Pearl

[final draft for scholarly review]
edited by Murray McGillivray
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General Editor: Murray McGillivray

The Cotton Nero A.x. Project
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Introduction

[Note that a full introduction will be published when the critical editions of the four poems are in place, and that the current introductory materials are intended primarily to explain features of our editorial practice in Pearl, including in the bottom-of-the-page textual variorum.]

Editorial History and the Current Edition

This critical edition of Pearl is a product of the larger Cotton Nero A.x Project (http://gawain-ms.ca/), an international collaboration between scholars, research associates at the University of Calgary, and the British Library. The aims of the larger project are to digitize this unique manuscript; to produce new diplomatic transcriptions of Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; and to publish new critical editions of each of the four poems. MS Cotton Nero A.x. (art. 3), preserved in the British Library, is a fourteenth-century Middle English manuscript that contains the only known extant copies of the anonymous alliterative poems Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Of the four poems in the manuscript, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and Pearl have received the most critical attention in the form of academic articles and books as well as scholarly editions.

The editio princeps of Pearl by Richard Morris was published by the Early English Text Society (EETS) in 1864. Transcribed and edited from the manuscript, Morris's edition "endeavour[s] to do justice to his author by giving the text, with some few exceptions, as it stands in the manuscript" (xx): in other words, the edition results from an effort primarily
directed at transcription. In his preface, Morris hints at his difficulties in deciphering the manuscript (xx), later noting instances where the manuscript is unclear and offering corrected readings in the marginalia accompanying the poem. Morris produces a punctuated transcription/edition that attempts to record meticulously the readings of the manuscript. His transcription itself is, however, sometimes incorrect, prompting later editors to offer “newly transcribed” versions of *Pearl*.

These revised transcriptions were often produced using the Gollancz facsimile, though Osgood (1906) worked from photographs and Hillman (1961) from a "photostat of the manuscript" (deFord 1967, vi), which was later also used by deFord and her students. The facsimile, published in 1923 by the Early English Text Society and produced under the direction of Gollancz (Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, and Sir Gawain *Reproduced in Facsimile*, with introduction by I. Gollancz, Early English Text Society, OS 162 [London: Oxford UP, 1923]), is a complete reproduction of the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript in grey-scale. It was originally published, for reasons hard to guess, as a boxed sheaf of disbound gatherings that look like they ought to represent the gatherings of the manuscript (they do not). The reproduction is not at a very high resolution and some murkiness results from the reduction of real-life colour to reproduction grey-scale; however, (probably not primarily because of fading of the original but because of the responsiveness of silver-salt photographic media to particular wavelengths and the use of early techniques for increasing contrast by manipulating exposure and aperture) the facsimile is now clearer to read in a few places than the manuscript itself (and we have occasionally relied on it). Some modern editors relied entirely on the Gollancz facsimile in place of the original, while some chose to
consult the manuscript but only in places of doubt, as is the case with the omnibus editions of the *Pearl*-poems prepared by Charles Moorman (1977), by William Vantuono (1984), and by Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (1978+). Textual cruces necessitating the consultation of the original manuscript are not consistently marked, if at all, in these editions. Working with a facsimile, whatever advantages it has in constraining researcher time and the expense of travel, presents obvious limitations.

The current critical edition is based on an extensive and prolonged direct study of the original manuscript (and of the high-resolution photographs of it provided to the Cotton Nero A.x. Project in 2011, which have resolved some conundrums). We are grateful to the British Library for allowing numerous visits with the manuscript to various members of our team. Our edition is based on our detailed diplomatic transcription, which is presented in tandem with it. The transcription was prepared with a high level of accuracy directly from the manuscript (though we admit to having ourselves based our rough original transcription on the Gollancz reproduction) and was checked recently against the new, high-resolution digital photographs, which sometimes provided more detail than was visible to us in the manuscript itself. (In addition, the colour photographs are subject to image manipulation by which we have frequently attempted to resolve difficult readings, sometimes successfully.) The photographs have also been published to the Web site (gawain.ucalgary.ca) alongside our transcription (www.gawain-MS.ca) so that others can review our evidence and, we hope, improve on our understandings.

We have been liberated by our publication of such a detailed transcription of the manuscript as an ancillary text to our edition (a publication that we hope will be of use to
other scholars on its own), and by the publication of the photos themselves, from one of
the forces that has often influenced previous editors to "conservatism," that is, to retaining
manuscript readings where at all possible, since earlier editions have taken on the dual role
of explaining and emending on the one hand, and of simply presenting, on the other, the
text as contained in the manuscript. In emending the manuscript readings (or in retaining
them where others have emended) we have been guided primarily by considerations of
sense and of linguistic likelihood, and more rarely by metrical concerns—we do not
consider the metre of Pearl to be a decided matter, though some lines seem more obviously
deficient. In terms of linguistic probability, we have profited from the completion of the
Middle English Dictionary, but we have been aware that the decisions of previous editors
about the vocabulary of the poems of this manuscript have often been adopted holus bolus
by the editors of the MED and we have exercised caution accordingly. This edition follows
the manuscript spelling and does not distinguish the characters 'ȝ' ("yogh") and 'z', which
we believe after statistical research to have constituted a single letter for both poet and
scribe. Abbreviations used in the manuscript have been silently expanded and obvious
scribal errors have been corrected.

Previous editions of Pearl displayed varying degrees of fidelity to the manuscript.
Except for some spelling modernizations, Israel Gollancz in his 1891 edition was restrained
in emending. In his revised 1921 edition, he proposed numerous emendations aimed at
restoring the metrical structure of the poem as he saw it. Conversely, the 1953 edition of
Pearl by E.V. Gordon and Ida L. Gordon (the latter not credited on title page, but see
preface) reproduced the spelling of the manuscript (except in cases of scribal error) and
emended the text in order to restore rhyme, rather than metrical regularity. Subsequent editions have most often tended to minimize editorial intervention and avoid correcting the manuscript. Charles Moorman, for example, makes no changes for “purely metrical reasons” and refuses “to correct the alliterative pattern or to fill out a short line which otherwise makes good sense” (5). Rather, he insists an “editor should wherever possible accept the MS reading and attempt to justify it” (5). Andrew and Waldron, too, incline towards the manuscript reading where sense can be made of it, though there are instances where they emend for sense, rhyme or metre. William Vantuono offers the fewest emendations of all, preferring to retain the manuscript reading “whenever possible” (Pearl Poems liv-lv), which is meant more literally than Moorman’s similar expression and motivates Vantuono’s defence of even improbable readings rejected by all other editors.

Because the poems of this manuscript, especially Pearl and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, have been frequently edited for use in the university or school classroom, there are a number of editions that modernize the texts to some degree, but that are nevertheless independent scholarly editions that offer textual or interpretive insight. In the case of Pearl, the editions of Hillman (1961), Cawley and Anderson (1962), deFord (1967), and Stanbury (2001) modernize spelling by making programmatic substitutions for the Middle English letters thorn and yogh (and sometimes other changes), and offer limited textual argumentation, but are worth consulting for their textual and other interpretations.

The most recent edition of Pearl, by Ad Putter and Myra Stokes (2014), is perhaps the most radical in its treatment of the manuscript. Their edition has two main aims: to modernize and regularize the Middle English text for the ease of the modern, non-specialist
reader, and to restore the metrical regularity of the poem, on the basis that the scribe of the Cotton Nero A.x poems did not well understand the metre of the poems being copied. To this end, Putter and Stokes very frequently add or remove final –e, which they seem to assume to have been pronounced by the poet, for what appear to be metrical purposes, or introduce other syllabic changes; these emendations for metrical reasons are often difficult to differentiate from the numerous divergences from the manuscript text that result from their modernizations and regularizations of spelling.

Textual variorum

Our edition is accompanied by a series of notes at the bottom of each page of the edited text giving a "textual variorum," that is, listing the readings of previous editions where they differ from ours or from the manuscript text as we have transcribed it. Each note of this series consists of a line number and word or words of our edited text, followed by the manuscript reading in our close transcription, then the readings of other editions. When the reading in our edited text follows the manuscript, only the readings in editions that diverge from the manuscript reading, whether through emendation or erroneous transcription, are noted. When our reading diverges from the manuscript reading, all previous readings are noted, both those that accept the manuscript and those that also emend. Three typical entries and an explanation follow:

11 fordolked] fo₂ dolked MS; for-do[k]ked GzP, GzP²
In line 11, our reading, "fordolked," follows the manuscript, which all editors have done (perhaps with minor variations such as hyphenation, which we do not record unless significant) save Gollancz, who has emended to "for-dokked" in both his 1891 and his 1921 editions of the poem. Square brackets indicate the addition or substitution of a letter in a particular edition and do not imply that this was signalled with square brackets in the editor's text; a dagger is used to signify the omission of a letter or word. In line 35, we emend the manuscript reading, cite the same emendation in a number of editions, and show the reading that editors who do not emend have preferred. In line 36, only Gollancz in his first edition and Chase (and his Bowdoin College students) emend, in both cases by omitting two letters, signalled with daggers (the daggers do not necessarily appear in their texts).

The degree to which our notes record the variants from a particular edition reflects our understanding of that edition's intentions. For example, we do not record as noteworthy variations (though we do when citing a word for another reason) the substitution of 'gh' for 'ȝ' as a textual variant in editions that modernize the letter throughout, nor the substitution of 'z' for 'ȝ' if that is the editor's policy when the letter signifies the sibilant. Word division is sometimes ambiguous in the manuscript and, generally speaking, more relaxed in Middle English texts; differences regarding word
division have been indicated in the notes only when the choice of where to divide a word significantly affects meaning.

The recent omnibus Penguin edition of Ad Putter and Myra Stokes has posed particular problems for our textual variorum for two reasons. First, it carries out a program of modernization of the text that does not restrict itself to modernizing the form of word according to a simple formula (such as replacing the letter thorn with ‘th’), but instead freely changes word forms either by applying throughout the texts of the four poems the one form of any particular word actually occurring in the manuscript that is most modern, or by creating a form that does not occur in the manuscript but that the editors have judged an apt replacement for the forms that do occur. (This is roughly the procedure of R.T. Jones and then J.A. Burrow in their editions of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* but with some important differences.) Second, Putter and Stokes have liberally emended the text for metrical reasons. These two procedures of modernization and metrical regularization of the text sometimes conflict or are difficult to disentangle. It would be counterproductive to burden our textual notes with references to each of the several thousands of spelling changes that are thus introduced into the Putter/Stokes text, and we restrict ourselves to recording here “significant variants,” that is, additions to or deletions of the words in the manuscript, and variants that have the effect of changing a word to a different word or a differently pronounced word (except additions or subtractions of final –e, which we regard as of no consequence for pronunciation—in contrast, Gollancz’s emendations of this kind are recorded) or that introduce changes larger than a single word (such as transpositions of words and lines).
Editions cited

The following editions are those cited in the textual variorum and in the textual and explanatory notes that follow the edited text. In the textual variorum, they are identified with sigla, which here begin each entry; in the discursive notes, with editor's name and date of edition.


Pearl

edited by Murray McGillivray

and Jenna Stook
[I]
Perle, plesaunte to prynces paye,
to clanele clos in golde so clere!—
oute of oryent, I hardely saye,
ne proued I neuer her precios pere.

So rounde, so reken in vche araye,
so smal, so smoþe her syde3 were,
queresoeuer I jugged gemme3 gaye
I sette hyr sengeley in singlure.
Allas! I leste hyr in on erbere,

Þur3 gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.
I dewyne, fordolked of luf-daungere
of þat pryuy perle withouten spot.

Sy þen in þat spote hit fro me sprange,
ofte haf I wayted, wyschande þat wele
þat wont wat3 whyle deuoyde my wrange
and heuen my happe and al my hele.
þat dot3 bot þrych my hert þrange,
my breste in bale bot bolne and bele.
3et þo3t me neuer so swete a sange
as styllle stounde let to me stele;
forsøþe þer fleten to me fele
to þenke hir color so clad in clot.
O moul, þou marre3 a myry iuele,
My priuy perle withouten spotte.
Þat spot of spyse3 mot nede3 sprede
þer such ryche3 to rot is runnen.
Blome3 blayke and blwe and rede
þer schyne3 ful schyr agayn þe sunne.
Flor and fryte may now be fede
þer hit doun drof in molde3 dunne,
for vch gresse mot grow of grayne3 dede—
no whete were elle3 to wonne3 wonne.
Of goud vche goude is ay bygonne:
so semly a sede mo3t fayly not,
þat sprygande spyce3 vp ne sponne
of þat precios perle wythouten spotte.

To þat spot þat I in speche expoun,
I entred in þat erber grene
in augoste in a hy3 seysoun,
quen corne is coruen wyth croke3 kene.
On huyle þer perle hit trended doun
schadowed þis wort3 ful schyre and schene—
gilofre, gyngure, and gromylyoun,
and pyonys powdered ay bytwene.
3if hit wat3 semly on to sene,
a fayr reflayr ȝet fro hit flot.
Þer wonys þat worþily, I wot and wene,
my precious perle wythouten spotte.

mot] mot MS (blotted but legible with image manipulation); my3t Mo; might GzP
runnen] rűnen MS; runnen Vn, VnP; runnea† all other eds.
blwe] blwe MS; bl[ue] GzP
schyne] schyne3 MS; schyne[s] Gzp, Bo, CA; schyne† St
agayn] agayn MS; agayns PS
now] not MS, all eds.
vche] vché MS; uch Bo
goude] goude MS; goud Bo
semly] semly MS; semely PS
fayly] fayly MS; fay[e] Bo, PS
spryngande] spryngande MS; spr[y]n]gande Gzp, Os, Gzp3, Bo, Gr, CA, Mm, St, AW, PS;
spryg ande Hi, deF, Vn, VnP
spotte] ñotte MS; spot†† Gzp, Bo
fayr reflayr] fayr reflayr MS; fayre flayr Gzp, AW
worþily] worþily MS; worthy PS
Before þat spot my honde I spennd

for careful colde þat to me caȝt:

dueely dele in my hert denned

þat resoun sett my seluen saȝt.

I playned my perle þat watȝenned

wyth fyrte skylle þat faste faȝt.

þat kynde of Kryst me comfort kenned,

my wrecched wylle in wo ay wraste.

I felle vpon þat floury flasȝt,
suche odour to my herneȝschot—

I slode vpon a slepyng-slaȝte

on þat precios perle withouten spot.

[II]

Fro spot my spyryt þer sprang in space—

my body on balke þer bod in sweuen.

My goste is gon in godeȝ grace

in auenture þer meruayleȝ meuen.

I ne wyste in þis worlde querȝat hit wace;

bot I knew me keste þer klyfeȝ cleuen.

Towarde a foreste I bere þe face,

where rych rokkeȝ wer to dyscreuen.

þe lyȝt of hem myȝt no mon leuen,

þe glemande glory þat of hem glent,

for wern neuer webbesȝat wyȝteȝ weuen

of half so dere adubemente.

spennd] þpȳnd MS; spenn[e]d Mo, Os, GzP²; Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, St, PS; spenud Vn, VnP; spenned AW
careful] care ful all eds.
cȝaȝt] cȝaȝt MS; caȝt[e] Mo
dueely] dueely or denely MS; denely Mo, GzP; de[r]uely Os dele] dele MS; doel PS
herti herti MS; herti[e] GzP, GzP², Bo
sȝaȝt] fȝaȝt MS; saȝt[e] Mo
pennd] þpȳned MS; spenned Mo, GzP, Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, Vn, VnP; þpȳned GzP², Bo, St, AW, PS
fyrte] fyrte or fyerce MS; fyerce Mo, GzP, Os, Bo, Hi, deF, Vn, VnP; fyrce GzP², Gr, CA, Mm, St, AW, PS
faȝt] faȝt MS; faȝt[e] Mo
flaȝt] flaȝt MS; flaȝt[e] Mo
preciosis pcos MS; preciios all eds.
bot] bot MS; b[u]t GzP
rych rokkeȝ rych rokkeȝ MS; rych[e] rokkeȝ GzP², Bo, St; rokkes rich PS
adubemente] adubemente MS; adubmente Mo, Hi, deF, Vn, VnP; adub[be]mente GzP, Bo, CA, PS;
adub[be]mente Os, GzP², Gr, Mm, St, AW
Dubbed wern alle þo downe3 syde3 with crystal klyffe3 so cler of kynde.

Holtewode3 bryʒt aboute hem byde3 of bolle3 as blwe as ble of ynde. As bornyst syluer þe lef onslyde3, þat þike con trylle on vch a tynde. Quen glem of glode3 agayn3 hem glyde3, wyth schymeryng schene ful schrylle þay schynde. þe grauayl þat on grounde con grynde wern precious perle3 of oryente, þe sunnebeme3 bot blo and blynde In respecte of þat adubbement.

The adubbemente of þo downe3 dere garten my goste al greffe forʒete; so frech flaure3 of frye3 were as fode hit con me fayre refete. Fowl3 þer flowen in fryth in fere of flaumbande hwe3, boþe smale and grete, bot sytole stryng and gyternere her reken myþe moʒt not retrete, for quen þose brydde3 her wynge3 bete þay songen wyth a swete aſent.

So gracios gle couþe no mon gete as here and se her adubbement.
So al wat3 dubbet on dere asyse
þat fryth þer fortwe forth me fere3,
þe derþe þer of for to deyse
100 nis no wyþ worþ þat tonge bere3.
I welke ay forth in wely wyse,
no bonk so byg þat did me dere3;
þe fyrre in þe fryth þe feier con ryse
þe playn, þe plontte3, þe spye, þe pere3,
and rawe3 and rande3 and rych reuere3–
as fyldor fyn her bonkes bren.
I wan to a water by schore þat schere3:
Lorde, dere wat3 hit adubbement!

The dubbemente of þo derworth depe
110 Wern bonke3 bene of beryl brazt.
Swangeande swete þe water con swepe
Wyth a rownande rourdande aryzt.
In þe founce þer stouden stone3 stepe,
as glente þur3 glas þat glowed and glyzt,
as stremande sterne3, quen stroþe-men slepe,
staren in welkyn in wynter nyzt.
For vche a pobbel in pole þer pryzt
wat3 emerald, saffer, ober gemme gente,
þat alle þe loþe lemed of lýzt,
120 so dere wat3 hit adubbement.

97 wat3] wat3 MS; wacz GzP (so spelled throughout).
98 fortwe] fortwe MS; fort[u]ne GzP
100 nis] nis MS; Nys deF
101 forth] forth MS; forth[e] GzP
103 feier] feier MS; fei[r]er GzP, Os, GzP2, Hi, deF; fayrer PS
106 bonkes] bonkes or bukes MS; b[o]nkes Mo, GzP, Os, GzP2, Bo, Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, AW, PS; bukes Vn, VnP, St
109 dubbemente] dubbemente MS; dubbement† GzP
113 stouden] stouden or stouden MS; stonden Mo, GzP, Os, GzP2, Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, Vn, VnP, St, PS; stören AW
115 as] a MS, Mo, Vn, VnP; a[s] GzP, Os, GzP2, Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, St, AW, PS
118 gente] gente MS; gent† GzP
119 alle] alle MS; all† Hi, deF
The dubbement dere of doun and dale,
of wod and water and wlonk playne,
bylde in me blys, abated my bale,
forbidden my stresse, dystryed my payne.

Doun after a strem þat dryȝly hale
I bowed in blys, bredful my brayne.

Þe fyrre I folȝed þose floty vale,
þe more strengh þe of ioye myn herte strayne.

More of wele watȝ in þat wyse
þen I cowþe telle, þaȝ I tom hade,
for vrþely herte myȝt not suffye
to þe tenþe dole of þo gladneȝ glade.

I hoped þe water were a deuyse
bytwene myrȝ þe mere
byȝonde þe broke, by slente oþer slade,
I hope þat mote merked wore,
bot þe water watȝ depe, I dorst not wade,
and euer me longed ay more and more.
More and more, and yet well more,
me lyste to se þe broke bysonde,
for if hit watȝ fayr þer I con fare,
wel loueloker watȝ þe fyrre londe.
Abowte me con I stote and stare
to fynde a forþe faste con I fonde—
bot wopȝ mo iwyss þer ware
þe fyrre I stalked by þe stronde,
and euer me þost I schulde not wonde
for wo þer weleȝ so wynne wore.
Þenne nwe note me com on honde
þat meued my mynde ay more and more.
More meruayle con my dom adaunt:
I seȝ bysonde þat myry mere
a crystal clyffe ful relusaunt—
mony ryal ray con fro hit rere.
At þe fote þerof þer sete a faunt,
a mayden of menske, ful debonere—
blysnsande whyt watȝ þyr bleaunt—
I knew þyr wel, I hade sen þyr erc.
As glysnande golde þat man con schere,
so schon þat schene anvnder schore.
On lengh I loked to þyr þere,
þe lenger I knew þyr more and more.

hit] hit MS; †it Bo.
abowte] aþowte MS; Abo[u]te GzP
bot] bôt MS; B[u]t GzP.
iwyss] I wiffe MS; iw[i]sse GzP
schulde] þchulde MS; þþulde St.
wȝ] wȝ MS; wþȝe GzP
cych] cych MS; n[c]we GzP
mynde] mynd MS; mynd† GzP
schore] þchore MS; þþore Gr, CA
lengh] lengh MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ‘h’); lengh[e] all eds.
loked] loked MS; lo[o]ked GzP
The more I frayste hyr fayre face,
her fygure fyn quen I had fonte,
suche gladande glory con to me glace
as lytrel byforþ perto watþ wonþe.
To calle hyr, lyste con me enchace,
bot baysment gef myn hert a brunt—
I se þe hyr in so strange a place,
such a burre myȝt make myn herte blunt.
Þenne vereȝ ho vp her fayre frount,
hyr vysayge whyt as playn yuore—
þat stonge myn hert ful stray astount,
and euer þe lenger, þe more and more.

III

More þen me lyste my drede aros—
I stod ful style and dorste not calle.
Wyþ yȝen open and mouth ful clos,
I stod as hende as hawk in halle.

I hope þat gostly wat þat porpose.
I dred onende quat schulde byfalle
lest ho me eschaped þat I þer chos
er I at steuen hir moȝt stalle.
þat gracios gay withouten galle,
so smoȝe, so smal, so seme slyȝt,
ryseȝ vp in hir araye ryalle,
a precios pyece in perleȝ pyȝt.
Perleȝ pyȝte of ryal prys
þere mœst mon by grace haf sene,
quen þat frech as flor-de-lys
doun þe bonke con boȝe bydene.
Al blysnadæ whyt watȝ hir beau amys,
vpon at sydeȝ, and bounden bene
wyth þe myryeste margarys, at my deuyse,
þat euer I seȝ set with myn yȝen—
wyth lappeȝ large, I wot and I wene,
dubbed with double perle and dyȝte,
her cortel watȝ of self-sute schene
with precios perleȝ al vmbepyȝte.

A pyȝt corouneȝ set wer þat gyrl
of marïorse and non oþer ston,
hȝe pynakled of cler quyȝt perle,
wyth flurted flowreȝ perfet vpon—
to hed hade ho non oþer werle.
Her here leke al hyr vmbegon,
her semblaunt sade for doc oþer erle,
her ble more blȝyt þen whalleȝ bon.
As schorne golde schyr her fax þenne schon
on schyldeȝe þat legh vnlapped lyȝte.
Her depe colourȝ set wonted non
of precios perle in porfyȜ pyȝte.
Pyȝt watȝ poyned and vche a hemme, at honde, at sydeȝ, at ouverture, wyth whyte perle and non oþer gemme, and bornyste quyte watȝ hyr uesture; Bot a wonder perle withouten wemme in myddeȝ hyr breste watȝ sette so sure—a manneȝ dom moȝt dryȝly demme er mynde moȝt malte in hit mesure. I hope no tong moȝt endure no saueryly sage say of þat syȝt, so watȝ hit clene and cler and pure, þat precios perle þer hit watȝ pyȝt. Pyȝt in perle, þat precios pyȝe on wyȝer half water com doun þe schore. No gladder gone heȝen into grece þen I quen ho on brymme wore. Ho watȝ me nerre þen aunte or nece—my joy forþy watȝ much þe more. Ho profered me speche, þat special spycy, enclynande lowe in wommon lore, caȝte of her coroun of grete tresore and haylsed me wyth a lote lyȝte. Wel watȝ me þat euer I watȝ bore to sware þat swete in perle pyȝte! [f. 42r/46r]
V

“O perle,” coþe I, “in perle þyȝt,
art þou my perle þat I haf playned,
regretted by myn one on nyȝte?
Much longeynge haf I fyr þe layned,
syþen into gresse þou me aglyȝte.
Pensyf, payred, I am forpayned,
and þou in a lyf of lykyng lyȝte,
in paradys erde, of stryf vnstrateyned.
What wyrde hatȝ hyder my iuel vayned
and don me in del and gret daunger?
Fro we in twynne wern towen and twayned,
I haf ben a joyleȝ juelere.”

That juel þenne in gemmeȝ gente
vered vp her vyse with yȝen graye,
set on hyr coroun of perle orient,
and soberly after þenne con ho say:
“Syr, þe haf your tale mysetente
to say your perle is al awaye
þat is in cofer so comly clente
as in þis gardyn gracios gaye,
hereinne to lenge foreuer and play
þer mys ne mornyng com neuer ere.
Her were a forser for þe in faye,
if þou were a gentyl jueler.”

[f. 42v/46v]
“Bot, jueler gente, if þou schal lose
þy ioy for a gemme þat þe watȝ lef,
me þynk þe put in a mad porpose
and busye þe aboute a raysoun bref,
for þat þou lesteȝ watȝ bot a rose
þat flowred and fayled as kynde hyt gef—
now þurȝ kynde of þe kyste þat hyt con close
to a perle of prys hit is put in pref.
And þou hatȝ called þy wyrde a þef,
þat oȝt of noȝt hatȝ mad þe cler.
Þou blameþ þe bote of þy meschef—
þou art no kynde jueler.”

A juel to me þen watȝ þys geste,
and iueleȝ wern hyr gentyl sawȝe.
“Iwyse,” coþe I, “my blysfol beste,
my grete dystresse þou al todraweȝ.
To be excused I make requeste—
I trawed my perle don out of daweȝ.
Now haf I fonde hyt, I schal ma feste,
and wony with hyt in schyr wod schaweȝ,
and loue my Lorde and al His laweȝ,
þat hatȝ me broȝt þys blys ner.
Now were I at yow byȝonde þise waweȝ,
I were a ioyfol jueler.”
"Iueler," sayde þat gemme clene,

290  wy borde ȝe men? So madde ȝe be!

þre wordeþ ȝe spoken at ene. 

Vnavysed, forsoȝe, wern alle þre. 

þou ne woste in worlde quat on dot3 mene—

þy worde before þy wytte con fle.

295  þou says þou trawȝ me in þis dene

bycawse þou may with yȝen me se. 

Anoȝer, þou says in þys countre

þyselȝ schal won with me ryȝt here. 

þe þrydde, to passe þys water fre—

300  þat may no ioyfol iueler.

VI

“Þat may leue wel þat seȝ wyth ȝye,

305  and much to blame and vncortoyse

þat leueȝ oure Lorde wolde make a lyȝe,

þat leȝly hyȝte þour lyȝf to rayse,

þȝe Fortune dyd þour flesch to dyȝe. 

ȝe setten hys worde ȝul westernays

310  and þat is a poynȝ o sorquydryȝe,

þat vche god mon may euȝl byseme,

to leue no tale be true to tryȝe 

bot þat hys one skyl may dem.”
“Deme now þyselv if þou con dayly as man to god wordeþ schulde heue: 
þou sayt þou schal won in þis bayly; me þynk þe burde ðyrst aske leue, 
and ȝet of graunt þou myȝteþ fayle. 
þou wylne ouer þys water to weue: er moste þou ceuer to oþer counsayl—
þy corse in clot mot calder keue, for hit wartȝ forgarte at paradys greue. 
Oure þoȝefader hit con mysseȝeþme; þurȝ drwry deth boȝ vch man dreue 
er ouer þys dam hym Dryȝtyn deme.”

“Deme þou me,” coþe I, “my swete, to dol agayn?—þenne I dowyne. 
Now haf I fonte þat I forlete, schal I efte forgo hit er euer I fyne? 
Why, schal I hit boþe mysse and mete? 
My precios perle dotȝ me gret pyne. 
What serueȝ tresor bot gareȝ men grete when he hit schal efte with teneȝ tyne? 
Now rech I neuer forto declyne, ne how fer of folde þat man me fleme, 
when I am partleȝ of perle myne—bot durande doel what may men deme?”

313 dayly] dayȝy MS; day[e] Bo, PS 
315 saytȝ saytȝ MS; say[e]z GzP 
bayȝy] baylyy MS; bayl[e] Bo, PS 
319 mosteȝ moȝte MS; mosþ VnP 
323 drwry] drwry MS; dr[u]ry GzP 
326 dowyne] dowyne MS; dewyne PS 
329 schal] šchal MS; s̆ḥal deF 
331 gareȝ] gareȝ MS; gareþ GzPz 
335 perleȝ] perleȝ MS; perleþ Os, GzPz, Gr, CA, Mm, St, AW; perleȝ Mo, GzP, Hi, deF; perles PS
"Thow demeȝ noȝt bot doel dystresse,"
þenne sayde þat wyȝt. "Why dotȝ þou so?
For dyne of doel of lureȝ lesse
ofte mony mon forgos þe mo.
þe oȝte better þy seluen blesse
and loue ay God, in wele and wo,
for anger gayneȝ þe not a cresse.
Who nedeȝ schal þole be not so þro;
for þoȝ þou daunce as any do,
braundysch and bray þy braȝeȝ breme,
when þou no fyrre may to ne fro,
þou moste abyde þat He schal deme.

"Deme Dryȝtyn, euer Hym adyte,
of þe way a fote ne wyl He wryȝe.
þy mendeȝ mounteȝ not a myte,
þaȝ þou for sorȝe be neuer blyȝe.
Stynst of þy strot and fyne to flyte,
and sech Hys blyȝe ful swefe and swyȝe.
þy prayer may Hys pyte byte,
þat mercy schal hyr crafeȝ kyȝe.
Hys conforte may þy langour lyȝe,
and þy lureȝ of lyȝtly leme;
for marre oþer madde, morne and myȝe,
al lys in hym to dyȝt and deme."
Thenne demed I to þat damyselle:

“Ne wor þe no wrathþe vnto my Lorde,
if I rapely raue, spornande in spelle.
My herte wat ȝal with mysse remorde,
as wallande water got ȝ out of welle.
I do me ay in Hys myserecorde.
Rebuke me neuer with worde ȝelle,
þa ȝ I forloyne, my dere endorde,
bot kyþe my kyndely your coumforde,
pytosly þenkande vpon þysses:
of care and me ȝe made acorde,
þat er wat ȝ grounde of alle my blyssse.”

“My blyssse, my bale, ȝe hau ben boþe,
bot much þe bygger ȝet wat þ my mon;
fro þou wat ȝe wroken fro vch a boþe,
I wyste neuer quere my perle wat ȝ gon.
Now I hit se, now leþe my lôþe,
and quen we departed we wern at on—
God forbede we be now wroþe,
we meten so selden by stok ofer ston.
þa cortaysly ȝe carp con,
I am bot mol and manereþ mysse.
bot Crystes mersþy and Mary and Jon—
þise arn þe grounde of alle my blyssse.”
In blysse I se þe blyþely blent, and I a man al mornynf mate.
þe take þeron ful lyttel tente, þaȝ I hente ofte harmeȝ hate.
Bot now I am here in your presente,
I wolde bysech, wythouten debate,
þe wolde me say in sobre asente
what lyf þe lede erly and late,
for I am ful fayn þat your astate
is worþen to worschyp and wele, iwysse;
Of alle my joy þe hyȝe gate
hit is, and grounde of alle my blysse.”

“Now blysse, burne, mot þe bytyde,”
þen sayde þat lufsoum of lyth and lere,
“and welcum here to walk and byde,
for now þy speche is to me dere.
Mysterful mod and hyȝe pryde,
I hete, arn heterly hated here.
My lorde ne loueȝ not forto chyde,
for meke arn alle þat woneȝ Hym nere,
and when in Hys place þou schal apere,
be dep deuote in hol mekenesse.
My Lorde þe Lamb loueȝ ay such chere,
þat is þe grounde of alle my blysse.

iwysse I wyffe MS; iwysȝ† GzP
and] i MS; [and] CA; in all other eds.
byde] bydeȝ MS; [ȝyde Vn, VnP
I hete] I liete þe MS; I hete þe all other eds.
loueȝ not] loueȝ not MS; lovez † GzP.
alle] alle MS; all† Hi, deF
mekenesse] mekeneȝe MS; meken[y]sse Bo
“A blysful lyf þou says I lede;
þou wolde3 knaw þerof þe stage.
Þow wost wel when þy perle con schede
I wat3 ful 3ong and tender of age;
bot my Lorde þe Lombe þur3 hys godhede,
he toke my self to Hys maryage,
corounde me quene in blysse to brede
in length of daye3 þat euer schal wage;
and sesed in alle Hys herytage
hys lef is. I am holy Hysse—
Hys prese, Hys prys, and Hys parage
is rote and grounde of alle my blysse,”

[VIII]

“When blysful,” coðe I, “may þys be trwe?
Dysplese3 not if I speke errour—
þat þou þe quene of heuene3 blwe,
þat al þys worlde schal do honour?
We leuen on Marye þat grace of grewe,
þat ber a barne of vyrgyn flour.
Þe croune fro hyr quo most remwe
bot ho hir passed in sum favour?
Now, for synglerty o hyr doussour,
we calle hyr Fenyx of Arraby,
þat fereles flege of hyr Fasor,
lyk to þe quen of cortaysye.”
“Cortayse quen!” þenne sayde þat gaye, knelande to grounde, folde vp hyr face, [f. 45r/49r]
435 “Makeleȝ moder and myryst may! Blessed bygynner of vch a grace!”
þenne ros ho vp and con restay and speke me towarde in þat space:
“Sir, fele here porchaseȝ and fongeȝ pray,
440 bot supplantoreȝ none withinne þys place.
Þat emperise al heuenȝ hatȝ, and vrȝe and helle in her bayly.
Of erytage ȝet non wyl ho chace, for ho is quen of cortaysye.
445 “The court of þe kyndom of God alyue hatȝ a property in hyt self leyng:
alle þat may perinne aryue of alle þe reme is quen oþer kyng,
and neuer oþer ȝet schal depryue,
450 bot vchon fayn of oþereȝ hafȝyng and wolde her corouneȝ wern worþe þo fyue
if possyble were her mending.
Bot my lady, of quom Iesu con spryng,
ho haldeȝ þe empyre ouer vus ful hyȝe,
455 and þat dyspleseȝ non of oure gyng, for ho is quene of cortaysye.

433 sayde] fyde MS; syde Vn, VnP; s[a]yde all other eds.
436 bygynner] bȝyner MS; bȳȝyner deF, St; bȳȝyn[n]er all other eds.
441 heuenȝ] hēuĕȝ MS; heuen[e]ʒ Hi, deF
442 bayly] bȳly MS; bayly[ɛ] Bo
446 leyng] leyȝ MS; beyng all other eds. (who read MS as þeȝg)
“Of courtaysye, as sayt3 Saynt Poule, 
al arn we membre3 of Iesu Kryȝt. 

As heued and arme and legg and naule 
temen to hys body ful trwe and tyȝte, 
ryȝt so is vch a krysten sawle 
a longande lym to þe Mayster of myȝte. 
þenne loke what hate oþer any gawle 
is tached oþer tyȝted þy lymme3 bytwȝte. 

þy heued hatȝ nauȝer greme ne gryȝte 
on arme oþer fynger þaȝ þou ber byȝte. 
So fare we alle wyth luf and lyȝte 
to kyng and quene by cortaysye.”

“Cortayse,” coȝe I, “I leue 
and charyte grete be yow among, 
bot my speche þat yow ne greue, 

Ýyslyf in heuen ouer hyȝþou heue, 
to make þe quen þat watȝ so ȝonge. 

What more honour moȝte he acheon 
þat hade endured in worlde stronge, 
and lyued in penaunce hys lyue ȝonge 
with bodyly bale hym blysse to byye? 
What more worschyp moȝt he fonge 
þen corounde be kyng, by cortayse?

458  Kryȝt kryft MS; Kryst all other eds. (see note) 
460  trwȝe] trwȝe MS; tr[u]e GzP 
462  myȝte] myȝte MS; myste all other eds. (see note to 458) 
464  bytwȝyte] by twȝyte MS; by-twȝyte Mo, GzP2; bytwȝyte all other eds. (see note to 458) 
465  gryȝte] gryȝte MS; gryste all other eds. (see note to 458) 
467  lyȝte] lyft Ps; lyst Ps; lyste all other eds. (see note to 458) 
469  Cortayse] Cortayf[ye]e GzP2, Bo 
472  line missing in MS; no gap left] [(Me think thou spekez now ful wronge,)] GzP; [(Me þynk þou spekeȝ now ful wronge;)] GzP2 
475  more honour] more ȝionȝe MS; more-hon[ȝ]e Mo 
479  he] hȝo MS; ho GzP, Vn, VnP; h[ȝ]e Os, GzP2, Gr, Bo, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, Vn, VnP, St, AW, PS 
480  cortayse] cortayf[ye]e MS] cortayf[ye]e Os, GzP2, Bo
“That cortayse is to fre of dede, 3yf hyt be soth þat þou coneʒ saye. þou lyfed not two þer in oure þede; þou cowþeʒ God nauþer plese ne pray, ne neuer nauþer pater ne crede, and quen mad on þe fyrst day! I may not traw, so God me spede, þat God wolde wyrþe so wrange away. Of countes, damysel, par ma fay, 490 Wer fayr in heuen to halde asstate, oþer elleʒ a lady of lasse aray– bot a queen! Hit is to dere a date!”

“þer is no date of Hys godnesse,” þen sayde to me þat worþy wyȝte, “for al is trawþe þat He con dresse, and he may do no þynk bot ryȝt. As Mathew meleʒ in your messe in soþfol gospel of God almyȝt, insample he can ful grayþely gesse, and lykkeʒ hit to heuen lyȝte: ‘My regne,’ he saytʒ, ‘is lyk on hyȝt to a lorde þat hade a uyne, I wate. Of tyme of þere þe terme watʒ tyȝt; to labor uyne watʒ dere þe date.’
“Dat date of þere wel knawe þys hyne.
Þe Lorde ful erly vp he ros
to hyre werkmen to hys vyne,
and fyned þer summe to hys porpos.
Into acorde þay con decline
for a pene on a day and forth þay got3,
wryþen and worchen and don gret pyne,
eruen and caggen and man hit clos.
Aboute vnder, þe Lorde to marked tot3,
and ydel men stande he fyned þerate.
‘Why stande 3e ydel?’ he sayde to þos–
‘Ne knawe 3e of þis day no date?’

‘Er date of daye hider arn we wonne–’
so wat3 al samen her answar so3t.
‘We haf standen her syn ros þe sunne
and no mon bydde þus do ry3t no3t.’
‘Gos into my vyne, dot3 þat 3e conne,’
so sayde þe lorde, and made hit to3t.
‘What resonabele hyre be na3t be runne
I wyl yow pay in dede and þo3te.’
þay wente into þe vyne and wro3te,
and al day þe lorde þus 3ede his gate,
and nw men to hys vyne he bro3te
Wel ne3 wyl day wat3 passed date.
“At ðe date of day of euensonge,
on oure byfore ðe sonne got3 doun,
He se3 ðer ydel men ful stronge
and sade to hem with sobre soun,
‘wy stonde 3e ydel ðise daye3 longe?’
Þay sayden her hyre wat3 nawhere boun.

‘Got3 to my vyne, 3emen 3onge,
and wyrke3 and dot3 ðat at 3e moun!’
Sone ðe worlde bycom wel broun;
ðe sunne wat3 doun and hit wex late.
To take her hyre he mad sumoun;
ðe day wat3 al apassed date.

X

“The date of ðe daye ðe lorde con knaw,
called to ðe reue, ‘Lede, pay ðe meyny.
Gyf hem ðe hyre ðat I hem owe,
and fyrre, ðat non me may repreny
set hem alle vpon a rawe
and gyf vchon inlyche a peny.
Bygyn at ðe laste ðat stande3 lowe,
tyl at ðe fyrste ðat ðou atteny.’
And ðenne ðe fyrst bygonne to pleny,
and sayden ðat ðay hade trauayled sore:
‘Ðese bot on oure hem con streyny–
vus ðynk vus oye to take more.

529  At ðe date of day] at ðe day of date MS; At ð da[te] of [the] da[y] GzP; At the da[te] of da[y] GzP², Bo, PS; at ðe da[te] of da[y] Os, CA, Mm, St, AW; At ðe day, of date Vn, VnP
530  got3] go MS; go all other eds.
532  sade] fade MS; s[a]yde Mo, GzP, Os, Bo; sade GzP², Gr, Hi, deF, Mm, Vn, VnP, St, AW; sayd PS hem] liën MS; hen Vn, VnP; hem all other eds.
538  and] v MS; þ and or † & all eds.
542  meyny] meyny MS; meþny GzP²; meyn[e] Bo
543  owel] owe MS; [a]we GzP², Bo
544  repreny] reprene MS; repreue Mo; repren[y] GzP, Os, GzP², Hi; reprene all other eds.
547  lowe] lowe MS; l[a]we GzP², Bo
550  hade] liade MS; had† Hi
551  oure] oure MS; [h]oure Mo, PS
“More haf we serued, vus þynk so, þat suffred hau þe dayeþ hete,
þenn þyse þat wroþt not houreþ two, and þou dotþ hem vus to counterfete!”
Þenne sayde þe lorde to on of þo, ‘frende, no warning I wyl of þe zete—
take þat is þyn owne, and go.
And I hyred þe for a penye agrete,
quy bygynne þou now to þrete?
Wþ not a penye þy couenaunt þore?
Fyrre þen couenaunde is noþt to plete.
Wy schalte þou þenne ask more?

“More, weþer louyly is me my gyfte—
to do wyth myn quatso me lykeþ?
Oþer elleþ þyn yþe to lyþer is lyfte
for I am goude and non byswykeþ?”
Þus schal I, coþe Kryste, ‘hit skyfte.
Þe laste schal be þe fyrst þat strykeþ,
and þe fyrst þe laste, be he neuer so swyft,
for mony ben called, þaþ feþe be mykeþ.’
Þus pore men her part ay pykeþ,
Þaþ þay com late and lyttel wore,
and þaþ her sweng wyth lyttel atslykeþ,
þe merci of god is much þe more.

554 hau] hân or liâu MS; haf PS; han all other eds.
555 wroþt] wroþt MS; wroþt[e] Mo
558 warning] wanig MS; wanig Hi, deF; w[r]anþg Mo; wani[n]g all other eds.
yþl of þe] wyl þe MS; wyl þe all other eds.
564 ask] ask MS; ask[e] GzP, GzP2, Bo, St
565 louyly] louyly MS; lawely Os, Bo; leuuly GzP2
572 called] calle MS; calle Hi, deF, Mm, Vn, VnP; calle[d] all other eds.
“More haf I of joye and blysse hereinne,
of ladyschyp gret and lyue blom,
þen alle þe wyþe þe worlde myȝt wynne
by þe way of ryȝt to aske dome.
Wheþer welnygh now I con bygynne—
in euentyste into þe wynne I come—
þyrst of my hyre my Lorde con myynne:
I watȝ payed anon of al and sum.
3et oþer þer werne þat toke more tom,
þat swange and swat for long þore,
þat ȝet of hyre nóþynk þay nom,
paraunter nóþt schal toȝere more.”

Then more I mȝeled and sayde apert,
“Me þynk þy tale vnresounable.
Goddeȝ ryȝt is redy and euermor rert,
oþer holy wryt is bot a fable.
In sauter is sayd a verce ouerte,
þat spekeȝ a poynyt determyynable:
þou quyte þyen as hys desserte,
þou hyȝe Kyng ay pertermynable.’
Now he þat stod þe long day stable,
and þou to payment com hym byforye,
þenne þe lasse in werke to take more abyl,
and euer þe lenger þe lasse þe more.”
XI

"Of more and lasse in Gode ryche,"
þat gentyl sayde, "lys no joparde,
for þer is vch mon payed inlyche,
weþer lyttel oþer much be hys rewarde.

For þe gentyl Cheuentayn is no chyche,
queþer-so-euer he dele nesch oþer harde;
he laueþ hys gyfte3 as water of dyche,
oþer golft of golf þat neuer charde.
Hys fraunchyse is large þat euer dard
to hym þat matþ in synne rescoghе,
no blysse betþ fro hем reparde,
for þe grace of God is gret innoþе.

"Bot now þou moteþ me for to mate,
þat I my peny haf wrang tan here.

þou sayþ þat I þat com to late,
am not woryþ so gret bere.
Where wysþe þou euer any bourne abate,
euer so holy in hys prayere,
þat he ne forfeted by sumkyn gate
þe mede sumtyme of heuenæ clere?
And ay þe ofter þe alder þay were,
þay laften ryþt and wroþt woghe.
Mercy and grace moste hем þen stere,
for þe grace of god is gret innoþе.
"Bot innoghe of grace hat3 innocent.
As sone as þay arn borne, by lyne,
in þe water of babtem þay dyssente—
þen arne þay boroȝt into þe vyne.
Anon þe day with derk endente
þe myȝt of deth dotȝ to enclyne
þat wroȝt neuer wrang er þenne þay wente.
Þe gentyle Lorde þenne payȝ3 His hyne.
Þay dyden Hys heste; þay wern þereine—
Why schulde he not her labour alow,
3ys, and pay hym at þe fyȝst fyne?
For þe grace of God is gret innoghe.

“Inoȝe is knawen þat mankyn grete
fyȝste watȝ wroȝt to blysse parfyt.
Oure forme-fader hit con forfete
þurȝ an apple þat he vpon con byte.
Al wer we damned for þat mete,
to dyȝe in doel out of delyt,
and syȝen wende to helle hete,
þerinne to won withoute respyt.
Bot þeron com a bote astyt:
ryche blod ran on rode so roghe
and wynne water þen at þat plyt.
Þe grace of God wex gret innoghe

myȝt] myȝt or niȝt MS niȝt Gr, Mm, Vn, VnP, AW; niȝght CA, St; myȝt Mo, GzP, Os, GzP², Hi, deF; myȝht Bo; night PS
3ys] 3y LMS, but indistinct; 3y[rd]Mo; Yyld GzP; 3y . . . Os
hym] hym MS; hym Hi, Vn, VnP, St, AW; h[e]m Mo, GzP, Os, GzP², Bo, Gr, deF, CA, Mm, PS
fyȝst] fyȝft MS; fyȝst[e] GzP², Bo, St
mankyn] man kyn MS; mankynde PS
þeron com] þer on com MS; þer oncom GzP, Os
wynne water] wȝne wȝt MS; wynne [ȝ] water Mo
“Innoghe þer wax out of þat welle, blod and water of brode wounde. Þe blod vus boþt fro bale of helle and delyuered vus of þe deth secounde; Þe water is baptem þe soþe to telle, þat folȝed þe glayue so gromly grounde, þat wascheȝ away þe gyldȝe felle þat Adam wythinne deth vus drounde. Now is þer noȝt in þe worlde rounde bytwene vus and blyssey bot þat he withdroȝ, and þat is restored in sely stounde, and þe grace of God is gret innoghe.

XII

“Grace innogh þe mon may haue þat synneȝ þenne new, ȝif hym repente, bot with sorȝ and syt he mot hit craue, and byde þe payne þat þerto is bent. Bot resoun of ryȝt þat con not raue sauȝe euer more þe innossent: hit is a dom þat neuer God gaue þat euer þe gyldȝe schulde be schente. Þe gyldȝe may contrysyoun hente and be þurȝ mercy to grace þryȝt, bot he to gyle þat neuer glente, al inoscente is saf and ryȝte.

649 out out out MS; † out all eds.
656 wythinne wythine MS; wyth inne Os, Bo, Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, VnP, St, AW; wythinne Mo; wyth in†† GzP, GzP2; with in PS
672 all at MS; [a]nd] Gr; at GzP, Os, GzP2, Bo, Hi, deF, Mm, VnP, PS; [a]s] CA, Vn, VnP, St, AW inoscente] i ofente MS; inos[c]ente Os, Bo, Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, St, AW; in-o[s]ente Mo; inos[c]ente GzP, GzP2; in[n]os†ent† Vn, VnP and] r† MS; [by] GzP, GzP2
“Ryst þus I knaw wel in þis cas
two men to saue is God by skylle:

þe rystwys man schal se Hys face,
þe harmleȝ hæfel schal com Hym tylle.

Þe sauter hyt saþþ þus, in a pace:
‘Lorde, quo schal klymbe þy hyȝ hylle,
oþer rest withinne þy holy place?’

Þynself to onsware he is not dylle:
‘Hondelynge þarme þat dyr not ille,
þat is of hert boþe clene and lyȝt,
þer schal hys step stable stytle.
Þe innosent is ay saue by ryst.’

“The rystwys man also sertayn
aproche he schal þat proper pyle–
þat takeȝ not her lyf in vayne,
ne glauereȝ her neȝbor wyth no gyle.’
Of þys rystwys saȝ Salamon playn

how Koyntyse in honoure hym con aquyle.
By wayeȝ ful streȝt ho con him strayn
and scheued hym þe rengne of God awhyle,
as quo says, ‘Lo, ȝon louely yle!
þou may hit wynne if þou be wyȝte.’

Bot hardyly, withoute peryle,
þe innosent is ay saue by ryst.”
"Anende ry3twys men ȝet saytȝ a gome
Dauid in sauter, if euer ȝe seȝ hit,
'Lorde, þy servaunt draȝ3 neuer to dome,
for non lyuyande to þe is justyfyet.'
Forþy to corte quen þou schal com
þer alle oure causeȝ schal be tryed,
alegge þe ryȝt, þou may be innome
by þys ilke speech, I haue asspyed.
Bot he on rode þat blody dyed,
delfully þurȝ3 hondeȝ þryȝ3t,
gyue þe to passe þen þou arte tryed,
by innocens and not by ryȝte.

"Ryȝtwysly quo con rede
he loke on bok and be awayed
how Iesu hym welke in areȝede,
and burneȝ her barneȝ vnto Hym Brayde.
For happe and hele þat fro Hym ȝede
to touch her chylder þay fayr Hym prayed.
His dessypeleȝ with blame 'Let be!' hym bede
and wyth her resounȝ ful fele restayed.
Iesu þenne hem swetely sayde,
'Do way! Let chylder vnto me tyȝt
to suche is heuenryche arayed.'
Þe innocent is ay saf by ryȝt.
Iesu con calle to Hym Hys mylde,

and sayde Hys ryche no wy3 my3t wynne

bot he com Þyder ry3t as a chylde,

ôfer Þel3 neuer more com Þerinne:

harmle3, trwe, and vndefylde,

withouten mote ôfer mascle of sulpende synne.

Quen such þer cnoken on þe bylde,

tyt schal hem men þe ȝate vnynne.

Þer is þe blys þat con not blynne,

þat þe jueler soȝte þurȝ perre pres,

and solde alle õys goud, boþe wolen and lynne,

to bye hym a perle watȝ mascelle.

This makel33 perle þat boȝt is dere,

þe joueler gef fore alle õys god,

is lyke þe reme of heuennesse clere–

so sayde þe Fader of folde and flode–

for hit is wemleȝ, clene and clere,

and endeleȝ rounde, and blyȝe of mode,

and commune to alle þat ryȝtywys were.

Lo, euen in mydde my breste hit stode!

My Lorde, þe Lombe, þat schede õys blode,

e þyȝt hit þere in token of pes.

I rede þe forsake þe worlde wode

and porchace þy perle maskelles.”
“O maskeleȝ perle in perleȝ pure,
þat bereȝ,” coȝe I, “þe perle of prys,
quò formed þe þy fayre figure?
þat wroȝt þy wede he waþȝ ful wys!
þy beaute com neuer of nature –
Pymalyon paynted neuer þy vys,
ne Arystotel nawþer by hys lettrure,
of carpe þe kynde þese propertȝeȝ.
þy colour passeȝ þe flour-de-lyȝs,
þyn angel haþyn so clene cortȝeȝ.
Breue me, bryȝt, quatkyn offys
bereȝ þe perle so maskelleȝ?”

“My makeleȝ Lambe þat al may bete,”
cõȝe scho, “my dere destyne,
me ches to Hys make, alþȝ vnmete
sumtyme semed þat assemble.
When I wente fro yor worlde wete
He calde me to Hys bonerte:
‘Cum hyder to me, my lemman swete,
for mote ne spot is non in þe.’
He gef me myȝt and als bewte.
In Hys blod He wesch my wede on dese,
and coronde clene in verrgynte,
and pyȝt me in perleȝ maskelleȝ.”
“Why, maskelleȝ bryd þat bryȝt con flambe,

770  þat reiateȝ hatȝ so ryche and ryf,
quat kyn þyng may be þat Lambe
þat þe wolde wedde vnþo hys vyf?
Ouer alle òþer so hȝȝ þou clambe
tolede with hym so ladyly lyf.

775  So mony a comly onvunder cambe
for Kryst hau lyued in much stryf,
and þou con alle þo dere outdryf,
and fro þat maryag al òþer depres,
al only þyselȝ so stout and styf,
780  a makeleȝ may and maskelleȝ!”

[XIII]

“Maskelles,” coþ þat myry quene,
“vnblemyst I am wythouten blot,
and þat may I with mensk menteene,
bot ‘makeleȝ quene’ þenne sade I not.

785  þe Lambes vyue in blysse we bene,
a hondred and forty þowsande flot,
as in þe Apocalyppeȝ hit is sene.
Sant John hem syȝ al in a knot
on þe hyl of Syon, þat semly clot;

790  þe apostel hem segȝ in gostly drem,
arayed to þe weddyng in þat hyl coppe,
þe nwe cyte o Jerusalem.
“Of Jerusalem I in speche spelle.
If þou wyl knaw what kyn He be—
my Lombe, my Lorde, my dere Juelle
my Joy, my Blys, my Lemman fre—
þe profete Ysaye of Hym con melle
pitously of hys debonerte:
‘Þat gloryous Gytle þat mon con quelle
withouten any sake of felonye,
as a schep to þe slaȝt þer lad watþ He,
and as lombe þat clypper in hande nem,
so closed he hys mouth fro vch query
quen jueþ hym iugged in Jerusalem.’

“In Jerusalem watþ my Lemman slayn
and rent on rode with boyeþ bolde.
Al oure bale þo bere ful bayn,
He toke on þem self oure careþ colde.
With boffeteþ watþ Hys face flayn,
þat watþ so ðayr on to byholde.
For synne he set Hymselþ in vayn,
þat neuer hade non Hymselþ to wolde;
for vus He lette Hyms flyþe and foldþ,
and brede vpon a bostwys bem,
as meke as lomp þat no playnt tolde.
For vus He swalt in Jerusalem.

felonye] felonye MS; felon þe GzP2, Bo
in hande nem] i lande men MS; in [h]ande [n]e[m] Gr, CA, Mm, AW, PS; in lande [n]e[m] Mo, GzP, Os, GzP, Bo, Hi, deF, St; in lande men Vn, VnP
query] query MS; quer[e] GzP2
lomp] lomp MS; lom[b] Mo, GzP, Os, GzP2, Bo; lamb PS
“Jerusalem, Jordan and Galalye: 
þeres baptysed þe goude Saynt Jon, 
his worde acorded to Ysaye.

820 When Iesu con to hym warde gon, 
he sayde of Hym þys professye: 
‘Lo, Gode ȝ as trwe as ston, 
þat dot3 away þe synne3 dry3e, 
þat alle þys worlde hat3 wro3t vpon.’

825 Hymself ne wro3t neuer ȝet non, 
wheder on Hymself He con al clem. 
Hys generacyoun quo recen con, 
þat dy3ed for vus in Jerusalem?

“In Jerusalem þus my Lemman swette, 

tweȝe for lombe watȝ taken þere 
by trw recorde of ayþer prophete, 
for mode so meke and al Hys fare. 
þe ȝryde tyme is herto ful mete 
in Apokaly3e wryten ful ȝare.

835 Inmydeaux þe trone þere saynte3 sete, 
þe apostel John Hym syȝ as bare, 
lesande þe boke with leueȝe sware 
þere seuen synnetteȝ wern sette in seme; 
and at þat syȝt vche douth con dare,

840 in helle, in erȝe, and Jerusalem.
[XV]

"Thys Jerusalem Lombe hade neuer pechhe
of oþer hue bot quyht jolylf
þat mot ne masklle moȝt on streche,
for wolle quyte so ronk and ryf.

Forþ vche saule þat lombe a worthyly wyf,
and þat vch day a store He feche,
among vus commes nouþer strot ne stryf,
bot vchon enle we wolde were fyf—

þe mo þe myryer, so God me blesse!
In company ny gret our luf con þryf,
in honour more and neuer þe lesse.

"Lasse of blysse may non vus bryng
þat beren þys perle vpon oure breste,
for þay of mote couþe neuer mynge
of spotleȝ perleȝ þat beren þe creste.
Alþat oure corse in clotteȝ clynge,
and þe remen for rauþe wythouten reste,
we þurȝoutly hauen cnawyng.

Of on dethe ful oure hope is drest.
Þe Lombe vus glade;
oure care is kest;
he myrþeþ vus alle at vch a mes.
Vchone þyllse is breme and beste,
and neuer oneþ honour ȝet neuer þe les.

843  masklle  mailde  MS;  masklle GzP;  mask[e]lle GzP²
848  nouþer  nouþer or nouþer MS;  non oþer Mo, Os, Hi, Mm; non other GzP, Bo;  nonoþer deF;  nouþer GzP², Gr, AW;  nouþer CA, St;  nouþer GzP²;  no nouþer Vn, VnP;  naþer PS
856  þat  þa MS;  þa Hi, deF, Vn, VnP;  þa St;  þay Mo;  that GzP;  þat Os, GzP², Gr, Mm, AW;  that Bo, CA, PS
860  on  _n  or  _u MS (first letter of second word of this line illegible because of damage);  [o]n all eds.
861  Lombe  lombe or louþe MS;  lou[m]be Mo, GzP²;  lamb PS;  ló[m]be or Lo[m]be all other eds.
“Lest les þou leue my talle farande,
in Appocalypesce is wryten in wro:
‘I segh,’ says John, ‘þe Loumbe Hym stande
on þe mount of Syon ful þryuen and þro,
and wyth Hym maydenne3 an hundreþe þowsande,
and fowre and forty þowsande mo.
On alle her forhede wryten I fande
þe Lombe3 nome, Hys fadere3 also.
A hue þro heuen I herde þoo,
lyk flode þe, laden runnen on resse,
and as þunder þowe3 in torre3 blo,
þat lote I leue wat3 neuer þe les.’

‘Nauþeles, þa3 hit schowted scharpe,
and ledden loude alþa3 hit were,
a note ful nwe I herde hem warpe,
to lysten þat wat3 ful lufly dere.
As harpore3 harpen in her harpe,
þat nwe songe þay songen ful cler,
in sounande note3 a gentyl carpe;
ful fayre þe mode3 þay fonge in fere.
Ryt3 byfore Gode3 chayere,
and þe fowre best3 þat hym obes,
and þe aldermen so sadde of chere,
her songe þay songen neuer þe les.’
“Now þe lesse non wæt ȝeuer so quoynt,
for alle þe crafte þat euer þay knewe,
þat of þat songe myȝt synge a poynt,
bot þat meyny þe Lombe þat swe,
for þay arn boȝt fro þe vrȝe al oynte
as newe frot to god ful due;
and to þe gentyl Lombe hit arn anoynt
as lyk to hym self of lote and hwe,
for neuer ȝesynge ne tale vntrwe
ne towched her tonge for no dysstresse.
þat moteles meyny may neuer remwe
fro þat maskeleȝ mayster neuer þe les.’ ”

“Neuer þe les let be my þonc,”
cöþe I, “my perle þaȝ I appose;
I schulde not tempte þy wyt so wlonc,
to Krysteȝ chambre þat art ichose.
I am bot mokke and mul among,
and þou so ryche a reken rose,
and bydeȝ here by þyß blysful bonc
þer lyueȝ lýste may neuer lose.
Now, hynde þat symplesse coneȝ enclose,
I wolde þe aske a þyngge expresse,
and þaȝ I be bustwys as a blose,
let my bone vayl neuer þe lese.

[ þat swe ] þay wye MS; þay swe Mo, Hi, deF, Vn, VnP; thay swe GzP; þa[ȝ] swe Os, GzP², Gr, Mm, AW; th[ȝ] swe Bo, CA, St; that sue PS
[ al oynte ] aloynte MS, all eds.
[ anoynt ] amoȝt MS; amoynþ Mo; anjoynt GzP, Bo, CA, Vn, VnP, St, AW, PS; anioynþ Os, GzP², Gr, Hi, deF, Mm
[ among ] amõg MS; amon[c] GzP², Bo; amon[k] PS
[ a blose ] abloȝe MS; a [w]ose GzP²; a bȝose AW
[ vayl ] vayl MS; vayl[e] GzP² Bo, St
[XVI]

“Neuerþelese, cler, I yow bycalle,
if ȝe con se hyt be to done,
as ȝou art gloryous withouten galle,
withnay ȝou neuer my ruful bone:
Haf ȝe no wone3 in castel-walle,
ne maner þer ȝe may mete and won?
Þou telleþ me of Jerusaleþ, þe rych þyalle,
þer Dauid dere watþ dyþt on trone,
bot by þyse holte3 hit con not hone,
bot in Judee hit is þat noble note.
As ȝe ar maskeleþ vnder mone,
your wone3 schulde be wythouten motle.

“Þys moteleþ meyny þou coneþ of mele,
of þousande þryþt so greþ a route—
a greþ cete, for ȝe arn fele,
yow byhod haue, withouten doute.
So cumly a pakke of joly juþle
wer euel don schulde lyþ þeroute,
and by þyse bonkeþ þer I con gele
I se no bygyþg nawhere aboute.
I trowe al one ȝe lenge and louþ
to loke on þe glory of þys gracious gote.
If þou hatþ oþer bygyngþeþ stoute
now tech me to þat myry mote.”
“That mote þou mene in Judy londe,”

þat specyal spyce þen to me spakk,

“þat is þe cyte þat þe Lombe con fonde
to suffer inne sor for manæ3 sake,
þe olde Jerusalem to vnderstonde,
for þere þe olde gulte watæ3 don to slake.
Bot þe new, þat lyȝt of Gode3 sonde,
þe apostel in Apocalyppce in theme con take.
þe Lompe þer withouten spotte3 blake
hatȝ feryed þyder Hys fayre flote,
and as Hys flok is withouten flake,
so is Hys mote withouten moote.

“Of moteȝ two to carpe clene
and Jerusalem hyȝt boȝe nawþeles–
þat nys to yow no more to mene
bot ‘cete of God’ oþer ‘syȝt of pes’–
in þat on oure pes watȝ mad at ene,
withayne to suffer þe Lombe hit chese;
in þat oþer is noȝt bot pes to glene
þat ay schal laste withouten reles.
þat is þe borȝ þat we to pres,
fro þat oure flesch be layd to rote,
þer glory and blysse schal euer encres
to þe meyny þat is withouten mote.”

938  spakk] þpakk MS; spak[e] Bo
944  in theme] i theme MS; † theme Bo; in teme PS
945  Lompe] lompe MS; Lom[þ]e Mo, GzP, Os, GzP2, Bo
958  flesch] frefth MS; f[le]es[c]h Mo, GzP, Os, GzP2, Bo, Gr, Hi, deF, CA, Mm, St, AW, PS;  fres[c]h
Vn, VnP (all eds. read 'sch' for MS 'fth')
“Moteleȝ may so meke and mylde,”
þen sayde I to þat lufly flor,
“bryng me to þat bygly bylde
and let me se þy blyssful bor.”

965 þat schene sayde: “Þat God wyl schylde!
Þou may not enter withinne Þys tor;
bot of þe Lombe I haue þe aquyld
for a syȝt þerof þurȝ greȝ fauor.
Vtwyth to se þat clene cloystor

970 þou may, bot inwyth not a fote;
to strech in þe strete þou hatȝ no vygour,
bot þou wer clene, withouten mote.

[XVII]

“If I þis mote þe schal vnhyde,
bow vp towarde þys borneȝ heued,
and I anendeȝ þe on þis syde
schal sve tyl þou to a hil be veued.”
þen wolde I no lenger byde,
bot lurked by launceȝ so lufly leued,
tyl on a hyl þat I asspyed

980 and blusched on þe burgh, as I forth dreued,
byȝonde þe brok fro mewarde keued,
þat schyrrer þen sunne with schaftȝ schon.
In þe Apokalypce is þe fasoun preued,
as deuyseȝ hit þe apostel John.
As John ðe apostel hit syȝ wif syȝt,
I syȝt ðat cyty of gret renoun,
Jerusalem so nwe and ryally dyȝt,
as hit wæt lȝȝt froy ðe heuen adoun.
Þe borg wæt ðal of brende golde brȝȝt
as glemande glas burnist broun,
with gentyl gemmeȝ anvnder pyȝt,
with banteleȝ twelue on basyng boun,
ðe foundementeȝ twelue of riche tenoun;
vch tabelment wæt ða serlypeȝ ston,
as derely deuyseȝ þis ilk toun
in Apocalyppeȝ þe apostel John.

As þise stoneȝ John in writ con nemme
I knew þe name after his tale.
Jasper hyȝt þe fyrst gemme
þat I on þe fyrst basse con wale–
he glente grene in þe lowest hemme.
Saffyr helde þe secounde stæle;
þe calsydoyne þenne withouten wemme
in þe þryd table con purly pale;
þe emerade þe fyrþe so grene of scale;
þe sardonys þe fyrþe þon;
þe sexte þe rybe he con hit wale
in þe Apocallppce, þe apostel John.
5et joyned John þe crysolýt,

þe seuenþe gemme in fundament;
þe aȝtþe, þe beryl, cler and quyþt;
þe topasye twynnehow þe nente endent;
þe crysopase þe tenþe is tyȝt;
þe jacyngh þe enleuenþe gent;
þe twelfþe, þe gentyleste in vch a plyt,
þe amatyst purpre with ynde blente.
þe wal abof þe bantels bent
o jasporye, as glas þat glysnande schon.
I knew hit by his deuysement

As John deuyseyd set saȝ I þare
þise twelue degrees wern brode and stayre;
þe cyte stod abof ful swere,
as longe as brode as hyȝe ful fayre–
þe streteȝ of golde as glasse al bare,
þe wal of jasper þat glent as glayre.
þe woneȝ withinne enurned ware
wyþ alle kynneȝ perre þat moȝt repayre.
þenne helde vch swere of þis manayre
twelue forlonge space, er euer hit fon,
of heȝt, of brede, of lenþe to cayre,
for meten hit syȝ þe apostel John.

1012 twynnehow] twyne how MS; twyne-h[e]w Gr, CA, Mm, St, AW
1014 jacyngh] jacygh MS; jacyng[h]t GzP², Gr, CA, AW, PS
1015 gentyleste] gentyleste MS; [tryeste] GzP², St, AW
1017 bent] bent MS, b[r]ent GzP², Bo
1018 o jasporye] o jaþporye MS; [M]asporye Mo; O[t] jasporye Vn, VnP; Of jasper PS. Some eds. believe they detect a small 'f' after the first 'o', but what they are so interpreting appears to us to be part of an area of ink transfers from the opposite page rather than an intentional mark on this page, whether in original ink or later.
1030 twelue forlonge space] twelue forlonge fʃace MS; twelue [fowsande] forlonge † GzP²
As John hym wryte3 jet more I sy3e:
vch pane of þat place had þre ȝate3–
1035 so twelue in poursent I con asspye;
þe portale3 pyked of rych plate3,
and vch ȝate of a margyrye,
a parfyt perle þat neuer fate3.
Vchon in scrypture a name con plye
1040 of Israel barne3, folowande her date3,
þat is to say as her byrþ whate3;
þe aldest ay fyrst þeron wat3 done.
Such lyȝt þer lemed in alle þe strate3
hem nedde nawþer sunne ne mone.

1045 Of sunne ne mone had þay no nede–
þe self God wat3 her lambe-lyȝt,
þe Lombe her lantynre withouten drede;
Þur3 Hym blysned þe bor3 al bryȝt.
Þor3 wȝse and won my lokynge ȝede;
1050 for sotyle cler noȝt lette no lyȝt.
Þe hyȝe trone þer moȝt þe hede
With alle þe apparylmente vmbepyȝte,
as John þe appostel in termeȝ tyȝte.
Þe hyȝe Godeȝ self hit set vpone.
1055 A reuer of þe trone þer ran outryȝte
wat3 bryȝter þen boȝe þe sunne and mone.
Sunne ne mone schon neuer so swete
as þat foysoun flode out of þat flet;
swyþe hit swange þur3 vch a strete
withouten ﬂyþe oþer galle oþer glet.
Kyrk þerinne watʒ non ȝete,
chapel ne temple þat euer watʒ set;
þe Almyȝþy watʒ her mynyster mete,
þe Lombe, þe sakerfyse, þer to reget.

De ȝate3 stoken watʒ neuer ȝet,
bot euer more vpen at vch alone;
þer entreʒ non to take reset
þat bereʒ any spot anvnder mone.

The mone may þeroþ acroche no myȝte–
to spotty ho is, of body to grým,
and also þer ne is neuer nyȝt.
What schulde þe mone þer compas clym
and to euen wyþ þat worþly syȝt
þat schyneʒ vpon þe broke brym?

De planeteʒ arn in to pouer a plyȝt,
and þe self sunne ful þer to dym.
Aboute þat water arn tres ful schym,
þat twelue fryteʒ of lyf con bere ful sone;
twelue syȝt on ȝer þay bereν ful frym
and renowelʒ nwe in vche a mone.
Anvnder mone so gret merwayle
no fleschly hert ne myȝt endeure
as quen I blusched vpon þat baly,
so ferly þerof watȝ þe fasure.

1085 I stod as style as dased quayle
for ferly of þat frech fȝure,
þat falde I nawþer reste ne trauayle,
so watȝ I raustye wyth glymmne pure.
For I dar say with conciens sure,

1090 hade bodyly burne abiden þat bone,
þȝat alle clerkeȝ hym hade in cure,
his lyf wer loste anvnder mone.

[XIII]

Rysȝt as þe maynful mone con rys
er þenne þe day-glem dryue al doun,

1095 so sodanly on awonder wyse
I warȝ war of a prosessyoun.
Þis noble cite of rych[e] enpresse
watȝ sodanly ful, withouten sommoun,
of such vergyneȝ in þe same gyse

1100 þat watȝ my blysful anvnder croun;
and coronde wern alle of þȝe same fasoun,
depaynt in perleȝ and wedeȝ wyte.
In vchone breste watȝ bounden boun
þe blysful perle with outer delyt.
With gret delyt Þay glod in fere
on golden gate3 Þat glent as glasse.
Hundreth Þowsande3 I wot Þer were,
and alle in sute her liure3 wasse.
Tor to knaw Þe gladdest chere.

Þe Lombe byfore con proudly passe
wyth horne7 seuen of red golde cler,
as praysed perle3 His wede3 wasse.
Towarde Þe throne Þay trone a tras
Þa3 Þay wern fele, no pres in plyt,
bot mylde as maydene3 sema at mas,
so dro3 Þay forth with gret delyt.

Delyt Þat Hys come encroched,
to much hit were of for to melle.
Þise alder men, quen He aproched,
grouelyng to His fete Þay felle.
Legyounes of ungele3 togeder uoched
Þer kesten ensens of swete smelle—
Þen glory and gle wæt3 nwe abroched—
al songe to loue Þat gay Juelle.

Þe steuen mo3t stryke þur3 Þe v[r]e to helle,
Þat Þe vertues of heuen of joye endyte,
to loue Þe Lombe His meyny in melle.
Iwysse I la3t a gret delyt!
Delit þe Lombe forto devise

with much meruayle in mynde went.
Best wat þe, blyþest and moste to pryse,
þat euer I herde of speche spent.
So worðy whyt wern wedeʒ Hys,
His lokeʒ simple, Hymself so gent,

bot a wounde, ful wyde and weete con wyse
anende His hert, þurʒ hyde torente.
Of His quyte syde His blod outsprent.
Alas, þeȝt I, who did þat spyt?
Ani breste for bale aȝt haf forbrent

er he þerto hade had delyt.

The Lombe delyt non lyste to wene.
þaʒ He were hurt and wounde hade,
in His sembelaunt watʒ neuer sene,
so wern His glenteʒ gloryous glade.

I loked among His meyny schene
how þay wyth lyf wern laste and lade.
þen saʒ I þer my lyttel quene
þat I wende had standen by me in sclade.
Lorde, much of mirþe watʒ þat ho made

among her fereʒ þat watʒ þat ho made
þat syȝt me gart to þenk to wade
for luf-longyng in gret delyt.

1133  Hys] hys MS; hys[e] GzP2, Bo
Delit me drof in y3e and ere, my maneȝ mynde to maddying malte.

Quen I seȝ my freely, I wolde be þere by3onide þe water þaȝ ho were walte. I þoȝt þat no þynge myȝt me dere to fech me bur and take me halte, and to start in þe strem schulde non me stere,

to swymme þe remnaunt þaȝ I þer swalte. Bot of þat munt I watȝ bitalt; when I schulde start in þe strem astraye, out of þat caste I watȝ bycalt– hit watȝ not at my Pryncȝ paye.

Hit payed Hym not þat I so flonc ouer meruelous mereȝ, so mad arayd. Of raas þaȝ I were rasch and ronk, þet rapely þerinne I watȝ restayed, for ryȝt as I sparred vnto þe bonc,

þat brathe out of my drem me brayde. Þen wakned I in þat erber wlonk– my hede vpon þat hylene watȝ layde þer as my perle to grounde strayd. I raxled and fel in gret affra, and sykyng to myself I sayd, “Now al be to þat Pryncȝ paye.”
Me payed ful ille to be outfleme
so sodenly of þat fayre regioun,
þro alle þo syȝte3 so quyke and queme.

A longeyng heuy me strok in swone,
and rewfully þenne I con to reme:
"O perle," coþe I, "of rych renoun,
so wat3 hit me dere þat þou con deme
in þys veray avysyoun!

If hit be ueray and soth sermoun
þat þou so styke3 in garlande gay,
so wel is me in þys doel-doungoun
þat þou art to þat Prynse3 paye."

To þat Prynce3 paye hadde I ay bente,
and ȝerned no more þen wat3 me geuen,
and halden me þer in trwe entent,
as þe perle me prayed þat wat3 so þryuen,
as helde drawen to Godde3 present,
to mo of His mysterys I hade ben dryuen.

Bot ay wolde man of happe more hente
þen moȝten by ryȝt vpon hem clyuen.
Þerfore my ioye wat3 sone toriuen,
and I kaste of kythe þat laste3 aye.
Lorde, mad hit arn þat agayn þe stryuen,
oþer proferen þe oȝt agayn þy paye.
To pay þe Prence ȝer sete saȝte
hit is ful eȝe to þe god Krystyyn;
for I haf founden Hym, boȝe day and naȝte,
a God, a Lorde, a frende ful fyin.

1205  Ouer þis hyul þis lote I laȝte,
for pyty of my perle enclyyn,
and syȝen to God I hit bytauȝte,
in Krysteȝ dere blessyng and myn,
þat in þe forme of bred and wyn

1210  þe preste vus scheweȝ vch a daye.
He gef vus to be His homly hyne
ande precious perleȝ vnto His pay Amen. Amen.
Textual and Explanatory Notes

1-2  *Perle, plesaunte . . . in golde so clere!* Since the syntax shifts at the end of line 2, it seems best to take the first two lines, *pace* Gordon (1953), as an apostrophe to the pearl, a “stone” redolent with Biblical and medieval lapidary meaning. Pearls were considered to result from the dew falling on oysters and to be foremost among white stones and whiter the younger they were. In *Cleanness* 1117 – 1132, pearls that regain their whiteness after being washed in wine symbolize the effect of penance on the soul; in *Cleanness* 1067 – 1070, Christ himself is a pearl, enclosed in the “lel Mayden” Mary. Appearances of pearls in the Bible with obvious relevance in this poem are the pearl of great price of Matthew 13: 45 –46, perhaps particularly relevant to this stanza and its lost pearl and explicitly invoked in a later stanza (733 – 744); and the pearls that ornament the gates of the New Jerusalem in Apocalypse (Revelation) 21: 21, which may have suggested the heavenly Pearl–maiden herself to the poet. The Latin name of the pearl, *margarita*, and derived English personal names such as Margaret and Margery (for which cf. lines 199, 206, and 1037), may of course also be relevant to a poem about a girl who is a pearl.

3  *oute of oryent* The lapidaries assert that the best pearls come from India and Britain, so this phrase could conceivably mean “except in the East,” “coming from the East,” or “among those not from the East.”

5-6  *So rounde . . . her sydez were* The terms of the description (as much as the pronoun) anticipate the appearance of the Pearl–maiden, since the gem itself is only figuratively “reken in vche araye” (in every suit of clothes?) and its “smal” (i.e. slim) and “smoþe” sides are cast in the vocabulary of erotic blazoning of women. Line 6, especially, is echoed by line 190, where the Pearl–maiden herself is being described.

8  *sengeley in synglure* i.e., apart as unique. Gollancz (1891) first emends to *synglere* and then (1921) to *syngulere*, both presumably to fix the eye-rhyme, which does not seem necessary to us.

9  *leste* The manuscript reading could equally well be *lefte*.

10  *hit* The pearl is referred to using the feminine pronoun in the preceding lines, and the sudden change of pronoun gender here and in lines 13, 30, and 41 serves to emphasize the disjunction between the pearl here depicted as an inanimate lost gemstone and the human being who is so allegorized—the feminine pronouns are the ones that are out of place in the current context.

11  *luf-daungere* the power of love (see MED). The word *daunger* evokes feudal power, primarily referring to the power exercised by a lord or lady (MED sense 1) but also
referring to the woman’s resistance to her lover or the feeling of frustration experienced by the lover himself (MED sense 4), couching courtly love as feudal service to a lady and anticipating the Dreamer’s use of the language of courtly love later in the poem. See W.R.J. Barron, “Luf-daungere,” Medieval Miscellany Presented to Eugène Vinaver by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends, ed. F. Whitehead et al. (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1965), 1-18.

**17**  
*bert*  
Gollancz (1921) and Stanbury (2001) emend *bert* to *herte*, perhaps for meter.

**23**  
*iuele*  
Early editors Morris (1864) and Gollancz (1891, 1921) read *mele*, but there appears to be a faint “dotting” of the first minim. See MED s.v. *mel* n2, senses 1 and 2b, for the alternative reading.

**25**  
*mot*  
In MS, there is a blot that obscures the letter(s) preceding the ‘t’. Morris (1864) and Gollancz (1891) read *myȝt* whereas Osgood (1906), Gordon (1953), Hillman (1961) and others read *mot*. There is some fading as well, but image manipulation using the 2007 photographs confirms *mot*; *myȝt* does not seem possible in any case because there is not enough space for both *y* and *ȝ*.

**26**  
*runnen*  
Only Vantuono (1984) retains MS *runnen*; other editors emend to *runne*. However, with unpronounced final-syllable ‘e’, rhyming *runnen* with *sunne* and *dunne* may be acceptable.

**28**  
*schyne*  
Andrew and Waldron (1978+), following Luttrell ("Pearl: Symbolism in a Garden Setting," Neophilologus 49 [1965] 160 – 76), emend to *schyne* for grammatical agreement with *sprede*, taking both as infinitives dependent on *mot*, but by 2007 “consider this unnecessary.” We agree with their later determination and doubt Luttrell’s proposed grammar.

**29**  
*may now be fede* “may now be fed/nourished.” MS reads *not*, and most editors have interpreted “fede” as a variant spelling of “fade” (dim, dull, feeble), but the phonology makes that explanation rather unlikely. Stanbury (2001) follows Gollancz (1891) in understanding *fede* as past participle of a verb derived from ON *feyja* ‘to cause to rot’ (MED s.v. *fȳde* ppl adj) but the resulting sense seems incongruous even if the concepts of “rot and regeneration” (Stanbury) pervade the stanza.

**35**  
*spryngande*  
Growing, sprouting (see MED). MS reads *spryngande*, which is retained by Hillman (1961) and Vantuono (1984), though both divide *spry ande*. Vantuono argues that the “emendation of all other editors to *spryngande* seems unnecessary, since the scribe sometimes ran words together” (102). Vantuono glosses *spry* as “shrubs” (which seems unlikely as a gloss) and Hillman as “sprig” (which makes an unlikely collocation).
fayr reflayr "sweeter scent." Dismissing the occurrence of reflayr in Cleanness: "Per watȝ rose reflayr where rote hatȝ ben ever" (1079), Andrew and Waldron (1978+) follow Gollancz (1891) and suggest that the word division in the MS is unreliable and that the syntax favours fayrre flayr. As Gordon (1953) noted, the spelling “feier” in line 103 of what must be a comparative there (“þe fyrre in þe fryth þe feier con ryse/ þe playn . . .”) suggests that fayr may also be a comparative here.

spennd Vantuono (1984) reads spenud (paleographically possible since ‘n’ and ‘u’ are indistinguishable in the manuscript but at very least unusual orthography) while others emend to spenned for metre or exact visual rhyme. Andrew and Waldron (1978+) retain spennd.

for careful colde . . . caȝt “on account of a mournful chill that seized me,” MS reads care ful colde (“very cold sorrow”) which other editors have retained, but the scribe’s word-division practice makes our reading equally likely.

penned (Holthausen). MS reads "spenned," but this does not alliterate properly in its line and is a repetition of an earlier rhyme word in the stanza (l. 49), a kind of repetition that the poet generally avoids.

fyrte Paleographically, either fyrte or fyrce may be the MS reading here, since ‘c’ and ‘t’ are not carefully distinguished in the scribal hand. ‘Fyrte’ could be the past participle of the verb MED ‘frighten,’ so meaning apprehensive or fearful (MED). Conversely, MED ‘fers,’ modern fierce, is used primarily to describe the qualities of a person, meaning bold, brave, noble, etc. However, it possesses a secondary meaning of violent and dangerous, which might be appropriate here. Morris (1864) understands this passage to mean “With trembling doubts that fast fought” (105). Chase (1932) glosses fyrte as “frightened, fearful” (75), whereas Hillman (1964) glosses fyrte “violent,” interpreting the passage as “With violence which swiftly reasonings fought” (80). Gollancz (1891) suggests the phrase fyrte skylles means “timid reasons” (109). Gordon (1953) understands this passage to mean “With vehement thoughts that contended obstinately” (49). Andrew and Waldron (1978+) interpret fyrce as “proud; bold; fierce; vehement” (317). See also F. Holthausen, “Zur Textkritik me. Dichtungen,” Archiv 90 (1893): 143-48. The extension by Gordon of the meaning of skylles to “thoughts” (also implicit in Morris) seems unlikely; of the many significations of that word in Middle English, the meaning “cause, reason, ground” seems most likely: “I mourned my pearl that was enclosed there, for reasons of fear that contended strongly.”

adubemente (for metre). MS reads "adubmente."
Gordon (1953) as well as Andrew and Waldron (1978+) separate the words *on slyde3*. Andrew and Waldron interpret *on slyde3* to mean “slide over each other” (58).

*bonkes* (Morris) MS reads "bnkes" or “bukes” (although Gordon [1953] apparently read the right stroke of the "b" as the central stroke of an uncompleted "bo" juncture and printed "bonkes" with the comment "o imperfect in MS"). While most editors sensibly emend to *bonkes*, Vantuono (1984), followed by Stanbury (2001), argues for reading *bukes* as a variant spelling of *bek*, meaning “small stream,” which we reject on phonological grounds.

Editors transcribe *stonden*, interpreting as present or past tense of *standen*. Andrew and Waldron (1978+) emend to *stoden*, glossing "shone."

Editors, except Morris (1864) and Vantuono (1984), emend MS a to *as*. Vantuono suggests that the ‘a,’ “gliding to the s of *stremande*, may be a shortened form of *as*.” (109).

Editors emend to *over gayn*, except Morris (1864), Hillman (1961), deFord (1967) and Vantuono (1984) who retain MS reading, the former three without explanation. Vantuono says that the MS *ofer* can be retained because “[t]he dreamer thinks that Paradise must be either on his side of the stream or on the opposite side” (110), but this reading hardly matches the import of the whole stanza. There is a plausible etymology for *gayn* as a preposition (ON *gegn*) and it is attested in northern texts, but the combination with *over* (adv) is at least hard to parse and would likely not make a Middle English equivalent of "over against" as editors seem to assume.

Here and at lines 185 and 225, this form probably represents the past tense, in which case *hoped* at 138 is possibly scribal.

*ay more* (Gollancz 1891). MS reads "amore." Vantuono defends "a more" as a variant spelling for "ay more."

(Gollancz 1921). MS reads "atount." Gordon (1953) suggests that, although *atount* has been regarded as an error for *astoun*, *astoun* may “[represent] an Anglo-French of *atoner*, a nearly related synonym of *estoner*,” and most editors have followed Gordon. The emended reading has usually been assigned to ME *astouen* (see MED s.v. astonen), but the past participle of that verb is usually *astonied*; the manuscript form is better explained as a form of ME *astinten*, to stop an activity: "that pierced my heart, stopped very much off course."

beau amys. MS has a sequence of five minims after ‘a’ and thus reads "beaumys" or "beamuys" etc. Morris (1864) reads beau uiys. Gollancz (1891) reads beau myys and translates myys as ‘tunic.’ Osgood (1906), also reading beau uiys, emends dramatically to bleaunt of biys, meaning “sorcot of fine linen” (64), after an extended discussion of the Pearl-maiden's clothing and citing Revelation 19:8. Gordon (1953), followed by other editors, reading beauuiys, emends to beau biys, again citing Revelation 19:8. Hillman reads beaumys and glosses “mantle or surcoat” (83), interpreting "be" as a prefix meaning "around, about," and "aumys" as a reflection of ModE aumusse (from Latin almucium), a fur of various forms, but most often a cape, worn by ecclesiastical canons. Vantuono (1984) reads beau mys, suggesting that mys is a shortening of amit (see MED s.v. and note variant spellings amis, amice, amuce) and glosses mys as ‘coat,’ “[denoting] the loose outer garment the maiden wears over her cortel (203).” The identification of the second part with ME amit/amis (ModE amice, derived from Latin amictus) seems particularly promising to us in the light of Revelation 7:9 and 7:13, both of which describe the saved of the nations as amicti stolis albis ("wrapped in white robes") that they have washed and whitened in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14). An aphetic form as suggested by Vantuono is apparently not otherwise attested in ME, however, and we assume instead a scribal confusion, involving repetition in an exemplar of ‘a’ and letters composed of minims.

watȝ Not in MS, but required for metre and sense.

bize The first letter of this word has been imperfectly corrected by the scribe from some other letter, possibly 'p,' by partial erasure.

here leke (suggested by Gollancz 1891) "hair enclosed." MS reads lere leke. Morris (1864) emends to bere heke (i.e. eke), understanding "hair also." Gollancz (1891) also reads bere heke, but adopts it hesitantly and proposes the following emendation in his note: "bere heke al byr umbegon," meaning “her hair encircled her all about.” Osgood (1906) emends to "here-leke," which he defines as "locks of hair." Gordon (1953) follows Gollancz's proposal. Hillman (1961), Cawley and Anderson (1962), Andrew and Waldron (1978+) and Vantuono (1984) all print lere leke. Hillman (1961) translates the line as “Her face-radiance all ‘round her beamed.” Andrew and Waldron (1978+) agree with Cawley and Anderson (1962), who translate the phrase as “Her face was enclosed all around (i.e. with a wimple).” Andrew and Waldron argue that the emendation to bere “involves the awkward reading of leke as a pa.t.
It also weakens the logical development of the poet’s description, for the Maiden’s hair is dealt with in 213f, and it would be clumsy for the subject to be anticipated here” (64). Lere-leke has been enshrined in the MED as "wimple," with only this line from *Pearl* as substantiation. Understanding the MS reading in this way, however, would seem to involve attributing a most unusual fashion to the Pearl-maiden, of hair wimpled up near the face (line 210) but freely flowing over shoulders below (lines 213–14). Stanbury (2001) reads here-leke, translating "hair-enclosure" in the margin, and argues “[s]ince the stanza emphasizes her unbound hair and lovely complexion, she would have been unlikely to be wearing a wimple.”

229  *pyse* "person." Gollancz (1891), followed by other editors, emends to ‘pyece,’ Hillman (1961) to ‘pece,’ all presumably to preserve the sight-rhyme, since *pyse* is an acceptable spelling variant of the same word.

235  *spyce* Gollancz (1891), Gordon (1953), and Hillman (1961) emend to *spece*.

Vantuono (1995) notes that emendation is unnecessary. Although his glossary translates the word as "damsel" here and at 938 (i.e. MED s.v. *spice* n.2), he draws attention in his note to the use of “[t]he spice image...throughout *Pearl*. The spot where the pearl is lost is spread with spices...the dreamer sees spices in the terrestrial paradise...and the maiden is again called *specyal spyce*...At the basis of this image is the symbolic death-and-resurrection seed that fell into the ground” (116).

241  *cope* The MS abbreviation here, used in Latin manuscripts for *quod*, is expanded as *quod* or *quoth* by all editors, but the word is spelled out in the manuscript (once only) as *cope* at *SGGK* 776.

250  *in del* Amended for metre. MS reads *dys del*, which is likely scribal.

262  *ne* All previous editions read "nee," but what they transcribe as the second ‘e’ is at most a single minim-like stroke, possibly the beginning of a second ‘e’ (or more likely another letter) which the scribe stopped himself before completing but did not erase.

*ere* MS reads *here*. See *SGGK* 239, 1632, 1891 and cf. Cl 1088 and 1339 and *SGGK* 197. Morris (1864), Hillman (1961), deFord (1967), Vantuono (1984) and Putter and Stokes (2014) retain MS *here* while other editors, most notably Gollancz (1891, 1921), Gordon (1953), Andrew and Waldron (1978+), and Stanbury (2001), emend to *nere*. Hillman (1961) suggests other editors emend to *nere* because of “their difficulty arising from their punctuation of the passage. The maiden’s argument is: ‘Since neither loss or mourning exists here in Heaven, here indeed would be your true treasure chest’...The second *here* is pleonastic.” It seems more likely to us that the first *here* is an anticipatory error.
302 leuez (Gollancz 1891) MS reads louez. Morris (1864) and a few others retain the MS reading, Vantuono (1995) arguing that “louez ‘honors’ here and in 308 recalls 285 and heightens the word-play with leuez ‘believes’ 304 and leue 311.”

304 leuez MS reading is very indistinct as a result of damp damage but was probably leuez rather than lyuez, which remains a possibility, however.

307 westernays Apparently a corruption or alternative form of OF bestorné ‘awry,’ ‘backwards,’ ‘wrongly’. See MED. Hillman (1961), followed by Vantuono (1984), reads “west ernays.” She argues, ”A possible reading here is west (OE wæst) and ernays for ernes, a fourteenth-century form of ‘earnest, pledge,’ ” an understanding Vantuono also follows. Osgood (1906) and Chase (1932) emend to forms of “besternays.”

308 leuez (Gollancz 1891) MS reads louez, which Morris (1864), Vantuono (1984), Stanbury (2001) and Putter and Stokes (2014) alone retain.

309 is MS reads īs.

319 counsayl Gollancz (1921), Chase (1932), Gordon (1953), and Stanbury (2001) emend to counsayle, presumably for the eye-rhyme, but this seems entirely unnecessary.

323 man (Gollancz 1891) MS reads ma, which most editors emend. Morris (1864), Osgood (1906), Gollancz (1921), Hillman (1961), de Ford (1967) and Vantuono (1984) retain ma, glossing as a form of "man" without further explanation except in the case of Vantuono, who adduces the same spelling of MED me indefinite pronoun ("one, someone, a person . . . ") in Sir Ferumbras (whereas this line has an instance of the common noun instead).

335 perle (Osgood). MS reads perleȝ, which is retained by Morris (1864), Gollancz (1891), Hillman (1961), and deFord (1967) but likely results from the influence of the similar ending of partleȝ earlier in the line. (Putter and Stokes [2014] modernize the same reading as perles.)

342 in (suggested by Morris). MS reads and (i.e. the Tironian nota), and Morris (1864), Osgood (1906), Hillman (1961), deFord (1967), Moorman (1977), and Vantuono (1984) retain and, Vantuono translating "both in prosperity and in misfortune," understanding the nouns as "synthetic datives."
stynst MS reads ftyft. We have retained this as a possible anomalous form of the imperative; other editors emend, notably Gollancz (1921), Gordon (1953) and Andrew and Waldron (1978+), to stynt.

*by lurez of lyȝtly leme* “easily drive off your losses.” Stanley (in *Notes and Queries* 37.2 [1990], 158–160) explains *leme* as a metanalysis of *offleme*, then subjected to tmesis by the insertion of *lyȝtly*.

if *rapely raue* MS reads *if rapely raue*. Gollancz (1921), followed by other editors, inserts *I* after *rapely* for sense, but this is not the usual syntax of the poem, though it is slightly more explicable as a scribal error.

*lyȝet* (Holthausen). MS reads *lyȝet* (“assuage”), which is not a completely implausible reading (though the grammar would not likely be Vantuono’s “soothe . . . [me] with (your) solace,” where *lyȝet* is an imperative parallel to *rebuke* l. 367, but rather “your solace . . . soothes me”). However, it makes rather awkward sense, whereas the Holthausen emendation gives better sense and also fuller alliteration.

*bau* Editors transcribe and print *ban*, but we think the glyph represents the labiodental fricative in this word. Cf. *Cleanness* 692–693 where the spellings *baf* and *bau* are used in quick succession.

*manere* (Holthausen). MS reads *marere*. Morris (1864) retains the MS reading but guesses at emendation to *marrez* in his glossary (without further explanation). Gollancz (1891) adopts *marrez* as an emendation, translating *marrez mysse* as “grief woundeth me” (i.e. taking *myisse* as the subject of *marrez*). Holthausen and an anonymous reviewer of Gollancz (in *Athenæum* (1891): 185) suggested emending to *manerez*, which Osgood (1906), who retained the MS reading and translated “A botcher’s blunder,” dismissed because “N.E.D. shows that ‘manners’ was not employed in this sense till much later.” Most subsequent editors have adopted the Holthausen emendation, but Moorman (1977) follows Schofield’s (*PMLA* 24 (1909): 585–675) suggestion of *marierez* (“pearls”); Hillman (1961) would read *mare rez mysse* “great eloquence lack” (with innovative and improbable interpretation of the first two words); and Vantuono ingeniously but even more improbably explains *marereȝ mysse* as a figurative use of the word *marrow*, meaning vitality, translating the line “I am but dust and lack vitality.” It is not clear to what sense of the noun *manner* Osgood’s comments about date apply; there are certainly several relevant senses attested for the period of the poem, see MED s.v. *manere*, and a similar use of the plural *manereȝ*, also implying “refined ways of speaking,” occurs at SGGK 924.

*Crystes mersy and Mary and Jon* “the mercy of Christ and Mary and John.” Gordon (1953) comments, somewhat oddly, that “The *mersy* is Christ’s, and not Mary’s and
John's. . . . Lines 383-4 are a way of saying that Christ's mercy of redemption, shown in the Crucifixion where Mary and John stood close at hand, is the sole source of the poet's happiness." John is perhaps included primarily for the rhyme, but both Jesus and Mary were often associated with mercy and indeed one of the epithets of the latter was "well of mercy"—see SNT 37, PrT 656.

402 I hete MS reads I hete þe, which is awkward metrically and likely scribal.

430 Fenyx of Araby Not a common designation of Mary. The focus here is on the singularity or uniqueness (synglerty 429) of the bird rather than the death and resurrection that cause it to be taken elsewhere as a type of Christ: “Fenyx is a bridde and þere is but oon of þat kynde in all þe worlde wyde . . . [A]mong þe aribyes, þere þis bridde fenix is Ibredde, he is Iclepid singularis, al one” (Trevisa)

431 fereles (Hamilton) “without equal” (or possibly here, “without companion,” or “without a mate”—see MED s.v. fere n1). MS reads ferles, which has been defended as a reflex of ON frýjalaust (“blameless”—Gordon [1953]), or as derived from frele (“moral weakness, sinfulness”—MED), but Hamilton ("Notes on Pearl," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 57 [1958], 187) pointed out that “fereles” is applied to the Phoenix elsewhere in ME literature and is more relevant to the passage, and Luttrell ("A 'Gawain' Group Miscellany," Notes and Queries 207 [1962]: 448 - 449) provided additional evidence.

433 sayde (Morris). MS syde

436 bygynner (Morris). MS bygon (i.e. the scribe has drawn the macron over the wrong 'y').

439 porchasez and fonge pray pursue and seize their quarry.

446 in byt self leyng: MS. Previous editions, taking the 'l' as a lobeless 'b,' have understood this as "in its own being," but although this is grammatically possible, the 'l' is more distant from the following letter than is usually the case with lobeless 'b' in the MS, and the interpretation "laying (that is, existing) in itself" seems to us equally if not more viable.

457 as sayte Saynt Poule See 1 Cor. 12: 12 – 26

458- 467 Kryȝt . . . tyȝte . . . myȝte . . . bytwȝtȝe . . . gryȝte . . . lyȝtȝe MS reads kryȝf . . . tyȝf . . . myȝf . . . by twȝfȝe . . . gryȝf . . . lyȝf. The words tyȝte and myȝte have proven problematic for editors and have provoked various attempts at emendation or explanation. Morris (1864) retains myȝte and glosses “mysteries, secrets,” and this explanation has been enshrined in MED (s.v. mist n2) and OED (s.v. mist sb 2) but
seems an entirely unlikely truncation (the only other quotation beyond this one alleged in the MED entry probably belongs with the foggy kind of mist, and we think the Milton sentence in the OED entry is also entirely unrelated, see Daniel M. Murtaugh, "Pearl 462: Æ Mayster of Myste," Neophilologus 55 [1971], 192-193). Morris emends *tyste* to *tryste* (“trustly”). Gollancz (1891, 1921) follows Morris for both readings but takes *myste* as a “poetical licence for *myghte*.” Osgoode (1906) retains both MS readings, but notes “Probably for *tyste*, *myste*, but thus spelled for the sake of rhyme.” Emerson, "Some Notes on Pearl" (PMLA 37 [1922]), p. 70, proposes “OF. *miste* ’joli, gentil, beau mis, propret’ . . . an adj. here used as a substantive for ‘gentility, graciousness, courtesy’,” but this stretches both semantics and grammar of the OF. Murtaugh 1971 proposes *miste* derived from *mister* (“trade”) and meaning “‘ministry’, ‘service’, or ‘calling’” but there does not seem to be other evidence of such a word with such a meaning. The phrase “maister of myght” is attested in *Gologras and Gawain* 187, unlike “Mayster of miste,” where neither the word nor the phrase is attested. We therefore follow Osgooode in suspecting that ‘tight’ and ‘might’ are the words meant, and suggest that these would have made satisfactory eye-rhymes in this stanza with the other rhyme words ending in a sibilant followed by ‘t’ if all were spelled with the glyph that in the script of this manuscript stands for both yogh and ‘z’. Our theory is that the scribe baulked at spelling the name Christ with that letter in the first line of the stanza and then regularized the other spellings to match as he/she wrote the rest of the stanza.

466 on arme ofer fynger þaz þou ber byȝe “even if you wear a ring on arm or finger”

467-68 fare we alle . . . to kyng and queen “we all become king and queen”

472 This line is missing from the manuscript and a gap has not been left, so the page has been written with 35 lines of text rather than the normal 36. The elaborate regularity of stanza structure, concatenation, etc., suggest strongly that there did exist a line to complete the stanza structure and that it has been accidentally omitted in copying. Gollancz (1891 and 1921) is the only editor bold enough to compose his own line to fill the gap; other editors follow the example of Morris (1864) and leave a blank line.

479 be (Osgood). MS reads ho.

483-5 þou lyfed not two zer . . . pater ne crede These lines are generally taken to indicate that the Pearl-maiden died as a young girl under two years of age and therefore unable to pray or to memorize the Lord’s Prayer (“pater”) or the (Apostles’) Creed (“crede”). The age of the Pearl-maiden may be symbolic rather than autobiographical: the Innocents slaughtered by Herod are aged two and under.
484 couþe God MS reads couþe neþu god, which editors have accepted, but the resulting line seems extremely awkward metrically and we suspect neuer results from an error of anticipation of the following line.

489 par ma fay An elegant French asseveration (literally, “by my faith”).

490 fayr As it is in lines 46 and 103, the word fayr is likely a comparative (“fairer”) here: “It would be more seemly to hold the estate of countess in heaven.”

492 to dere a date As Gordon (1953) notes, the normal ME usage of date is extended by its uses as a concatenation word in this sequence of stanzas. The phrase in this line may depend on knowledge of the word’s etymology (L datum, “(a thing) given”): “too rich a gift.”

497-8 As Matthew meleþ in your messel in sothfol gospel “As Matthew says in your mass in the true gospel.” The parable of the vineyard which follows, Matthew 20: 1 – 16, is the gospel reading for Septuagesima Sunday mass (York and Sarum). Cf. Cleanness 51: “Maþew meleþ in his masse of þe man ryche . . . “ It is possible that the mention of the mass is called up in both cases by the demands of alliteration, but on the other hand both passages mentioned in this way are authentically gospel readings in the missal.

499-500 insample . . . lygte “He skilfully conceived a parable [MED s.v. ensaumple n.] and likens it to bright heaven.” It is also possible to retain the manuscript separation of in and sample (MED s.v. saumple n.) as many editors have done and understand “In a parable he skilfully conceived . . . ,” but this seems to us to give less satisfactory sense.

501 My regne . . . is lyk on lygte “My Kingdom above is like . . .”

512 keruen and caggen and man bit clos “cut and bind and make it secure”

522 made bit tozt “made it a firm offer” (lit. “made it taut”)

529 þe date of day (Osgood). MS reads þe day of date.

530 on oure before þe sonne gotþ doun In the Vulgate, this is “undecimam [horam]” the eleventh hour, and the lord has previously gone out specifically at the third hour (vnder, l. 513), sixth hour, and ninth hour. gotþ: MS reads go, which has been retained by editors, presumably as a subjunctive, though one would not seem to be called for here.
558. *no warning I wyl of þe zete* "I will not receive a reprimand from you." MS reads *no wanig I wyl þe zete.* Editors have emended to *waning* (reduction), having the lord rather oddly promise not to reduce the agreed-upon penny. While it is just marginally possible that such a statement could be based on a wild mistranslation of Vulgate "non faciam tibi iniuriam" (Matthew 20: 13: "I do thee no wrong"), that seems unlikely.

563. *Fyrre þen couenaunde is noz to plete* Apparently a legal maxim: “One cannot sue beyond the contract.”

572. *called* (Morris 1864). MS reads *call*.

573-5. *Dus pore men . . . wyttel atslyke* “Thus poor men always get their part, though they came late and were inconsiderable and though their labour slides away with little (recompense).”

581. *Wheþer welyng now I con bygynne* “Nevertheless, I began just recently”

595. *Dow quytez vchon as his desserte* Psalm 61 (62): 13: “tu redes unicuique iuxta opera sua” (“thou wilt render to every man according to his works”).

616. *bere* So, probably, MS (*bère*): ‘l’ and lobeless ‘b’ before ‘e’ (i.e. 'b' in juncture or "with biting") are not easily distinguishable in this hand. Previous editors have read *lere*, and most have emended, Gordon (1953), Andrew and Waldron (1979+) and others to *fere* (show, array), Osgoode (1906) and Gollancz (1921) to *bere* (hire), Putter and Stokes (2014) to *lowere* (reward, recompense). Emerson ("Some Notes on the Pearl," *PMLA* 37 [1922]) read *lere* and suggested emendation to *bere*, “bearing, manner, society, position” (74), i.e. *MED bere n9*, sense b. We think this is the right word but not the right sense (since the focus of the stanza is on reward, not position) and would instead propose an attenuated use of *bere n9* sense a (“Outcry, clamor, commotion, disturbance”); “You say that I came too late and am not worthy so great a fuss.”

617. *bourne abate* "nobleman abbot." Previous attempts to read *abate* as a verb (the leading contenders being the past tense of *abiden*—to remain—and the infinitive or past participle of *abaten*—to beat down) are unconvincing and have missed the point of the Pearl-maiden’s question here, which is that worldly position, public piety, and exalted status in the church hierarchy do not exempt even the great and holy adult from sin and its occasions.

672. *al* MS reads *at*, which many editors retain. Those who emend follow either Holthausen (*as*) or Gordon (*and*).
two men to saue is God by skylle “God will (is to) skilfully save two men.”

face MS reads fate.

Psalm 23 (24): 3 – 4: “Quis ascendet in montem Domini? Aut quis stabit in loco sancto eius? Innocens manibus et mundo corde, Qui non accepit in vano animam suam, Nec iuravit in dolo proximo suo.” (“Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord: or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent in hands and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbour.”) Not recognizing lines 687 – 688 as continued translation of the biblical passage, previous editors have placed only lines 681 – 683 in quotation marks as psalter text, but it is better to treat the whole, including the tag line 684, which picks up innocens from the psalm, as paraphrase of the psalm. Note that the poet’s reading of his text is innovative in detecting in the psalm two classes of the saved: the innocent (up to mundo corde) and the righteous (Qui no accepit . . . ).

Of þys ryztwys saȝ Salamon playn/ how Koynytse in honoure hym con açuyle. “About this righteous one Solomon says plainly how Wisdom received him in honour.” For line 690, MS reads only the obviously corrupt “how kyntly oure con açuyle.” As Henry Bradley argued in 1890 (“An Obscure Passage in The Pearl,” Academy 38 [1890], 201-2, 249), the reference must be to the personified Wisdom (Koynytse) of Wisdom 10:10: “Haec profugum irae fratris iustum deduxit per vias rectas; Et ostendit illi regnum Dei, Et dedit illi scientiam sanctorum, Honestavit illum in laboribus et complevit labores illum.” (“She conducted the just, when he fled from his brother’s wrath, through the right ways, and shewed him the kingdom of God, and gave him knowledge of the holy things, and made him honourable in his labours, and accomplished his labours.”) The Wisdom reference is to the dream of Jacob in Genesis 28: 11 – 17, in which a ladder extends from the place Jacob sleeps up to heaven.

bo (Bradley 1890). MS reads be. Sapientia in the book of Wisdom is female, and it seems likely that the poet would not have changed her gender in a direct reference.

Dauid in sauter: Psalm 142 (143): 2: “Et non intres in iudicium cum servo tuo, Quia non iustificabitur in conspectus tuo omnis vivens.” (“And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight no man living shall be justified.”)

alegge þe ryzt . . . speech: “claim the right (to eternal life), and you may be caught out by that same speech”—because it would exhibit the sin of pride.

The concatenation pattern fails in this line, since either *innocent/innocens* or *ryȝt* or both would be required by the pattern. Andrew and Waldron’s substitution for the first word, *Iesu*, of *Ryȝt*, which they take to be a personified Justice here equated with Jesus, is unconvincing.

The parable of the pearl of great price is told in Matthew 13: 45 – 46, where the man seeking to acquire the pearl is a merchant (Lat. "negotiator") rather than the poem’s jeweller, whose selling here of all his goods "both woollen and linen" is slightly incongruous with his profession.

There is disagreement among editors and critics as to the manuscript reading here, with many detecting an ‘ri’ abbreviation above the right shoulder of a ‘t’, resulting in the readings *oftriys* (Gollancz 1891 and 1921; Donaldson, "Oysters, Forsooth: Two Readings in Pearl," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 73 [1972], 75-79); others (notably Osgoode (1906), Gordon (1953), Andrew and Waldron (1978+)) read the MS as *offys*. We see more paleographic difficulties with the former readings than with the latter. The scribe’s ‘ri’ abbreviation with ‘t’ is most commonly slightly seriffed top and bottom to form a miniature minim, whereas the stroke in question is rounded and teardrop shaped, more like the completing stroke of an ‘f’; moreover, the scribe habitually writes ‘s’ and ‘t’ in ligature whereas these (if the first glyph were indeed a long ‘s’) are not written that way. Reading *offys* requires understanding the same stroke that others take as an ‘ri’ abbreviation as the far-displaced completing stroke of a second ‘f’, and although this is probably the farthest separation of such a stroke from its ascender in the manuscript, such an understanding is on slightly firmer paleographic grounds. Possibly the appeal of a mention of oysters in association with a pearl has some weight here, and that reading was strongly argued by Donaldson, but as Gordon (1953) points out the plural *ostriys* is a logical problem since we are dealing with the unique Pearl and her unique Maker, and the rhyme also is more or less impossible with *prys*, *wys*, *vys*, and *fleur-de-lys*. Moreover, one might expect some direct reference in the Pearl-maiden’s answer to such an audacious question. Echoed in *angel-bauyng* 754 (angel-like possession—c.f. line 450) the idea of office may be called up here by the Pearl-maiden’s outfit, perhaps conceived of in these lines as a livery of office. The Pearl-maiden's position and her appearance are again linked in her answer: "He gef me myȝt and als bewte" (765 "He gave me power and also beauty.").

destyne Andrew and Waldron (1978+) capitalize this word as a reference to Christ, and translate the first two lines of the stanza as "'My peerless Lamb,' she said, 'my beloved Destiny, who can amend everything . . . " This interpretation is
grammatically and logically possible, but seems to strain the sense of a stanza that features the active intervention of the Lamb. We therefore side with the majority of editors, taking *al* as adverbial rather than pronominal and understanding, "'My peerless Lamb,' she said, 'who is entirely able to amend my dire destiny . . . ."

761  *worlde wete* An image that likely evoked both moist fleshiness and dismal winter dampness for a medieval audience.

763-4  *Cum hyder . . . non in he* from Canticles (Song of Solomon) 4: 7 - 8: "Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te. Veni de Libano, sponsa mea: veni de Libano, veni, coronaberis." ("Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee. Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come: thou shalt be crowned.") These lines were generally considered to be addressed by Christ to his Church.

766  *In Hys blod He wesch my wede* cf. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:14: "Hi sunt, qui venerunt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas, et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine Agni." ("These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.")

786  a boundred and forty housande flot  the saved are numbered at 144,000 in Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:4 and 14: 1.

790-92  *he apostel . . . he nwe cyte o Jerusalem* Apocalypse (Revelation) 21: 2: "Et ego Ioannes vidi sanctam civitatem Ierusalem novam descendentem de caelo a Deo, paratam sicut sponsam ornatam viro suo." ("And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.")

799  *gyltle*  So MS as we read it. The scribe has accidentally written the vertical stroke of an 'I' rather than an 'l' (i.e. it begins with a swoop from the right rather than a serif from the left) but has noticed the mistake and has not provided the final right-curving stroke of the 'l'. We therefore read the stroke as a (malformed) 'l'. We do not see the signs of imperfect correction that Andrew and Waldron (1978+) allege.

801-3  as a scep . . . fro vcb query  Isaiah 53: 7: "Oblatus est quia ipse voluit, et non aperuit os suum: sicut ovis ad occasionem ducetur, et quasi agnus coram tondente se obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum." ("He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth.") This verse of Isaiah is also quoted in Acts 8: 32 with slight differences of wording.

802  *in bande nem* (Gordon). MS reads *i lande men*. We do not observe signs of attempted correction as suggested by Andrew and Waldron (1978+).
For Christ’s silence before his Jewish accusers, see Matthew 27: 12; Mark 15: 3 - 5.

A translation of Isaiah 53: 4: "... languores nostros ipsum tulit, et dolores nostres ipsum portavit." ("... he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.")

Although the places of John the Baptist's ministry are not well recorded in the Bible, he baptized Jesus in the Jordan and neither Jerusalem nor Galilee are mentioned in connection with him. Probably the poet, whether deficient in sacred geography or not, ascribed to him an ambit similar to that of Jesus, his successor. Several editors, including Gordon (1953) and Andrew and Waldron (1978+), add In at the beginning of this line; we prefer to understand þeras in 818 as a summative "wherever."

"The next day, John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world."

Isaiah 53: 8: "Generationem eius quis ennarabit?" ("Who shall declare his generation?"). Again, this is quoted in Acts 8: 33.

The Lamb is the only one worthy to open the book in Apocalypse (Revelation) 5; the seals are broken and the book read in the subsequent chapters.

The MS always spells this name with abbreviations for the Latin equivalent Johannes or its case variants, here iohū or iohnī; with some reservations, we follow established editorial convention in everywhere substituting the single syllable English name, which is guaranteed as the phonetic intent of these Latin spellings/abbreviations by metre and rhyme.

enle: possibly MED enle adj., from OE ēnlīc, "single, individual," as editors have speculated, though this line would then be the only evidence for such a word in ME; but more likely a spelling of MED inli adv., from OE inlice, "heartily, cordially."
pay of mote couthe neuer mynge . . . creste: "they could never bring to mind spot (blemish, flaw, stain) who bear the crest of spotless pearls." Editors since Gordon (1953) have been convinced by his argument (given most fully in Gordon and Onions, "Notes on the Text and Interpretation of Pearl," Medium Aevum 1 [1933], 183) that mote refers to "strife" (MED mot n3) here, unusually for the poem. But that suggestion is more appropriate to the previous stanza than this one, which specifically contrasts the perfected vision of the throng of maidens with the imperfect vision of their mourners, including the Dreamer, who see only their "corses in clotte3" (bodies in lumps of dirt) and not their heavenly perfection.

hat (Osgood). MS reads ĥa.

on detbe that of Jesus.

Lest les þou leue my talle farande: "Lest you believe my excellent tale to false" (MED s.v. lese adj). As one of the 144,000, the Pearl-maiden is incapable of lying. See lines 897–98 and Apocalypse (Revelation) 14: 5.

'I segh,' says John . . . : These lines paraphrase Apocalypse (Revelation) 14: 1 - 5: "Et vidi: et ecce Agnus stabat supra montem Sion, et cum eo centum quadraginta quatuor millia, habentes nomen eius et nomen Patris eius scriptum in frontibus suis. Et audivi vocem de caelo, tamquam vocem aquarum multarum, et tamquam vocem tonitru magnis: et vocem, quam audivi, sicut citharoedorum citharizantium in citharis suis. Et cantabant quasi canticum novum ante sedem, et ante quattuor animalia, et seniores: et nemo poterat dicere canticum, nisi illa centum quadraginta quatuor millia, qui empti sunt de terra. Hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati: virgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur Agnum quocumque iret. Hi empti sunt ex hominibus primitiae Deo, et Agno: Et in ore eorum non est inventum mendacium: sine macula enim sunt ante thronum Dei." ("And I beheld, and lo a lamb stood upon mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the noise of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb: And in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot before the throne of God.")

hat swe (Kölbing). MS reads þay swe.
*al oynte* "entirely consecrated/anointed" (MED ointen v.). Editors have kept MS aloynte and have accepted the interpretation of Morris (1864) "removed, far from . . . OFr aoligner." More likely, this is a reference to the consecration by anointing with oil and frankincense of first fruits, as in Lev. 2: 14 - 15: *Si autem obtuleris munus primarum frugum tuarum Domino de spicis adhuc virentibus, torrebis igni, et confringes in morem farris, et sic offeres primitias tuas Domino, fundens supra oleum et thus imponens, quia oblatio Domini est." (But if thou offer a gift of the firstfruits of thy corn to the Lord, of the ears yet green, thou shalt dry it at the fire, and break it small like meal, and so shalt thou offer thy firstfruits to the Lord, pouring oil upon it and putting on frankincense, because it is the oblation of the Lord.)

*anoynt* "anointed, consecrated." MS reads amoynt, i.e. has three minims after 'a', and editors have in general accepted Gollancz's 1891 explanation of this as amioynt, a form of MED enjoinen to join.

*bynde* *bat sympellesse coneȝ enclose" boorish fellow enclosed in ignorance." The Dreamer is characterizing himself in these terms. Previous editors have interpreted bynde as a spelling variant of bende and seen this description as addressed to the Pearl-maiden, who has, however, displayed theological sophistication rather than simplicity in their conversation.

*bygyngȝe* (Gordon). MS reads lygyngȝe and this is a sensible word ("places to lie"), varies the vocabulary from 932, and has therefore been retained by some editors, but it does not suit the argument of this stanza well, since a place to sleep outside (930) would also be a lygyng.

*bat lyȝt of Godȝe sondȝe" that descended by the sending of God." The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven in Apocalypse (Revelation) 21: 2.

*Cete of God’ oþer ‘syȝt of pes’* : "City of God" (civitas dei) is a Biblical cognomen (though the poet appears to take it as an etymology) of Jerusalem, e.g. in Psalm 86 (87): 3, Hebrews 12: 22; it is associated with the New Jerusalem in Apocalypse (Revelation) 3: 12: "scribam super eum nomen Dei mei, et nomen civitatis Dei mei novae Ierusalem, quae descendit de caelo a Deo meo." ("I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.") "Sight of peace" is the translation of the name Jerusalem given by Augustine in his commentary on the Psalms: "Babylon Confusio interpretatur, Jerusalem visio pacis" (PL 36: col 773). (Babylon means "mingling/confusion"; Jerusalem "sight/vision of peace.")

"in the one our peace was made entire: the Lamb chose it to suffer pain [in]"
958  *flesch* (Morris). MS reads *frefib*, which Vantuono (1984) reads as *frefib*, defends and renders improbably as "young bodies."

977  *wolde* I (Morris). MS reads only *wolde*. Gollancz (1921) has *wolde* *θer*.

979  *on a byl* John is taken to a "montem magnum et altum" ("a great and high mountain") to be shown the New Jerusalem (*Apocalypse* [Revelation] 21: 10).

985ff.  The description of the New Jerusalem in the poem is generally founded on *Apocalypse* (Revelation) 21: 11 to 22: 8.

1012  *topasye twynnebow* "two-coloured topaz." "[Topazius] hath .ii. colours, as it were of golde and of clere ayre, and shineth moste when it is smyte with the sonne beame" (Trevisa).

1016  *purpre with ynde blente* "purple blended with indigo." "Amatisus is purpre in colour, medlyd with colour of violette" (Trevisa).

1068  *anvnder* (Morris). MS reads *an vndeʒ*, which Vantuono (1984) alone retains, taking it as a spelling of MED *anentes*.

1073  *syʒt*: so MS in our reading. The first letter is either a malformed 'l' (as previous editors have taken it) or a malformed 's' (in our understanding).

1086  *frech* (Andrew and Waldron). MS reads *freuch* or more likely *french*, neither of which seem particularly sensible. Gordon (1953) emended to *frelich*. Many editors have accepted *freuch* as a spelling of the word *fresh*, but this seems doubtful to us.

1104  *with outer deylt* "with utter delight" (MED outre adj.) MS reads " wë outen deylt," which is nonsense although it has been retained by some editors as the doubtful "beyond delight" (Hillman 1961). Others in general have emended to "with gret deylt," leaving the MS reading unexplained.

1111  *golde* (Morris). MS reads *gloðɛ*.

1179  *quyke* (Gollancz 1891). MS reads *quykeʒ*.

**Bibliography**
