow the grace of God almyght.
As the boke of Rome tellys,
Of hys taylle he cut four ells,
With hys sword so bryght. | <i>wrapped around; (see note)</i>
<i>loop [in the dragon's tail]</i> |
| 555 | Than cryed the lothely thyng,
That all the dall began to ryng,
That the gyant hard wyght. | <i>dale</i>
<i>heard right away</i> |
| 560 | The gyant seyd, "I undyrstond,
There ys sum Crystyn man nere hond,
My dragon here I cry.
By Hym that schope bothe watyr and lond,
All that I can se before me stond,
Dere schall they abyte. | <i>created</i> |
| 565 | Me thynkythe I here my dragon schowt,
I deme there be some dowghetty man hym abowght, | <i>Dearly (i.e., at high cost); pay for it</i> |
| 570 | | |

- 1 I trow, to long I ly.
 Yf I dwell in my pyll of ston,
 And my chef foster were gone,
 575 A false mayster were I!”
- believe
 tower
 chieff foster-child
 master
- 2 Be the gyant wase redy dyght,
 Torrent had slayne the dragon ryght;
 Thus gan God hyme scheld.
 To the mownteyne he toke the way
- 580 To rest hyme all that day,
 He had myster to be kyllyd.
- need; refreshed
- fol. 86r Tyll the day began to spryng
 Fowllys gan myrre to syng,
 Bothe in frethe and in fold.
- Birds; merrily
 (i.e., everywhere)
- 585 Leve we now of Torrent there
 And speke we of thys squyer more:
 Jesu hys sole fro hell schyld.
- 3 Hys squyer rod all nyght
 In a wod that wase full tyght,
 590 With meche care and gret fare,
 For to seke hys lord Torrent,
 That wysly wase frome hyme sent,
 And he wyst nevyr whethyr ne wher.
 He durst nevyr cry ne schuot,
 595 For wyld bests were hym abowght
 In the holtts hore.
- indeed
 knew
- A lytyl whyll before the day
 He toke into a ryde wey,
 Hyme self to meche care.
- dark forest (see note)
 riding path
- 4 Forthe he rod, I undyrstond,
 Tyll he an hey wey fond,
 Withowtyn any delay,
 Also fast ase he myght fare,
 Fore berrys and apys that ther were,
 600 Lest they wold hym byght.
- highway (main road)
- 605 The sone arose and schone bryght,
 Of a castyll he had a syght,
 That wase bothe feyer and whyte . . .
- bite (i.e., eat)
- 5 The gyant him se, and ny yed,
 610 And seyd, “Fellow, so God me sped,
 fol. 86v Thow art welcom to me.
 What dost thou here in my forest?”
 “Lord, to seke an hawkys nest,
 Yf yt yowr wyl be.”
- came near

- | | | |
|----------|--|--|
| 615 | “Thee behovythe to ley a wede.”
To an oke he hym led:
Gret ruthe yt wase to se.
In four quarters he hym drewe,
And every quarter uppon a bowe.
Lord, soche weys toke hee. | <i>pay a forfeit</i> |
| 620 | | <i>[tree] bough</i> |
| 625 | Ase Torrent in the mounteyn dyd ly,
Hym thowght he hard a reufull cry,
Gret fere ther hyme thowght.
“Seynt Marre,” seyd the chyld so fre,
“Wher evyr my jentyll squyer myght be,
That I with me to wod browght?”
On he dyd hys harnes ageyne,
And worthe on hys sted, serteyne,
And thetherward he sowght. | <i>It seemed to him that
fear
generous (noble)</i> |
| 630 | And wot yow wyll, I undyrstond,
In fowre quartys he hym fownd,
For otherwyse wase yt nowght. | <i>mounted</i> |
| 635 | The gyant lenyd to a tre,
And behyld Torrent so free,
For sothe, ase I yow seye.
Thys fend wase ferly to fyght,
Rochense, seythe the boke, he hyght,
Ther wase a dredfull fraye. | <i>terrifying
noise</i> |
| 640 | To the chyld than gan he smyght:
“A, thef, yeld thee asttyt, | <i>quickly</i> |
| fol. 87r | As fast as thou may!”
“What,” seyd Torrent, “art thou wood?
God, that dyed on the Rood,
Gef thee evyll happe thys day!” | <i>mad
bad luck</i> |
| 645 | He rawght Torrent suche a rowght,
Hys steddys brayne he smot owte,
So mykyl he began.
Torrent tho a good sped,
Ase fast abowte an eche went, | <i>blow
steed's brain
strongly
speed</i> |
| 650 | Ase swefte ase he myght ryne.
He gathyred sum of hys gere,
Bothe hys schyld and hys spere;
Nere hym yod he than. | <i>run</i> |
| 655 | Bacward than be a browgh,
Twenty fote he gard hyme goo,
Thus erthe on hym he wane. ¹ | <i>steep slope
caused</i> |

¹ Thus [Torrent] gained ground on him

- Yt solasyd Torrent than,
 When he sawe hym bacward ron,
 Downe be a mounteyn of Perowne,
 660 Stomlyng thurrow frythe and fen,
 Tyll he com to a depe thorne,
 Ther myght non hym stere.
 Torrent wase glad and folowyd fast,
 And hys spere on hym he brast,
 665 Good Adyloke yed hym nere.
 The fynd in the watyr stod,
 He fawte ageyn, ase he were wod,
 All the day in fere. *solaced (consoled)*
lowland
thicket of thorn trees
nothing move him
- fol. 87v Tho nere hond wase the day gone,
 670 Torrent wase so werry than,
 That on hys kne he knelyd:
 “Helpe, God, that all may!
 Desonell, have good day!”
 Fro hym he cest hys schyld. *nearly*
- 675 Jesu wold not he were slayne,
 To hym He sent a schowyr of rayne,
 Torrent full wyll yt kelyd.
 The fynd saw he wase ny mate,
 Owt of the watyr he toke the gate,
 680 He thowght to wyne the fyld. *cast*
cooled
exhausted
path
- Thoo wase Torrent fresse and good;
 Nere the fynd sore he stod,
 Cryst hym save and see.
 The fynd fawt with an yron staff,
 685 The fyrst stroke to hym he gafe,
 He brast hys schyld on thre.
 Torrent undyr hys staff rane,
 To the hart he baryd hym than,
 And lothely cry gane he. *ferociously*
i.e., Christ protect him
- 690 To the grownd he fell as tyght,
 And Torrent gan hys hed off smyght,
 And thus he wynnynthe the gre. *pierced*
quickly
prize
- Torrent knelyd on the grownd,
 And thankyd God that ylke stownd,
 695 That soche grace hym send.
 Thus two journeys in thys woo,
 With hys hands slew he gyantys too,
 fol. 88r That meny a man hathe schent.¹ *same time*
way
two

¹ *Who had destroyed many men*

- 700 Torrent forthe frome hym than yod,
And met hym xxiiii fotte,
Ther he lay on the bent.
Hedles he left hym there,
Howt of the fyld the hed he bare,
And to the castell he went.
- 705 To thys castell he gan far.
Ther fond he armor and other gere,
A sword that wase bryght.
To the towre he toke the wey,
Ther the gyants bed lay,
710 That rychly wase dyght.
At the bedds hed he fond
A swerd worthe an erllys lond,
That meche wase of myght.
On the pomell yt wase wret,
715 Fro a prynce yt wase get,
Mownpolyardns he hyght.
- The sarten, withowt lese,
A schef chambyr he hym ches,
Tyll on the morrow day.
- 720 To the stabull tho he yod,
There he fond a nobyll sted,
Wase comely whyt and grey.
The gyantts hed gan he take,
And the dragonnys wold he not forsake,
725 And went forthe on hys wey.
He left mor good in that sale
- fol. 88v Than was within all Portyngall,
Ther ase the gyant laye.
- 730 Tho he rod bothe day and nyght,
Tyll he come to a castell bryght,
Ther ys lord gan dwell.
The kyngh ys gone to the gate,
Torrent on kne he fond ther at,
Schort tall for to tell.
- 735 "Have thow thys in thyn hond,
No nother hawkys ther I fond,
At Mawdlenys well."
The kyngh seyd, "Ase so have I blyse,
Torrent, I trow, slyke ys,
740 To the dewell of hell!"
- he measured twenty-four feet*
battlefield
Out
gear (equipment)
written
it is called
Certainly; lying
chief; chose
treasure (wealth); hall
tale
is like
devil

- “Here besyd dwellythe won on lond,
 Ther ys no knyght hys dynt may stond,
 So stronge he ys on grond.”
- “Syr,” he seyd, “fore Sen Jame,
 745 What ys the gyants name,
 So evyr good me sped?”
- “Syr,” he seyd, “so mut I thee,
 Slogus of Fuolls thus hyght hee,
 That wyt ys undyr wede.”
- 750 Lytyll and mykyll, lese and more,
 Wondyr on the heddys thore,
 That Torrent had browght hol whome.
- The lords seyd, “Be Sen Myhell,
 755 Syr kyng, but ye love hymey wyll,
 To yow yt ys gret schame.”
- fol. 89r Torent ordeynyd prysts fyve,
 To syng for hys squyerys lyve,
 And menythe hym by name.
- Therfor the lady whyt ase swane
 760 To Torrant, here lord, sche went than,
 Here hert wase to hymey tane.
- Lettyrrs come hetherward
 To the kyng of Portynggall,
 To ax hys dowghtyr derre,
- 765 Fro the kyng of Eragon,
 To wed her to hys yongest son,
 The lady that ys so clere.
- For Torrent schuld no her have,
 770 To hymey fyrst he here gafe,
 To the messenger,
- And hys way fast agayn dyd pase,
 Whyle Torrent an huntyng wase,
 Therof schuld he not be ware.
- On a mornyng ther ase he lay,
 775 The kyng to the quene gan sey:
 “Madame, for cherryté,
 Thow art oftyne hold wyse;
- Now woll ye tell me yowr devyce,
 That how I may governe me.
- 780 The ryche kyng hathe to me sent,
 For to aske my dowghtyr gente,
 That ys so feyer and fre.”
- “Syr,” sche seyd, “so God me save,
- one*
- home*
- Michael*
- unless*
- mourn*
- given*
- ask*
- aware*
- advice*

fol. 89v I red yow let Torrent her have,
785 For best worthy ys he."

He seyd, "Madame, were that feyer,
To make as erlls sone myn eyer?
I will not, by Sen Jame!
There he hathe done maystrs thre,
790 Yt ys hys sword, yt ys not he,
For Hatheloke ys ys name." deeds
"Lord, he myght full wyll sped,
A knyghts dowghttyr wase hym bed,
Ase whyt ase walls bone.
795 And yf ye warne hym Desonell,
All that therof here tell,
Theroft wyll speke schame."

"Madam, unto thys tyd
Ther lythe a gyant here besyd,
800 That many a man hathe slayne.
I schall hyght hym my dowghttyr dere,
To fyght with that fynds fere,
Thus he holdythe hym in trayne.
But I schall make myn commnnt so,
805 That there schall non with hym go,
Squier ne swayne."
"Syr," sche seyd, "so mut I thee,
So sore bestad hathe he be,
And wyll commyn agayne!"

810 Tho the bells began to ryng,
Upe rose that ryche kyng,
And the lady in feree.
fol. 90r And aftyrward they went to mase,
Ase the law of Holy Chyrge wase,
815 With notts and solemnyté.
Trompettys on the wall gan blowe,
Knyghts semlyd on a rowe,
Gret joy wase to see.
Torrent a syd bord began,¹
820 The squyers nexte hym than,
That good knyghts schuld be.

Ase they sat a-mydds the mete,
The kyng wold not foreget;
To Torrent the kyng gan sey,

i.e., [the giant] has slain many men
promise

trap
covenant

attendant

hard-pressed

together
mass

Holy Church
[musical] notes; ceremony

assembled in a line

¹ *Torrent went to the side-board (a table for lower-ranking nobility)*

- 825 He seyd, "Torrent, so God me save,
 Thow wolds fayne my dowghtyr have,
 And hast loyvd her many a day." *would*
 "Ye, be trouthe," seyd Torrent than,
 "And yf that I were a ryche man,
 830 Ryght glad, parmafay!" *by my faith*
 "Yf thow durst for her sake,
 A poynt of armys undyrtake,
 Thow broke her well fore ay!" *enjoy; forever*
- 835 "Ye," seyd Torrent, "or I go,
 Sekyrnes ye schall make me so,
 Of yowr dowghtyr hend. *before
Securities; in this way*
 And astyrward my ryghts,
 Before xxvii knyghts."
 And all were Torrents frende.
- fol. 90v 841 "Now, good seris," gan Torrant sey,
 "Bere wittnes her of som daye,
 Ageyne yf God me send!"
- 845 Torrent seyd, "So mut I thee,
 Wyst I where my journey schold be,
 Thether I wolde me dyght." *Calabria (see note)*
 The kyng gaf hym an answere:
 "In the lond of Calabur ther
 Wonnynthe a gyant wyght,
 And he ys bothe strong and bold,
 850 Slocys he hyght, I thee told,
 God send thee that waye ryght." *Lives*
 Than quod Torrent, "Have good day,
 And, or I come ageyn, I schall asay,
 Whether the fynd can fyght!" *before; test*
- 855 Tho wold he no longer abyde,
 He toke ys wey for to ryde
 On a sted of gret valewe.
 Into a chambyr he gothe,
 Hys leve of Desonell he toke,
 860 Sche wepte, all men myght rewe. *feel pity*
 He seyd, "Lady, be styll.
 I schall come ageyn thee tyll,
 Thurrow helpe of Marry trewe."
 Thus he worthe on a stede. *to you*
- 865 In hys wey Cryst hym sped,
 Fore he yt no thyng knewe. *mounted*

- He toke hym a redy wey,
 Thurrow Prevyns he toke the wey,
 fol. 91r As hys journey fell. *Provence*
happened
- 870 Tyll the castell be the see,
 An hy stret heldythe hee,
 Ther the kyng dyd dwelle.
 To the porter he gan seye,
 "Wynd in, fellow, I thee pray,
 875 And thy lord than tell,
 Pray hym, on won nyght in hys sale,
 To harburrow Torrent of Portyngall,
 Yf yt bee ys will!" *high street (highway)*
- The porter dyd hys commandment,
 880 To the kyng he ys wente,
 And knelyd uppon ys kne:
 "God blyse thee, lord, in thy sale.
 Torrent of Portynggale
 Thus sendythe me to thee.
- 885 He praythe yow, yf ye myght,
 To harburrow hym thys won nyght,
 Yf yowr will yt bee." *asks*
 The kyng swere by Hym that dyed on tre,
 "There ys no man in Crystyanté
- 890 More welcome to me!"
- The kyng arose and to the gat yod,
 Lords and other knyghts good,
 That were glad of hys commyng.
 Into the hale he hyme browght,
 895 Ryche met spare they nowght,
 Before Torrent fore to bryng.
- fol. 91v "Syr," sayd the kyng, "I pray thee,
 Where be thy men of armys free,
 That with thee schuld wynd?"
- 900 "Syr, to a lord I must ryde,
 My squyer hongythe be my syde,
 No man schall with me wend." *(see note)*
- "Syr," seyd the kyng, "I pray thee,
 Where schall thy ded of armys bee,
 905 Yf yt be thy wyll?"
- "Syr," he seyd, "uttyrly,
 At Calabur, sekylly,
 I ame all redy ther tyll
 With a squyer that will can ryde;
 910 Fast be the see sydde *gate*
- frankly*
certainly

- Schuld we play owr fyle.
 And wot ye wyll, and undyrstond,
 Ther schall no knyght come nere hond
 Fore dred of dentss yll."
- 915 The kyng seyd, "Be Goddes ore,
 I rede that thou come not there,
 Fore why, I wyll thee saye:
 Meche folke of that contré
 Come hether for sokor of me,
 Bothe be nyght and day.
 There ys a gyant of gret renoune,
 He destroythe bothe seté and towyn,
 And all that evyr he may.
 And ase the boke of Rome dothe tell,
 925 He wase get of the dewell of hell,
 As hys moder on slepe lay."
- fol. 92r The kyng seyd, "Be Seynt Adryan,
 I rede, another jentyll mane
 Be there and have the degré.
 930 I have a dowghttyr that ys me dere,
 Thow schalt here wed to thy fere,
 And yf yt thy wyll be
 Two duchyes in londe,
 I wille geve here in hande."
 935 "Gramercy, syr," sayd he,
 "With my tonge so have I wrowght,
 To breke my day than will I nowght,¹
 Nedys me behovythe ther to bee."
- 940 "In Godds name," the kyng gane sayne,
 "Jesu send thee will ageyne,
 Lord so mekyll of myghte!"
 Menstrels was them amoneg,
 Trompetts, haryps, and myrre songe,
 Delycyous nottis on hyght.
- 945 When tyme was, to bed they wente.
 On the morrow rose Torrente
 And toke leve of kyng and knyght,
 And toke a redy wey়ে,
 Be a see syd as yt laye.
- 950 God send hym gatts ryght!
- compete (fight); enough to satisfy us*
brutal blows
mercy
advise
here; help
city
begotten
duchies
Minstrels
Beautiful music
good pathways

¹ *To break [my promise to keep an appointed] date I will not*

- A hye strel hath he nome,
Into Calabur hy ys come,
Within to days ore thre.
Soo come ther folks hym ageyne,
955 Fast folloynge with cart and wayne,
Forward the sytté.
“Dere God,” seyd Torrent nowe,
“Leve folks, what eellythe yow
Soo fast fore to flee?”
960 “There ys a gyante here besyde,
In ale thys countré fare and wyde,
fol. 92v No mane on lyve levythe hee.”
- “Dere God,” sayd Torrant thane,
“Where schall I fynd that lothly man?”
965 Ther they answerd hym ageyne:
“In a castyll besyd the see,
Slongus, soo hyght hee,
Many a man had he slayne.
We wot will where he doth ly:
970 Before the cyté of Hongryé;
He will not thus gone,
Tyll he have the ryche kyng
To hys presone for to bryngg,
To be lord of hymself alone.”
- 975 Tho wold he no lenger abyd,
But to the sytte gan he ryde,
As fast as he myght fare.
Here barys fell and broke downe,
And the gatts of gret renoune,
980 Stondyng all baree.
Men of armys stond hym ageyne,
Mo than fyfty had he slayne
With gryme woundds and sare.¹
When Torrent of hym had a syght,
985 Thowe Desonell be nevyr so bryght,
He will rewe hym hys chafer.
- Torrent in the storrope stod
And prayd to God that dyed on Rode:
“Lord, ase Thow schalt ale wyld at wyle,
990 Gyf me grace to wyn the fyld
Undyr nethe spere and schyld,
That thys fynd hym yeld

*taken**two or three days**heavy wagon**Away from; city**Dear; frightens**know well**city of Hungary**barriers**bare (exposed)**stand against him**stirrups**govern at will*

¹ *With severe and painful wounds*

- Anon to me tyll.
- fol. 93r A man schall but onnys dyee,
995 I will fyght whill I may dryee!"
He mad nobyll cher.
When he had Jesu prayd of grace,
He wyscheyd hym a battell place,
There as hym lyst were.
- 1000 Torrent hys spere asay began,
Bothe schyld and spere than,
That they were sekyr and good.
Aftyr that, within a throwe,
Hys good horne gane he blowe.
- 1005 The gyant sawe wher he stodde;
Slongs of Flonthus staryd than.
Quod Torrent, "Yf thou be a gentyll man,
Or come of gentyll blod,
Let thy beyting and thy ermyght be
- 1010 And come prove thy strenghe on me,
Therfor I sowght thee, be the Rodde!"
- The gyant sayd, "Be the Roode,
Dewell of hell send thee fode,
Hether to seche me.
- 1015 By the nose I schall thee wryng,
Thow berdles gadlyng,
That all hell schall thow see!"
The wey than to hym he toke
And on hys bake he bare a croke,
- 1020 Wase ten fot long and thre.
And thow he never so gret were,
Torrent thowght not fare to fare,
fol. 93v Tyll wone of them ded bee,
- Thoo wold Torrent no lenger byd,
1025 Tyll the thef gan he ryde,
Ase fast ase evyr he may.
The thef had non ey but on,
Soche sawe I never none,¹
Neyther be nyght nor be day.
- 1030 Thurrow Godds helpe and Sen Awsden,
The spere anon he toke to hym,
God send hym the ryght wey.
Than the thef begane to rore.
- have strength*
high spirits
- prayed for*
- test*
- dependable*
in a short time
- harassment; misery*
- young knight*
search for
- low-born fellow*
- ten and three (i.e., thirteen) feet long*
- to move very far*
- Toward*
- eye; one*
- Saint Austin*

¹ *I have never seen anyone like him*

- 1035 All that in the sytté were,
Ovyr the wallys they laye. *waited*
- 1040 Thow the fynds ey were owte,
Fast he leyd hym abowte,
All that sommyrrs nyght.
He set ys backe to an hyll,
That Torrent schuld not come hym tyll,
So meche that thef coud of fyght.
He bled so sore, I undyrstond,
Hys croke fell owt of hys hond,
Hys deth to hyme ys dyght. *attacked on all sides*
- 1045 Torrent to hyme rane with a spere,
Thurrow the body he gan hym bere,
Thus helpe hym God of myght. *knew how to fight*
- 1050 That all in the sytté were,
Mad full nobill chere,
That thys fynd wase dedde. *done*
- fol. 94r Forthe they ran with stavys of tre,
Torrent seyd, "So mut I thee,
Kepe hold hys hed!
Yf yt be broke, so God me sped,
Yt ys wyll the worse to lede." *wooden clubs*
- 1055 That seson they dyd ase hyme bad;
Mo than thre hunderd on a throng,
Yt ys solas evyr among,
Whan that he was dede. *undamaged*
- 1060 Than the kyng of Calaber ayen hym went,
Torrent be the hond he hent,
To the hall he gan hym lede
And comaundid squiers tho,
Of hys harnes for to do, *toward*
- 1065 And cloth hym in another wede.
Waytes on the wall gan blowe,
Knyghtis assemled on a rowe,
And sith to the deyse they yede. *grasped*
- 1070 "Sir," quod the kyng, "of whens are ye?"
"Of Portingale, sir," said he,
"I com heder to sech my deth." *remove*
- 1075 Ful curtesly the kyng gan say,
To Torrent on the other day:
"Wyll ye wend with me
A litull here beside to passe,
There as the geaunts dwelling was, *Musicians*
- 1075 Ful curtesly the kyng gan say,
To Torrent on the other day:
"Wyll ye wend with me
A litull here beside to passe,
There as the geaunts dwelling was, *then; dais; went*
- 1075 Ful curtesly the kyng gan say,
To Torrent on the other day:
"Wyll ye wend with me
A litull here beside to passe,
There as the geaunts dwelling was, *seek; (see note)*
- 1075 Ful curtesly the kyng gan say,
To Torrent on the other day:
"Wyll ye wend with me
A litull here beside to passe,
There as the geaunts dwelling was, *go*

- His manner now for to see?"
 To the castell gan they gone,
 Richer saw they never none,
 1080 Better myght none be.
 "Sir," he said, "by God allmyght,
 For thow hym slew, that it dight,
 I vouche it save of thee.¹
- mansion (manorial estate)*
- fol. 94v "I yeve yt thee, sir, of my hond,
 1085 And thereto, an erledome of lond,
 For soth, ye shall it have.
 Omage thou shalte non fyne,²
 But ever more to thee and thyne,
 Frely, so God me save!"
- also*
- you and your successors*
- 1090 Lordys, and ye liston wold,
 What was clepud the riche hold:
 The castell of Cardove.
 Two days or thre dwellith he there,
 And sith he takyth the way to fare,
 1095 Both at knyght and knave.
- By the kyng of Pervens he gan gane,
 That he had oute of preson i-tane
 His son upon a day.
 Gentilmen, were blith and fayn,
 1100 That he in helth was comyn agayn,
 That they myght with hym play.
 Thereof herd he, sertaynly,
 That Desonell wedid shold be,
 With an uncouth ray.
- rescued [from prison]*
- compete in chivalric sport*
- 1105 And listonyth, lordis, of a chaunce,
 Howe he lefte his countenaunce,
 And takyth hym armes gay!
- foreign king*
happening
courtly conduct
took up bright armor
- Byfore the kyng he fell on kne,
 "Good lord," he said, "for charité,
 1110 Yeve me order of knyght!
 I wott well, ye are leryd,
 My lordys daughter shall be wed
 To a man of myght."
- knighthood*
aware
- fol. 95r "Sir," he said, "I trow, she mone
 1115 To the prynce of Aragon,
 By this day sevynnyght.
- must [be wedded]*

¹ *I give you responsibility for it*

² *You will not have to pay annual tribute on it*

Swith,” he seith, “that this be done,
That thou be there and wyn thy shone,¹
Gete thee armes bryght.”

- 1120 Sir Torrent ordenyth hym a sheld,
It was ryche in every feld,
Listonyth what he bare:
On azure a squier of gold,
Richely bett on mold;
1125 Listonyth what he ware:
A dragon lying hym besyde,
His mouth grennyng full wyde,
All fyghtyng as they were.
The crest, that on his hade shold stond,
1130 Hit was all gold shynand,
Thus previd he hym there.
- Lordys assembelid in sale,
Well mo than I have in tale,
Or ellis gret wonder were.
1135 There herd he tell for certayn,
That Desonell wed shold be than,
That was hymselfe full dere.
And whan he herd of that fare,
Wors tydingis than were thare,
1140 Might he none gladly here . . .
- He wold not in passe,
Till at the myd-mete was
The kyng and meny a knyght.
As they satt at theyre glade,
1145 In at the hall dur he rade
fol. 95v In armes feye and bryght,
With a squier that is fre.
Up to the lady ryduth he,
That rychely was i-dight.
1150 “Lordys,” he said, “among you all,
I chalenge thre coursus in the hall,
Or delyver her me with right!”
- The kyng of Aragon sett her bye,
And he defendid her nobely:
1155 “I wyll none delyver thee.”
His son said, “So muste I thryve,
There shall no man just for my wife.
- wore
square
engraved on the heraldic field*
- grinning (i.e., baring its teeth)*
- head (i.e., helmet)*
- more than I can count*
- lunch*
- merry-making*
- door; rode*
- beautiful*
- adorned*
- battle charges (i.e., jousts)*
- placed her beside [himself]*
- joust*

¹ *[So] that you are there and win your shoes (i.e., prove yourself worthy of knighthood)*

- But yf youre wyll it be,
 For her love did I never no dede,
 1160 I shall today, so God me spede;
 Behold and ye shall se."
 "Alas," said Desonell the dere,
 "Full longe may I sitt here,
 Or Torrent chalenge me!"
- 1165 Trumpetts blew in the prese,
 Lordys stond on rengis,
 Ladyes lay over and beheld.
 The prynce and Torrent than
 Eyther to other gan ren,
 1170 Smertely in that feld.
 Torrent sett on hym so sore,
 That hors and man down he bore,
 And all to-sheverd his sheld.
 So they tombelid all in fere,
 1175 That afterward of seven yere
 The prynce none armes myght weld.
- Torrent said, "So God me save,
 fol. 96r Other two coursus wyll I have,
 Yf ye do me law of lond."
 1180 Gret lordys stond stylly,
 They said nether good ne yll,
 For tynding of his hond.¹
 The prynce of Aragon in they barr
 With littill worshipp and sydes sare,
 1185 He had no fote on for to stond.
 Thus these lordys justid aye;
 Better he had to have be away,
 Suche comfort there he found.
- He wold not in passe,
 1190 Till they at myd-mete was,
 On the other day at none.
 His squiers habite he had,
 Whan he to the deyse yad,
 Withoute couped shone,
 1195 And the hede on the bord he laid.
 "Lo, sir kyng, hold this," he said,
 "Or ellis wroth we anon!"
 They sett still at the bord,
 None of hem spake one word,
- deed*
- beloved*
- in a group
leaned over [the castle walls] and watched*
- Quickly*
- completely splintered
all together (i.e., the prince and his horse)*
- honor; sore*
- noon*
- went to the high table
slashed shoes*
- consider*

¹ For [fear of a] beating

- 1200 They spake nether ylle ne good,
But ryght that he had done.¹
- Torrent at the syde bord stode:
“Lystonyth, lordyngs, gentill of blood,
For the love of God all-myght.
- 1205 The kyng heyght me his daughter dere, *promised*
To fyght with a fendys fere,
That wekyd was and wight,
To wed her to my wyfe,
And halfe his kyngdome be his life, *during [Calamond's] lifetime*
- 1210 And after his days all his ryght.
- fol. 96v Lokyth, lordys, yow among,
Whether he do me ryght or wrong!”
Tho waried hym both kyng and knyght. *cursed*
- 1215 Tho said the kyng of Aragon, i-wys:
“Torrent, I wiste no thing of thys,
A gret maister arte thou.” *indeed*
The kyng sware be Seynt Gryffen:
“With a sward thou shalte her wynne,
Or thou have her nowe. *Before*
- 1220 For why, my son to her was wed,
Gret lordys to churche her led,
I take wittnes of all you.”
“Kyng Calamond, have good day,
Thow shalt i-bye it and I may, *Because*
1225 To God I make avowe.” *pay the price for it*
- The emperoure of Rome ther was,
Betwene thes kyngs gan he passe,
And said, “Lordys, as sone, *immediately*
This squier that hath brought this hede,
- 1230 The kyng had wend he had be dede,
And aventurly gan he gone. *supposed*
I rede you take a day of ryghts,
And do it uppon two knyghts,
And let no man be slayn!” *riskily*
- 1235 Gret lordys that were thare,
This talis lovid at that fare,
And ordenyd that anon.² *chivalric competition*

¹ *But that he had done what was right*

² Lines 1235–37: *The great lords who were at the feast loved the tale of the squire's [Torrent's] adventures and arranged the competition straight away*

- To the kyng the thoght com was,
To send unto Sathanas,
1240 For a geaunt that hight Cate,
For to make hym knyght to his hond
And sease hym in all his lond.
Satan
is called
fol. 97r The messingere toke the gate.
Gret othes he sware hym than,
1245 That he shold fyght but with one man,
And purvey hym he bad
Iryn stavis two or thre,
For to fyght with Torrent fre,
Though he there of ne wott.
endow
went off
oaths
prepare; asked for
nothing knew
- 1250 Than take counsell kyng and knyght,
On lond that he shold not fyght,
But far oute in the see,
In an yle long and brod.
isle
effort
1255 A gret payn there was made,
That holdyn shold it be.¹
Yf Cate slow Torrent, that fre ys,
Halfe Portyngale shold be his,
To spend with dedys fre.
And yf Sir Torrent myght hym overcom,
1260 He shold have halfe Aragon,
Was better than suche thre.
- The gyaunt shyded in a while
And sett hym oute in an yle,
That was grow both grene and gay.
1265 Sir Torrent com prekand on a stede,
Richely armed in his wede.
“Lordyngys,” gan he say,
It is semely for a knyght,
Upon a stede for to fyght.”
pricking (i.e., galloping)
- 1270 They said sone: “Nay,
He is so hevy he cannot ryde.”
Torrent said, “Evil mut he betyde,
Falshode, woo worth it aye!”²
- fol. 97v “Sir, takyth housell and shrefte!”
1275 To God he did his hondys lifte,
And thankid hym of his sond:
“Jesu Cryste, I thee praye,
holy communion; confession
message

¹ *That it should be held there*

² *Treachery, may evil befall it always*

- Send me myght and strength this day,
 Ayen the fend to stand!" *against*
- 1280 To the shipp Sir Torent went,
 With the grace God had hym sent,
 That was never fayland. *failing*
- 1285 All the lordys of that contré,
 Frome Rome unto the Grekys se,
 Stode and beheld on lond.
- Whan Sir Torrent into the ile was brought,
 The shipmen lenger wold tary nought,
 But hied hem sone ageyn. *quickly took*
- 1290 The giaunt said, "So must I thee,
 Sir, thow art welcom to me,
 Thy deth is not to layn!" *cannot be denied*
- 1295 The firste stroke to hym he yave,
 Oute of his hand flew his staff:
 That thefe was full fayn. *glad*
- The thef couth no better wonne,
 Into the see rennyth he sone,
 As faste as he myght fare. *knew; option*
- 1300 Sir Torrent gaderd good cobled stony
 Good and handsom for the nonys, *easy to handle; indeed*
- 1305 That good and round were.
 Meny of them to hym he caste,
 He threw stony on hym so faste,
 That he was sad and sore.
- fol. 98r To the ground he did hym fell,
 Men myght here the fend yell,
 Halfe a myle and more.
- Sir Torent said, as he was wonne, *as he was wont [to do]*
- 1310 He thankid Jesu, Maryes son,
 That kyng that sent hym myght.
 He said, "Lordys, for charité,
 A bote that ye send to me,
 It is nere hand nyght." *boat
nearly*
- 1315 They reysed a gale with a sayll,
 The geaunt to lond for to trayll,
 All men wonderid on that wight.
 Whan that they had so done,
 They went to Sir Torent full sone *galley; sail
drag [with the boat]*
- 1320 And shipped that comly knyght. *transported by ship*

- The emperoure of Rome was there,
 The kyngs of Pervens and of Calabere yare, *without delay*
 And other two or thre.
 They yave Sir Torent, that he wan,
 1325 Both the erth and the woman, *land*
 And said well worthy was he.
 Sir Torent had in Aragon
 The riche cité of Cargon,
 And all that riche contré.
 1330 Archbeshoppes, as the law fell, *Separated*
 Departid the prynce and Dessonell,
 With gret solempnité. *observance of ceremony*
- For Sir Torent the fend did fall,
 Gret lordys honoured hym all,
 1335 And for a doughty knyght hym tase. *took*
 The kyng said, “I understand,
 fol. 98v Thou hast fought for my doughter and my lond,
 And well wonne her thou hase.”
 He gave to Saint Nycholas de Barr
 1340 A grett erldome and a marr, *even more*
 That abbey of hym redith *built*
 For Jesus love, moch of myght,
 That hym helpeth day and nyght,
 Whan he to the batell yode.
- 1345 Lordys than at the laste,
 Echone on theyre way paste, *Each one*
 And every man to his.
 The quene of Portingale was fayn,
 That Sir Torent was com agayn,
 1350 And thankyd God of this.
 Than said the kyng, “I understand,
 Thou hast fought for my doughter and my lond,
 And art my ward i-wys. *child under guardianship*
 And I wyll not ageyn thee say,
 1355 But abyde halfe yere and a day,
 And broke her well with blis!” *assay (test)*
- Torent said, “So muste I thee,
 Sith it wyll no better be,
 I cord with that assent.” *accord*
 1360 After mete, as I you tell,
 To speke with mayden Desonell,
 To her chamber he went.
 The damysell so moche of pride
 Set hym on her bed syde,

- 1365 And said, "Welcom, verament!" *truly*
hospitality; prepared
 Such gestenyng she a-right,
 That there he dwellid all nyght,
 fol. 99r With that lady gent.
- 1370 Sir Torent dwellid thare *destroy*
 Twelfe wekys and mare,
 Till letters com hym till
 Fro the kyng of Norway.
 For Jesus love he did hym praye,
 Yf it were his wyll,
 1375 He shold com as a doughty knyght,
 With a geaunt for to fyght,
 That wyll his londys spyll.
 He wold hym yeve his daughter dere,
 And halfe Norway far and nere,
 1380 Both be hold and be hyll. *give*
in woods and in hills (i.e., everything)
- Sir Torent said, "So God me save,
 I-nough to lyve uppon I have,
 I wyll desyre no more.
 But it be for Jesu is sake *Jesus' sake*
 1385 A poynt of armes for to take,
 That hath helpid me before.
 I yeve thee here oute of my hond,
 To thy daughter all my lond,
 Yf that I end there." *feat of arms*
die
- 1390 And whan he toke his way to passe,
 Mo than fyfty with hym was,
 That fals to hym were.
- Syr Torent to the lady went,
 Full curtesly and gent: . . .
 1395 "Desonell, have good day.
 I muste now on my jurnay,
 A kyngis lond for to fend. *defend*
 These gold ryngs I shall yeve thee,
 Kepe well my lady fre,
 1400 Yf God a child us send!"
- fol. 99v She toke the ryngis with moche care, *sorrow*
 Thries in sownyng fell she thare,
 Whan she saw that he wold wend. *Thrice; swooning*
depart
- 1405 Shipp and takyll they dight, *tackle; prepared*
 Stede and armour for to fyght,
 To the bote they bare.
 Gentilmen, that were hend,

- Toke her leve at theyre frend,
With hym for to fare.
- 1410 Kyng Colomond, is not to layn,
He wold that he cam never agayn,
Therefore God yef hym care.
So within the fyfty dayes
He come into the lond of Norways,
1415 Hard contré found he thare.
- Thus Sir Torrent for soth is fare,
A noble wynd droffe hym thare,
Was blowyng oute of the weste.
Of the coste of Norway they had a sight . . .
- 1420 Of sayling they were all preste.
So feyre a wynd had the knyght,
A litull before the mydnyght,
He rode be a foreste.
The shipmen said, "We be shent.
- 1425 Here dwellith a geaunt, verament,
On his lond are we sett."
- The maistershipmen said, "Nowe
I rede we take down sayle and rowe,
While we have this tyde.
- 1430 Sir," he said, "be God allmyght,
The giant lieth here every nyght,
On the mowntayn here besyde.
- fol. 100r My lord the kyng wyll not fyght,
Till he of you have a sight,
1435 On you ys all his pryd."
- Sir Torrent said, "Here my hond!
Sith we be ryven on this lond,
Tonly wyll I ryde."
- 1440 Sir Torent armyd hym anon
And his knyghts, everychone,
With sheld and spere in hond.
- The shipmen said, "As mut I thryve,
I rede that every man other shryve,
Or that we go to the lond."
- 1445 Sir Torent said, "As God me spede,
We will firste se that fede,
My lord was never fleand!"
- Gentilmen, make chere godd,
For Jesu love, that died on Rood,
- 1450 He will be oure waraunt!"
- cannot be denied*
- determined*
- anchored*
- landed*
- confess*
- enemy*
- wanting*
- protector*

- In a forest can they passe,
Of Brasill, saith the boke, it was,
With bowes brod and wyde.
Lyons and berys there they found
1455 And wyld bests about goand,
Reyning on every side.
These men of armes, with trayn
To the shipp they flew agayn,
Into the see at that tyde.
1460 Fast from land row they began,
Above they left that gentilman,
With wyld bestis to habyde.
- Rushing
treachery*
- The shipmen of the same lond,
Ryved up, I understand,
fol. 100v In another lond of hold.
1466 To the chamber they toke the way,
There the kyng hymself lay,
And fals talis hym told
For he wold not the geaunt abyde,
1470 For all this contrey feyre and wyde,
Though he yef it hym wold.
- arrived
land with a fortified town or castle*
- “Sir kyng, ye have youreselfe
Erlis ten or twelfe,
Better know I none.
1475 Send youre messingeris far and wyde,
For to fell the geaunts pride,
That youre doughter hath tane.”
“I had lever to have that knyght,
With hym is grace of God allmyght,
1480 To be here at his bane.”
Full litull wist that riche kyng,
Of Sir Torrents ryding,
In the forest all alone.
- cut down
taken
rather*
- 1485 Thorough helpe of God that with hym was,
Fro the wyld bestis gan he passe,
To an hye hyll.
A litull while before the day,
He herd in a valey,
1490 A dynnyng and a yell.
Theder than riduth he,
To loke what thing it myght be,
What adventure that befell.
It were two dragons stiff and strong,
- his (i.e., the giant's) destruction
knew*

- Upon theyre lay they sat and song,
1495 Beside a depe well. *song (see note)*
- Sir Torrent said thanne,
fol. 101r To God, that made man,
And died upon a tree:
“Lord, as thou mayst all weld,
1500 Yeve me grace to wyn the feld,
Of thes fendys ontrewel!” *false*
Whan he had his prayers made,
Pertely to hem he rade,
And one thoroughoute bare he. *Briskly*
1505 Thus sped the knyght at his comyng,
Thorough the helpe of hevyn kyng;
Lord, lovid muste thou be! *ran through*
- The other dragon wold not flee, . . .
But shotith all his myght.
1510 He smote fire, that lothely thing,
As it were the lightenyng,
Upon that comly knyght.
Therefore Sir Torrent wold not lett,
But on the dragon fast he bett, *struck with repeated blows*
1515 And overcome that foule wight.
Tho anon the day spong,
Fowles rose, mery they song,
The sonne arose on hyght.
- Torent of the day was full blithe,
1520 And of the valey he did hym swith, *quickly*
As fast as ever he may.
To a mowntayn he rode ryght,
Of a castell he had a sight
With towrys hyght and gay . . .
1525 He come into an hyghe strete,
Few folke gan he mete,
To wish hym the way. *show*
- To the gatys tho he rode,
fol. 101v Full craftely they were made,
1530 Of irun and eke of tree.
One tre stonding there he found,
Nyne oxen of that lond
Shold no drawe the tre.
The giaunt wrought up his well,
1535 And laid stony gret and small;
A lothely man was he. *built*

“Now,” quod Torrent, “I not whare
My squiers be fro me to fare,
Ever waried they be!

- 1540 “Lord God, what is beste,
So Jesu me helpe, est or weste,
I can not rede to done,
Yf I to the shipp fare,
And no shipmen fynd thare;
1545 It is long sith they were away.
Other wayes yf I wend,
Wyld bestis wyll me shend:
Falshede, woo worth it aye.
I fyght here, Jesu, for Thy sake;
1550 Lord, to me kepe Thou take,
As Thou best may!”
- Down light this gentill knyght,
To rest hym a litull wight,
And unbrydelid his stede
- 1555 And let hym bayte on the ground,
And aventid hym in that stound,
Thereof he had gret nede.
The gyaunt yode and gaderid stone,
And sye where the knyght gan gone,
fol. 102r All armed in dede.
- 1561 And wet ye well and not wene,
Whan eyther of hem had other sene,
Smertely they rerid her dede.
- For that Sir Torent had hym sene,
1565 He worth upon his stede, I wene,
And Jesu prayed he till:
“Mary son, thou here my bone,
As I am in venturis sad come,
My jurnay to full-fyll!”
- 1570 A voys was from hevyn sent,
And said, “Be blith, Sir Torent,
And yeve thee no thing yll,¹
To fyght with my lordys enemy.
Whether that thou lyve or dye,
1575 Quyte thy mede he wyll!”
- Be that the gyaunt had hym dight,
Cam ageyn that gentill knyght,

decide what to do

destroy

be mindful of me

*graze
cooled*

know you; doubt not

fought

leapt

*prayer
adventures*

Repay; reward

¹ *And give yourself nothing sorrowful (i.e., do not worry)*

- As bold as any bore.
He bare on his nek a croke, *crook*
1580 Woo were the man that he overtoke,
It was twelfe fote and more.
“Sir,” he said, “for charité,
Loke, curtes man, that thou be, *courteous*
Yf thy wyll ware.
- 1585 I have so fought all this nyght
With thy two dragons wekyd and wight,
They havebett me full sore.”
- The geaunt said, “Be my fay,
Wors tydings to me this day
1590 I myght not goodly here.
Thorough the valey as thou cam,
My two dragons hast thou slayne;
fol. 102v My solempnité they were.
To thee I have full good gate; *good cause to kill you*
1595 For thou slow my brother Cate,
That thou shalte by full dere!” *pay dearly*
Betwene the giaunt and the knyght
Men myght se buffetts right,
Who so had be there.
- 1600 Sir Torent yave to hym a brayd;
He levid that the aungell said, *stroke*
Of deth yave he no dynt. *believed*
Into the brest he hym bare,
His spere hede lefte he thare,
1605 So evill was hitt mynt. *aimed*
The giaunt hym ayen smate
Thorough his shield and his plate,
Into the flesh it sought.
And sith he pullith at his croke,
1610 So fast into the flesh it toke,
That oute myght he gete it nought.
- On hym he hath it broke,
Glad pluckys there he toke, *sudden sharp pulls*
Set sadly and sore.
- 1615 Sir Torent stalworth satt,
Oute of his handys he it gatt,
No longer dwellid he there.
Into the water he cast his shield,
Croke and all togeders it held,
1620 Fare after how so ever it fare. *however it came about*
The geaunt folowid with all his mayn,

- And he come never quyk agayn: *alive*
 God wold that so it ware.
- fol. 103r Sir Torent bet hym there, *beat*
 1625 Till that this fend did were, *dead*
 Or he thens wend.
 On hym had he hurt but ane, *injury; one*
 But lesse myght be a mannus bane, *man's death*
 But God is full hend. *courteous*
- 1630 Thorough grace of Hym, that all shall weld, *neared*
 There the knyght had the feld,
 Such grace God did hym send.
 Be than it nyed nere hand nyght,
 To a castell he rode right,
 1635 All nyght there to lend. *stay*
- In the castell found he nought, *nobody*
 That God on the Rode bought. *(i.e., people)*
 High upon a toure,
 As he caste a side lokyng,
- 1640 He saw a lady in her bed sytting, *strong; battle*
 White as lylle floure.
 Up arose that lady bryght,
 And said, "Welcom, sir knyght,
 That fast art in stoure!"
- 1645 "Damysell, welcom mut thou be. *lodging*
 Graunt thou me for charité,
 Of one nyghtis socoure."
- "By Mary," said that lady clere, *regret*
 "Me for-thinkith, that thou com here,
 1650 Thy deth now is dight.
 For here dwellith a geaunt,
 He is clepud Weraunt;
 He is of the devill be-taught. *taught by the devil*
 Today at morn he toke his croke,
- 1655 Forth at the yates the way he toke,
 fol. 103v And said he wold have a draught. *take a walk*
 And here be chambers two or thre,
 In one of hem I shall hide thee,
 God thee save frome harmes right!"
- 1660 "Certayn," tho said the knyght,
 That thefe I saw tonyght,
 Here beside a slate. *area of flat land*
 He was a ferly freke in fyght,
 With hym faught a yong knyght, *terrifying warrior*

- 1665 Ech on other laid good lode.
Me thought well, as he stode,
He was of the fendus blood,
So rude was he made.
Dame, yf thou leve not me,
1670 Come here, and thou shalt se,
Which of hem abode." *several blows*
- Blith was that lady bryght
For to se that sight,
With the knyght went she.
1675 Whan she cam where the geaunt lay,
"Sir," she said, "parmafay,
I wott well it is he.
Other he was of God allmyght,
Or Seynt George, oure lady knyght,
1680 That there his bane hath be.
Yf eny Cryston man smyte hym down,
He is worthy to have renown
Thoroughhoute all Crystiaunte!" *survived*
- "I have wonder," said the knyght,
1685 "How he gate thee, lady bryght,
Fro my lord the kyng."
fol. 104r "Sir," she said, "verament,
As my fader on huntyng went
Erly in a mornyng,
1690 Fore his men pursued a dere,
To his castell that stondith here,
That doth my handys wryng,
This giaunt hym toke, wo he be!
For his love he gevith hym me,
1695 He wold none other thinge."¹
- Forth she brought bred and wyne,
Fayn he was for to dyne . . .
This knyght made noble chere,
Though that he woundid were,
1700 With the geaunt strong.
- Sir Torrent dwellid no longer thare,
Than he myght away fare
With that lady bryght.
"Now, Jesu, that made hell,
1705 *a knight of the Virgin Mary*
- by my faith*
- (see note)*

¹ Lines 1694–95: *For his own sake he [the king] gave me to him [the giant], / He [the giant] would [accept] nothing else*

- 1705 Send me on lyve to Desonell,
That I my trouth to plight!"
Tho sye they be a forest syde
Man of armes faste ride
On coursers comly dight.
- 1710 The lady said, "So must I thee,
It is my fader, is com for me,
With the geaunt to fyght."
- An harood said anon right:
"Yon I se an armed knyght,
- 1715 And no squier, but hym one:
He is so long of bone and blood,
He is the geaunt, be the Rode!"
Som seith, he riduth uppon.
- fol. 104v "Nay," said the kyng, "verament,
- 1720 It is the knyght that I after sent,
I thanke God and Seynt John,
For the geaunt slain hath he
And wonne my doughter, well is me!
All his men are tane!"
- 1725 Wott ye well, with joy and blis
Sir Torrent there recevid ys,
As doughty man of dede.
The kyng and other lordys gent
Said, "Welcom, Sir Torrent,
- 1730 Into this uncouth lond!"
Into a state they hym brought,
Lechis sone his woundis sought;
They said, so God hem spede,
Were there no lyve but ane,¹
- 1735 His life they wyll not undertane,
For no gold ne for mede.
- The lady wist not or than,
That he was hurt, that gentilman,
And sith she went hym tyll.
- 1740 She sought his woundis and said thare:
"Thou shalte lyve and welfare,
Yf thee no thing evyll.²
My lord the kyng hath me hight,
That thou shalt wed me, sir knyght,

*alive
pledge*

herald

large

he is on the move

captured

*foreign (pagan)
chair*

Physicians; examined

*guarantee
reward*

before then

*searched
fare well*

¹ Even if [Torrent] had more lives than one

² Do not worry about anything

- 1745 The forward ye to fullfyll.” *promise*
 “Damysell, loo here my hond:
 And I take eny wyfe in this lond,
 It shall be at thy wyll!” *look*
If I were to take
- Gendres was that ladyes name.
- 1750 The geaunts hede he brought hame,
 fol. 105r And the dragons also.
 Mene myght here a myle aboute,
 How on the dede hedys they did shouthe,
 For the shame that they had hem wrought, *hear*
decapitated heads
- 1755 Both with dede and with tong *tongue*
 Fyfté on the hedys dong,
 That to the ground they sought.
 Sir Torrent dwellid thare
 Twelfe monthis and mare,
 1760 That further myght he nought. *Fifty; beat*
- The kyng of Norway said, “Nowe,
 Fals thevis, woo worth you,
 Ferly sotell were ye:
 Ye said, the knyght wold not com. *subtle*
- 1765 Swith oute of my kyngdome,
 Or hangid shall ye be!”
 His squiers, that fro hym fled,
 With sore strokys are they spred,
 Upon the wanne see, *dark sea*
- 1770 And there they drenchid every man,
 Save one knave, that to lond cam,
 And woo begone is he. *drowned*
lost in woe
- The child, to lond that God sent,
 In Portyngale he is lent, *come*
- 1775 In a riche town,
 That hath hight be her day,
 And ever shall, as I you say,
 The town of Peron. *long ago*
- Byfore the kyng he hym sett,
 1780 “Full well thy men, lord, they grett,
 And in the see are they drowned.” *kneeled*
 Desonell said, “Where is Torent?” *cried out*
- fol. 105v “In Norway, lady, verament.”
 On sownyng fell she down.
- 1785 As she sownyd, this lady myld,
 Men myght se tokenyng of her child,
 Steryng on her right syde. *a sign*

- Gret ruth it was to tell,
How her maydens on her fell,
1790 Her to cover and to hide.
Tho the kyng said, "My daughter, do way,
By God, thy myrrh is gone for aye,
Spousage wyll thou none lede. *Marriage*
- Therefore thou shalt into the see
1795 And that bastard within thee,
To lerne you for to ride."
- Erlis and barons, that were good,
Byfore the kyng knelid and stode
For that lady free.
- 1800 The quene, her moder, on knees fell:
"For Jesu is love, that harood hell,
Lord, have mercy on me.
That ylke dede that she hath done,
It was with an erlis sonne,
1805 Riche man inough is he.
And yf ye wyll not let her lyve,
Right of lond ye her yeve,
Till she delyvered be!" *Law of the land; (see note)*
- Thus the lady dwellith there,
1810 Tyll that she delyverd were
Of men children two.
In all poyntes they were gent,
And like they were to Sir Torent; *physical features; excellently formed*
- fol. 106r For his love they sufferid woo.
- 1815 The kyng said, "So mut I thee,
Thou shalte into the see,
Withoute wordys moo.
Every kyngis daughter fer and nere,
At thee shall they lere,
1820 Ayen the law to do."
- Gret ruth it was to se,
Whan they led that lady free
Oute of her faders lond.
The quene wexid tho nere wood *mad*
- 1825 For her daughter, that gentill fode,
And knyghtis stode wepand. *young woman weeping*
- A cloth of silke gan they ta,
And partyd it betwene hem twa,
Therin they were wonde.
1830 Whan they had shypped that lady yeng,

- An hunderid fell in sownyng
At Peron on the sond.
- Whan that lady was downe fall,
On Jesu Cryste dyd she call.
1835 Down knelid that lady clene:
“Rightfull God, ye me send,
Some good londe on to lende,
That my chyldren may crystened bene!”
She said, “Knyghtis and ladyes gent,
1840 Grete well my lord, Sir Torrent,
Yf ye hym ever sene!”
The wynd rose ayen the nyght,
From lond it blew that lady bryght
Upon the see so grene.
- 1845 Wyndes and weders have her drevyn,
That in a forest be they revyn,
There wyld bestis were.
The see was eb, and went her froo,
fol. 106v And lefte her and her children two
1850 Alone withoute fere.
Her one child woke and began to wepe,
The lady awoke oute of her slepe
And said, “Be still my dere,
Jesu Cryst hath sent us lond;
1855 Yf there be any Cryston man nere hond,
We shall have som socoure here.”
- The carefull lady was full blith,
Up to lond she went swith,
As fast as ever she myght.
1860 Tho the day began to spryng,
Foules arose and mery gan syng
Delicious notys on hight.
To a mowntayn went the lady free,
Sone was she warr of a cité,
1865 With towrus feyre and bryght.
Therefore, i-wys, she was full fayn,
She sett her down, as I herd sayn,
Her two children for to dight.
- Upon the low the lady found,
1870 An erber wrought with mannis hond,
With herbis that were good.
A grype was in the mowntayn wonne,
Away he bare her yong son
- live*
- Greet*
- at low tide*
- Birds*
- prepare [to enter the city]*
- mound*
arbor
- griffin; mountain aerie*

- Over a water flood,
 1875 Over into a wyldernes,
 There Seynt Antony ermet was,
 There as his chapell stode. *hermit*
 The other child down gan she lay,
 fol. 107r And on the foule did shoute and crye,
 1880 That she was nere hond wood.
- Up she rose ageyn the rough,
 With sorofull hert and care inough,
 Carefull of blood and bone
 She sye it myght no better be,
 1885 She knelid down uppon her kne,
 And thankid God and Seynt John.
- There come a libard uppon her pray,
 And her other child bare away. *leopard*
 She thankid God there
 1890 And his moder Mary bryght.
 This lady is lefte alone ryght:
 The sorow she made there
- That she myght no further fare:
 “Of one poynt is my care,
 1895 As I do now understand,
 So my children Crystonyd were,
 Though they be with beests there,
 Theyre life is in Goddus hond.”
 The kyng of Jerusalem had bene
 1900 At his brothers weddyng, I wene,
 That was lord of all that lond.
 As he com homward on his way,
 He saw where the liberd lay,
 With a child pleyand.
- 1905 Torrent had yeve his lady rings two,
 And every child had one of tho,
 Hym with all to save.
 The kyng said, “Be Mary myld,
 Yonder is a liberd with a child,
 1910 A mayden or a knave.”
 fol. 107v Tho men of armes theder went,
 Anon they had theyre hors spent,
 Her guttys oute she rave.
 For no stroke wold she stynt;
 1915 Till they her slew with speris dynt,
 The child myght they not have.
- Their guts (i.e., the horses' innards); tore
stop*

- Up they toke the child yong,
And brought it before the kyng,
And undid the swathing band,
As his moder before had done,
A gold ryng they found sone,
Was closud in his hond.
Tho said the kyng of Jerusalem:
"This child is come of gentill teme,
Where ever this beest hym found."
The boke of Rome berith wytnes,
The kyng hym namyd Leobertus,
That was hent in hethyn lond.
- Two squiers to the town gan flyng,
And a noryse to the child did bryng,
Hym to kepe frome grame.
He led it into his own lond
And told the quene how he it fond
By a water streme.
Whan the lady saw the ryng,
She said, withouthe lettyng:
"This child is com of gentill teme:
Thou hast none heyre, thy lond to take,
For Jesu love thou sholdist hym make
Prynce of Jerusalem."
- Now, in boke as we rede,
As Seynt Antony aboute yede,
Byddyng his orysoun,
fol. 108r Of the gripe he had a sight,
How she flew in a flight,
To her birdus was she boun.
Betwene her clawes she bare a child;
He prayed to God and Mary myld,
On lyve to send it down.
That man was well with God allmyght,
At his fote gan she light,
That foule of gret renown.
- Up he toke the child thare,
To his auter he did it bere,
There his chapell stode.
A knave child there he found,
There was closud in his hond,
A gold ryng riche and good.
He bare it to the cité grett,
There the kyng his fader sett,
- swaddling*
- family*
- seized; heathen*
- wet nurse*
- harm*
- Reciting his prayers*
- young; bound*
- alter*
- stayed*

As a lord of gentill blood,
 For he wold save it fro dede.
 A grype flew above his hede
 And cryed as he were wood.

- 1965 This holy man hied hym tye. *took himself quickly*
 To a cité with touris white, *towers*
 As fast as he may.
 The kyng at the yate stode,
 And other knyghts and lordys good,
 1970 To se the squieris play.
 The kyng said, "Be Mary myld,
 Yonder comyth Antony, my child,
 With a gryffon gay.
 Som of his byrdus take hath he,
 1975 And bryngith hem heder to me."
 Gret ferly had thaye. *his (i.e., the griffin's) young wonder*
- fol. 108v The kyng thereof toke good hede,
 And ageyn his sonne he yede, *toward*
 And said, "Welcom ye be!"
- 1980 "Fader," he said, "God you save.
 A knave child found I have,
 Loke that it be dere to thee.
 Frome a greffon he was reste, *taken*
 Of what lond that he is lefte,
 1985 Of gentill blood was he.
 Thou hast none heyre, thy lond to take, *heir*
 For Jesu love thy sonne hym make,
 As in the stede of me!"
- The kyng said, "Yf I may lyve,
 1990 Helpe and hold I shall hym yeve, *Support; assistance*
 And receyve hym as my son.
 Sith thou hast this lond forsake,
 My riche londys I shall hym take,
 Whan he kepe them can.
- 1995 To a font they hym yave,
 And crystonyd this yong knave;
 Fro care he is wonne.
 The holy man yave hym name,
 That Jesu shild hym frome shame,
 2000 Antony Fice Greffoun.
- "Fader, than have thou this ryng,
 I found it on this swete thing,
 Kepe it, yf thou may.

- It is good in every fight,
 2005 Yf God yeve grace that he be knyght,
 Other be nyght or day.”
 Let we now this children dwell,
 And speke we more of Desonell:
 fol. 109r Her song was welaway! *alas*
- 2010 God, that died uppon the Rode,
 Yf grace that she mete with good,
 Thus disparlid are thay. *separated*
- This lady walkyd all alone
 Amonge wyld bestis meny one,
 2015 Ne wanted she no woo. *lacked*
 Anon the day began to spryng,
 And the foules gan to syng,
 With blis on every bowghe.
 “Byrdus and bestis aye woo ye be. *harm*
- 2020 Alone ye have lefte me,
 My children ye slough.” . . .
- As she walkid than alone,
 She sye lordis on huntyng gone,
 Nere hem she yode full sone.
 2025 This carfull lady cried faste,
 Than she herd this hornes blaste,
 By the yatis gone . . .
 But into a wildernes,¹ *gates*
 Amongst beests that wyld was,
 2030 For drede the shold be s lone.
- Till it were under of the day,
 She went in that wilsom way,
 Into a lond playn.
 The kyng of Nazareth huntid there,
 2035 Among the herts that gentill were,
 Thereof she was full fayn . . .
- They had ferly, kyng and knyght,
 Whens she come, that lady bryght,
 Dwelling here alone.
 2040 She said to a squier that there stode:
 “Who is lord of most jentill blood?”
- fol. 109v And he answerid her anon:
 This ys the lond of Nazareth,
 Se where the kyng gethe, *goes*

¹ But [she ran] into a wilderness

- 2045 Of speche he is ful bone.
All in gold coverid is he."
"Gramercy, sir," said she,
And nere hym gan she gone. *good*
- 2050 Lordys anon ageyn her yode,
For she was com of gentill blood,
In her lond had they bene:
"God loke thee, lady free,
What makist thou in this contré?" *protect*
- 2055 "Sir," she said, "I wene,
Seynt Katrym I shold have sought,
Wekyd weders me heder hath brought
Into this forest grene.
And all is dede, I understand,
Save myselfe, that com to lond,
2060 With wyld beestis and kene."¹ *Katherine*
- 2065 "Welcom," he said, "Desonell,
By a token I shall thee tell:
Onys a stede I thee sent.
Lady gent, feyre and free,
To thee shold I have wedid be,
My love was on thee lent."
Knyghtis and squiers that there were,
They horsid the lady there,
And to the cité they went.
- 2070 The quene was curtes of that lond
And toke the lady be the hond,
And said, "Welcom my lady gent!"
- 2075 "Lady, thou art welcom here,
fol. 110r As it all thyn own were,
All this feyre contree."
"Of one poynt was my care,
And my two children Crystonyd ware,
That in the wood were reft fro me."
"Welcom art thou, Desonell,
2080 In my chamber for to dwell,
Inough therein shall ye see!"
Leve we now that lady gent,
And speke we of Sir Torrent,
That was gentill and fre.

¹ *With wild and deadly beasts*

- 2085 The kyng of Norway is full woo,
 That Sir Torent wold wend hym fro,
 That doughty was and bold.
 “Sir,” he said, “abyde here,
 And wed my doughter, that is me dere!”
- 2090 He said, in no wise he wold.
 He shipped oute of the kyngs sale,
 And ryved up in Portingale,
 At another hold. *castle*
- 2095 Whan he herd tell of Desonell,
 Swith on sownyng there he fell
 To the ground so cold.
- The fals Kyng of Portingale
 Sparid the yatis of his sale,
 For Torent the free. *Barred*
- 2100 He said, “Be Mary clere,
 Thou shalt no wyfe have here,
 Go sech her in the see!
 With her she toke whelpis two,
 To lerne to row wold she go.”
- 2105 “By God, thou liest,” quod he,
 “Kyng Colomond, here my hond!
- fol. 110v And I be knyght levand,
 I-quytt shall it be!” *If; living
Repaid*
- 2110 Torent wold no lenger byde,
 But sent letters on every side
 With force theder to hye. *a band of armed men*
- Theder com oute of Aragon
 Noble knyghts of gret renown,
 With grett chevalrye.
- 2115 Of Provens and Calaber also
 Were doughty knyghts meny moo,
 They come all to that crye.
 Kyng Colomond had no knyght,
 That with Sir Torent wold fyght,
- 2120 Of all that satt hym bye.
- There wold none the yatis defend,
 But lett Sir Torent in wend
 With his men everychone.
 Swith a counsell yede they to,
 What deth they wold hym do,
- 2125 For he his lady had lone.
 “Lordis,” he said, “he is a kyng,
 Men may hym nether hede ne heng.” *What [kind of] death
behead*

- Thus said they everychone.
- 2130 They ordenyd a shipp all of tree,
And sett hym oute into the see,
Among the wawes to gone.
- Gret lordis of that lond,
Assentid to that command,
2135 That hold shold it be.
In the havyn of Portyngale,
There stode shippes of hede vale,
fol. 111r Of irun and of tree.
A bote of tre they brought hym beforne,
2140 Full of holis it was boryn,
Howsell and shryfte askyd he.
Sir Torent said, "Be Seynt John,
Seth thou gave my lady none,
No more men shall do thee!"
- 2145 The shippmen brought Sir Colomond,
And sent hym forth within a stound,
As far as it were.
Wott ye well and understand,
He come never ayen to lond,
2150 Such stormes found he there.
Gret lordys of renown
Beteke Sir Torent the crown
To rejoysit there.
Loo, lordys of every lond:
2155 Falshode wyll have a foule end,
And wyll have evermore.
- Sir Torent dwellid thare
Fourty days in moche care,
Season for to hold.
2160 Sith he takith two knyghts,
To kepe his lond and his rights,
That doughty were and bold.
He said, "Madam," to the quene,
"Here than shall ye lady bene,
2165 To worth as ye wold."
He purveyd hym anon,
To wend over the see fome,
There God was bought and sold.
- And ye now will liston a stound,
fol. 111v How he toke armes of Kyng Colomond,
2171 Listonyth, what he bare.

*harbor**great value**wooden boat**Since**Bestowed upon
possess (rule)**In order to hold court**possess**moment**Calamond's coat of arms*

- On asure, as ye may see,
With sylver shippes thre,
Who so had be thare.
- 2175 For Desonell is love so bryght,
His londis he takyth to a knyght,
And sith he is home to fare.¹
“Portyngale, have good day,
For sevyn yere, parmafay,
2180 Paraventure som dele more!”
- Sir Torent passid the Grekys flood,
Into a lond both riche and good.
Full evyn he toke the way,
To the seté of Quarell;
2185 As the boke of Rome doth tell,
There a soudan lay.
There he smote and set a-down
And yave asaute into the town,
That well the storye say.
2190 To well they vetelid were,
That he lay there two yere,
And sith into the town went they.
- And tho Sir Torent found on lyve,
He comaundid with spere and knyfe
2195 Smertely ded to be.
He said, “We have be here
Moche of this two yere
And onward on the third.”
All the good that Sir Torent wan,
2200 He partid it among his men,
Sylver, gold, and fee.
- fol. 112r And sith he is boun to ride
To a cité there besyde,
That was worth such thre.
- 2205 There he stode and smote adown,
And leyd sege to the town:
Six yere there he lay.
By the six yere were all done,
With honger they were all slone,
2210 That in the cité lay.
The soudan sent to Sir Torent than,
With honger that thes people be slain,
All thes folke of this cité:

*Desonell's
hands over (entrusts)*

By chance

city

sultan (Muslim leader)

assault

provisioned

*property; won
distributed
goods (wealth)*

*sixth year
destroyed*

¹ *And then he leaves his home*

- “Yf ye thinke here to lye,
 2215 Ye shall have wyne and spycery,
 I-nough is in this contré!”
- Now God do his soule mede.
 On the soudan he had a dede,
 Upon every Good Fryday. *battle*
- 2220 Jesu sent hym strength i-nough,
 With dynt of sword he hym slough,
 There went none quyk away.
 Down knelid that knyght,
 And thankid God with all his myght:
 2225 So ought he well to say.
 The cité that Sir Torent was yn,
 Worldely goodis he left ther yn,
 To kepe it nyght and day.
- Sith he buskyd hym to ride, *prepared*
 fol. 112v Into a lond there besyde,
 2231 Antioche it hight.
 Sevyn yere at the cité he lay,
 And had batell every Good Fryday,
 Upon the Sarzins bryght. *Saracens (Muslims)*
- 2235 And be the seven yere were gone,
 The child that the liberd had tane,
 Found hym his fill of fyght *seventh year*
- (i.e., he gained experience in battle)*
- The kyng of Jerusalem herd tell
 Of this lord good and fell, *fierce*
 2240 How doughtyly he hym bare. *carried himself*
 Upon his knyghts can he call,
 “Ordeyn swith among you all,
 For no thing that ye spare!” *Make preparations*
 They buskyd hem oute of the lond,
 2245 The nombre of fyfty thousand,
 Ageyn Torent for to fare
- The kyng of Jerusalem said thus:
 “My dere son, Leobertus,
 That thou be bold and wight!
- 2250 Thou shalt be here and defend the lond,
 From that fals traytors hond,
 And take the ordre of knyght!”
 He yave hym armes, or he did passe:
 Right as he found was,
 2255 On gold he bare bryght *blue*
 A liberd of asure blay,

A child betwene his armes tway:
Full woo was her that see it myght!

- 2260 Sir Torent wold no lenger abyde,
But thederward gan he ride;
And to the feld were brought,
fol. 113r Two knyghts that were there in stede; *(i.e., Torrent and Leobertus)*
Many a man did they to blede,
Such woundis they wrought.
- 2265 There durst no man com Torent nere,
But his son, as ye may here,
Though he knew hym nought.
All to nought he bet his shild,
But he toke his fader in the feld,
2270 Though he there of evill thought.
- Whan Sir Torent was takyn than,
His men fled than, every man,
They durst no lenger abyde.
Gret ruth it was to behold,
2275 How his sword he did uphold,
To his son that tyde.
To Jerusalem he did hym lede,
His actone and his other wede,¹
All be the kyngis side.
- 2280 “Sir,” he said, “have no care,
Thou shalte lyve and welfare,
But lower ys thy pryde.”
- Fro that Sir Torent was hom brought,
Doughty men upon hym sought,
2285 And in preson they hym throughe. *threw*
His son above his hede lay,
To kepe hym both nyght and day,
He wist well that he was strong.
Thus in preson as he was,
2290 Sore he sighed and said alas,
He couth none other songe.
- fol. 113v Thus in bondys they held hym thare
A twelfmonyth and som dele mare,
The knyght thought full long.
- 2295 In a mornyng as he lay,
To hymselfe gan he say:
“Why lye I thus alone?

¹ *His acton (a padded jacket worn underneath chain mail) and his other garments*

- God, hast thou forsakyn me?
All my truste was in Thee,
2300 In lond where I have gone.
Thou gave me myght for to slee
Dragons two, other thre,
And giauntes meny one.
And now a man in wekid lond
2305 Hath myn armor and stede in hond;
I wold my life were done!"
- slay*
- His son herd hym say soo
And in his hert was full woo,
In chamber there he lay.
2310 "Sir," he said, "I have thy wede,
There shall no man rejoysse thy stede,
Yf so be that I may.
By oure lady Seynt Mary,
Here shalt thou no lenger lye,
2315 Nether be nyght ne be day!
As I am curtesse and hend,
To the kyng I shall wend,
For thy love this nyght pray!
- On the morow whan he rose,
2320 The prynce to the kyng gose
And knelid uppon his knee.
fol. 114r "Sir," he said, "for Godds sonne,
The knyght that lieth in the dungeon,
Ye wold graunt hym me.
2325 I hard hym say be hym alone,
Many geaunts had he slone
And dragons two or thre."
The kyng said, "Be my fay,
Be warr he scape not away;
2330 I vouch hym save on thee!"
- The prynce into the preson went,
Torent by the hond he hent
And toke hym oute of his bondys cold.
To the castell he brought hym sone,
2335 And light fettouris did hym uppon,
For brekyng oute of hold.
The kyng said, "Be my faye,
And he ever scape away,
Full dere he shall be sold!"
- fetters*
- 2340 "Sir," he said, "parmafay,
- paid for*

- We wyll hym kepe, and we may,
Thereof be ye bold." *assured*
- For he was curtes knyght and free,
At the mete sett was he, *meal*
2345 By the kyng at the deyse.
"Sir, thou haste i-bene
At justis and at tornements kene,
Both in warr and in peas.
Sith thy dwelling shall be here,
2350 That thou woldist my son lere,
Hys tymber for to asay." *[I pray] that; teach
lance (i.e., his jousting)*
"Sir," he said, "I understand,
fol. 114v After the maner of my lond,
I shall withouten lese." *without lie (truly)*
- 2355 The castell court was large within,
They made ryngis for to ren, *ringed arenas for jousting*
None but they alone.
Every of hem to other rode;
Feyre turnaments than they made,
2360 Men sye never none.
The prynce in armes was full preste,
Thre shaftys on his fader he breste,
In shevers they gan gone. *splinters*
Sir Torent said, "So mut I thee,
2365 A man of armes shall thou be,
Stalworth of blood and bone!" *knight*
- Harroldys of armes cryed on hight,
The prynce and that other knyght, *strong*
No more juste shall thay.
2370 But lordys of other lond,
Every one to other fond, *proceeded (separated)*
And sith went theyre way.
Sixe wekys he dwellid there,
Till that all delyverd were,
2375 That in the cité were.
Tho they held a gestonye, *feast (festival)*
With all maner of mynstralsye,
Tyll the sevynth day.
- Lordis with all other thing
2380 Toke leve at the kyng,
Home theyre ways to passe.
That tyme they yave Torent the floure
fol. 115r And the gre with moch honowre, *prize*

- As he well worthy was.
- 2385 The kyng said, "I shall thee yeve,
Life and lyvelode whill I lyve,
Thyn armor, as it was."
Whan he sye feyre ladyes wend,
He thought on her that was so hend,
2390 And sighed and said, "Alas!"
- The kyng of Nazareth home went,
There that his lady lent,
In his own lede.
"Sir," she said, "for Godds pité,
2395 What gentilman wan the gre?"
He said, "So God me spede,
One of the feyrest knyghtis
That sleipith on somer nyghts
Or walkyd in wede.
- 2400 He is so large of lym and lith,
All the world he hath justid with,
That come to that dede."
- "Good lord," said Desonell,
"For Godds love, ye me tell,
2405 What armes that he bare!"
"Damysell, also muste I thee,
Sylver and asure beryth he,
That wott I well thare.
His creste is a noble lond,
2410 A gyaunt with an hoke in hond,
This wott I well he bare.
He is so stiff at every stoure,
He is prynce and victoure,
fol. 115v He wynneth the gree aye where.
- 2415 Of Portyngale a knyght he ys,
He wanne the town of Raynes,
And the cité of Quarell.
At the last journey that he was sett,
The prynce, my broders son, was gatt,
2420 And in his hond he fell.
The prynce of Grece leth nere,
There may no juster be his pere,
For soth as I you tell.
A dede of armes I shall do crye,
2425 And send after hym in hye."
Blith was Desonell.
- livelihood*
- lived*
- land*
- limbs and joints (i.e., in all parts)*
- noble everywhere*
- strong (unwavering); battle*
- victor*
- in all places*
- captured*
- attacked*

- This dede was cried far and nere,
 The kyng of Jerusalem did it here,
 In what lond that it shold be.
- 2430 He said, "Sone, anon right,
 Dight thee and thy Cryston knyght,
 For sothe, theder will we."
 Gret lordys that herith this crye,
 Theder come richely,
- 2435 Every man in his degré.
 The kyng of Grece did assigne,
 With hym come Antony fygh Greffon,
 With moche solempnité.
- 2440 "The kyng of Nazareth sent me,
 That there shold a justynge be,
 Of meny a Cryston knyght.
 And all is for a lady clere,
- fol. 116r That the justyng is cryed far and nere,
 Of men of armes bryght."
- 2445 Gret joye it was to here tell,
 How thes kyngs with the knyghtis fell, *many knights*
 Come and semled to that fyght.
- There come meny another man,
 That thought there to have to done,
 And than to wend her way.
- 2450 Whan they come to the castell gent,
 A roall fyght, verament,
 There was, the sothe to say.
 Trompes resyn on the wall,
- 2455 Lordys assembled in the hall,
 And sith to souper yede thay.
 They were recevid with rialté,
 Every man in his degré,
- 2460 The lordys rosyn all be-dene,
 On the morow, as I wene,
 And went masse for to here.
 And furthermore, withoute lent,
- 2465 They wesh and to mete went,
 For to the feld they wold there.
 After mete, anon right,
 They axid hors and armes bryght,
- 2470 To hors-bak went thay in fere.
 Knyghtis and lordys revelid all,
- Who thought to do business there*
- royal* (i.e., *fit for a king, magnificent*)
- Trumpets* (i.e., *trumpeters*) *arise*
- royalty*
- lodging*
- immediately*
- tardiness*
- washed*
- asked for*

2470 And ladyes lay over the castell wall,
That semely to se were.

Than everyman toke spere in hond,
And everych to other found,

fol. 116v Smert boffetts there they yeld.

Swift blows

2475 The prynce of Jerusalem and his brother,
Everiche of hem ran to other,
Smertely in the feld . . .
Though Antony fy Gryffon yonger were,
His brother Leobertus he can down bere,

2480 Sir Torent stode and beheld

. . . . “Be my trouth,” said Torent thanne,
“As I am a Cryston man,
I-quytt shall it be!”

2485 Torent bestrode a stede strong,
And hent a tymber gret and long,
And to hym rode he.

Torent so sore to hym rode,
That he bare hym to the ground,
And let hym lye in the feld.

2490 There was no man hyghe ne lowe,
That myght make Torent to bowe,
Ne his bak to bend.

They justyd and turneyd there,
And everyman found his pere,

2495 There was caught no dethis dynt.
Of all the justis that there ware,
Torent the floure away bare,
And his sonnys in that tyde.

peer (equal match)

death's blow (i.e., no one was killed)

2500 And on the morow, whan it was day,
Amonge all the lordys gay,
That worthy were in wede,
Desonell wold no lenger lend,
But to Sir Torent gan she wend
And on her kne she knelid.

remain

2505 She said, “Weclom, my lord Sir Torent!”
fol. 117r “And so be ye, my lady gent!”

In sownyng than fell she.
Up they coveryd that lady hend,
And to mete did they wend

2510 With joye and solempnit .

- Dame Desonell be sought the kyng,
That she myght, withoute lesyng,
Syt with Torent alone.
“Yes, lady, be hevyn kyng,
2515 There shall be no lettyng;
For well worthy is he, be Seynt John!”
- 2520 Every lord in the hall,
As his state wold befall,
Were couplid with ladyes gent.
- 2525 But of all ladyes that were there sene,
So feire myght there none bene,
As was dame Desonell
- Thes two kyngis, that doughty ys,
To the cité come i-wys,
With moche meyne.
To the castell they toke the way,
2530 There the kyng of Nazareth lay,
With hym to speke on high.
At none the quene ete in the hall,
Amongst the ladyes over all,
That couth moche curtesye.
- 2535 Desonell wold not lett,
By Sir Torent she her sett,
Thereof wonder had they.
- Whan eyther of hem other beheld,
fol. 117v Of care no thyng they feld,
2540 Bothe her herts were blithe.
Gret lordys told she sone,
What poyntes he had for her done,
They began to be blithe.
And how her fader in the see did her do,
2545 With her she had men childre two;
They waried hym fell sithe.
“Sir kyng, in this wildernes,
My two children fro me revid was,
I may no lenger hem hide.
- 2550 The knyght yave me ryngs two,
Everich of hem had one of thoo,
Better saw I never none.
A gryffon bare the one away,

*prayed to**hesitating**social rank**many troops**felt**many times**stolen*

A liberd the other, parmafay,
 2555 Down by a roche of stone.”
 Than said the kyng of Jerusalem:
 “I found one by a water streme,
 He levith yet with blood and bone!”
 The Kyng of Grece said, “My brother,
 2560 Antony, my son, brought me another!”
 She saith, “Soth, be Seynt John?”

Truly

The kyng said, “Sith it is sothe,
 Kys ye youre fader bothe,¹
 And axe hym his blesyng.”
 2565 Down they knelid on her knee:
 “Thy blessing, fader, for charité!”
 “Welcom, children yong!”
 Thus in armes he hem hent,
 A blither man than Sir Torent,
 fol. 118r Was there none levynge.
 2571 It was no wonder, though he it so were;
 He had his wife and his children there,
 His joye began to spryng.

Of all the justis that were thare,
 2575 Away the gre his sonnys bare,
 That doughty were in dede.
 Torent knelid uppon his knee,
 And said, “God yeld you, lordys free,
 Thes children that ye have fed.
 2580 Ever we will be at youre will.
 What jurney ye will put us tyll,
 So Jesu be oure spede.
 With that the kyng thre,
 Into my lond will wend with me,
 2585 For to wreke oure stede.”

reward

support

avenge

They graunted that there was,
 Gret lordys more and lesse,
 Bothe knyght and squiere.
 And with Desonell went
 2590 Al the ladyes that were gent,
 That of valew were.
 Shippis had they stiff and strong,
 Maistis gret and sayles long,
 Hend, as ye may here,
 2595 And markyd into Portingale,

Masts

proceeded

¹ *Both of you kiss your father*

Whan they had pullid up her sayll,
With a wynd so clere.

fair

- 2600 The riche quene of that lond
In her castell toure gan stond,
And beheld into the see.
“Sone,” she said to a knyght,
fol. 118v “Yonder of shippis I have a sight,
For sothe, a grett meyne.”
The quene said, “Verament,
2605 I se the armes of Sir Torent,
I wott well it is he.”
He answerid and said tho:
“Madam, I will that it be so,
God gefe grace that it so be!”
- 2610 A blither lady myght none be,
She went ageyn hym to the see
With armed knyghtis kene.
Torent she toke by the hond:
“Lordys of uncouth lond,
2615 Welcom muste ye bene!”
Whan she sye Desonell,
Swith in sownyng she fell
To the ground so grene.
Torent gan her up ta:
2620 “Here bene her children twa,
On lyve thou shalt hem sene!”

Young man

- In the castell of Portyngale
Arose trumpes of hede vale,
To mete they went on hye.
2625 He sent letters far and nere;
The lordys that of valew were,
They come to that gestonye.
The emperoure of Rome,
To that gestonye he come,
2630 A noble knyght on hyghe.
Whan all thes lordys com ware,
Torrent weddid that lady clere,
A justyng did he crye.

greatest value

celebration

- fol. 119r So it fell upon a day,
2635 The kyng of Jerusalem gan say,
“Sir, thy sonne I found
Lying in a liberts mouth,

- And no good he ne couth,¹
 Dede he was nere hond.
- 2640 Wold thou that he dwellid with me,
 Till that I dede be,
 And sith rejoysē my lond?” . . .
- Before lordys of gret renown,
 Torent gave hym his son . . .
- 2645 The kyng of Grece said, “Sir knyght,
 I yef thy son all my right
 To the Grekys flood:
 Vouch thou save, he dwell with me?”
 “Ye, lord, so mut I thee,
- 2650 God yeld you all this good!”
 For Sir Torent was stiff in stoure,
 They chose hym for emperoure,
 Beste of bone and blood.
- Grete lordys that there were,
 2655 Fourty days dwellith there,
 And sith they yode her way.
 He yave his sonnys, as ye may here,
 Two swerdys that were hym dere,
 Ech of hem one had they.
- 2660 Sith he did make up-tyed
 Chirchus and abbeys wyde,
 For hym and his to praye.²
 In Rome this romans berith the crown
 Of all kerpyng of renown:
- 2665 He leyth in Rome in a feire abbey.
- bound (restricted)*
- romance*
- talking (storytelling)*
- Now Jesu Cryst, that all hath wrought,
 fol. 119v As He on the Rode us bought,
 He geve us His blessing.
 And as He died for you and me,
 2670 He graunt us in blis to be,
 Oute of this world whan we shall wend!
- Amen
- Explicit Torent of Portyngale

¹ *And he could do no good (i.e., he was helpless)*

² *To pray for him and his family*



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **A:** Adam edition (EETS, 1887); **BT:** Bosworth and Toller, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*; **C:** Manchester, Chetham's Library MS 8009 (Mun. A.6.31); **CT:** *Canterbury Tales*, ed. Benson; **H:** Halliwell edition (1842); **M:** Montgomery edition (2008); **MED:** *Middle English Dictionary*; **OED:** *Oxford English Dictionary*.

- 1–6 *God that ys . . . servyse to ende.* Most Middle English romances begin with a benediction or prayer of this sort, often asking God to protect the audience from Satan or sin, and to deliver them to heaven. *Torrent* also ends with a benediction along similar lines, and the romance concludes with an “Amen” (see lines 2666–71).
- 7; 10 *ye woll lyst; I schall yow tell.* Oral formulae such as these occur frequently in Middle English romance. The suggestion of live performance links this romance to the troubadour tradition, and tail-rhyme romances were especially popular amongst minstrels, since the short lines and structured rhyme scheme made the poems easy to memorize and easy for audiences to follow. Oral tags at the beginning of a romance, or at significant transitions in the narrative, where the performer may have paused to take a break, often include calls for attention, silence, or as is the case here, for the audience to stay put. Narratorial prayers, which appear in *Torrent*, are also suggestive of oral performance. Crosby (“Oral Delivery,” p. 110) says that “the religious beginning and ending” in medieval poetry (in *Torrent*, lines 1–6 and 2666–71) “may be considered as indications of the intention of oral delivery.” Such indications of orality are not, however, assured evidence that this romance was composed by a minstrel or that it ever existed in oral circulation before it was first written down. By the late fourteenth century oral tags had become such a mainstay of tail-rhyme romance that they could have been included by the author as a matter of convention, or simply to give the impression that the tale was “authentic” and genuinely came out of popular oral culture. Chaucer, for example, includes several oral tags in his parody of tail-rhyme romance, The Tale of Sir Thopas (CT VII[B²]712–14, 833–35, 891–96). For other oral tags in *Torrent* see, for instance, lines 335–36, 337–39, 513, 1090–91, 1105, 1122, 1125, 2169–71.
- 12 *Rome.* The insistence that the story comes from Rome, or that the author’s source is a “boke of Rome,” appears repeatedly in *Torrent*. The point is to add gravitas to the narrative by inventing an older and reputable source, and to signal the text’s generic affiliations. A (p. 101n1/12) notes that “there is evidently no difference at all between *in Rome* and *in romance*,” presumably

in reference to the text's expression of antiquity and exoticism, as clearly Rome is a specific geographic location in the romance (see line 2663). In any case, it is highly unlikely that there is a genuine Latin or Italian source for the story. For other instances of this device, see lines 118, 187, 190, 198, 558, 924, 1926, 2185, and 2663.

- 18 *Tyrrant*. The hero's name, most often spelled "Torrent" or "Torent," seems to hold no prior significance or history in chivalric literature. The particular spelling (as in line 26, "Torrayne"), provides a rhyme, but the variant is never used again in the romance. In the later Middle Ages a "torrent" was a body of swift and violently flowing water (*MED torenes* (n. pl.)), which may be appropriate for Torrent's character. Trevisa's 1398 translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* uses the term to describe fast-flowing streams: "Of ryuers beþ two manere kyndes . . . Oon is yclepid [called] a lyuynge ryuer . . . þat oþer manere ryuer hatte [is called] *torrens* and is a water þat comeþ wiþ a swifte rees and passeth, and hatte *torrens* for it encresseþ [increases] in grete reyne and fordwyneth [runs dry] in drye wedir" (ed. Seymour, I:654). See M, p. 121–22n18, for further suggestions as to the origins of Torrent's name, including the Old English verb *torendan* (*BT tó-rendan*, "to rend in two, tear in pieces"), and the Portuguese adjective *torrente*, whose meaning ("torrent, barrage, flood, outburst") is strikingly similar to the later Middle English *torenes*.
- 25 *kyng of Portynggall*. That is, king Calamond, who is first named at line 1223.
- 28 *fesomnyd*. The *MED* records this line as a lone witness, and speculates a gloss on the phrase "fe somned in his hond": "gathered fief in his hand, gave in fief." See *MED fesomned* and *sammen* (v.). M speculates that the manuscript gives a garbled form of "fest on (hond)," or "placed in his hand" (p. 124n28).
- 31 *feyer ase flowyr*. Proverbial. See Whiting F304. Related similes in Middle English romance compare fair complexions to white horses (see line 456), white swans (see line 759), whale's bone (see line 794), lilies (see line 1641), and foam (used in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, line 26). Milk, paper, and snow are also used.
- 33 *Worthyest in wede*. The expression that women, and occasionally men, are "most noble in apparel" appears often in Middle English romance, as in *Emaré, Amis and Amiloun*, *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain*, and *Guy of Warwick*. Chaucer parodies the phrase as the most tired of clichés in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* (CT VII[B²]917), but the author of *Torrent* uses it often as an external sign of nobility. In lines 2397–99 the phrase is used to describe Torrent, and in line 2501 it is used to describe all the "lordys" of the court.
- 37–39 *For love of . . . gan he take*. Central to chivalric practice in romance is the notion that knights should go on adventures for the sake of the ladies they love or parallel ladies they have chosen to champion. A central feature of romance, too, is the trope that knights on a quest or in combat can increase

their prowess by thinking about the women they love, and the success of a knight in battle is often attributed to his romantic motivations, as is the case in lines 55–59.

- 40 *tymbyr*. A rare metonym for a lance, though other examples survive from the romances *Duke Rowland* and *Sir Otuell of Spain* (line 455) and *The Wars of Alexander* (line 1230), both of which, like *Torrent*, were likely composed around 1400. See *MED timber* (n.1), sense 1c. The *Torrent*-author must have been fond of it, as he uses it again in lines 2351 and 2485.
- 48 *ovyr-ryde*. Presumably refers to running over one's fallen opponent whilst on horseback, an indication of complete dominance in the joust. According to *MED (override) (n.)*, which gives the definition "?superiority in riding," this is a unique occurrence of the word.
- 48 *ordurrs*. Chivalric orders are highly selective fellowships or societies of knights, and initiation into an order often coincides with one being "dubbed" or made a knight, usually after proving oneself in battle. There were several real-life chivalric orders across Europe during the Middle Ages, such as the Order of the Garter in England and the Order of the Star in France.
- 55–59 *For the love . . . schalt her wyne*. That knights must perform feats of arms to prove themselves worthy of the women they love is one of the most central motivating forces in medieval chivalric fiction, and indeed in heroic literature more broadly. As is the case here, these tests often provide the impetus for narrative action that would appeal to a mixed audience.
- 73 *the kyng for tene wax wode*. At this point the cause of the king's sudden anger remains unclear. Later (lines 786–88), he reveals that *Torrent* is unworthy of his daughter, and eventually his throne, because of *Torrent*'s relatively low status as an "erlls sone" (line 787).
- 75 *trew*. *Treuth* is a fundamental principle of medieval chivalry. It encompasses virtues such as honor, fidelity, and integrity. See *MED treuth* (n.).
- 79 *Greks See*. The Mediterranean Sea. In *Torrent* and related romances such as *Sir Eglamour of Artois* (lines 257, 894, 1064), *Octavian* (lines 407, 569), and *Sir Isumbras* (line 194), the Mediterranean is understood as a boundary (and point of contact) between the East and West, between the Muslim world and the Christian world. See also Hudson, ed. *Four Middle English Romances*, p. 32n194.
- 90 *He wold fell thee with hys wynde*. This allusion to the giant's size and strength seems to be punning on the word "wynde," as both breath and a fart (*MED wind* (n.), senses 4 and 5). Either way, it is intended as a swipe at the young *Torrent*'s prowess.
- 95 *Samson*. Samson was an Old Testament hero known for his extraordinary strength and his ill-fated relationship with the temptress Delilah, who betrayed him by cutting his hair upon discovering that it was the source of his strength. His wondrous story is recounted in Judges 13:24–16:31, and

it was well known in the Middle Ages, as an historical account, a typological allegory, and a moral tale.

- 97 *Hys squyerys.* As Torrent is not made a knight until lines 1108–19, it is rather odd that he has squires assisting him at this point. In the feudal structure of later medieval military service a squire was a young man who attended upon a knight.
- 101 *Begomnese.* It appears as though the scribe did not recognize this unusual proper name, as he seems to have transcribed it as three words: “Be gon mese” (A and M hyphenate the word thus: “Be-gon-mese”), which makes no apparent sense. M speculates that, if the name has any etymological significance, it could mean “evil inhabitant,” from Old French *mais* “bad, evil, wicked” and Old English *bígenga* (Middle English *beȝeng*) “inhabitant” (p. 129n101).
- 112–14 *Now God, that . . . for to have.* The narrator’s prayer for Torrent is one of many such interjections in the romance (see lines 587, 683, 865–66, 1047, 2217). A lists these as evidence that the poem may have been written by a monk (pp. xx–xxi), though a narrator’s investments in the adventures of the hero is a staple of late-medieval romance, and the narrator’s prayers and benedictions may have been intended to generate sympathy for the protagonists rather than to make a theological point.
- 133–41 *Torrent on kne . . . be the Rode.* This is the first of Torrent’s many prayers before battle. Their frequency, and their length, have led scholars like Dalrymple to label *Torrent* a “pious” romance (*Language and Piety*, p. 101n52). For the other prayers see lines 528–39, 670–73, 693–95, 987–99, 1275–79, 1309–14, 1496–1504, 1540–51, 1564–69, 2223–25, and 2577–85.
- 147 *He swellyd ase dothe the see.* Proverbial. See Whiting S113.
- 167 *wed.* The giant is punning off of Torrent’s demand for “amends” in line 162. See *MED wed* (n.), sense 5a (“something paid or yielded up as amends or penalty; ?also, a token of subservience, tribute”), and compare to “wede” in line 615.
- 181–89 *Torrent undyr hys . . . armys walloyng fast.* Knights have a long history of wrestling giants in medieval chivalric literature, going back to Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain* (c. 1138). Torrent’s fight in this passage corresponds in several details with the fight between Marhalt and a giant in Thomas Malory’s *Morte Darthur* (ed. Field, 1:139–40). Kennedy has suggested that Malory knew *Torrent* and used it as a source for the episode (“Malory and his English Sources,” pp. 34–39). Kennedy’s view is largely endorsed by Norris, *Malory’s Library*, pp. 46–49.
- 228 *Schynnyng ase crystall clere.* Proverbial. See Whiting C594.
- 237 *blowe.* Blue; that is, he turned pale out of fear. See *MED blóen* (v.), sense a, “to become livid or pale,” which cites this line.

- 276–77 *Owt of the . . . by thy tale*. The disjunction here suggests that there is perhaps one stanza missing between lines 276 and 277. It seems likely that it would have included Torrent's account of his journey to the palace, in which he purposefully omits his encounter with the giant.
- 283–88 *for thy gentry . . . they wrought*. That lions were powerless to harm ladies of genteel birth, or that they must submit themselves to those who remained virgins, seems to have held some folkloric currency in the Middle Ages. Early readers who encountered *Torrent* in C would have also seen this trope in *Bevis of Hampton*, another romance in C. This romance makes clear that the heroine, Josian, cannot be harmed by the lions she encounters in a cave because she is a pure virgin (ed. Herzman, Drake, and Salisbury, lines 2390–94). In *Octavian* (ed. Hudson, lines 349–51) and the Prose *Lancelot* (ed. Sommer 3:233), the lion refuses to harm the child of a king. In *Torrent* it is explicitly the lady's “gentry,” or high birth, that ensures her safety, though virginity might also be implied.
- 291 *lemered ase gold bryght*. Proverbial. See Whiting G314.
- 343–44 *of Gales lond, / Elyoner*. M hesitantly identifies Gales as Galicia, a medieval kingdom located on the modern-day border between Poland and Ukraine (p. 146n344). M also notes that in the N-Town play *Parliament of Hell; Temptation*, “Portyngale” and “Galy” are listed together in a catalogue of place names that also includes “Aragon” (ed. Sugano, lines 172–73). A less exotic possibility is that Gales refers to Wales.
- 347 *Berweyne*. M speculates that this may refer to French “Burgoyne,” or Burgundy (p. 147n347). A, however, suggests that this line is corrupt in multiple ways (p. 103n13/344). The possible errors in the manuscript make any speculation on the names and places in this stanza dubious at best.
- 371 *thei trussyd the gyantts hed*. That Torrent needs a dedicated horse to carry the giant's head suggests something of the head's size. Here, as in several other places in the romance, the author makes use of the trophy motif, in which the defeated giant's head is taken back to court both as evidence of victory and as a gift for the king or for those the giant had previously oppressed. For comparable moments see lines 691–92, 703–04, 723–25, 750–55, 1051–59, and 1750–57. For other examples of decapitation as the trophy motif in Middle English romance, see *King Horn* (ed. Herzman, Drake and Salisbury, lines 625–28), *Sir Eglamour of Artois* (ed. Hudson, lines 298–300, 493–95), and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (ed. Benson, lines 1175–82).
- 380 *a devyll ys hed*. “Ys” here is a possessive marker. The disappearance of the Old English genitive *-es* inflection, as in “se sunu æs cyninges” [the son of the king], led to split possessive constructions in Middle English. The loss of the “e” sound eventually led to the use of an apostrophe in its place, producing the modern English possessive form, e.g., “devil's head.” Find parallel constructions at lines 440, 449, and 460. See Allen, *Genitives in Early English*, especially chapters 3 and 4.

- 390–93 *The kyng seyd . . . joy and blyse.* The kiss is a formal greeting intended to display trust and affection. The suggestion seems to be, however, that the king dares not approach Torrent because he is afraid of the lions at Torrent's side. To put the king at ease, Torrent commands the lions to lie down while they embrace.
- 412 *Perrown.* May refer to modern Péronne, in the north of France. M cites Cardim ("Torrent of Portyngale," p. 120) to note that its appearance suggests Torrent's indebtedness to *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. M also notes that Péronne is the site of a thirteenth-century castle located near a mountain, which fits with the reference to it in line 659 (p. 152n415).
- 425 *Yt ys ase glemyrryng ase the glase.* Proverbial. See Whiting G125.
- 426 *Thorrow Velond wroght.* Velond, or Weyland, was a master blacksmith of Old Norse legend. He was a well-known figure throughout the Middle Ages, mentioned in English literature as early as *Beowulf* (ed. Klaeber, line 455). Metalwork attributed to his making, particularly weapons, testifies to the close relationship between craft and magic in the period, and the attribution here is meant to suggest the possibility of the sword's supernatural qualities, as well as its antiquity and rarity.
- 434 *Adolake.* Named swords suggest both their uniqueness and their extraordinary quality. A named sword, like a named romance hero, might also have a history and career beyond the adventures of the romance itself, a possibility reinforced by Adolake's origins in Weyland's legendary smithy. The most popular named swords in medieval romance and chronicle are King Arthur's Excalibur and Roland's Durendal, but there are many others scattered throughout the medieval romance tradition. Unlike Excalibur, however, which Malory glosses as meaning "kutte stele" (ed. Field, 1:51), the name Adolake does not hold any obvious or explicit onomastic significance, or hearken to any traditions beyond the romance. It is also mentioned by name in line 665 ("Adyloke") and again in line 791 ("Hatheloke"). The Old English *æðele* means "noble," (*BT æðele* (n. and adj.)). The word survived into the Middle English period and still held some currency in the fifteenth century, particularly in romances. For another named sword, see lines 711–16, and the corresponding note to line 716 below.
- 457 *And whyt as the flowyr in med.* Proverbial (see Whiting F308), though usually used to describe beautiful women, not horses. See also note to line 31 above.
- 458 *blac ase slo.* Proverbial. See Whiting S385.
- 459–67 *have here thys . . . may I none.* As perhaps the most basic requirement of chivalric endeavor, good horses make for excellent gifts in romance ("chivalry" literally meaning "horse-soldiery"). Moreover, the magical aid ascribed to this particular horse — that no man shall die whilst mounted on it — suggests its value beyond the ordinary. This supernatural attribute, however, or any of the consequences thereof, is not mentioned again in the romance. Of course Torrent does not, in fact, die while seated on the horse, but there remains no way of knowing whether this can be chalked up to the horse's magic or

Torrent's own martial skill. Indeterminacy of this kind, which allows for the population of romances with magical objects but also for characters to achieve feats of arms on their own accord, is part of what Cooper identifies as "magic that doesn't work" (*English Romance in Time*, ch. 3). Magic rings are by far the most common gifts women give to their lovers in romance, as seen in lines 2001–06.

- 477 *that was trew ase styl*. Proverbial. See Whiting S709.
- 489 *the Forrest of Maudelayne*. According to a well-known medieval legend, witnessed in the *Legenda aurea*, Mary Magdalene lived for thirty years in a forest, supposedly in Provence (trans. Ryan, 1:380). The forest is named again in line 505, and in line 737 Torrent describes his adventures as taking place at "Mawdlenys well." For more on Mary Magdalene see note to line 737 below.
- 507–09 *Berys and apes . . . And lyons*. The forests of medieval romance, even those set in Britain or in western Europe more broadly, are often filled with exotic and dangerous animals. Apes (present only in F.II's reading of these lines), of course, never inhabited the woodlands of Europe. By the fifteenth century, though, the presence of such dangerous creatures in romance had become a mainstay. One of the earliest romances, the twelfth-century *Roman de Thèbes*, for example, describes the trials of its hero in exile: *Par mi un bois vet chevauchant, / fieres bestes vet encontraunt: / grippons, serpanz, guivres, dragons, / lieparz et tygres et lyons* (ed. Raynaud, 1.649–52) [He went riding through a forest, encountering savage beasts there: griffins, serpents, snakes, dragons, leopards, and both tigers and lions] (my translation). By the later Middle Ages, the trope had developed to the point that it was ripe for satirical send-offs, such as with Chaucer's dainty knight Sir Thopas, who encounters all manner of "wilde bestes," including bucks and hares (CT VII[B²]755–56). For another encounter with lions and bears in *Torrent* see lines 1454–56, as well as the note to line 1454 below.
- 552 *On the tayle an hed ther wase*. Dragons or serpents with heads at both ends (*amphisbaenae*) were known to medieval encyclopedists and natural philosophers such as Isidore of Seville (trans. Barney et al., *Etymologies*, Book XII.iv.20). According to Collins (*Symbolism of Animals*, p. 162), such creatures were depicted in medieval church carvings, and with the particular representation of the dragon Torrent faces here (lines 552–63), they were likely responses to the imagery of Apocalypse 9:18–19: "And by these three plagues was slain the third part of men, by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and in their tails. For, their tales are like to serpents, and have heads: and with them they hurt."
- 553 *byrnyd bryght as anny glase*. Proverbial. See Whiting G108.
- 555 *schyld*. The author, or copyist, apparently forgot what he wrote in lines 525–27 and 549: that Torrent had only his sword to hand.

- 559 *ells*. An ell was a unit of measurement commonly used by merchants in the textile industries. Its length varied from country to country, but an English ell was equal to 45 inches (for comparison, a Scotch ell was 37.2 inches and a Flemish ell was 27 inches). Going by the English measurement, then, Torrent cuts off about fifteen feet of the dragon's tail, which was, according to line 544, originally seven yards, or twenty-one feet, long.
- 564–75 *The gyant seyd . . . mayster were I.* Torrent is a romance more densely populated with giants and dragons than most. It is, moreover, unique amongst surviving Middle English romances in that it establishes what appears to be a master and pet relationship between giants and dragons, both in these lines and with a different giant and two dragons in lines 1588–93. This latter giant, named Weraunt, also has a brother, Cate (see lines 1594–96) — details that work to develop a far more domestic scenario for giants than one might normally expect, especially for one that has been “of the devill be-taught” (line 1653).
- 582–83 *Tyll the day . . . myrre to syng.* The author seems to be rather fond of this bucolic tableau. He uses it twice more, with slight variations, at lines 1516–18 and 1860–62.
- 596 *holts hore.* Literally, a dark or gloomy wood, though in Middle English romance the term is frequently used to suggest wildness and danger borne of the unknown. For more on wild places in romance, see Saunders, *Forest of Medieval Romance*.
- 610–14 *Fellow, so God . . . yowr wyl be.* The use of pronouns in the exchange between Rochense and Torrent's squire suggest that the giant is assuming the superior social position. Rochense twice uses the familiar pronoun “thow” (lines 611, 612), while the squire uses the formal “yowr” (line 614) after addressing him as “Lord” (line 613).
- 615 *ley a wede.* See the note to line 167 above.
- 618–19 *In four quarters . . . uppon a bowe.* Those convicted of treason in England were sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, a punishment introduced by Edward I in the thirteenth century (Bellamy, *Law of Treason*, pp. 23–24). To ensure none of the tortures were redundant for the accused, the drawing and quartering took place after the hanging but before death. Quartering was also seen as an effective method of crime prevention in the Middle Ages, as the dismembered parts could be hung up in prominent places as a reminder to others, which is what Rochense does to Torrent's squire here. However, given that there is nothing especially treasonous about the squire's quest for a hawk's nest, and that Rochense's attack does not seem to have any political motivation, these lines may have been intended to imply the giant's cannibalism. By quartering the squire and hanging the cuts from a tree branch, he could be simply aging the meat for a more tender and flavorful meal. Cannibalistic giants have a long history in medieval romance, from Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 1130s (ed. Thorpe, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 237–41) to Thomas Malory in the 1470s (ed. Field, *Le Morte Darthur*, 1:154–59).

- 651–52 *He gathyred sum . . . and hys spere.* Kennedy cites these lines, as well as lines 685–86 about Torrent’s weaponry, as evidence that Malory drew directly on *Torrent* for his depiction of Marhalt’s fight with the giant (“Malory and His English Sources,” p. 36).
- 654–68 *Bacward than be . . . day in fere.* Kennedy cites these lines, in which Torrent drives the giant into the water, as evidence that Malory drew directly on *Torrent* for his depiction of Marhalt’s fight with the giant (“Malory and his English Sources,” p. 36). See also lines 1293–1308, which Kennedy also suggests were a source for Malory.
- 716 *Mownpolyardns.* The name of the sword, not the prince. M (p. 171n714–16) suggests a hypothetical etymology of *mouen* (*MED mouen* (v.1), senses a and b), and *polle* (*MED polle* (n.), sense 1a), combined to possibly mean “cut heads.” Along with Adolake, it is likely one of the two swords of extreme value that Torrent gives to his sons in lines 2657–59. For more on Adolake, and on named swords in romance, see the notes to line 434 above and to lines 790–91 below.
- 737 *Mawdlenys well.* While Gospel accounts never represent Mary Magdalene (first named in Mark 15:40) at a well, it is likely that medieval traditions conflated her with the unnamed Samaritan woman whom Jesus encounters at a well in John 4:6–42, among others (Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, pp. 5–16). More simply, the ascription could just reference the location of the well in the “forrest of Maudelayne” (see note to line 489 above), a fitting place for encounters with the exotic and the marvelous. The cult of Mary Magdalene was particularly strong in medieval England (as it was in France), with her feast day assigned to a prime midsummer slot: 22 July. By the end of the Middle Ages nearly 200 churches were dedicated to her, along with two colleges, Magdalen (Oxford) and Magdalene (Cambridge), both of which, of course, only admitted men (ed. Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, pp. 51–52).
- 744 *Sen Jame.* St. James the Greater, one of Christ’s apostles, was beheaded by Herod. As patron saint of Spain, his body was translated to Santiago de Compostella, where his shrine became one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in medieval Europe (Farmer, *Dictionary of Saints*, p. 256). Given that Calamond has been presented with the severed head of a giant, the oath may not be coincidental. Calamond swears by St. James again in line 788.
- 753 *Sen Myhell.* Based on Apocalypse 12:7–9, the archangel Michael is often represented in medieval iconography as slaying a dragon or standing over a dead dragon. As the patron saint of soldiers, he is also frequently represented wielding a banner and a sword. Even though his evocation in the collective utterance of the lords takes the form of an oath, it could be understood as a calculated association intended to suggest Torrent’s worthiness.
- 756–58 *ordeynyd prysts fyve . . . hym by name.* Within medieval Catholic tradition it would have been considered an act of charity to provide for masses to be

performed, and prayers said, for the souls of the departed. This practice, it was believed, would help speed souls through the pains of purgatory and quicken their path to Heaven. This is especially important for Torrent's squire due to the unexpected nature of his death.

- 759 *whyt ase swane*. Proverbial. See Whiting S930. See also the note to line 31 above.
- 775–79 *The kyng to . . . may governe me*. The petitionary or advisory role was well established for virtuous women of the period, especially women of the court. Thomas of Chobham, in his thirteenth-century *Summa confessorum* (ed. Broomfield, 7.2.15), suggests just how far women should go to be good wives to their wayward husbands: *Debet enim in cubiculo et inter medios amplexus virum suum blande alloqui, et si durus est et immisericors et oppressor pauperum, debet eum invitare ad misericordiam; si raptor est, debet detestari rapinam; si avarus est, suscitet in eo largitatem* [Even in the bedroom, in the midst of their embraces, a wife should speak alluringly to her husband, and if he is hard and unmerciful, and an oppressor of the poor, she should invite him to be merciful; if he is a plunderer, she should denounce plundering; if he is avaricious, she should arouse generosity in him] (trans. Farmer, "Persuasive Voices," p. 517).
- 786–88 *He seyd . . . by Sen Jame*. Compare lines 73–75, and the explanatory note to line 73 above. The king's disdain for Torrent's slightly lower social class exposes a widespread concern with matters of genealogy, marriage, primogeniture, and property in medieval romance. See Cooper, *English Romance in Time*; Maddox, *Fictions of Identity*; and Crane, *Insular Romance*.
- 790–91 *Yt ys hys sword . . . Hatheloke ys ys name*. See note to line 434 above. The attribution of Torrent's martial success to his sword, rather than his own prowess, hints at the common romance trope in which heroes are somehow chosen or favored by supernatural chivalric weapons that aid them in their adventures.
- 794 *whyt ase walls bone*. C's reading, "snalls bone," appears to be a clear corruption, especially since "white as whale's bone" was a proverbial simile (see Whiting W203) and a common metaphor for describing the complexion of beautiful women in Middle English romance. See the note to line 31 above.
- 813–15 *they went to mas . . . notts and solemnnyté*. That Torrent begins his day by going to mass is in keeping with the expectations of Christian chivalry, at least within the world of romance. See the reiteration of this practice in line 2462.
- 819 *syd bord*. The meal's seating plan, with Torrent relegated to a side table with the squires (line 820), indicates his relatively junior or inferior social position as an earl's son. Near the end of the romance he sits next to the king at the high table (line 2345), signifying his social ascendancy.
- 847 *Calabur*. Calabria, a region of southern Italy that forms the toe of the Italian "boot."
- 868 *Prevyns*. Provence, a region of southern France with a coastline on the Mediterranean Sea.

- 901 *squyer*. At first glance it seems this would be a simple copyist's mistake, and that the line should read "sword." The repetition of "squyer" in line 909, however, suggests that Torrent is using it as a metaphor to mean that the only help he brings with him is his own sword, a sentiment reiterated in line 902: "No man schall with me wend."
- 925–26 *He wase get . . . on slepe lay*. More than once in medieval romance does the devil (or a devil) impregnate human women while they sleep, or while they are otherwise unaware. The progeny of these couplings tend to be monstrous, as with *Sir Gowther* or *Robert the Devil*, but the most famous example of this motif is the child, Merlin. In the Vulgate Cycle, Merlin is capable of using his supernatural powers for good, presumably on account of both God's providence and the piety of his mother, who was a nun (trans. Pickens, *Story of Merlin*, pp. 50–56).
- 927 *Seynt Adryan*. There are several possible candidates for this allusion. The seventh-century scholar and missionary St. Adrian (also called Hadrian), an African monk who accompanied Theodore of Tarsus when he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 669, was widely venerated in England. The location of his tomb in St. Augustine's Abbey, which was said to be the site of many miracles, made it a convenient stop for the huge number of pilgrims traveling to Canterbury to visit the shrine of St. Thomas Becket. It was also common for English monarchs to either send offerings to his tomb, or deliver them in person, and Henry III ordered two altars to be built to Adrian, one at Westminster and one in Dover Castle. See Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England*, pp. 131, 284n38. A potentially more tantalizing possibility, however, is the early martyr saint Adrian of Nicomedia (d. 304), whose Life is included in the *Legenda aurea* (trans. Ryan, 2:160–64), as well as in the Scottish Legendary, c. 1390–1400 (ed. Metcalfe, 2:272–91), and the *Gilte Legende* from 1438 (ed. Hamer, 2:660–66). Adrian is a soldier who fights for Emperor Maximian, and who converts to Christianity when he witnesses the fortitude of Christians facing torture and execution for their faith. The main part of his legend focuses on his relationship with his wife Natalia. Both are young and beautiful, and both are wholly devoted to each other. After Adrian's death, Maximian wants to marry off Natalia to another soldier. She manages to escape, however, taking with her one of Adrian's dismembered hands, which she carries to his tomb in Constantinople. Later, Adrian appears to her in a dream, shortly before she dies, telling her that they will be reunited in death. The unusual emphasis on married love in this legend, along with the heroics of both Adrian and Natalia (especially Adrian's status as a soldier, his steadfastness during his gruesome tortures, and Natalia's unfailing support for her husband even after his death) makes for a poignantly ironic allusion in the context of the king's oath (lines 927–34). In swearing by St. Adrian, the king promises to give his daughter's hand in marriage if Torrent will stay with the king and let someone else take on the battle with the giant Slochys, a fight that Torrent vows to undertake in order to win the hand of Desonell (lines 825–54).

- 942–44 *Menstrells was them . . . nottis on hyght.* The representation of minstrels performing in a court has an air of self-referentiality to it in a romance that itself may have been performed by minstrels, and perhaps even within court settings. See note to lines 7 and 10 above for more on oral tags within the text. For another instance of minstrelsy and performance see lines 2376–78.
- 970 *cyté of Hongryé.* M suggests that the author has conflated Calabria and Hungary, perhaps because both had coastlines on the Adriatic Sea. He also notes a possible (though improvable) connection to Zungria, a city “in modern day Calabria . . . which was in existence by 1310 and is located on the coast” (p. 185n986).
- 986 *chafer.* *MED* lists this line as an example of the definition, “any transaction or agreement involving an exchange” (*chaffere* (n.), sense 2a). But sense 2b, “any kind of dealings of doings; also, unfair dealings” makes more sense in this context.
- 994 *A man schall but onnys dyee.* An early example in English of this proverbial expression (the earliest of six citations in Whiting D242). The sentiment likely originates in Hebrews 9:27: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.” The Wycliffite Bible, from the end of the fourteenth century, reads: “And as it is ordeynede to men, onys to die” (ed. Forshall and Madden, p. 495).
- 1000 *spere.* “Sword,” perhaps, makes better sense here. Torrent soon tests his spear and shield (line 1001), so it seems most logical that he would want to test his third weapon — his sword — here, rather than testing his spear twice.
- 1016 *berdles gadlyng.* A “gadlyng” is a base or low-born fellow, or worse, a scoundrel or a bastard (*MED gadeling* (n.), sense b). “Beardless” signifies immaturity, and it is nearly always an attack on the fitness of one’s manhood. It is a common insult in medieval romance, as it is in masculine-oriented heroic literature more broadly.
- 1019 *croke.* Large crooks are standard weapons for giants in medieval romance, as are huge clubs, staffs the size of tree trunks, and other crude implements appropriate for those who lack the chivalric sophistication of steel swords and armor. The giant Cate, whom Torrent later fights, carries with him two or three “iryn stavis” (line 1247), and his brother, Weraunt, carries a crook greater than twelve feet long (lines 1579–81 and 1654).
- 1027 *The thef had non ey but on.* The most famous of one-eyed giants is Polyphemus, one of the Cyclopes, an ancient race of giants from Greek mythology that appears in Book 9 of Homer’s *Odyssey* (trans. Powell), though it is unclear how many fifteenth-century readers of *Torrent* would have been familiar with Homer’s epic. The story of the Cyclops would likely have been known in the Middle Ages through Book 3 of Virgil’s *Aeneid* (trans. West), a Latin text commonly taught in schools. Although Virgil’s poem was not translated into English until 1522, Trevisa’s 1398 translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* includes a physical description of the Cyclopes:

- “Certeyn bestes . . . beþ y cleped Ciclopes and han þat name for oon of hem haþ but oon yhe, and þat in þe myddel of þe forheed” (quoted in *MED Ciclōpes* (n. pl.), quote b).
- 1071 *I com heder to sech my deth.* In other words, the adventure is so dangerous that Torrent expects to die.
- 1084–89 *I yeve yt . . . God me save.* The king is giving Torrent the land free of any homage or feudal dues, and Torrent and his heirs will own it in perpetuity.
- 1092 *Cardove.* The scribe’s nearly indistinguishable *u* and *n* makes both “Cardon” and “Cardove” plausible readings. If read as Cardon, the town may be identified with Cardona, a town in Catalonia (Cardim, “Torrent of Portyngale,” p. 133). However, M suggests that Cardove is more likely given the rhyme with *save* (*sau* in C) in line 1089; thus, Cardove may speculatively be identified with Cordova (modern Cordoba), “a Spanish royal seet until the late fifteenth century” whose castle was “a very riche hold . . . extensively rebuilt in the thirteenth century” (p. 192n1090).
- 1123–31 *On azure . . . he hym there.* Heraldic devices such as these were used to identify knights who would be covered head to foot in armor. The colors azure and gold are often used in romance to indicate true nobility (M, p. 193n1118–28). That Torrent’s shield depicts a golden knight fighting a teeth-bearing dragon gives some suggestion as to how the hero understands himself, or how he wants to be understood by other knights. Torrent’s new armor represents his change in social status, following his (brief) knighting ceremony (lines 1108–19), and the first instance in the romance in which he is given a title — “Sir” Torrent (line 1120). Notably, too, only *Torrent* and *Sir Eglamour of Artois* use “molde” to refer to a heraldic field (see *MED mold(e* (n.1), sense 4), a further indication of *Torrent*’s indebtedness to *Eglamour*. For other depictions of heraldry see lines 2172–74, 2254–58, and 2407–11. For a discussion of knighting ceremonies in Middle English romance, see Ackerman, “Knighting Ceremonies.”
- 1145 *In at the hall dur he rade.* Knights who enter a king’s hall on horseback often do so in order to set a challenge or instigate adventure in medieval romance, as seen in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, and Chaucer’s Squire’s Tale. The Middle English *Sir Perceval of Galles* uses this trope to comic effect when Sir Perceval’s mare gets so close to King Arthur that it kisses the king on the forehead (ed. Braswell, lines 493–500).
- 1182 *For tynding of his hond.* That is, for fear of Torrent’s strength or prowess, or more literally, for fear of a beating from Torrent’s fist. According to *MED tynding* (ger.), this is the sole Middle English use of the word. To “tund,” a word that survives from the nineteenth century, is to beat or to thump (*OED tund* (v.), sense 2).
- 1192 *His squiers habite he had.* Torrent is apparently in disguise, given that Desonell does not recognize him (lines 1162–64) and the emperor calls him “squier” (line 1229). Disguise is one of the most popular narrative tropes in

Middle English romance, and knights regularly hide their true identities or, at certain points in their narratives, appear unrecognizable, even to those who know them best. Torrent's motivation for disguising himself as his squire at this point is not especially clear.

- 1194 *couped shone*. Slashed shoes, cut for decoration, are often worn by knights in medieval romance. Such a fad is mentioned in Langland's description of Christ as a chivalric knight in *Piers Plowman*: ". . . sprakliche he loked, / As is þe kynde of a knyȝt þat comeþ to be dubbed, / To geten hym gilte spores on galoches ycoupēd" (ed. Schmidt, 18.12–14). Such shoes are likely implied in line 1118. See also M, p. 197n1192.
- 1217 *Seynt Gryffen*. No trace of a "Saint Griffin" survives from the Middle Ages, or any other time in history for that matter. There also appears to be no saint whose name would have plausibly been confused with "Griffin." Rather, it seems the reference could be chalked up to an authorial flight of fancy, and a fascination with the marvelous beast that appears in the romance, and after which one character is named. See line 1872 and the corresponding note on griffins, as well as line 2000 and its note on Antony Fice Greffoun.
- 1226 *emperoure of Rome*. Kennedy suggests the possibility that Malory was inspired by *Torrent* to include the king of Portugal in his list of Emperor Lucius' allies in the *Tale of Arthur and Lucius* ("Malory and His English Sources," p. 38).
- 1247 *iryn stavis*. A stave is a post or a pole. See *OED* *stave* (n.1), sense 2, and *MED* *staf* (n.), sense 1c(a). On giants' weapons see the note to line 1019 above.
- 1262–71 *The gyaunt shyped . . . he cannot ryde*. Torrent's fight with the giant Cate shares many similarities with the battle between Guy and Colbrond in the popular Middle English romance *Guy of Warwick*. As with Cate, Colbrond refuses to fight on horseback because he is too heavy, a clear sign of his inherent inability to conform to chivalric standards (ed. Zupitza, lines 10590–95). A similar logic operates in the romance *Bevis of Hampton*, which also survives in C; in this case the giant Ascopard refuses to be baptized because he cannot fit within the baptismal font (ed. Herzman, Drake, and Salisbury, lines 2592–96).
- 1271 *He is so hevy he cannot ryde*. Kennedy argues that Malory drew from this line for Marhalt's fight with the giant in his *Morte* ("Malory and His Sources," pp. 36–38).
- 1274 *housell and shrefte*. Knights are rarely shown going to confession before a dangerous adventure in romance, with Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ed. Gollancz, lines 1870–92) being an outlier. The underlying principle is that, in the likely event (from their point of view) that they should die, their absolution would speed them straight to heaven rather than to purgatory. All medieval readers would have learned from a young age that contrite confession and the appropriate performance of penance is essential for the forgiveness of sin, and *Torrent*'s attention to confession and absolution here (and in lines 1443–44 and 2141), adds support to Dalrymple's claim that *Torrent* is a "pious" romance. In contrast, the so-called

“penitential” romances — *Guy of Warwick*, *Sir Gowther*, *Sir Isumbras*, and *Robert of Cisyle* — never feature orthodox confessions in their heroes’ quests for absolution, though Sir Gowther insists that he will seek confession only with the Pope himself (ed. Laskaya and Salisbury, lines 250–52). For more on confession in romance, see Wade, “Confession, Inquisition and Exemplarity.”

- 1300–05 *good cobled stony . . . sad and sore.* That Torrent throws stones at the giant Cate hearkens to the well-known account of David and Goliath in the Old Testament, though of course David uses a slingshot (1 Samuel 17:48–51). In The Tale of Sir Thopas, Chaucer turns this around for comic effect, having his giant, Olifaunt, hurl stones at the hero Thopas, though in this case even the giant uses a slingshot (*CT VII[B²]*827–29).
- 1325 *Both the erth and the woman.* In other words, Torrent wins both land (half of Aragon, from line 1260) and the right to wed Desonell (promised in line 1218).
- 1328 *Cargon.* Cardim suggests this may be the modern city of Carrión de los Condes, in Aragon (“Torrent of Portyngale,” p. 133). M further speculates that it was chosen because it was on the popular pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostella (p. lxxix).
- 1330–32 *Archbeshoppes . . . with gret solempnité.* Legally sanctioned separations, be they divorces or annulments, were relatively rare in the Middle Ages. They were normally granted only if it could be shown in court that the spouses were related (i.e., brother and sister, or parent and child), as happens in the Middle English *Sir Degaré*, when the hero unwittingly marries his own mother (ed. Laskaya and Salisbury, lines 1092–93); if there was evidence of infertility (prostitutes could be used, in court, to provide such evidence); or if there was some sort of legal impediment to the marriage, such as one of the partners being already married to someone else (McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, pp. 139–41). In *Torrent*, “Archbeshoppes” divorce the prince of Aragon and Desonell, and they do so, the text says, according to Church law. Such a display of ecclesiastical legality finds an analogue in the Middle English prose *Brut* chronicle (c. 1450), which records how “The Archbisshop . . . deuorsed and departed the Duke of Gloucestre and Dame Alianore Cobham, as for matrymony made before betwene theym two” (ed. Brie, 2:480–81). In *Torrent*, the grounds for separation are never spelled out, though we could be meant to infer that it was allowed because Desonell had earlier been promised to Torrent (lines 55–60), or because her marriage to the prince had not been consummated, or both. Anne of Cleves, who outlived Henry VIII, agreed to an annulment on the grounds that, she claimed, the marriage had not been consummated, though the king argued for the annulment on the basis of her pre-contract of marriage with Francis I, duke of Lorraine (Warnicke, *The Marrying of Anne of Cleves*, pp. 204–05).
- 1339 *Saint Nycholas de Barr.* St. Nicholas of Bari would later become the model for Santa Claus, as he was known for giving unexpected gifts. Nicholas is also the patron saint of sailors, making him a fitting recipient of benefaction in this romance, given all of Torrent’s hazardous seafaring. In various places

- around Europe Nicholas also happens to be the patron saint of thieves, pawnbrokers, and students.
- 1356 *broke her well.* Essentially, Calamond offers Desonell to Torrent as a piece of property for his pleasure. Compare to lines 1324–25, in which women are understood as prizes akin to other forms of property, such as land. See *MED brouken* (v.), sense 1a (“to have the benefit of (sth.), enjoy; take (one’s) pleasure in (a woman as wife or mistress”), which cites this line, and sense 1b (“to possess (sth.), get, take, keep”).
- 1366–68 *Such gestenyng she that lady gent.* This is typical of the kind of veiled language used to indicate lovemaking in romance.
- 1398 *gold ryngs.* Rings as recognition tokens have a long history in medieval romance, going back at least to the twelfth century Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn*. On recognition tokens, see Cooper, *English Romance in Time*, pp. 327–29. The recognition often comes from the design or signet of the ring, though in *Torrent* it is simply the gold, and the wealth it signifies, that marks out the young children as nobility (Leobertus, lines 1921–25; Antony, lines 1956–62 and 2001–03). The rings are also used at the end of the romance to bring about the long-deferred family reunion (lines 2550–52). Recognition tokens in Middle English romance take other forms as well, from embroidered cloths to gloves to sword-tips. In lines 1827–29 Desonell and her mother tear a silk cloth, each taking half before Desonell is sent out to sea on a rudderless boat. The practice of using two identical objects, or one object split in half, so that only its counterpart will match, is a common technique for creating at least the possibility of a reunion after long periods. London’s Foundling Hospital, or orphanage, established in 1741, allowed mothers to leave such tokens with the children they gave up, and the hospital would only release a child to someone with the corresponding token (Cooper, *English Romance in Time*, pp. 327–28). Many of these tokens can still be seen in the London Foundling Museum.
- 1402 *sownyng.* In the Middle Ages swooning was understood to be a consequence of the physiological effects of either intense grief or overwhelming physical pain. It was not, in the period, connected with weakness or effeminacy, or with misogynistic stereotypes of temporary loss of control or irrationality. Rather, swooning occurs when violent emotion restricts blood, heat, and “vital spirits” from the heart, resulting in a temporary condition that looks like, and is often mistaken for, death. In *Torrent* Desonell does most of the swooning, though Torrent swoons once, when he hears the news that Desonell and their two infant children had been exiled from Portugal in a rudderless boat (lines 2094–96). Remarkably, when Desonell is actually set adrift, 100 people watching from the beach simultaneously swoon (lines 1830–32). For other instances see lines 1784–85, 2507, and 2616–18. For further discussion of swooning in romance see Weiss, “Modern and Medieval Views on Swooning.”
- 1423 *rode.* That is, Torrent and his men anchor their ship along a forested stretch of land and remain aboard for a time. See *MED riden* (v.), sense 7b, “to ride at

- anchor, be moored.” This sense of “ride” is now nearly obsolete (see *OED ride* (v.), senses II.15a and II.16).
- 1443 *shryve*. Normally, under canon law, one could confess only to one’s parish priest, but under exceptional circumstances it might still be considered efficacious to confess to one another (“Lay Confession,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 9:94–95). In much the same way, midwives could perform emergency baptisms if it was thought that the newborn’s life was in danger (“Baptism,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2:270–71). See note to line 1274 above for more on confession in romance.
- 1452 *Brasill*. Torrent and his men ride through a forest of Brazil trees, not through a forest in the South American country. In the Middle Ages, Brazil was the name of a mythical island located variously in the Atlantic (M, p. 205n1450), but it was also the name of a reddish-brown wood that came from the East Indian tree Sappan, or the name of the dye produced from this wood, as found in the epilogue to Chaucer’s Nun’s Priest’s Tale (*CT* VII[B²]3459). After the discovery of the New World (Brazil was first colonized by Portugal, as it happens), the name gradually transferred to a similar South American wood, and eventually, to the land of Brazil (*OED Brazil* (n.1), sense 1a). See also *MED brasile* (n.). The *Torrent*-author presumably mentions Brazil trees here to conjure up associations with the mythical Atlantic island, so as to amplify the exotic and dangerous setting, as if Norway — where they really are (line 1414) — is not foreign enough.
- 1454 *Lyons and berys*. Norway is an unlikely place to encounter lions in the wild, though Norwegian bears are real enough. For more wildlife in *Torrent* see lines 507–09 and the corresponding note above, 594–605, 1484–86, 1546–47, 1845–47, 2013–21, and 2028–30.
- 1494 *lay*. Lays are short narrative songs thought to be originally composed by ancient Bretons and performed with the accompaniment of a harp. In the twelfth century Marie de France wrote twelve lays in Anglo-Norman French, treating matters of courtesy, chivalry, and courtly love. The form proved to be popular in the later Middle Ages, and several survive in Middle English. See, for example, *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. Laskaya and Salisbury. Why the two dragons are singing a lay is a difficult question to answer, just as it is hard to imagine what their lay would be about. Unfortunately, the text gives no firm indication as to whether or not one of the dragons is also playing a harp. A more prosaic reading might gloss “lay” as “field, clearing” (see line 165), and “song” as “roar.” *MED singen* (v., senses 6 and 7) lists several animals that “sing,” such as donkeys, frogs, and — predictably — various species of birds. Neither the *MED* nor the *OED* records this or any other instance of “singing” dragons.
- 1570–75 *A voys was . . . mede he wyll*. *Amis and Amiloun*, ed. Foster, includes a similar heavenly voice at line 1250.
- 1578 *As bold as any bore*. Proverbial. See Whiting B389.

- 1594–96 *To thee I . . . by full dere.* There are other giants in Middle English romance who seek to avenge the deaths of their brothers, including Arrok and Marras in *Sir Eglamour*, and Moradas, Morgan, Urgan, and Burlond in *Sir Tryamour*. For more on the familial and domestic aspects of giants in *Torrent*, see lines 564–75 and the note above.
- 1600–23 *Sir Torent yave . . . so it ware.* The multiple pronouns in this passage occasionally make it difficult to distinguish between Torrent and the giant (named Weraunt in line 1652). The battle begins with Torrent striking Weraunt in the breast with a spear, so that the spear-head is lodged in Weraunt's chest (lines 1600–05). Weraunt strikes back in kind (1606–08), and when Weraunt's crook lodges in Torrent, they grapple for control over it, with presumably Weraunt trying to push the crook further and Torrent trying to dislodge it (1609–11). During the struggle the crook breaks, but not before inflicting considerable pain on Torrent (1612–14). But Torrent recovers, snatching away what remains of Weraunt's crook, along with Weraunt's shield, and casting them into the water (1615–20). Weraunt then strides into the water and apparently drowns while attempting to recover his weapons (1621–23).
- 1641 *White as lylye floure.* Proverbial. See Whiting L285. See also the note to line 31 above.
- 1652 *Weraunt.* M (p. 213n1650) notes that the giant's name is reminiscent of other giants in romances such as Ameraunt (in *Guy of Warwick*), Olifaunt (in the Tale of Sir Thopas), and Termagaunt (in *King of Tars*). He also speculates on possible derivations of the name: from Old English *wer* ("man") or *were* ("guardian"), and Old French *were* ((n.), "involving misfortune").
- 1679 *Seynt George.* St. George was a popular medieval figure, best known for rescuing a lady from a dragon. He has been connected with a huge number of patronages, including — perhaps coincidentally — England, Portugal, and Aragon. He is also the patron saint of knights, crusaders, horsemen, armorers, and archers.
- 1704 *made hell.* "Harood hell" is a possible reading and a more conventional expression (see line 1801 and explanatory note below), though C's witness is perfectly acceptable. A suggests the possibility but allows C's reading to stand; M emends.
- 1740 *She sought his woundis.* Women in romance are often shown to be skilled in the medical sciences, such as Melior in *Partonope of Blois*, Josian in *Bevis of Hampton*, and Loospaine in *Eger and Grime*, among many others. The connection appears to stem from real-life practices. From the twelfth century, women were linked to the healing arts through the legendary figure Trotula, and the medical texts associated with her. See Barratt, ed., *Knowing of Woman's Kind in Childing*.
- 1762 *Fals thevis.* Here the king of Norway is addressing the shipmen who had deserted Torrent at lines 1457–62.

- 1778 *Peron*. See the note for line 412 above.
- 1786–87 *tokenyng of her . . . her right syde*. A sign that the baby will be a boy. The theory that males are conceived on the right and females on the left has origins in Aristotle, and was translated to the medieval West through the twelfth-century Latin gynecological treatise known as the *Trotula* (so named because it was supposed to have been written by a woman named Trotula, a gynecologist or midwife from Salerno, who we now believe to have been called Trota, Trotta, or Trocta). It was popular both in Latin and in European vernacular languages, and in the fifteenth century it was translated into Middle English. See Barratt, ed., *Knowing of Woman's Kind in Childing*, pp. 5, 46–47 and Green, ed., *The Trotula*.
- 1794–96 *Therefore thou shalt . . . for to ride*. The king seems to be punning on the word “ride.” *OED ride* (v.) gives both “Of a ship, etc.: to float or move on the water, to sail, esp. in a buoyant manner” (sense II.13.a), and “To mount a partner or mate for the purpose of sexual intercourse; (also) to have sexual intercourse, esp. when positioned on top” (sense III.20.a).
- 1801 *harood hell*. The Harrowing of Hell, a story found only in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, in which Christ descends into hell between his crucifixion and resurrection in order to rescue the righteous dead, was central to stories of the life of Christ in the Middle Ages. Accounts of the Harrowing survive from the Middle Ages in both Latin and vernacular languages, and in England it often found representation on stage. See Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell in Medieval England*.
- 1807 *Right of lond*. This may be a reference to “pleading the belly,” a process in English common law whereby pregnant women who were handed the death sentence were permitted to deliver the child before the execution was carried out. Female convicts could make such a plea at least as early as 1387, and it was rendered obsolete in the twentieth century by the Sentence of Death (Expectant Mothers) Act of 1931. See Oldham, “On Pleading the Belly.”
- 1827 *cloth of silke*. Desonell and her mother tear the silk cloth in two so that, by matching the two halves, they could recognize each other if they were ever to meet again. For more on recognition tokens see the note to line 1398 above.
- 1836–38 *Rightfull God . . . may crystened bene*. One of Desonell’s chief concerns is the christening of her children, also expressed in lines 1896 and 2076–77. Antony is christened in lines 1995–97, though Leobertus’ christening, if or when it happens, is never mentioned.
- 1842–47 *The wynd rose . . . wyld bestis were*. Rudderless boats have powerful associations in medieval romance, and in medieval Christian tradition more broadly. Typically, they were used as a form of punishment that would result either in exile or, more likely, in death. Whatever happened, however, was entirely in the hands of God, as whoever was in a boat without rudder, sail, or oars had absolutely no control over its direction. If the winds landed the

boat on some distant shore, then, it was a result of providence, just as it was equally an act of God's will if the ship was destroyed in a storm, or if the person in it perished of dehydration or exposure after days at sea. In the several Middle English romances in which central characters are cast adrift in rudderless boats, such as *King Horn*, *Emaré*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, and Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*, to name a few, the character's survival in the face of adversity — often tyranny — is a sign of divine favor. For another manifestation of this trope see lines 2130–50. For a discussion of its history in romance see Cooper, *English Romance in Time*, ch. 2.

- 1872 *grype*. A griffin is a mythical animal with the head and wings of an eagle and the body and hindquarters of a lion. In medieval romance, as (of course) in real life, they are much more commonly represented in heraldic imagery than purported to exist in the real world. In *Torrent*, however, the griffin is very much real, and its description and behavior accords in several ways with how John Trevisa describes a griffin in his late fourteenth-century translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum*: “Pe grype . . . is strong enemy to hors . . . Pat he takyþ vp þe hors and þe man y-armed . . . [a]nd grypes kepen þe mounteyns in þe whiche [ben] gemmes [gems] and precious stones” (ed. Seymour, 2:1207). A griffin also abducts a child in *Sir Eglamour of Artois* (ed. Hudson, lines 827–31), and in *Octavian* (ed. Hudson, lines 352–60) a griffin abducts both a child and the lioness guarding it. The griffin from which the abducted boy takes his surname, Antony Fice Greffoun (line 2000; see note below), is also mentioned in line 1983, there spelled “greffon.”
- 1876 *Seynt Antony*. There are two plausible origins for this character. One is St. Anthony, or Anthony the Great, an Egyptian saint and a prominent leader amongst the desert fathers. His signification here as an “ermet” or hermit is correct, insofar as his biographer, Athanasius of Alexandria, represented him as the first known ascetic who went into the wilderness (*Life of Antony*, trans. Gregg, pp. 68–72). Athanasius' biography of Anthony was influential in spreading the concept of monasticism. In any case St. Anthony was certainly not, as noted in line 1972, the son of the king of Greece. The other possibility is St. Anthony of Padua, who was born in Lisbon in 1195, and was much venerated in his country of birth. While also not the son of the king of Greece, he did abandon a wealthy upbringing for his religious calling (*Life of St. Anthony*, ed. Da Rieti, pp. 14–16). He is also the patron saint of animals, and of finding lost things or people.
- 1884–86 *She sye it . . . and Seynt John*. This pious acceptance of hardship is a particular (though not exclusive) trait of female protagonists in Middle English romance, as seen in *Emaré*, *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, *Sir Amadace*, *Sir Gowther*, and *Sir Isumbras*.
- 2000 *Antony Fice Greffoun*. The name plays on two Middle English meanings of the word “griffoun.” *MED griffoun* (n.(1)) is defined as “A Greek,” and *MED griffoun* (n.(2)) as “The fabulous griffin.” The *MED* (n.2, sense d) also records a few instances of “Griffin” or “Griffon” as a personal or family name.

- 2001–04 *thou this ryng . . . in every fight.* The ring protects the wearer from injury in combat. In the tail-rhyme romance *Ipomadon* (also preserved in C) the hero finds similar powers in a precious stone set in a ring: “He towchyd the wounde wyth the ston; / Off bledyng was he stavnchyd sone, / So was the vertu good” (ed. Purdie, lines 8018–20). See the note to lines 459–67 above for more on magical objects, especially those that are never shown to actually work. The ring was one of two originally given as recognition tokens for Torrent’s unborn children (see line 1398).
- 2009 *Her song was welaway!* Proverbial. See Whiting S469.
- 2055 *Seynt Katryn.* A prose version of the life of St. Katherine survives in C, along with the lives of St. Dorothy and St. Anne (see Introduction, p. 4). In medieval England St. Katherine was perhaps the preeminent exemplar of Christian femininity. She is the patron saint of unmarried women, and it was thought that those who invoked her in their hour of greatest need would have their petitions answered, which likely explains Desonell’s reference to her in these lines.
- 2063 *stede.* This is the marvelous horse Desonell gives to Torrent in lines 456–67. See also the corresponding note to these lines above. Here the king of Nazareth makes it clear that he intended it as a wedding gift to her.
- 2104 *row.* This is perhaps another of the king’s grim puns. *MED rouen* (v.1) can mean “To propel a vessel by means of oars or paddles, row” (sense a), and “to swim” (sense d). For his other grim pun, see line 1796 and the note to lines 1794–96 above.
- 2137–38 *shippes of hede . . . and of tree.* The ships are built of wood joined with iron clench-nails, similar to what we would call “rivets” today. In some of the larger ships, such as the Grace Dieu of 1418, the clench-nails could be as large as eight or nine inches in length (Friel, *Good Ship*, p. 72), making it perfectly appropriate to describe them as being made “Of irun and of tree,” given the amount of iron used. In line 1530 the narrator describes a city gate also made “Of irun and eke of tree,” presumably using the same clench-nail technique. The ship “all of tree” (line 2130) would have been less expensive to build, less sturdy, and therefore appropriate for its use as described in lines 2139–50.
- 2139–40 *A bote of . . . of holiis it was boryn.* There is a sense of poetic justice in condemning the king to the same sentence he had given his daughter. There is another sense, however, in which drilling a rudderless boat full of holes does not give Providence much of a fighting chance. See the note to lines 1842–47 above on rudderless boats.
- 2155–56 *Falshode wyll have . . . wyll have evermore.* Proverbial. See Whiting F51.
- 2168 *There God was . . . bought and sold.* The Holy Land, or more specifically, Jerusalem. The reference is presumably to the story of Judas Iscariot, one of Christ’s disciples who betrays him by agreeing to deliver him to the Sanhedrin in exchange for thirty silver coins (Matthew 26:14–16). The phrase “bought and sold” is also proverbial; see Whiting B637.

- 2170 *he toke armes of Kyng Colomond.* Torrent's motivation for taking Calamond's coat of arms remains unclear, though it may have something to do with his supplanting of the king. The arms — three silver ships on an azure field — are never mentioned again, and when Torrent's arms are next described his crest shows "A gyaunt with an hoke in hond" (line 2410), though even that differs from his original coat of arms, which depict a grimacing dragon (lines 1126–28). Torrent's wearing of Calamond's coat of arms may also be part of an impulse to disguise (see lines 1192–95 and the note above).
- 2176 *a knight.* The poet, or the copyist, seems to have forgotten that in lines 2160–01 Torrent leaves his lands in the care of two knights.
- 2184 *Quarell.* This name does not seem to correspond with any known historical city. As M notes, "it is tempting to speculate that the poet has garbled *Al-Qahirah*, the Arabic name for modern Cairo, which dates from CE 969" (p. 234n2179) though this seems unlikely.
- 2186 *soudan.* A sultan is a ruler of a Muslim kingdom, though in Middle English literature the term is rarely used with much precision, aside from signifying someone pagan, powerful, and antagonistic.
- 2193–95 *And tho . . . ded to be.* M notes that such instances of "wholesale slaughter" were common in siege warfare (p. 235n2188–90). Barber observes a similar justification for indiscriminate killing during siege warfare: "if [the inhabitants of a besieged site] remained adamant, the town lay at the besieger's mercy . . . It is the idea that rapine is a legal remedy for defiance that underlies the incredible cruelties of mediaeval sieges" (*Knight and Chivalry*, p. 239).
- 2231 *Antioche.* Antioch was an ancient Greco-Roman city whose ruins are found near the modern city of Antayka, Turkey. The city was besieged during the First Crusade (1096–99).
- 2235–37 *the seven yere . . . fill of fyght.* At this point Torrent has been fighting Saracens for fifteen years. He besieges the first city for two years (line 2191), the second for six years (line 2208), and the third for seven years (line 2232). Meanwhile, his son Leobertus (along with his other son, of course) has grown old enough to win his spurs.
- 2298 *God, hast thou forsakyn me?* This is a particularly audacious line — in terms of its attempt to establish the terms of Torrent's suffering — in that it imitates the words of Christ on the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).
- 2304 *wekid lond.* *MED* *wikked(e* (adj.), sense d, "resulting from or permeated with sin," cites this line. M notes that this is an "odd epithet for Jerusalem, but by the time of Torrent's composition Jerusalem had been under the control of the Islamic Mamalukes for around 150 years" (p. 240n2299).
- 2409 *His creste is a noble lond.* The meaning of this line is difficult to construe. For A, the line could have been replaced with line 1129 ("The crest, that on his hade shold stond"), but he does not emend (p. 111n2407). As M points out,

- it is possible that “a noble lond” could be a corruption of “noble a-lond” (i.e., “noble everywhere”) (p. 241n2404). While this is only conjecture, it is probably at least close to the intended meaning of the original line.
- 2416 *Raynes*. Cardim (“Torrent of Portyngale,” p. 120) conjectures that Raynes can be identified with modern-day Ramla, which is located on the road to Jerusalem. M (p. 243n2411) notes that it was occupied by the crusaders in the First Crusade, but was recaptured by Saladin in 1187.
- 2480 *Sir Torent stode and beheld*. Richardson suggests that this line is drawn from the Thornton MS (Lincoln Cathedral MS 91) version of *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, in which an anonymous Eglamour likewise watches his sons on the tournament field: “His fadir hovede and byhelde” (line 1234). Given the similarity in context and the possibility of indebtedness, the lines that follow in *Sir Eglamour* perhaps give some clue as to what happens in *Torrent*’s missing lines: “His fadir hovede and byhelde / How he fellid in the felde / The knyghtis all bydene. / His sonne hym sawe and rade hym till; / Said, ‘Sir, why houys þou sa stille / Amange thir knyghtis kene?’” (ed. Richardson, lines 1234–39).
- 2601 *Sone*. M reads “sone” not as a form of address, but as an adverb (“soon” or “presently”), which is also possible (p. 253n2596). H and A accord with the reading given here.
- 2657–59 *He yave his sonnys one had they*. These two swords are likely Adolake and Mownpolyardns. See the notes to lines 434 and 716 above.
- 2660 *up-tyed*. That is, Torrent has the deeds established such that the churches and abbeys he founded could do nothing but pray for his soul and the souls of his heirs (see A, p. 112n92/2658). Alternatively, M notes that “up-tyed” could be derived from “tighten up” (p. 255n2655). *MED tighten* (v.(2)), sense 2b, gives “to erect (a structure).” In this reading Torrent is therefore simply commissioning the construction of churches and abbeys, rather than restricting their remit to pray for only him and his family. On prayers for the dead see the note to lines 756–58 above.
- 2663 *In Rome this romans berith the crown*. A notes that in *Eglamour*, line 1339, the Lincoln MS reads “In Rome this romance crouned es” and the Cambridge MS reads “In Rome thys geste cronyculd ys.” A then adds: “I am inclined to think that *crouned* is nothing else but a misreading for *cronyculd*. Afterwards, considered to be correct, it has originated expressions like those we find here” (p. 112n2261).
- 2665 *He leyth in Rome in a feire abbey*. Indicating the real-world location of the hero’s grave is an attempt at generating authenticity for the narrative. The most famous example of this practice can be found in texts that locate King Arthur’s grave at Glastonbury Abbey, Somerset. These include the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, John Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*, and Caxton’s preface to Malory’s *Morte Darthur*.



TEXTUAL NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **A:** Adam edition (EETS, 1887); **F.I** through **F.VII:** fragments of early sixteenth-century prints by Richard Pynson (1505?) and Wynkyn de Worde (1510?) which survive in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce E.20; **H:** Halliwell edition (1842); **M:** Montgomery edition (2008); **MED:** *Middle English Dictionary*; **MS:** Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS 8009 (Mun. A.6.31) (c. 1475).

- 1 *God.* MS: line begins with a large, five-line rubricated *G*.
- 32 *Desonell.* MS: *Dyscenys*. See M, p. 125n33, for the possibility that *Dyscenyr*, like *Torrayne* at line 26, is a poetic form of *Desonell*, not a scribal error.
- 50 *see.* MS: *bee*. A and M emend likewise.
- 63 *Yowr.* MS: *r* inserted above the line.
- 65 *a-go.* MS: *agone*, with *ne* struck out.
- 75–76 *Be trew and . . . me sped ere.* This stanza appears to be missing its middle six lines between lines 75 and 76. No doubt this lost passage would indicate to whom *they* in line 77 refers, as would it likely illuminate a reading of line 78. Because the text of *Torrent* is incomplete, I will indicate missing lines with ellipses, where a three-point ellipsis indicates a single missing line and a four-point ellipsis indicates multiple missing lines.
- 78 *continuance.* MS: *a* inserted above the line.
- 78 *chaunce.* MS: second *c* erased.
- 80 *in an yle.* So MS, H, M. A reads MS as *mauyle*, assuming that the scribe erroneously supposed it to be the name of the giant, who is in fact named *Begonmese* in line 101.
- 84 *No ston lyttethe he stond* The final six lines of this stanza appear to be missing. They likely would have continued the description of how the giant further laid waste to the king's lands.
- 85 *Terrent.* MS: line begins with a large, four-line rubricated *T*.
- 86 *he.* MS: inserted above the line.
- 88 *kyng.* MS: *knyght*. Emendation following A and M.
- 123 *seke.* So MS, corrected in lighter ink from an unclear word, which is struck out. A: *ches.* M: *ther*.
- 129 *grene.* MS: *smale*. A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 136 *ryght.* MS: *ryght*, *lyght*, or possibly *fylght*, written above the line.
- 171 *In.* MS: *Jesu*. It is hard to imagine how the scribe could write *Jesu* (abbreviated as *Ihu* with a macron) in this line, and it is suggestive of over-hasty copying, or otherwise mechanical copying without any attention to sense. Emendation following A and M.

- 175 *to hym*. MS: inserted above the line.
 178 *he no better*. MS: *not he better*. A: *not he bettur*. M: *not he bettyr*.
 181 *sprent*. MS: *spred*. Emendation following A and M.
 192 *brast*. MS: *Rane*. Emendation following A and M; *brast* is a verb commonly used in romance descriptions of combat, and its fit with the stanza's other tail-line rhymes suggests the possibility of authenticity.
- 196–97 *And also hys . . . fell that tyd*. These lines are transposed in MS.
 198 *I*. MS: *he*. Emendation following A, H, and M.
- 198 *As I herd in Rome*. A adds an ellipsis following this line to suggest missing text, presumably on account of the two non-rhyming tail-lines that follow. M postulates six missing lines at this point, a new stanza beginning with line 199, and another six missing lines following line 204.
- 201 *gan him warke*. MS: *he gan warke*. A: *gan hym quelle*. M: *he gan warke*.
 210 *Upp bothe hys hands held*. Parentheses are used here to indicate that Torrent's speech continues through line 213. So A. M reads the speech's conclusion at 209.
- 214 *to*. Written above the line in MS.
- 214–15 *Now ys ther . . . fyld that day*. Following these lines in MS is a near-duplication:
Now ys ther non other say / Of hym to wyne the fyld pat day. Perhaps the scribe was not sure which reading he preferred, so included both. Emendation following A, H, and M.
- 219 *to se*. Written above the line in MS.
- 236 *Crystyn man thow he were*. MS: *Crystyn thow thow they were*. Aside from the problem of duplicated *thow*, lines 237–40 clearly refer to Torrent, not to the two slain guards, so I have followed the emendation given in A. M: *Crystyne thow [that] they were*.
- 241 *Torrant*. MS: line begins with a large, four-line rubricated *T*.
 244 *whalle*. MS: corrected with lighter ink from *whyle*.
 245 *syghyng*. MS: corrected with lighter ink from *syngyng*.
 261 *sche gothe anon*. MS: *anon sche gothe*. This is one of several instances where a simple shift of syntax places the rhyming word at the end of the line. A makes these changes, and I follow A's emendations, considering the likelihood that such transpositions could have been easily made by the MS scribes or by earlier scribes along the line of recension. M: *gothe sche a-non*.
- 265–66 *Say me now . . . schall me hyght*. MS: *Say me now, fayer lady, / Who owte of thys plase schall hyght*. I follow A's emendation for the insertion of *of* in line 266. I have added *me* to line 266 to restore plausible meaning, and *wyght* to line 265, a common adjective for ladies of romance (see line 759), to restore consistency in meter and rhyme. A offers different possibilities:
Say me now, fayer lady, belyve, / Who owte of thys plase schall me dryve. M offers another possibility: *Say me now, fayer lady, right, / Who owte thys plase schall hym hyght*.
- 273 *Thy*. MS: *They*. Emendation following A.
 276–77 *Out of the . . . by thy tale*. The discontinuity in the dialogue between Torrent and Desonell suggests a missing stanza between these lines. A likewise

- posits a missing stanza. Alternatively, however, M suggests that the discontinuity could be mitigated by restoring *my* in line 277 (see note below), making it possible that MS is complete here (p. 142n277–79). See also the explanatory note for these lines.
- 277 *thy*. MS: *my* erased and *thy* inserted above the line.
- 283 *thy*. MS: corrected from *my*.
- gentry. MS: corrected from *gentre*.
- 285 *nyee*. MS: *e*¹ inserted above the line.
- 286 *hand*. MS: *d* corrected from *e*.
- 287 *betwe*. MS: *bewte*. Emendation following A.
- 300 *onely God on hyght*. MS: *ondly gode a lone*. A: *onely Godes myght*. M: *ondly God all-myght*.
- 318 *owt*. MS: *ow*. Emendation following A and M.
- 325 *fyve*. MS has a struck-out *V* preceding *fyve*. Perhaps the scribe decided to spell out the number for the sake of the visual rhyme with *lyve*; compare with lines 697 and 756.
- 336 *well to sped*. MS: *to sped well*. Rhyming word transposed within the line, following A and M.
- 337 *Lordds*. MS: line begins with a large, four-line rubricated *L*.
- 338 *wol*. MS: *wol* is followed by a struck-out *be*.
- 343–48 *The kyngs dawghtyr . . . wase Amyas bold*. A places lines 343–45 after lines 346–48, presumably to clarify that *sche* in line 349 refers to Elyoner, who is named in line 344.
- 353 *lyghtand*. MS: *lygand*. A: *al schynand*. Emendation following M.
- 354 *trusse*. MS: corrected from *truste*.
- 357 *redy*. MS: omitted. Emendation following A.
- 358 *wote*. MS: corrected from *what*.
- 359 *Had*. MS: corrected from *han byn*, with *byn* almost entirely erased.
- 360 *gyant*. MS: corrected from *gyand*.
- 361 *gan*. MS: line ends with *lle on the*, struck out. Emendation following H.
- 366 *keys*. MS: *e* inserted above the line.
- 367 *lyons*. MS: *lyone*.
- 368 *Were*. MS: *wase*.
- 369 *On*. MS: *Vn*. Emendation following A.
- 370 *hym*. MS: corrected from *hem*.
- 371 *thay*. MS: corrected from *that*.
- 372 *On*. MS: *Vn*. Emendation following A.
- 373 *thei*. MS: *i* written above the line.
- 374 *wer*. MS: *ther* struck out and *wer* written above.
- 382–83 *Desonell seyd . . . ase he went*. There appears to be a line missing between 382 and 383, presumably relating how Desonell sees Torrent approaching.
- 390 *thee*. MS: *hym*. Emendation following A and M, to accord with *thy* in line 391.
- 395 *clere*. MS: *jent*. The epithet *ladys clere* seems likely given the tail-lines in this stanza end in *squierres*, *ner*, and *ther*, and given the occurrence of the same expression elsewhere in the poem, in lines 259 and 1648. Emendation following A and M.
- 396 *toke*. MS: *to*. Emendation following M.

- 402 *kyng seyd*. MS: *kyngs messengere*. Emendation following A.
- 408 *Than seyd they that to Gales yede*. MS: *That they than to Gales yede*, with *Gales* corrected in lighter ink from *Calles* and *yede* corrected from *went*.
Emendations following A.
- 409 *hym were*. MS: *were hym*. A emends to *Yeftys to take were hem no ned*, though given the number of transposed phrases elsewhere in the MS, the transposition of *hym were* seems like the most likely scribal error.
Emendation following M.
- 410 *Verdownys*. MS: *Downys*.
- 412–13 *At Perrown on . . . mot I thee*. There appears to be one line missing between these lines. M places the presumed missing line at lines 411–12.
- 416 *Gales*. MS: *G* corrected in lighter ink from *C*.
- 427 *Bettyr ys non to hold*. MS: entire line inserted to the right of the main text.
- 431 *it bold*. MS: *i told*. M emends likewise.
- 435 *mayney*. MS: *mayne*, corrected to *mayneyer* with lighter ink.
- 438 *I*. MS: omitted. Emendation following A and M.
- 440 *ys rest to take*. MS: *to take ys rest*. Rhyming word transposed within the line, following A and M.
- 451 *love*. MS: *lowe*.
- 461 *settyste*. MS: *settythe*. A and M emend likewise.
- 462 *persewyd*. MS: *prevyd*. Emendation following A.
- 465 *Nazareth sent hym me*. MS: *Portynggalle seyd so mot I thee*. Emendation following F.I, as in A and M.
- 466 *hym on thee*. MS: *of the*. Emendation following F.I, as in A and M.
- 469 *they*. MS: *the*. Emendation following F.I, as in M.
- 470 *went*. So MS. F.I: *walkyd*.
- 471 *watyr*. So MS. F.I: *ryvers*.
- 472 *ded were*. MS: *were ded*. Emendation following F.I, as in A and M.
The kyng. So MS. F.I: *this lorde*.
- 477 *he*. MS: *hym*. Emendation following F.I, as in A and M.
- 481 *wyst*. So MS. F.I: *wyst nat*.
- 484–85 *that was*. MS: omitted. Emendation following F.I, as in A.
lestyned and nere yed. So MS. F.I: *came nere and lystened*.
Loo lord come ner and see / Abowght a facon schene. So MS. F.I: *Lord it is sent to me / For a faucon shene*.
- 487 *that they*. MS: *they ne*. Emendation following F.I, as in A.
- 489 *Maudelayne*. MS: *Mavdlen*. Emendation following F.I: *Mavdeleyn*, as in A.
- 498 *Hys squyer*. MS: *Hys squyers*. F.II: *To his squyer*. Emendation following A.
- 500 *byddythe*. So MS. F.II: *abode*.
- 502 *noble*. MS: *nothere*. Emendation following F.II, as in A.
- 503 *And forthe than rod hee*. F.II: omitted.
- 504 *Torrent*. MS: line begins with a large, five-line rubricated *T*.
- 507–09 *Berys and apes . . . where they lay*. MS: *Berrys he sawe stondyng, / And wyld bestes ther goyng, / Gret lyonyss ther he fond*. Emendation following F.II, as in A.
- 510 *tyght*. MS: *thyke*. Emendation following F.II, as in A and M.
- 511 *wase*. So MS. F.II: *is*.
nere-hand nyght. So MS. F.II: *towarde the nyght*.

- 512 *By dymmynge.* MS: *And in the dawnyng.* Emendation following F.II, as in A. M: *And in the dymmynge.*
- 513–15 *Lysten lordes . . . then were they.* MS: *Harkyn, lords, what I schall sey, / He and hys squyer partyd they, / Carfull they were that Day.* Emendation following F.II, as in A.
- 524 *to fyght.* MS: *to syght.* A: *to fond.* M: *syngande.*
- 532 *thys.* MS: *hys.* Emendation following A.
- 533 *I take order.* MS: *I have or take other.* A and M: *I have take order.*
- 542 *clough.* MS: *colvd.* Emendation following M. A: *clow.*
- 543 *and.* MS: *an.* Emendation following A.
- 548 *swowe.* MS, H: *swayne.* Emendation following A. M: *swoghe.*
- 554 *it.* MS: *he.* Emendation following A.
- 558 *tellys.* MS: *tellythe.* Emendation following A and M.
- 595 *wyld.* MS: *wyd.* Emendation following A and M.
- 597 *lytyl.* MS: *lyty.* Emendation following A and M.
- 608–09 *That was bothe . . . and ny yed.* Three lines appear to be missing from the end of this stanza. Presumably they would have described the squire riding through the forest toward the castle. A likewise locates the missing lines at line 608; M locates them between lines 602 and 603.
- 609 *him.* MS: *hem.* Emendation following A.
- 624 *fre.* MS: *fer.* Emendation following A and M.
- 630 *wot yow.* MS: *wote w yow.* A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 635 *I.* MS: omitted. A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 642 *wood.* MS: *wodd.* Emendation following A and H.
- 658 *ron.* MS: *rond.*
- 662 *stere.* MS: *schere.* Emendation following A.
- 668 *All the day.* MS: *all þe day.* A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 671 *he knelyd.* MS: *knelyd he.* Rhyming word transposed within the line, following M.
- 690 *grownd.* MS: *gownd.* A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 697 *he.* MS: *ii.* Emendation following A.
- 718 *gyantys too.* So A, M. MS: *gyantys ii too.* Compare with lines 325 and 756.
- 738 *he hym ches.* MS: *sche hym chesys.* Emendations following A and M.
- 739 *seyd.* MS: omitted. M: *sayd.* A: *quod.* H: *ase.*
- 742 *slyke.* MS: *sylke.* Emendation following M. A, H: *sybbe.*
- 748 *knyght hys.* MS: *knyghts.* Emendation following A.
- 749–50 *Fuolls.* MS: *o* inserted above the line.
That wyt ys . . . lese and more. Three lines appear to be missing from the end of this stanza, perhaps containing Torrent's further telling of his exploits. A likewise locates the missing lines at line 749; M locates between lines 740 and 741.
- 752 *browght hol whome.* So MS, M. A reads *ho* and interprets this as a scribal error and omits to give: *browght whome.*
- 753 *The.* MS: omitted. Emendation following A.
seyd Be Sen. MS: *lords seyd he be sen myhell.* M: *He! By Sen Myhell!* Emendation following A.
Myhell. MS: *my her* with *lle* written over the *r* in lighter ink.

- 756 *pryste fyve*. MS: *pryste v fyve*. Compare with lines 325 and 697.
 766 *yongest*. MS: *youngeest*.
 771 *way*. MS: omitted. Emendation following A.
 775 *The kyng*. MS: *quene to the* precedes *kyng*. Transposition noted and emended in MS. A, H, and M likewise follow the scribal emendation.
 781 *aske*. MS: *aseke*. A and H emend likewise.
 790 *hys*. MS: omitted. Emendation following A.
 794 *walls*. MS: *swalls*. Emendation following A and M.
 796 *All*. MS: *And*. Emendation following A and M.
 815 *notts*. MS: *netts*.
 822 *a-mydds*. MS: *the mydds*. Emendation following F.III, as in A.
 825 *save*. MS: *sped*. Emendation following F.III, as in A and M.
 831 *for her sake*. MS: *parmafay*. Emendation following F.III, as in A and M.
 833 *broke*. MS: *breke*. Emendation following F.III, as in A and M.
 834 *or I go*. MS: *ar I gan Rage*. Emendation following F.III, as in A and M.
 835 *make me so*. MS, M: *me make*. A: *me ma*. Emendation following F.III.
 838–39 *Before xxvii knyghts . . . were Torrents frende*. F.III: *By vii score of hardy knyghtes*.
 Three lines appear to be missing, presumably detailing the twenty-seven
 knights assembled to bear witness to the king's assurances.
 839 *frende*. MS: *frendds*. Emendation following F.III, as in A.
 840 *seris gan Torrent sey*. So MS. F.III: *lordes I you praye*.
 844 *be*. MS: omitted. F.III is cropped just at the *d* of *schold*. A, H, and M emend likewise.
 845 *wolde*. MS: omitted. Emendation following F.III, as in A.
 848 *wyght*. MS: *whyte*. Emendation following F.III, which crops the end of the
 line but still preserves *wyg*.
 849 *And he ys bothe strong and bold*. F.III: omitted.
 851 *that waye*. MS: *ways*. Emendation following F.III, as in A.
 852 *good*. MS: *goo*. A and M emend likewise. F.III: . . . *Torente . . .*
 853 *And*. MS: leaves room for a large, five-line *A*, though the rubrication has not
 been completed. M notes that there is a “minuscule *th*, visible next to the
 Chetham's stamp that occupies the space, [which] indicates that the *t* in
tho (line 855) was to be capitalized” (p. 180n853–57).
 856 *ryde*. MS: *ryght*. Emendation following A and M.
 862 *thee*. MS: *than*. Emendation following A.
 871 *An*. MS: *And*. Emendation following A.
 872 *kyng dyd dwelle*. MS: *kyng dwellyd*. Emendation following A.
 875 *tell*. MS: *tyll*. Emendation following A.
 878 *yt bee ys will*. So M. MS: *ys will to Bee*. Rhyming word transposed within the
 line.
 891–902 *The kyng arose . . . with me wend*. Irregularly, the tail lines of this stanza
 rhyme on two different consonant clusters, leading A to emend *wynd*
 (line 899) to *leng*, and leading M to divide the stanza into two six-line
 stanzas. The continuity in narration, however, suggests that there are
 not two half-stanzas missing.
 892 *knyghts*. MS: *knygs*.
 915 *kyng*. MS: *kyngs*.

- 922 *seté*. MS: final *e* corrected from *a*.
 924 *boke*. So MS. F.IV: *bokes*.
 929 *the*. MS: omitted. Emendation following F.IV, as in A.
 have the degré. So F.IV. MS, H, M: *haue degré*. A emends *degré* to *the gre*, which perhaps makes more sense in context and accords with usage elsewhere in the text.
 932–33 *And yf yt . . . duchyes in londe*. MS: omitted. F.IV: *And yf it thy wyll be / Two duchyes in honde / I wyll geve her in londe*. Following A and M, I have inverted F.IV's placement of the rhyming words *londe* and *honde*, though altering this reading is not absolutely necessary for sense.
 935 *Gramercy sir sayd he*. MS: *Gramarcy seyd he thane*. Emendation following F.IV, as in A.
 940 *send*. F.IV: *brynge*.
 942–43 *Menstrells was . . . myrre songe*. So MS. F.IV: *Mynstralsy was them amonge / With harpe fedyll and songe*.
 947 *of*. MS: *on*. Emendation following F.IV, as in A.
 948 *toke*. MS: *to*. Emendation following F.IV, as in A and M.
 951 *stret*. F.V: *waye*.
 nome. MS: *none*. Emendation following F.V, as in A and M.
 952 *come*. MS: *gone*. Emendation following F.V, as in A.
 954 *come ther folks*. F.V: *he met folke*.
 955 *folloyng*. F.V: *comynge*.
 958 *yow*. MS gives *nowe* following *yow*, which I have omitted following F.V, A, and M.
 961 *couentre fare*. F.V: *londe brode*.
 962 A large decorative *Portyngale* has been added in lighter ink in the right-hand margin of this line.
 964 *lothly*. MS: *lovely*. Unless intentionally ironic, *lothly* seems most plausible, occurring also in lines 561 and 689. A and H emend likewise. F.V: *fendes den*.
 968 *had he slayne*. MS: *had he slaylne*. F.V: *he hath slone*.
 969 *doth ly*. MS: *ys*. Emendation following F.V, as in A.
 970 *cyté*. MS: *knygthod*. Emendation following F.V, as in A.
 990 *wyn*. MS: *wynd*. Emendation following A and M.
 991 *Undyr nethe spere and schyld*. So MS and M. This line is omitted by A, presumably on the grounds that it disrupts the tail-rhyme form and the twelve-line stanza pattern. Compare with line 1200.
 1009 *Let thy beytyng and thy ermyght be*. So M. MS: *Let be thy beytyng and thy ermyght*. Rhyming word transposed within the line.
 1012 *sayd*. Written above the line in MS.
 1018 *he*. MS: omitted. Emendation following F.VI, as in A and M.
 1019 *he*. MS: *her*. Emendation following A and M.
 croke. MS: *creke*. Emendation following F.VI, as in A and M.
 1021 *gret*. So MS. F.VI: *longe*.
 1023 *Tyll wone of them ded bee*. So MS. F.VI: . . . *darste thou come nere*.
 1025 *the thef*. MS: *theff* preceded by a single *f*. Emendation following A and M.
 1029 *Neyther by nyght nor by day*. MS: *blyther be day and be nyght*. F.VI: . . . *nor by nyght*. Emendations following F.VI, as in A.

- 1030 *and sen Awsden.* MS: *and sen tawsden.* F.VI: . . . of god of heuen.
 1041 *that thef.* MS: *bat be theff.* Emendation following A.
 1055 *lede.* MS: *Rede* struck out and *lede* added in lighter ink.
 1064 *hys.* MS: *her.* Emendation following A and M.
 1073 *To Torrent.* MS: *Torrent said.* Emendation following A and M.
 1082 *it.* MS: *is.*
 1084 *yt.* MS: omitted. Emendation following A.
of my hond. MS: *of all my lond.* Emendation following A, to maintain the sense
 of line 1085.
 1102 *sertaynly.* MS: *sertayn.* Emendation following A and H.
 1104 *uncouth ray.* MS: additional *a* preceding *Ray.* Emendation following A.
 1116 *By this day sevynnyght.* This line has been transposed in MS with the following
 tail-line, *Gete thee armes bryght*, at line 1119. Emendation following A and M.
 1123 *On.* MS: *Of.* Emendation following A.
 1135 *he.* MS: *i.* H: *i-telle.* Emendation following A and M.
 1140–41 *Might he none . . . not in passe.* There appears to be three lines missing from
 the end of this stanza, which may tell of Torrent's plans to challenge the
 prince of Aragon.
 1142 *at.* MS: omitted. A and M emend likewise.
 1144 *theyre glade.* So MS and M. A reads *glade* as an adjective and emends to *theyre*
mete glade. It is possible, however, that *glade* is a noun (*MED glad* (n.),
 sense 4, which cites this line), making emendation unnecessary.
 Although the *MED* definition is speculative ("?entertainment, ?merry-
 making"), *theyre glade* has the advantage of preserving the extant text
 and a metrically regular line.
 1145 *he.* MS: *they.* Emendation following A and M.
 1152 *Or.* MS: omitted. Emendation following A.
 1152 *her.* MS: *it.* Emendation following A and M.
 1200 *They spake nether ylle ne good.* A omits; compare with line 991.
 1213 *kyng and knyght.* MS: *ky* cancelled before *knyght.*
 1222 *all you.* So M. MS: *you all.* Rhyming word transposed within the line.
 1232 *ryghts.* MS: *restys.* Emendation following A.
 1237 *that.* MS: *than.* Emendation following A.
 1238 *the thoght.* MS: omitted. Emendation following A, which must be close to the
 sense of the passage, though it is one of the more conjectural supplements
 I have adopted for this edition. M simply gives *it*; H follows MS.
 1250 *counsell kyng and knyght.* MS: *counsell of kyng and knyght.* There is clearly no
 additional subject; rather it is the king and knights who are taking
 counsel. Emendation following A.
 1280 *To.* MS: line begins with a large, three-line rubricated *T.*
Torent went. MS: *yode*, struck out, precedes *went.*
 1285 *Stode and beheld on lond.* So M. MS: *On lond stode and beheld.* Rhyming word
 transposed within the line.
 1295–96 *Tho Sir Torrent . . . hym have slain.* There appears to be one line missing
 between these lines, presumably elaborating on Torrent's attack on Cate.
 1322 *The kyngs.* MS: omitted, but *kyngs* appears in the following line after *other.*

- 1323 *And other two or thre.* MS: *And other kyngs two or thre.* Preceding *thre* is *the*, blotted out with ink.
- 1339 *Saint.* MS: *sir.* Emendation following A, M.
- 1340 *a marr.* So MS, H, M. A: *simarr.* A posits that *simarr* is a variant of Middle English *chimar*, which he glosses as a “cloak” (A, p. 107n47/1338). This word is not otherwise attested in the Middle English canon. See M, p. 202n1338, a note with which I agree.
- 1366 *she.* M emends likewise. MS, A, H: *he.*
- 1393 *Sir.* MS: line begins with a large, three-line rubricated *S*.
- 1394–95 *Full curtesly and . . . have good day.* The tail-line (rhyming with *fend* in line 1397) between these lines appears to be missing, though it does not seem to cause much obstruction to sense.
- 1395 *Desonell.* MS: *Denosell.* A and M emend likewise.
- 1399 *Kepe well my lady fre.* So MS, H, and M. A emends to *Kepe them well my lady ffre*, which may be correct, but I keep the reading from MS because it is possible, considering the following line, that Torrent is meant to refer to Desonell herself rather than the rings.
- 1419–20 *Of the coste . . . were all prest.* There appears to be a line missing between these lines, which presumably concerned an approach to the Norwegian coast.
- 1436 *Torrent.* MS: *Torerent.* A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 1447 *My lord was never fleand.* So MS. A gives *failand* for *fleand*, which would perhaps offer a more conventional reading, but I retain the reading in MS because lines 1448–50 develop the concept of Jesus’ participation in the upcoming battle. See *MED flen* (v.1), sense 3b: “to desert or depart from (someone), to go away.” A’s *failand* could be seen as a variant of the same verb. M retains MS reading.
- 1448 *make.* MS: *made.* Emendation following A, H, and M.
- 1453 *bowes.* MS: *browes.* Emendation following A and M.
- 1462 *habyde.* So M. MS: *have ryde.* H: *have byde.* A: *haue kyde.*
- 1466–67 *To the chamber . . . hymselflay.* MS: line 1467 precedes line 1466. Emendation following A.
- 1468–69 *And fals talis . . . the geaunt abyde.* There appears to be three lines missing between these lines. They likely would have described the shipmen’s false account of Torrent’s cowardice, which is elaborated in lines 1469–71.
- 1478 *knyght.* MS: *ky* cancelled before *knyght.*
- 1504 *bare he.* So M. MS: *he bare.* Rhyming word transposed within the line.
- 1508–09 *The other dragon . . . all his myght.* One line appears to be missing here. A likewise locates the missing line here, while M locates it between lines 1507 and 1508.
- 1518 *hyght.* MS: *hyȝe.*
- 1524–25 *With towrys hyght . . . an hyghe strete.* There appears to be three lines missing here, likely describing the castle in further detail. A likewise locates the missing lines here, while M locates them between lines 1525 and 1526.
- 1537 *not.* MS: *wot.* Emendation following A.
- 1539 *they.* MS: *thou.* Emendation following A.
- 1555 *And let hym bayte on the ground.* MS: additional *hym* preceding *on.* Emendation following A.

- 1563 *they*. MS: omitted. A and M emend likewise.
- 1569 *to*. MS: *than*. Emendation following A.
- 1575 *Quyte thy mede he wyll*. MS: *He wyll quyte thee thy mede*. Rhyming word transposed within the line. A offers something different: *Thy mede the quyte he wyll*. M offers: *Quyte the thy mede he wyll*.
- 1605–06 *So evill was . . . hym ayen smate*. M locates six missing lines here, although their existence would not significantly affect meaning.
- 1652 *Weraunt*. MS: *weraumt*. A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 1690 *Fore*. MS: *For*. Emendation following A.
- 1697–98 *Fayn he was . . . made noble chere*. There appear to be seven lines missing from the middle of this stanza, presumably describing how they dined and the cheer they made. A likewise locates the missing lines at the end of the stanza; M, however, locates one following line 1697, and the other six after line 1700.
- 1776 *hath*. MS: *hatt*. Emendation following A.
- 1809 *Thus the*. MS: *This*. Emendation following F.VII, as in A.
- 1810 *Tyll*. MS: omitted. Emendation following F.VII, as in A.
- 1812 *In all poyntes*. MS: *in poyntes*. F.VII: *of all poyntes*. A likewise combines these variants.
- 1820 *Ayen the law*. So MS. F.VII: *Agaynst right*.
- 1824 *The quene*. So MS. F.VII: *The queen hir moder*.
- 1828 *wexid tho nere wood*. So MS. F.VII: *was nere wode*.
- 1829 *between hem twa*. So MS. F.VII: *bytwene the children two*.
- 1830 *Therin they were wonde*. MS: omitted. Supplied by F.VII, as in A and M.
- 1831 *Whan they had shypped that lady yeng*. MS: *Whan they clepud that lady yeng*. Emendation following F.VII, which reads *Whan they had shypped that gentyll thyng*. A likewise combines these variants, but also emends *yeng* to *ying*.
- 1833–34 *An hunderid fell*. F.VII: *Anone she fell*.
- 1835 *Whan that lady . . . dyd she call*. Supplied by F.VII, as in A. MS: *Downe knelid that lady clere / Ihesu Cryste that come up here*.
- 1836–37 *clene*. MS: *clere*. Emendation following A.
- 1838 *Down knelid that lady clene*. F.VII: *To defende hir with his honde*.
- 1839 *Rightfull God . . . on to lende*. MS: *Jesu Cryste, that com up here / On this strand, as I wenyd*. Supplied from F.VII, as in A and M.
- 1840 *my chyldren*. MS: *we*. Emendation following F.VII, as in A.
- 1841 *Knyghtis and ladyes gent*. So MS. F.VII: *ladyes fayre and gent*.
- 1842 *rose ayen the nyght*. So MS. F.VII: *arose on the myght*.
- 1843 *From lond*. MS: *ffro lond*. F.VII: *Fro the londe*.
- 1844 *Uppon*. So MS. F.VII: *Into*.
- 1845 *woke and*. So MS. F.VII: omitted.
- 1846 *man nere hond*. So MS. F.VII: *man at hande*.
- 1847 *Tho*. So MS. F.VII: *Tyll*.
- 1848 *Foules arose and mery*. So MS. F.VII: *Foules on trees merely*.
- 1849 *mowntayn*. So MS. F.VII: *hyll*.
- 1850 *Sone*. So MS. F.VII: *Where*.

- 1883–84 *Carefull of blood . . . no better be.* There appears to be six lines missing from this stanza, presumably devoted to elaborating on Desonell's sorrow. A likewise locates the missing lines here; M locates them after line 1886.
- 1887 *her.* M emends likewise. MS, A, H: *his.*
- 1892–93 *The sorow she . . . no further fare.* Six lines seem to be missing from this stanza as well, possibly also devoted to elaborating on Desonell's sorrow at the abduction of her other child. A likewise locates the missing lines here; M locates three missing lines at lines 1889–90, one at lines 1891–92, and two at lines 1893–94.
- 1939 *sholdist.* MS: *woldist.* Emendation following A.
- 1954 *sett.* MS: *lett.* Emendation following A.
- 2006 *Other be nyght or day.* MS, M, H: *Other be nyght or forme of day.* A: *Be nyght and be day.*
- 2020 *have.* MS: corrected from *heue.*
- 2021–22 *My children ye . . . walkid than alone.* Three lines seem to be missing from this stanza, perhaps containing further details on Desonell's surroundings. M likewise locates the missing lines here; A locates them at lines 2018–19.
- 2027–28 *By the yatis . . . a wildernes.* Three lines seem to be missing here, perhaps describing why Desonell flees from the hunting party.
- 2036–37 *Thereof she was . . . kyng and knyght.* Six lines seem to be missing from this stanza as well, no doubt describing the initial encounter between Desonell and the knights. A and M likewise locate the missing lines here.
- 2115 *Calaber.* MS: *Cababer.* A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 2118 *Colomond.* MS: *Calomond.*
- 2134 *command.* MS: *comland.*
- 2141 *askyd.* MS: *had.* This line makes perfect sense on its own, but the following three lines make it plain that the king is not given the opportunity to take the Eucharist and confess. A emends to *wold.* M and H preserve MS reading.
- 2172 The line begins with a large, three-line rubricated *O.*
- 2184 *On.* MS: *Off.* Emendation following A.
- 2189 *seté.* MS: *see.* A: *cité.*
- 2197 *say.* MS: *says.* Emendation following A. M emends to *stroyes say.*
- 2205–16 *third.* MS: *thrid.*
- 2205–16 *There he stode . . . in this contré.* MS: lines 2211–16 come before lines 2205–10. Emendation following A and M. Because the sultan's message to Torrent (lines 2211–16) acknowledges the starved people of the city, suggesting that the description of Torrent besieging the city (lines 2205–10) precedes it, I have followed A and M in reversing the order of these lines.
- 2211 *The soudan.* MS: *a Soudan.* Emendation following A.
- 2229–34 *Sith he buskyd . . . the Sarzins bryght.* MS: lines 2232–34 come before lines 2229–31. Because Torrent must first arrive in a new city (Antioch) before he can live there for seven years, I (following A and M) have chosen to reverse the order of these line groupings.
- 2237–38 *Found hym his . . . Jerusalem herd tell.* This stanza seems to be missing three lines, which may well describe Leobertus' martial exploits of which the

- king of Jerusalem hears at the beginning of the following stanza. A and M likewise locate the missing lines here.
- 2245 *thousand.* MS: *thousaid.* Emendation following A and M.
- 2246–47 *Ageyn Torrent for . . . Jerusalem said thus.* The end of this stanza also seems to be missing three lines. A and M likewise locate the missing lines here.
- 2248 *Leobertus.* MS, M: *Liobertious.* A: *Liobertus.*
- 2255 *On.* MS: *Of.* Emendation following A.
- 2258 *Full woo was her that see it myght.* MS: *it ought.* A: *Woo was her, that se it myght!* M: *full woo was that i-dight.*
- 2283 *hom.* MS: *hem.* A and M emend likewise.
- 2285 *And in preson.* MS: *and and in preson.* Emendation following A. M gives *And an presone.*
- 2301 *slee.* MS: *flee.* Emendation following A.
- 2315 *be nyght ne be day.* MS: *be day ne be nyȝt.* Rhyming word transposed within the line.
- 2318 *this nyght pray.* MS: *pray this nyght.* Rhyming word transposed within the line.
- 2359 *Feyre.* MS: *Feyrer.*
- 2375 *turnaments.* MS: *Turments.* Emendation following A.
- 2375 *were.* So MS. A and M emend to *lay* in order to complete this stanza's tail-rhyme scheme.
- 2405 *he.* MS: *ye.* Emendation following A and M.
- 2417 *Quarell.* MS: *Quarellis.* A and M emend likewise.
- 2438–39 *With moche solempnité . . . Nazareth sent me.* There appears to be at least three lines missing at the beginning of this stanza, possibly describing the messenger's audience.
- 2447 *semled.* MS: *sem lend.* Emendation following A and M.
- 2473 *fy Gryffon.* MS: *ffygryffon.* M likewise construes as two separate words.
- 2474 *there they yeld.* MS: *they yeldyd there.* Rhyming word transposed within the line.
- 2477–78 *Emendation following A and M.*
- 2480–81 *Smertley in the . . . Gryffon yonger were.* There appears to be three lines missing here. A likewise locates the missing lines here; M locates them at the end of the stanza, after line 2480.
- 2485–86 *Sir Torrent stode . . . said Torrent thanne.* There may be six lines missing at the beginning of the stanza (see M, p. 245n2475), though this may also be just an idiosyncratic six-line stanza.
- 2487 *And hent a . . . hym rode he.* These lines are transposed in MS. Emendation following A.
- 2487 *so sore to hym rode.* So MS. A: *to hym rode so sore.* M: *rode to hym so sore.*
- 2488 *he bare hym to the ground.* So MS. A: *he to the ground hym bare.* M: *to the ground he hym bare.*
- 2504 *on her kne she knelid.* So MS. A: *knelid on her kne.* M: *she knelid on her knee.*
- 2523–25 *As was dame . . . that doughty ys.* This tercet seems to be all that survives of a distinct stanza. The nine missing lines might have further described Desonell's beauty, provided additional details on the feast, and introduced the two kings mentioned in line 2526. A suggests that only three lines are missing here and combines them with lines 2226–28 to create a "complete" stanza. See M, p. 245n2475, for different stanza divisions, beginning at line 2480 ff.

- 2537 *wonder had they*. MS: *they had wonder*. A: *There of they had envye*. M: *they had ferly*.
- 2544 *fader*. MS: omitted. Emendation following A.
- 2562 *Sothe*. MS: *so*. Emendation following M.
- 2590 *Al*. MS: *at*. A, H, and M emend likewise.
- 2604–09 *The quene said . . . it so be*. MS, M: lines 2607–09 come before lines 2604–06. Emendation following A based on the likelihood that the knight's enthusiasm stems from the news that Torrent is returning, as opposed to the appearance of unidentified ships, which may well have conventionally elicited dread rather than joy.
- 2618 *grene*. MS: *kene*. Emendation following A.
- 2621 *sene*. MS: *see*. Emendation following M and A.
- 2623 *of*. MS: omitted. Emendation following A and M.
- 2642–43 *And sith rejoysē . . . of gret renown*. There seems to be three lines missing at the end of this stanza, which may well have described how Torrent accepts the king of Jerusalem's offer.
- 2644–45 *Torent gave hym . . . Sir knyght*. The tail line (rhyming with *flood* in line 2647) seems to be missing here.
- 2647 *To the Grekys flood*. MS: *To the Grekys flood I plight*. Emendation following A.
- 2648 *Vouch*. MS: *Wouch*.
- 2656 *they yode her way*. MS: *her way they yode*. Rhyming word transposed within the line.
- 2666–71 *Now Jesu Cryst . . . we shall wend*. The text's final stanza was probably not composed in the standard twelve-line form. Rather, it seems likely that it is an idiosyncratic stanza written as separate from the main narrative and intended to close the romance, in conventional fashion, with a prayer. See also the explanatory note to lines 7; 10.



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GLOSSARY

after, aftyr after, following; *for*; behind
agayne, ageyn(e) up; against; toward; once again
a-go go, proceed, pass by; **be** ~ have gone by
amends compensation
ane one
anon(e) soon, immediately
armes, armys(e) upper limbs; coat of arms; armor, weapons; **dede/poynt of ~** feast of arms; **man of ~** an armed soldier
asaute assault
asay test, challenge
asondyr apart
assemled assembled
asttyt quickly
aventid cooled (by removing helmet or raising visor)
aventorrs adventures
ax(e), axithe ask; **axid, askyd** asked, requested
aye ever; **for** ~ forever; ~where everywhere
ayen see **agayne**

bad, bode asked; asked for; commanded
bane cause of death or pain
bare, barr, bere carry, bear; wear; knock down; pierce, stab
bayte graze
be by the time
bed (n.) bed; (ppl.) offered, promised
be-dene immediately
befall happens; **befell** happened
behovythe it is necessary
bene, byn(e) be; been

bent battlefield
be-sought, be-sowght prayed to, asked
bestrod(e) mounted
bet beaten, pounded; engraved (in metal)
beytyng harassment
blewe (n.) blue
blith(e), blyth(e), blither happy, joyful; happier
blowe, blew(e) (v.) blow; turn pale
blyse bless
boffetts, buffetts blows
bond holding, imprisonment
boryn drilled
boun bound
bowght loop (in a dragon's tail)
brast, breste burst
bred (n.) bread
bred (v.) breed
broke enjoy
broke broke, destroyed
browgh cliff's edge, precipice
bugell trumpet
buskyd prepared, readied
by (v.) buy, pay for
by(e) (prep.) along, next to
byd(e), byddythe wait
byddyng reciting
byrlyd poured out

care worry, sorrow
car(e)full sorrowful
certayn certain(ly)
chaffer unfairness
chaunce (n.) happening; (v.) deviate
cheff chief
cher(e) high spirits, celebration

chyrge, chirchus (n. pl) *church, church building*
chyld(er) *knight*
cité *city*
clarkys *scholars*
clepud, clepyd *called (as in named)*
clere *shining; fair, beautiful; ~ of armes* *entitled to bear arms*
closud *closed, clutched*
cloth (n.) *fabric*
cloth (v.) *to dress*
colod *small mound*
com(e)ly *handsome*
commnant *covenant*
contnance, countenaunce *conduct; good manners, customary behavior*
contré(e)(y) *country, territory*
cord *agree*
cost(e) *coast*
coud, couth *knew*
couped *slashed (for decoration)*
coursers *warhorses*
covyrd *recovered*
cry(e) *yell (v.); call (v.); yell, roar (v.); call to arms (n.)*
crystonyd *baptized*
curtes(e), curtesse *courteous, gracious*

dall *dale*
darryst *dare*
ded(e), dedd(y)s *deed, deeds*
ded(d/e) *dead, death*
degré *estate, social position*
delicious, delycyous *pleasing, melodious*
delyver, delyvered *give over; set free*
delyverd (pp1.) *give birth*
deme (v.) *judge*
dent, dynt *strike, blow*
departed *separated, annulled*
dere (n.) *deer*
der(r)e, deyr (adj.) *dear, cherished; (adv.) dearly, at high cost*
destroyythe *destroys*
devyce *opinion, advice*
dight, dyght *prepare(d); done; awarded; assured*

dong *beat, struck*
doughter, dowghttyr *daughter*
doughty, dowghtty *valiant*
downe (prep.) *down; (n.) highland plains and hills*
draught *have a ~ take a walk*
drenchid *drowned*
droffe *drove; drevyn* *driven*
dryee *have strength*
dulful *sorrowful*
durst, dourst *dared*

eb *low tide*
ebbyd *receded*
ech(e) *each*
echone *each one*
eke *also*
ellis *else*
ells *ell (unit of measurement)*
end(e) (n.) *end, conclusion; (v.) die*
endentyd *studded, adorned*
erber *arbor*
ere *before*
erell, eryll(s) *earl(s)*
erlis, erllys *see erell*
erly *early*
ermet *hermit*
everychone *everyone, each one, all of them*
evill, evyll *evil*
evyn *directly*
ey *eye*
ellythe *frightens*
eyther *each; either*

facon *falcon*
fall *drop, topple*
fals(e) *untrue, treacherous*
falsely *treacherously*
falshode, falshede *treachery, dishonesty*
far(e) *journey; feast; occurrence; owt ~ die*
fare *see fere*
farly *see ferly*
fast (adj.) *strong; (adv.) powerfully; quickly; securely*
fayland *failing*

fayn(e) glad, favorable toward
fede enemy
fee goods, wealth
feld (v.) felt
feld, fyld (n.) field; battlefield
fell (v. p.) dropped; came about; declared; yielded; ~ *in swooning faint*
fend(s), fynd(s) fiend(s/s), devil(s/s)
fere(e) (n.) companion, attendant; wife; *in ~ in company*
fere (v.) fear
ferly (n.) wonder, marvel; (adj.) terrifying; (adv.) extremely
fesomnyd gathered
fettouris setters
fice, fygh, fy son of
flood sea
fode young man, knight; young woman
fode spiritual food, nourishment
fole steed, warhorse
fome foam
force band of armed men
for(e) (conj.) because; so that; in order to; (prep.) before; against
forth(e) forward, onward
for-thinkith regret
forward (n.) agreement
forward (prep.) away from
fot(t)e foot (anatomy); measurement of distance; base
fraye noise
fre(e) generous; noble
freke man, warrior
frese fresh, refreshed
fretthe woods
ful(l)e entirely, completely; extremely
fyld field
fyne pay a fine on land tenure
fynd(e) find; see also **fend**
fytte hooves

gadlyng low-born fellow, scoundrel
gan did (p., auxiliary)
gale galley
gard caused [him to]
gate, gatt(y)s way, path; gate(s)

gay bright; merry
gef(f), geve give; **gaf(f)(e), gave** gave
gen respectable, suitable
gent(e) noble
gentill, gentyll noble, genteel
gentilmen (n. pl.) men of noble birth, highborn men
gentry nobility
gere gear, equipment
gestenyng, gestonye feast, hospitality, entertainment, merry-making
get, gat(t)(e) take, took; obtain(ed); capture(d)
glade merry-making
glase glass
glemyrryng glimmering
good (adj.) valuable; excellent; noble; (n.) wealth, treasure
grace favor
grame hurt, harm
gramercy many thanks
gre(e) prize
greffon, gryffon griffin
grennyng baring teeth
grett cried out
growonde growing
gryme severe
grype, gripe see **greffon**
gryslly terrifying

habite clothing
hame see **home**
handsom easy to handle
happe luck, fortune
harburrow, harbo(u)rrow shelter
harnes armor
harood (n.) herald
harood (v.) ~ **hell** harrowed hell
hart heart
havyn harbor
hed(e), hedys (n.) head(s); ~ *vale of great value*
hede (v.) behead; **take ~ heed**, observe
heder hither, this way
hey, heygh high, tall
heyght see **hyght**
heyre heir

held, heldythe see **hold** (v.)
hend courteous, gracious; handsome, beautiful
hense from this place
hent(e) grasped, clutched, caught
herbis edible plants, vegetables
her(e), hard (v.) hear, heard
her(e) (prep.) here, in this place
herekyn listen, pay attention
hert see **hart**
hether see **heder**
heve, hevy heavy
hied go quickly
hold (n.) castle; fortified building or town; prison; kingdom, domain; **help** and ~ support, assistance
hold, held (v.) hold captive; keep, maintain, uphold; hold court; see, behold; grasp, seize; believe; **holdyn** (ppl.) to be held
holis holes
holts woods
home home country, hometown
honowre honor, fame; worship
hore dark, grey; hoary
housell, howsell confession
howge huge
howte see **owt(e)**
hy(e), hyghe principal, main, tall; he
hyght, hight, hyte (ppl.) was called, named; (v.) to promise

i- (prefix)
i-bye pay the price
i-dight adorned
ile, yle isle, island
i-quytt repaid
iryn, irun, yron iron
i-tane rescued
i-wys(e) indeed

jent(e) see **gent(e)**
gentill, je(e)ntyll see **gentill**
jentylman, jentyll man (n. sg.) see **gentilmen**
jorney, jurn(a/e)y battle, fight; travel, journey; undertaking, enterprise

joy(e) joy, bliss
just(e), justid (v.) joust, jostled; **justyng(e)** (ger.) jousting event
juster, justis (n.) combatant(s) in jousts

kelyd cooled; quenched; refreshed; assuaged
kene brave, mighty; deadly
kerpyng talking, storytelling
knave low-born person; villain; boy, young man; attendant, squire
knelid, knelyd kneeled
knyffe knife
kyllyd see **kelyd**
kynd nature, type, sort
Kyrstendome Christianity
kys(se) kiss

lad see **led(e)**
lappyd wrapped around
last(e) (n.) end; most recent
last(e), lest (v.) endure
lay (n.) field; song; (v.) see **lay(e)**
lay(e), laid (v. tr.) leaned (over); placed; struck; (intr.) see **ly(e)**
layn is not to ~ cannot be denied
lechis physicians
led(e), lad (v.) lead, led
lede (n.) people, subjects; nation
leman lover, sweetheart
lenage pedigree, lineage
lend(e) (v.) remain, live; arrive
lenger longer
lent (n.) **withoute** ~ without delay
lent(e) (ppl.) given; (v.) see **lend(e)**
ler(n)e learn; teach
lest unless; (v.) see **last(e)**
lett linger, delay; let up, back off
lettyng hesitation
levand living
leve (v.) leave; **take** ~ take one's departure, depart from; believe; **yf I** ~ if I may be allowed to
leve (adj.) dear
lever, levyr rather
levys leaves

ley, le(y)th *strike, attack; impose; ~ a wede* *make (someone) pay a forfeit; ~ about* *attack on all sides; ~ sege* *lay siege*
libard, liberd *leopard*
life, lyve *life; of/on ~ alive*
light *(adj.) light*
light, lyghttythe *(v.) alight, dismount; come, arrive; lower, descend*
lith *joints*
logyng *lodging, quarters*
loke *make sure; find out*
lokynge *looking, gazing, staring; side ~ glance*
long(e) *long, tall; large; long time*
lo(o) *(v. imper.) look, behold*
lothely *loathly*
low *(adj.) low; (n.) mound*
ly(e), lay(e), leyth *(v. intr.) lie down; rest; wait; reside, remain; lie buried, interred*
lylye *lily*
lym *limbs*
lyonesse *lioness*
lyst, lythe *hear, listen; lysten, lystoneth* *(imper.) listen, pay attention; he/hym ~* *(impers.) like, desire, wish*
maister, mayster *warrior; master*
maistis *masts*
mall *mace*
man(n)er *kinds; custom; manor or manorial estate*
mare *see more*
Mare *(n.) the Virgin Mary*
mas(s)e *mass*
mate *exhausted*
mayney *celebration*
maystrs *great or noble deeds*
maystry *mastery, victory*
med *meadow*
mede *reward*
mekyll *see mykyll*
menythe *mourn*
met *measured*

met(e) *(n.) food, meal; myd ~ lunch; (v.) meet*
meyne, mayn *group of attendants, followers; band of troops*
moder *mother*
mold *realm, lands; heraldic field*
mone *(n.) complaint; (aux. v.) must*
mo(o) *see mor(e)*
mor(e), mare *(n.) additional quantity; (adj.) more; (adv.) to a greater degree*
morn, mornyng *morning*
mornyd *mourned*
morrow *morning; in/on the ~ the next morning*
mot *must, may*
mount, mounte(y)n(e), mownt(e/a)yn(e) *mountain, hill*
mut *see mot*
myght(e) *(v.) might, may; (n.) strength*
mykyll *great; most; strong; lytell and ~ lowborn and highborn (i.e., everyone)*
myld *gracious, merciful*
myl(l)e *mile*
myn *mine*
mynstralsye *merry-making, minstrels' music-making*
mynt *aimed*
myster *need*
myrre *merry, merrily*
namyd *named*
nay *no*
ne *nor, not*
ned(e) *(n.) need, necessity; (v.) to be needed, necessary*
nek *neck*
ner(e) *near, nearly; ~hand* *close to*
nether *neither*
nobill, nobyll *noble*
nombre *number*
non(e) *(pron.) no one; (adv.) none, not*
none *noon*
nonys for the ~ *indeed*
noryse *nurse*
nott(i)s *(musical) notes*
nought, nowght *not; nothing*
nowyd *annoyed, spurred*

ny <i>nearly, nigh</i>	pray(e) (v.) <i>pray; beseech, ask a favor</i>
nyee, ny(h)ed <i>approach; (v. p.) neared; injured</i>	prekand <i>pricking, galloping</i>
nyne <i>nine</i>	prese (n.) <i>crowd, group</i>
of(f) <i>about; made from</i>	preson(e) <i>prison</i>
oke <i>oak tree</i>	preste (v.) <i>be crushed in battle, be determined</i>
olywys <i>olive trees</i>	presyos <i>precious</i>
onely <i>alone; only</i>	preve <i>hidden, secret (privy)</i>
onharnes <i>unharness, remove armor</i>	proferd <i>offered</i>
on(n)ys <i>once</i>	prysts <i>priests</i>
ontrew(e) <i>untrue, dishonest</i>	purvey, purveyd <i>prepare(d)</i>
ordenyth, orde(y)nyd <i>order(ed)</i>	pyll <i>tower, castle, fortress</i>
order, ordor, ordre, ordurrs	
<i>membership in a chivalric fraternity;</i>	
<i>rites of initiation into said fraternity</i>	
or(e) <i>before; (conj.) or</i>	quene <i>queen</i>
ore <i>mercy</i>	quod <i>said</i>
othes <i>oaths</i>	quyk <i>alive</i>
overtoke <i>met in combat</i>	quytle <i>requite, repay</i>
ovyr-ryde <i>running down, running over</i>	
owre <i>our</i>	rade see rod(e)
owt(e) <i>out</i>	ragyd <i>jagged</i>
parmafay <i>by my faith</i>	rave <i>tore</i>
partid, partyd <i>departed, separated;</i>	rawght <i>struck</i>
<i>divided up, distributed</i>	rayne <i>rain</i>
pas(s)e <i>pass, go; passid, paste</i> <i>passed, went</i>	receyve, recevid <i>accept(ed); welcome(d)</i>
payn <i>effort</i>	red(d/e) (adj.) <i>red</i>
peas <i>peace</i>	red(e), redd (v.) <i>advise, counsel; read</i>
perayll <i>peril, danger</i>	redith <i>built</i>
per(r)e <i>peer</i>	redy <i>ready, prepared; prompt</i>
pertely <i>briskly</i>	redyly <i>immediately</i>
pité <i>pity</i>	reft <i>taken</i>
plase <i>place</i>	rejoyse <i>have, possess; rule</i>
play <i>compete, fight</i>	rerid ~ <i>dede</i> <i>fought</i>
playn <i>flat</i>	resyn <i>arise</i>
pleyand <i>playing</i>	refull <i>sorrowful</i>
plight <i>pledge</i>	revelid <i>reveled, rejoiced</i>
pluckys <i>sudden sharp pulls</i>	revid <i>carried off, stolen</i>
pomell <i>hilt</i>	rewe <i>pity</i>
Portingale, Portyng(g)al(l)(e) <i>Portugal</i>	reynyd <i>reined, tied up</i>
poynt(es) <i>fight; ~ of armes</i> <i>feat of</i>	reysed <i>raised</i>
<i>arms; in ~ in physical features; in</i>	reysing <i>rushing</i>
<i>readiness; of one ~ on one subject</i>	rially <i>royally</i>
pray (n.) <i>prey</i>	rialty <i>royalty</i>
	ride, ryd(e), r(i/y)d(u/y)th <i>ride, rides</i>
	right, ryght (n.) <i>entitlement; that which</i>
	<i>is proper; right-hand side; law; (adj.)</i>
	<i>true; (adv.) directly; completely; very; just as</i>

ring, ryng, ryng(i)s (n.) <i>ring (jewelry); ringed arena for jousting; (v.) see ryng</i>	sease <i>endow</i>
ryng	sech(e) <i>seek</i>
roall <i>royal, fit for royalty</i>	se(e) (v.) <i>see, look at; sawe, sewe saw</i>
roche <i>rock</i>	see (n.) <i>sea</i>
rod(e) <i>rode</i>	sege <i>siege</i>
Rod(d)e, Rood(e) <i>the Cross</i>	sekyr, sekyrly <i>true; (adv.) truly</i>
romans <i>romance</i>	sekyrnes <i>securities, assurance of pledge</i>
rome <i>road</i>	semely <i>seemly, becoming; pleasing, beautiful</i>
rore <i>roar</i>	semled, semlyd see assemled
row(e) (v.) <i>row</i>	sene, seyn, syn <i>seen</i>
rowe (n.) <i>line; on a ~ in a line</i>	sertes, sertts <i>certainly, indeed</i>
rowght <i>strike, blow</i>	serteyn(e), sertaynly see certayn
rude <i>rough, base, unrefined</i>	servyse <i>service</i>
ruth(e) <i>pity, sorrow; gret ~ it was to see/to tell it was a very tragic [event] to witness or recount</i>	seson <i>occasion</i>
ryd (n.) <i>plan</i>	seté see cité
ryde <i>ride</i>	seth, sethyn <i>then; since</i>
ryng (v.) <i>ring, resound; (n.) see ring</i>	sevynyght <i>a week</i>
rysythe <i>arise</i>	seylyd <i>sailed</i>
sad <i>grave, serious</i>	shaftys <i>lances</i>
sadly <i>gravely</i>	shend <i>kill, destroy</i>
sale <i>hall</i>	shent see schenet
sarten see certayn	shevers see schevyr
Sarzins <i>Saracens, Muslims</i>	shild, sheld (n.) <i>shield; (v.) protect</i>
save (v.) <i>save, protect; (prep.) excluding, excepting; (adj.) safe</i>	shone <i>shoes</i>
sayle, sayll <i>sail</i>	shot <i>moved quickly</i>
sayment <i>exploit(s), challenge</i>	shryfte <i>sacrament of confession</i>
scape <i>escape</i>	shryve <i>confess</i>
schame, shame <i>shame</i>	sith(e), sythe see seth
schedyng <i>parting</i>	slate <i>flat ground</i>
scheff see cheff	slo <i>sloe berries (something of little value)</i>
scheld, schyld see shild	slone, slough, slow <i>slew, killed</i>
schene <i>precious</i>	smate see smot(e)
schent, shent <i>killed, destroyed</i>	smert, smertely <i>quick, quickly</i>
schere <i>cut</i>	smot(e) <i>smashed, struck; ~ fire breathed fire; ~ a-down</i> <i>struck down, dashed, laid low</i>
schevyr, shevyr <i>splinters</i>	smyte, smyght <i>attack, strike; cut</i>
schone <i>shone</i>	socoure <i>aid, hospitality</i>
schope <i>created</i>	sokor see socoure
schowt <i>shout, roar</i>	solas <i>solace, comfort</i>
schowyr <i>shower</i>	solasyd <i>comforted, consoled</i>
schulder <i>shoulder</i>	sole <i>soul</i>
schuot see schowt	solemnité, solemnité <i>ceremony, ceremonial observance</i>
schynyg, s(c)hynand <i>shining</i>	sond <i>sand; message</i>
	sone (adv.) <i>soon, quickly</i>

son(n)(e) *son; sun*
sore, sare (adj.) *painful, sorrowful;*
 (adv.) *painfully, sorrowfully,*
 grievously; ferociously, fiercely
sotell *subtle, cunning*
soth(e), sothely *truth; (adv.) truly*
soudan *sultan; Muslim leader*
sownyd, sownyng *swooned; swooning*
spare, sparrythe *keep in reserve, hold*
 back;
sparid *locked, barred*
sped(e) (n.) *speed; support; (v. inf.)*
 succeed; (v. p.) helped; succeeded; (v.
 subj.) God me ~ God help me
spere *spear; blow*
sperryd see **sparid**
sperrys *trees*
spousage *marriage*
spred *scattered*
sprent *ran, rushed*
spryt *staff, pole*
spycery *spiced food or drink; dessert*
spyll *destroy, lay waste*
squier(e), squyer(e) *squire, attendant*
 in the service of a knight
stabull, stabyll *stable*
stad see **sted(e)**
stalworth *strong, powerfully*
staryd *stared*
stavis, stavys *clubs, staffs*
sted(e), stedd *place; steed, warhorse*
steryng *moving*
still, styl (adj.) *still, calm; (n.) steel*
stod(e), stood, stodd *stood, remained*
stomlyng *stumbling*
stond *stand, remain; withstand*
storrope *stirrup*
stound(e), stownd *time, moment*
stoure *battle*
stynt *stop, cease*
sufferid *suffered, endured*
swane *swan*
sward, swerd *sword*
swathing *swaddling*
swayne *attendant*
swefte *swiftly*
swith *quickly*

sye see **se(e)**
sylver, sylvyr *silver*
symly see **semely**
syn(e) *since*
synne *sin*
sytté see **cité**

ta see **take**
take *take, capture; receive*
takyll *tackle, rigging (on a ship)*
tale, tall *tale*
tane see **take**
tase *takes, assumes*
tayl(l)e *tail*
teme *family*
tene *anger*
thay *they*
thef(e) *thief, villain*
thens *thence, from there*
ther(e)of, ther-of *therefore; so that;*
 concerning; of that
tho(o) *then; (pron.) those*
thore *there*
thorne *thicket of thorn trees*
thorow, thurrow, thorough *by,*
 through
thow(e) (pron.) *thou, you; (conj.)*
 though
thries *thrice, three times*
throng *threw; (n.) crowd*
thryve *thrive, prosper*
till, tyll (prep.) *to; (adv.) to; (conj.) until*
to (prep.) *to, toward; (num.) see twa*
to-brast *burst in pieces*
toke *took*
token, tokyn, tokenyng *sign, symbol*
tombelid *tumbled*
tong(e) *tongue*
to-sheverd *completely splintered*
toure, towre *tower*
trayll *drag*
trayn(e) *treachery; hold in ~ hold in a*
 trap
tre(e) *tree; wood; the Cross*
trew(e) *honest*
trouth(e), trowthe *truth, honesty; word,*
 pledge

- trow** believe
- trusse** pack up, get ready; **trussyd** tied, readied
- turneyd** competed
- twa, tway, twayne** two, both
- twelfmonyth** a year
- tyd(e)** time; tide, rise and fall of the sea
- tyding(i)s** tidings, news
- tyght** (adj.) dense, thick; (adv.) see **tyte**
- tymber, tymbyr** lance
- tynding** a beating
- tyte** quickly
- unbrydelid** unbridled
- uncouth** foreign; uncultured, uncivilized, pagan
- under** noon
- undertane** guarantee
- uphold** hold up, surrender
- up(p)(e)** up
- uttyrly** frankly
- valew(e)** worth
- velony** villainy, dishonor
- venturis** adventures
- verament** truly
- vetelid** provisioned
- vouch(e) ~ save** give responsibility for
- voys** voice
- walloyng** tumbling from side to side
- walls ~ bone** whale's bone
- wan(n)e** (adj.) dark; (v.) see **wyn(e)**
- ward(e)** (n.) child under guardianship; (v.) to act as guardian
- ware, warr** aware; (v. p.) wore
- waried** cursed
- warne** assure; refuse to give
- warrant, waraunt** protector
- wawes** waves
- wax** grow, become; **wexid** grew, became
- wayes** rooms
- wayne** heavy wagon
- waytes** musicians
- wed(e)** (n.) clothing, armor; pledge; (v.) to wed, marry
- weders** weather
- wekid, wekyd** wicked; pagan, heathen
- welaway** alas (exclamation of grief)
- weld** wield
- welfare** do well, thrive
- well** (n.) spring, well; (adv./adj.) well
- wend** go, travel, depart
- wene** understand, believe, suppose; wend supposed
- wepe** weep; **weppand** weeping; **wep(p)te** wept
- werry** weary
- wesh, washid** washed
- wexid** see **wax**
- whalle, wall** wall
- whare** where
- whelpis** young dogs
- whens** whence, from what place
- whethyr** whither, to which place
- whyll, whyle** while; (n.) time
- whome** see **home**
- whoso** whosoever
- whyt** white
- wight, wyt(e), whyte** (n.) person, creature; (adj.) strong, powerful; monstrous; (adv.) while, immediately
- wilsom, wyldsom(e)** wild, desolate
- wise** way, manner
- wist(e), wy(s)t, wote** knew
- wit, wot(e), wott** know
- wo(o)** (n.) woe; (adj.) woeful
- wod(e), wood** (adj.) mad, insane; (n.) woods, forest
- woll, wole** will
- won** one
- wonande** living
- won(e)** (p. ppl.) see **wyn(e)**
- wonde** see **wend**
- wonne** won; released; wont to do; **no** better ~ option; **mowntayn** ~ aerie
- wonnythe** lives
- wors(e)** worse
- worshipp** honor
- worth(e)** (n.) worth, value; (v.) possess; (v. p.) ~ **on** mounted; **woo ~ it/you** may evil befall it/you
- wreke** avenge
- wret** written, inscribed

wroght, wro(u/w)ght, wrow(y)t *built, made; crafted, created; caused; behaved*
wroth *grow angry, become wrathful*
wyde *wide; big*
wyn, wyne *wine*
wynd(e) *(n.) wind; (v.) see wend*
wyn(e), wynne(th) *win(s); wan(n)(e)*
 won; captured, conquered
wynggs *wings*
wykkyd *see wekid*
wyld *(adj.) wild; (v.) see weld*

wyse *wise, having good judgement*
wysly *indeed, truly*
wyttht *see wight*

yate *see gate*
yeff, yeve *see geff*
yf *if*
yff *see geff*
ylke *same*
yll *bad, evil*
ys *is; (pron.) his*