Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

edited by Murray McGillivray
with help from Elias Fahssi, David Hyttenrauch, and Andrew Taylor
[Peer-reviewed by MESA]

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Sir Gawain and the Green Knight © Murray McGillivray
Introduction

[To come.]

Editions Cited

The following editions are those cited in the textual variorum and in the textual and explanatory notes. In the textual variorum, they are identified with the sigla which here begin each entry; in the discursive notes, with editor's name and date of edition for editions, with fuller bibliographical information for articles and books.


(Previously published by Penguin, 1972.)


GzG Gollancz, Israel, ed. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Early English Text Society OS 210. (Introduction and notes by Mabel Day based on materials left by Gollancz on his death.)


Revised editions (revisions by Israel Gollancz), 1897 (Mo⁴) and 1912 (Mo⁵).


Also seen but not collated in our notes:


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Elias Fahssi, David Hyttenrauch, and Andrew Taylor
Síphen þe sege and þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye, 
þe bor3 brittened and brent to bronde3 and aske3, 
þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wro3t 
wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe.

5 Hit wat3 Ennias þe athel and his high kynde 
þat síphen deprecéd prouinces and patrounes become 
welne3e of al þe wele in þe west iles.

Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe, 
with gret bobbaunce þat bur3e he biges vpon fyrost 
and neuenes hit his aune nome as hit now hat; 
Ticius to Tuskan and teldes bigynnes; 
Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes vp homes; 
and fer ouer þe French Flod Felix Brutus 
on mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he sette3

10 wyth wynne, 
where werre and wrake and wonder 
bî syþe3 hat3 wont þerinne, 
and oft boþe blysse and blunder 
ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

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5 high] high MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of final 'h'; high Ma; high Bu; highe all other eds.
10 aune] aune MS; anne Ma; Owen Bu
11 Ticius] tícíus MS; Ticius [turnes] Mo; Ti[r]ius TGD, Bar; T[us]cius Si
17 wont] wont MS; woned Bu
Ande quen þis Bretayn watʒ bigged bi þis burn rych, bolde bredden þerinne, baret þat lofden, in mony turned tyme, tene þat wroʒten. Mo ferlyes on þis folde hau fallen here oft þen in any ọþer þat I wot syn þat ilk tyme.

Bot of alle þat here bult, of Bretaygne kynges, ay watʒ Arthur þe hendest as I haf herde telle. Forþþ an aunter in erde I attle to schawne þat a selly in siʒt summe men hit halden and an outtrage awenture of Arthureʒ wondereʒ.

If ʒe wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile I schal telle hit astit as I in toun herde with tonge: as hit is stad and stoken in stori stif and stronge with lel letteres loken, in londe so hatʒ ben longe.

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23 hau] hau or han MS; han all other editors.
28 halden] haldәn MS (with a imperfectly formed by crossing an o previously written); h[o]lden all other editors, transcribing holden.
Þis kynge lay at Camylot vpon Krystmasse
with mony luflych lorde, ledeʒ of þe best,
rekenly of þe Rounde Table alle þo rich breþer,
with rych reuel oryʒt and rechles merþes.
Þer tournayed tulkes bi tymʒ ful mony,
justed ful jolile þise gentyle kniȝtes,
syþen kayred to þe court caroles to make,
for þer þe fest watʒ ilyche ful fifteŋ dayes,
with alle þe mete and þe mirþe þat men coupþe ayþse,
such  glamm ande gle glorious to here,
dere dyn vpon day, daunsþng on nyþtes.
Al watʒ hap vpon heʒe in halleg and chambreʒ,
with lordeʒ and ladies as leuest him þoʒt.
50 With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,
þe most kyd knyʒteʒ vnder Krysteʒ seluen
and þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,
and he þe comlokest kynge þat þe court haldes.
for al watʒ þis fayre folk in her first æge
on sille:
þe hapnest vnder heuen,
kyng hyʒest mon of wylle—
hit were now gret nye to neuen
so hardy a here on hille.

46 glamm ande] glammandæ, or glamuandæ, or glaumandæ etc. MS; glaumande Ma, Mo, GzG; glaum ande TG, Ca, TGD, Wa, Bar, Mm, AW, Vn, Si, Bat; glaum and Bu; glam and PS
50 all] all MS; alle TG
51 krystez] kryʒf MS, Ma; kryste† Mo
58 were] werere MS; were† Ma, Mo, TG, GzG, Ca, TGD, Wa, Bu, Bar, Mm, AW, Si, Bat, PS; wer[, ]ere Vn
Wyle Nw ȝer watȝ so ȝep þat hit watȝ nwe cummen, þat day double on þe dece watȝ þe douth servȝed.
Fro þe kyng watȝ cummen with knyȝtes into þe halle, þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende, loude crye watȝ þer kest of clerkeȝ and oþer,

"Nowel!" nayted onewe, neuened ful ofte, [f. 92r/96r]
and syþen riche forth runnen to reche hondeselle, ȝeȝed ȝeres ȝiftes on hiȝ, ȝelde hem bi hond, debated busylȝy aboute þo giftes.
Ladies laȝed ful loude þoȝ þay lost haden,
and he þat wan watȝ not wroþe þat may ȝe wel trawȝe.
Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme.
When þay had waschen worþyly þay wenten to sete, þe best burne ay abof as hit best semed,
Whene Guenore ful gay grayped in þe myddes,

dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute, smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer
of tryed Tolouse, of Tars tapites innogh, þat were enbrawded and beten wyþ þe best gemmes þat myȝt be preued of prys wyþ penyes to bye,
in daye.
Þe comlokest to discrye þer glent with yȝen gray;
a semloker þat euer he syȝe,
soth moȝt no mon say.

nwe] nwe MS; [ȝister]-n[eu]ȝe GzG
hõeselles] honðe felle MS; hanselle PS
of(2)] of MS; [&] GzG; [and] Bu
innogh] ȝ nogh MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of h); ȝ nogh Ma; innowe Bu, innoghe Mo, GzG; innoghe all other eds.
enbrawded] enbrawdȝed MS; e[m]brawded Vn
Bot Arthure wolde not ete til al were serued, he watȝ so joly of his joyfnes and sumquat childgered. His lif liked hym lyȝt: he louied þe lasse auþer to lenge lye or to longe sitte, so bisied him his þonge blod and his brayn wylde; and also anoþer maner meued him eke, þat he þurȝ nobelay had nomen: he wolde neuer ete vpon such a dere day er hym devised were of sum auenturus þyng an vncoûpe tale of sum mayn meruayle þat he myȝt trawe, òper of alderes of armes, òper of auenturus, òper sum segg hym bisoȝt of sum siker knyȝt to joyne wyth hym in iustynge in joparde to lay, lede, li for lyf, leue vchon òper as fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to haue. Þis watȝ þe kynges countenaunce where he in court were at vch farand fest among his fre meny in halle. [f. 92v/96v] Þerfore of face so fere he stiȝtȝeȝ stif in stalle ful ȝep in þat Nw ȝere— much mirthe he mas with alle.

85 joyfnes MS; Io[lf]yfnes Mo
86 louied MS; loved PS
87 to lenge MS; to lenge Vn; to l[onge Ma, all other eds.
88 òper of(1) of of MS; Of † all eds
90 òper of(2) of oþ MS, Ma; of òper all other eds.
95 þe kynges MS, TG, Ca, Wa, Bu, Mm, AW; [þe] kynges Mo, GzG, TGD, Si; [the] kynges Ma, Bar, Bat, PS
Thus þer stondes in stale þe stif kyng hisseluen, talkkande bifore þe hyȝe table of trifles ful hende. There gode Gawan watȝ grayþed Gwenore bisyde, bope þe kynges sistersunes and ful siker kniȝtes. Bishop Bawdewyn abof bigineȝ þe table, and Ywan Vrynson ette with hymseluen. Þise were diȝt on þe des and derworȝly serued and siȝen mony siker segge at þe sidbordeȝ. Þen þe first cors come with crakkyng of trumpes, wyþ mony baner ful bryȝt þat þerbi henged, nwe nakryn noyse with þe noble pipes wylde werbles and wyȝt wakned lote, þat mony hert ful hiȝe hef at her towches. Dayntes dryuen þerwyth of ful dere metes, foysoun of þe fresche and on so fele disches þat pine to fynde þe place þe peple bifornþ for to sette þe sylueren þat sere sewes halden on clothe. Íche lede as he loued hymselue þer laght withouten lobe; ay two had disches twelue good ber and bryȝt wyn bope.

113 with[ MS, Ma, Mo, GzG, Mm, Vn; wit[h] TG, Ca, TGD, Wa, Bu, Bar, AW, Si, Bat
115 sidbordeȝ] sidebordes PS
119 wakned[ MS; wakned PS
124 sylueren] ylueȝ or ylueȝ MS; ylueȝ Ma; sylue[ren] Mo, TG, GzG, TGD, Wa, Bar, Mm, AW, Vn, Si; sylveren Ca, Bu, Bat, PS
Now wyl I of hor seruise say yow no more, for vch wyȝe may wel wit no wont þat þer were. Anoþer noyse ful newe neȝed biliue, þat þe lude myȝt haf leue liflode to cach— for vneȝe watȝ þe noyce not a whyle sese
and þe fyrst cource in þe court kyndely serued, þer hales in at þe halle dor an aghlich mayster, on þe most in þe molde on mesure hyȝh, fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware and so þik, and his lyndes and his lymes so longe and so grete, half etayn in erde I hope þat he were, bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene, and þat þe myriest in his muckel þat myȝt ride, for of bak and of brest al were his bodi sturne, bot his wombe and his wast were worthily smale and alle his fetures folȝande in forme þat he hade, ful clene.
For wonder of his hwe men hade, set in his semblaunt sene; he ferde as freke were fade
and oueral enker-grene.
Ande al grayped in grene þis gome and his wedes:
a strayt cote ful streþ þat stek on his sides,
a mere mantile abof mensked withinne
with pelure pured apert, þe pane ful clene,

155
with blyþe blaunder ful bryȝt and his hod boþe
þat watȝ læȝt fro his lokkeȝ and layde on his schulderes;
heme wel-haled hose of þat ilke grene,
þat spenet on his sparlyr, and clene spures vnder
of bryȝt golde vpon silk bordes barred ful rych;
160
and scholes vnder schankes þere þe schalk rides.
And alle his vesture uerayly watȝ clene verdure,
boþe þe barres of his belt and oþer blyþe stones
þat were richely rayled in his aray clene
aboutte hymself and his sadel vpon silk werkeȝ.
165  þat were to tor for to telle of tryfles þe halue
þat were enbrauded abof wyth bryddes and flyþes,
with gay gaudi of grene þe golde ay inmyddes
þe pendauntes of his payttrure, þe proude cropure,
his molaynes and alle þe metail anamayld was þenne,
170  þe steropes þat he stod on stayned of þe same
and his arsounȝ al after and his apple scurtes,
þat euer glemered and glent al of grene stones;
þe fole þat he ferkkes on fyn of þat ilke,
sertayn:
175  A grene hors gret and þikke,
a stede ful stif to strayne
in brawden brydel quik—
to þe gome he watȝ ful gayn.  [f. 93v/97v]

168  þe (2nd) þe MS (‘Þ’ altered from ‘p’); [þ]e TG, TGD, Mm, Si, Vn, AW (reading MS as ‘pe’); [th]e Bat (reading MS as ‘pe’)
171  scurtes] tœurtes MS; tûrtes Ma; sturtes Mo, TG; s[k]ûrtes GzG, Ca, Mm, Si (reading MS as sturtes); s[ky]ûrtes TGD, Bu, PS; scurtes Wa, Bar, Vn, AW
172  glemered] glemed MS; glemed Mo
177  brawden] brawden MS; brayden PS
Wel gay watȝ pis gome gered in grene

and þe here of his hed of his hors swete.
Fayre fannand fax vmbefoldes his schulderes;
a much berd as a busk ouer his brest henges,
þat wyth his hîlîch here þat of his hed reches
watȝ euesed al vmbetorne abof his elbowes,

þat half his armes þervnder were halched in þe wyse
of a kyngeȝ capados þat closes his swyre;
þe mane of þat mayn hors much to hit lyke,
wel cresped and cemmed wyth knottes ful mony,
folden in wyth fildore aboute þe fayre grene,

ay a herle of þe here, anoþer of golde.
Þe tayl and his toppynyg twynnen of a sute,
and bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bryȝt grene,
dubbed wyth ful dere stoneȝ as þe dok lasted,
syþen þrawen wyth a þwong, a þwarle knot alofte,

þer mony belleȝ ful bryȝt of brende golde rungen.
Such a folke vpon folde ne freke þat hym rydes
watȝ neuer sene in þat sale wyth syȝt er þat tyme,
with yȝe.
He loked as layt so lyȝt,

so sayd al þat hym syȝe.
Hit semed as no mon myȝt
vnder his dynetteȝ dryȝe.
Wheþer hade he no helme ne no hawbergh nauþer,
ne no pysan ne no plate þat pented to armes,
ne no schaþte ne no schelde to schwne ne to smyte,
bot in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
þat is grattest in grene when greueȝ ar bare,
and an ax in his oþer a hoge and vnmete,
a spetos sparþe to expoun in spelle quoso myȝt.

Þe hede of an elnȝerde þe large lenkþe hade,
þe grayn al of grene stele and of golde hewen,
þe bit burnyst bryȝt with a brod egge,
as wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores.
Þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi grypte
þat watȝ waunden wyth yrn to þe wandeȝ ende,
and al bigrauen with grene in gracios werkes,
[f. 94r/98r]
a lace lapped aboute þat louked at þe hede, 
and so after þe halme halched ful ofte 
wyth tryed tasseleþ þerto tacched innoghe, 
220 
on botoun3 of þe bryȝt grene brayden ful ryche. 
Þis hæpel heldeȝ hym in and þe halle entres, 
driuande to þe heȝe dece—dut he no woþe— 
haylsed he neuer one bot heȝe he ouerloked. 
Þe fyrst word þat he warp, “Wher is,” he sayd, 
225 þe gouernour of þis gyng? Gladly I wolde 
se þat segg in syȝt and with hymself speke 
raysoun.” 
To knyȝte3 he kest his yȝen 
and reled hym vp and doun; 
230 he stemmed and con studien 
quo walt þer most renoun.

219 innoghe| ïnoghe MS, with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of ’h’; innoghee Vn 
223 one| one MS; [a]ne Ma 
228 yȝen| yȝe MS, all editors. 
230 studien| studie MS, all editors
Ther watȝ lokyng on lenȝe þe lude to beholde,
for vch mon had meruayle quat hit mene myȝt
þat a hapel and a horse myȝt such a hwe lach
as growe grene as þe gres and grener hit semed
þen grene aumayl on golde glowande bryȝter.
Al studied þat þer stod and stalked hym nerre
wyth al þe wonder of þe worlde what he worch schulde,
for fele sellyȝ had þay sen, bot such neuer are,
forþi for fantoum and fayryȝe þe folk þere hit demed.
Þerfore to answare watȝ arȝe mony aþel freke,
and al stouden at his steuen and stonstil seten,
in a swoȝh sylence þurȝ þe sale riche
as al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor loteȝ,
in hyȝe.
I deme hit not al for doute
bot sum for cortaysye
let hym þat al schulde loute
cast vnþo þat wyȝe.

236  glowande] lowande MS; lowande Ma, Mo, Vn; [g]lowande all other editors.
238  worch] worch MS; vor[t]h Ma
243  swoȝh] swoȝh MS, with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of 'h'; swoȝh Ma; swoȝhe-sylence
Mo, GzG: swoȝh all other editors
248  Let] bot let MS; Bot let all editors
250  þenn Arþour biforn þe hiȝ dece þat auentoþry byholdeȝ
and rekenly hym reuerenced, for rad was he neuer,
and sayde, “Wyȝe, welcum iwys to þis place.
þe hede of þis ostel, Arþour I hat.
[þe 94v/98v]
Liȝt luﬄych adoun and lenge, I þe praye,
255  and quatso þy wylle is we schal wyt after.”
“Nay, as help me,” coþe þe hafel, “þe þat on hyȝe syttes,
to wone any quyle in þis won hit watȝ not myn ernde,
bot for þe los of þe, lede, is lyft vp so hyȝe,
and þy burȝ and þy burnes best ar holden,
260  stifest vnder stelgere on stedes to ryde,
þe wyȝest and þe worȝyest of þe worldes kynde,
preeue forto play wyth oþer pure laykȝ,
and here is kydd a cortaysye as I haf herd carp,
and þat hatȝ wayned me hider iwys at þis tymȝ.

254  luﬄyч] luﬄych MS; lovely PS
256  coþe] Q MS, Ma; quod Mo*; quoþ or quoth all other editors
3e may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here þat I passe as in pes and no plyȝt seche, for had I founded in fere in feȝtyng wyse, I haue a haubergh at home and a helme bope, a schelde and a scharp spere schinande bryȝt, ande oþer weppenes to welde I wene wel als—bot for I wolde no were, my wodeȝ ar softer. Bot, if þou be so bold as alle burnȝ tellen, þhou wyl grant me godly þe gomen þat I ask bi ryȝt."

Arthour hym con onsware, and sayd, “Sir cortays knyȝt, if þou craue batayl bare, here fayleȝ þou not to fyȝt.”
“Nay, frayst I no fyȝt, in fayth I þe telle.

Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdeȝe chylder—
if I were hasped in armes on a heȝe stede,
here is no mon me to mach for myȝteȝ so wayke.
Forþy I craue in þis court a Crystemas gomen,
for hit is ȝol and Nwe ȝer and here ar ȝep mony:

if any so hardy in þis hous holdeȝ hymselfen,
be so bolde in his blod, brayn in his hede,
þat dar stifly strike a strok for anoþer,
I schal gif hym of my gyft þys giserne rych, 
þis ax þat is heue innogh to hondel as hym lykes,
and I schal bide þe fyrst bur as bare as I sitte.
If any freke be so felle to fonde þat I telle,
lepe lyȝtly me to and lach þis weppen.
I quitclayme hit for euer, kepe hit as his auen,
and I schal stonde hym a strok stif on þis flet,

elleȝ þou wył dȝt me þe dom to dele hym anoþer
barlay,
and ȝet gif hym respite
a twelmonyth and a day.
Now hyȝe and let se tite

dar any herinne oȝt say,”

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282 so] fo MS, Ma, Vn; [s]o all other editors (reading 'so' except Bat)
283 gomen] gomē MS, with the macron over the 'm' rather than the 'e'; gomē Ma; game Bu, PS; gomme Vn; gomen all other editors.
286 brayn] brayn MS, brayn[-wod] Mo
287 stifly] stifly MS; stiflyche PS
289 hondel] honдел MS, with an otiose dot or pen-rest, apparently in text ink, above and to the right of 'l'; hondel’ Ma; hondel[e] all other editors.
296. barlay] barlay MS; bar lay Vn
If he hem stowned vpon fyrst, stiller were þanne
alle þe heredmen in halle, þe hyȝ and þe loȝe.
Þe renk on his rounce hym ruched in his sadel
and runischly his rede yȝen he reled aboute,
305 bende his bresed broȝeȝ, blycande grene,
wayued his berde forto wayte quoso wolde ryse.
When non wolde kepe hym with carp, he coȝed ful hyȝe
ande rimed hym ful richly and ryȝt hym to speke.
“What, is þis Arþures hous,” coþe þe hapel þenne,
310 þat al þe rous rennes of þurȝ ryalmes so mony?
Where is now your sourquydrye and your conquestes,
your gryndellayk and your greme and your grete wordes?
Now is þe reuel and þe renoun of þe Rounde Table
ouerwalt wyth a worde of on wyȝes speche,
315 for al dares for drede withoute dynt schewed!”
Wyth þis he laȝes so loude þat þe lorde greued;
þe blod schot for scham into his schyre face
and lere.
He wex as wroth as wynde;
320 so did alle þat þer were.
Þe kyng as kene bi kynde
þen stod þat stif mon nere.
ande sayde, “Haþel by heuen þyn askyng is nys, and as þou foly hatȝ frayst, fynde þe behoues.

I know no some þat is gast of þy grete wordes.
Gif me now þy geserne vpon Godeȝ halue, and I schal baþen þy bone þat þou beden habbes.”

Lyȝtly leþe þe hym to and laȝt hit at his honde; Lyȝtly leþe þe hym to and laȝt hit at his honde; [f. 95v/99v]
þen feersly þat oþer freke vpon fote lyȝtis.

Now hatȝ Arthure his axe and þe halme grypeȝ and sturnely stureȝ hit aboute, þat styke wyth hit þoȝt. Þe stif mon hym bifoþe stod vpon hyȝt herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede and more. Wyth sturne schere þer he stod he stroked his berde

and wyth a countenaunce dryȝe he droȝ doun his cote, no more mate ne dismalþ for hys mayn dintȝ þen any burne vpon bench hade broȝt hym to drynk of wyne.

Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene,

to þe kyng he can enclyne:
“I beseche now with saȝȝe sene þis melly mot be myne.”

327  boden | boden MS; boden all other editors
328  laȝt | laȝt at MS; laght [hit] at Wa; laȝt [hit] at AW; laȝt at all other editors
336  hys | hys MS; hys or his all editors
dintȝ | dintȝ MS; dintȝ† Si
“Wolde ȝe, worþilych lorde,” cope Wawan to þe kyng,
“bid me boȝe fro þis benche and stonde by yow þere,

345 þat I wythoute vylanye myȝt voyde þis table,
and þat my legge lady lyked not ille,
I wolde com to your counseyl biforn your cort ryche.
For me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,
þer such an askyng is heuened so hyȝe in your sale,

350 þaȝ ȝe ȝourself be talenttyf, to take hit to yourseluen
whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench syttyn,
þat vnnder heuen I hope non haȝerer of wylle
ne better bodyes on bent þer baret is rered.
I am þe wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,

355 and lest lur of my lyf quo laytes þe soþe,
bot for as much as ȝe ar myn em I am only to prayse—
no bounte bot your blod I in my bode knowe—
and syȝen þis note is so nys þat noȝt hit yow falles,
and I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst: foldeȝ hit to me!

360 And if I carp not comlyly let alle þis cort rych
bout blame.
Ryche togeder con roun,
and syȝen þay redden alle same
to ryd þe kyng wyth crownew

365 and gif Gawan þe game.
Pen comaundéd þe kynge þe knyȝt forto ryse,
and he ful radly vpros and ruchched hym fayre,
kneled doun before þe kynge and cacheȝ þat weppen,
and he luflyly hit hym laft and lyfte vp his honde
and gef hym Goddes blessyng and gladly hym biddles
þat his hert and his honde schulde hardi be boȝe.
“Kepe þe, cosyn,” coþe þe kynge, “þat þou on kyrf sette,
and if þou redeȝ hym ryȝt, redly I trowe
þat þou schal byden þe bur þat he schal bede after.”
³⁷⁰
Gawan gotȝ to þe gome with giserne in honde
and he baldly hym bydeȝ, he bayst neuer þe helder.
Þen carppeȝ to Sir Gawan þe knyȝt in þe grene:
“Refourme we oure forwardes er we fyrre passe.
Fyrst I eþe þe, haþel, how þat þou hattes
³⁷⁵
þat þou me telle truly as I tryst may.”
“In god fayth,” coþe þe goode knyȝt, “Gawan I hatte,
þat bede þe þis buffet quatsɔ bifalleȝ after,
and at þis tyme twelmonyþt take at þe anoþer
wyþ what weppen so þou wylt and wyþ no wyȝ elleȝ
³⁸⁰
on lyue.”
Þat oþer onswæreȝ agayn,
“Sir Gawan, so mot I þryue
as I am ferly fayn
þis dint þat þou schal dryue.”
³⁸⁵
“Bigog!” coþe þe grene knyȝt. “Sir Gawan, me lykes þat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here; and þou hatȝ redily rehearsed bi resoun ful trwe clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kynge asked, saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawpe þat þou schal seche me þiself whereso þou hopes I may be funde vpon folde, and foch þe such wages as þou deles me today bifore þis doupe ryche.”

“Where schulde I wale þe?” coþe Gauan, “Where is þy place? I wot neuer where þou wonyes, bi hym þat me wroȝt, ne I know not þe, knyȝt. þy cort ne þi name—bot teche me truly þerto and telle me howe þou hattes and I schal ware ale my wyt to wynne me þeder, and þat I swere þe forso þe and by my siker traweþ—[f. 96v/100v] þat is innogh in Nwe ȝer, hit nedes no more.”

Coþe þe gome in þe grene to Gawan þe hende, “3if I þe telle trwly quen I þe tape haue, and þou me smoþely hatȝ smyten, smartly I þe teche of my hous and my home and myn owen nome, þen may þou frayst my fare and forwardeȝ holde—

410 and if I spende no speche, þenne spedeȝ þou þe better, for þou may leng in þy londe and layt no fyrrre. Bot slokes!

Ta now þy grýmme tole to þe and let se how þou cnokeȝ!”

415 “Gladly, sir, for soþe,”

coþe Gawan—his ax he strokes.

390, 398, 405, 416 coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo45; quoþ or quoth all other editors
394 siker] siker MS; s[w]er Ma
396 foch] foch MS; f[y]ch Ma
399 wonyes] wonyes MS; wones Bu, PS
406 3if] 3if MS; [G]if Ma, Mo
The grene knyght vpon grounde grayþely hym dresses;
a littel lut with þe hede, þe lere he discouereȝ,
His longe louelych lokke he layd ouer his croun,
let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.
Gauan gripped to his ax and gederes hit on hyȝt.
Þe kay fot on þe folde he before sette,
let hit doun lyȝtly lyȝt on þe naked
þat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones
and schrank þurȝ þe schyire grece and schade hit in twynne
þat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.
Þe fayre hede fro þe halc hit to þe erþe
þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete þere hit forth roled.
And the blood flowed from the body that blushed on the grass, and now the faltering fell steeply, he started forth upon stiff schoenke and runishly he raised out there renkkes stood, last to his swiftly head and lifted up some and supposing to his blonk. The bridle he caught, stepped into stelbawe and strayed aloft, and his head by the here in his honde hale, and as sadly the see you him in his saddle set as none unhappily had him ailed, you heale he were in stedde.

He brayed his blonk about, that ugly bodily that bled. Moni one of him had doubt by his reason were red. [f. 97r/101r]
For þe hede in his honde he haldeþ vp euen,
toward þe derrest on þe dece he dresseþ þe face,
and hit lyfte vp þe yȝelyddeþ and loked ful brode,
and meled þus much with his muthe as þe may now here:
“Loke, Gawan, þou be grayþe to go as þou hetteþ
and layte as lelly til þou me, lude, fynde,
as þou hatþ hette in þis halle, herande þise knyþtes.
To þe Grene Chapel þou chose, I charge þe, to fotte
such a dunt as þou hatþ dalt. Disserued þou habbeþ
to be ȝederly ȝolden on Nw ȝeres morn.
‘Þe Knyþt of þe Grene Chapel,’ men knowen me mony,
forþi me for to fynde if þou fraysteþ, fayleþ þou neuer;
þerfore com ofþer recreaunt be calde þe behoueþ.”
With a runisch rout, þe rayneþ he torneþ,
halled out at þe hal dor, his hed in his hande,
þat þe fyr of þe flynte flæþe fro folþ housþ.
To quat kyth he becom knwe non þere,
neuer more þen þay wyste from queþen he watþ wonne.
What þenne,
þe kyng and Gawen þare
at þat grene þay læþe and grenne;
3et breued watþ hit ful þare
a meruayl among þo menne.
Arthur the king had wondred, he let no semblant be seene, but sayde ful hyȝe to þe comlych quene wyth cortays speche,

“Dere dame, today demay you never!
Wel bycommes such craft vpon Cristmasse, laykyng of enterlude3, to laȝe and to syng among þise kynde caroles of knyȝte3 and ladye3. Neuer þe lece to my mete I may me wel dres, for I haf sen a selly I may not forsake.”
He glent vpon Sir Gawen and gaynly he sayde, “Now sir, heng vp þyn ax þat hatȝ innogh hewen!” And hit watȝ don abof þe dece on doser to henge, þer alle men for meruayl myȝt on hit loke,

[f. 97v/101v]

and bi trwe tytel þerof to telle þe wonder. Þenne þay boȝed to a borde, þise burnes togeder, þe kyng and þe gode knyȝte, and kene men hem serued of alle dayntyȝe3 double as derrest myȝt falle, wyth alle maner of mete and mynstrælie boþe.

Wyth wele walt þay þat day til worþed an ende in londe. Now þenk wel, Sir Gawen, for wøþe þat þou ne wonde þis aventure for to frayn,

þat þou hatȝ tan on honde!

467  Arþur] ar þ: Arþer or Arþer other editors.
þe] þe MS; þer þe Si
had] had MS (with a conjoined -e largely erased); hade all editors but Bu
470  demay] ðemay MS; dismay Bu, PS
II

This hanselle hat3 Arthur of auenture3 on fyrist
in ȝonge ȝer, for he ȝerned ȝelpynge to here.
Thaȝ3 hym wordeȝ3 were wane when ȝay to sete wenten,
now ar ȝay stoken of sturne werk stafful her hond.

495 Gawan watȝ3 glad to begynne þose gomne3 in halle,
bot þaȝ3 þe ende be heuy haf þe no wonder,
for þaȝ3 men ben mery in mynde quen þay hau mayn drynk,
a ȝere ȝernes ful ȝerne and ȝeldeȝ3 neuer lyke:
þe forme to þe fynisment foldeȝ3 ful selden.

500 Forþi þis ȝol ouerȝ3ede and þe ȝere after,
and vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer.
After Crystenmasse com þe crabbed Lentoun
þat fraysteȝ3 flesch wyth þe fysche and fode more symple,
bot þenne þe weder of þe worlde wyth Wynter hit þrepeȝ3:

colde clengeȝ3 adoun, cloudeȝ3 vp lyften,
schyre schedeȝ3 þe rayn in schowreȝ3 ful warme,
falleȝ3 vpon fayre flat, flowreȝ3 þere schewen;
boþe groundeȝ3 and þe greueȝ3 grene ar her wedeȝ3;
þryddeȝ3 busken to bylde and bremlych syngen

510 for solace of þe softe Somer þat sues þerafter
bi bonk,
and blossumȝ3 bolne to blowe
bi raweȝ3 rych and ronk.
Þen noteȝ3 noble innoȝ3e

515 ar herde in wod so wlonk. [f. 98r/102r]

491 auentureȝ3] auenturus MS; aventureþ Bu, PS; auenturus or aventureþ all other editors.
495 gomneȝ3] gomneþ MS; games Bu
497 men] men MS; m[a]n Ma, Mo
502 Crystenmasse] cryftþe maffe MS; Cristmasse Bu
508 boþe] boþe MS; boþe [þe] GzG
509 bremlych] bremlych MS; bremely Bu
After, þe sesoun of Somer wyth þe soft wyndeȝ quen ȝeferus syfleȝ hymself on sedeȝ and erbeȝ; wela-wynne is þe wort þat waxes þeroute when þe donkande dewe dropeȝ of þe leueȝ to bide a blysful blusch of þe bryȝt sunne. Bot þen hyȝes Heruest and hardenes hym sone, warneȝ hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype. He dryues wyth droȝt þe dust for to ryse f ro þe face of þe folde to flyȝe ful hyȝe. Wroȝe wynde of þe welkyn wrasteleȝ with þe sunne, þe leueȝ laucen f ro þe lynde and lyȝten on þe grounde, and al grayes þe gres þat grene watȝ ere. Þenne al rypeȝ and roteȝ þat ros vpon fy rst, and þus þirneȝ þe þere in þisterdayeȝ mony and Wynter wyndeȝ aȝayn as þe worlde askeȝ, no fage, til Meȝelmas mone watȝ cumen wyth wynter wage— þen þenkkeȝ Gawaw ful sone of his anious uyage.
3et quy\l Alhalday with Ar\pur he lenges,
and he made a fare on \pat fest for \pe freke\ȝ sake,
with much reuel, and ryche of \pe Rounde Table,
\knyȝte3 ful cortays and comlych ladies.

540 Al for luf of \pat lede in longynge \pay were,
bot neuer \pe lece ne \pe later \pay neuened bot mer\pe.
Mony ioyle\ȝ for \pat ientyle iape3 \per maden.
For aftter mete with mournyng he mele\ȝ to his eme
and speke\ȝ of his passage and pertly he sayde

545 “Now, lege lorde of my lyf, leue I yow ask.
3e knowe \pe cost of \his cace. Kepe I no more
to telle yow tene3 \perof, neuer bot trifel,
bot I am boun to \pe bur barely tomorne,
to sech \pe gome of \pe grene as God wyl me wysse.”

536 Ar\pur] Ar\ȝ MS; Ar\ȝ Ma; Arther Ca, Wa; Arthur Bu, PS, Ar\per all other editors.
539 comlych\] comlych MS; comly Bu
550  þenne þe best of þe burȝ boȝed togeder,
     Sir Ywan and Errik and oþer ful mony,
     Sir Doddinal de Sauage, þe Duk of Clarence,    [f. 98v/102v]
     Launcelot and Lyonel and Lucan þe gode,
     Sir Boos and Sir Byduer, big men boþe,
555  and mony oþer menskful, with Mador de la Port—
     alle þis compayny of court com þe kyng nerre
     for to counseyl þe knyȝt with care at her hert.
     þere watȝ much derne doel driuen in þe sale
     þat so worthe as Wawan schulde wende on þat ernde
560  to dryȝe a delful dynt and dele no more
     wyth bronde.
     þe knyȝt mad ay god chere
     and sayde, “Quat, schuld I wonde?
     Of destines derf and dere,
565  what may mon do bot fonde?”

550  best] beȝt MS; [h]eȝt Ma
551  Syr Ywan] a ywan MS; † Ywan Bu, PS; Aywan all other editors.
552  Doddinal] doddinanal or doddnaual MS; Doddinˆal Si, Bat; Doddinaual all other editors.
558  derne] dærne or dærue MS; dærue Ma, GzG, Ca, Bu, Bar, Mm, Vn, PS; dærue Mo, TG, TGD,
     AW, Si; derve Wa, Bat
559  ernde] ernde MS; erande Bu
He dowelleʒ þer al þat day and dresseʒ on þe morn, askeʒ erly hys armeʒ and alle were þay broʒt. Fyrst a tule tapit tyʒt ouer þe flet and miche watʒ þe gyld gere þat glent þeralofte.

570 þe stif mon steppeʒ þeron and þe stel hondeleʒ, dubbed in a dublet of a dere Tars, and syþen a crafty capados, closed aloft, þat wyth a bryʒt blauunner was bounden withinne. Þenne set þay þe sabatounʒ vpon þe segge foteʒ, his legeʒ lapped in stel with luﬂych greueʒ, with polayneʒ piched þerto, policed ful clene, aboute his kneʒ knaged wyth knoteʒ of golde. Queme quysswes þen, þat coyntlych closed his thik þrawn þyʒeʒ, with þwonges to cachched, and syþen þe brawden bryne of bryʒt stel ryngeʒ vmbeweued þat wyʒ vpon wlonk stuffe, and wel bornyst brace vpon his boþe armes with gode cowters and gay and gloueʒ of plate, and alle þe godlych gere þat hym gayn schulde þat tyde, wyth ryche cote-armure, his gold sporeʒ spend with pryde, gurde wyth a bront ful sure, with silk sayn vmbe his syde.

566 dowelleʒ dowelleʒ MS; dwelles PS
575 luﬂych] luﬂych MS; lovely Bu
579 thik þrawn] thik þrawn MS; thik-throwen PS
to cachched] to cachched MS; to-[t]achched Ma, Mo; to tached Bu, PS; to [t]achched all other editors.
584 godlych] godlych MS; goodly Bu
589 sayn] fayn MS; saynt Bu, PS
When he was clad in arms, his harness was rich, 
the least laced open to the knees.

And the least knight in that company, 
offered and honoured at the altar.

Then he came to the king and his courtiers, 
lately his leave at lord and lady, 
and prayed him kissed and conveyed, begging him to Christ.

By that time Gryngolet greyed and girded with a saddle 
and gleamed ful gayly with many gold fringes, 
ayquere nailed full new, for that note rich,
the bridle barred about, with braid gold bound; 
the apparel of the paytrure and of the proude skyrte, 
the cropore, and the court acorded with the arsoune, 
and all was rayled on red, rich gold nails
that all gleamed and glinted as gleam of the sun.
Þenne hentes he þe helme and hastily hit kysses þat watȝ stapled stifly and stoffed wythinne.
Hit watȝ hyȝe on his hede hasped biynnde,
wyth a lyȝtly vrysoun ouer þe auentayle,
enbrawden and bounden wyth þe best gemmeȝ
on brode sylkyn borde, and bryddeȝ on semeȝ,
as papiayeȝ paynted, peruyng bitwene,
tortors and trulofȝ entayled so þyk
as mony burde þeraboute had ben seuen wynter
in toune.
Þe cercle watȝ more o pryȝt
þat vmbeclypped hys croun,
of diamaunteȝ a deuys
þat boȝe were bryȝt and broun.

lyȝtly lyȝtly MS; lyȝt[ȝ] Ma; lyȝt ly[n] Mo
peruyng þerûyg or þernûyg MS; perynûg Ma; perynûg Mo, TG, GzG, Ca; peruyng TGD, Bar, Mm, AW, Vn, Si; perving Wa; pervyng Bu, Bat, PS
Then þay schewed hym þe schelde þat was of schyr gouleʒ
wyth þe pentangel depaynt of pure golde hweʒ.
He braydeʒ hit by þe baundryk, aboute þe hals kesteʒ—
þat bisemed þe segge semlyly fayre.
And quy þe pentangel apendeʒ to þat prynce noble
I am intent yow to telle, þof tary hyt me schulde.

Hit is a syngne þat Salamon set sumquyle
in bytoknyng of Trawþe, bi tytle þat hit habbeʒ,
for hit is a figure þat haldeʒ fyue poynteʒ,
and vche lyne vymlappeʒ and loukeʒ in oþer,
and ayquere hit is endeleʒ and Englych hit callen
oueral, as I here, þe endeles knot.
Forþy hit acordeʒ to þis knyʒt and to his cler armeʒ,
for ay faythful in fyue and sere fyue syþeʒ
Gawan watʒ for gode knawen, and as golde pured
voyded of vche vylany, wyth vertueʒ enourned
in mote.
Forþy þe pentangel nwe
he ber in schelde and cote,
as tulk of tale most trwe
and gentylest knyʒt of lote.

Intent] "tent MS, Ma; in tent Mo, TGD, Wa, Bu, Bar, Mm, Si, Bat; intent TG, Ca, Mm, Vn; in-tent GzG; in tente PS
þof] "bof MS, thogh Bu, PS
Endeleʒ] "emdeleʒ MS; emdeleʒ Ma; e[in]deleʒ Mo, Vn; e[n]deleʒ TG, GzG, Bar, Mm; endelez TGD, AW, Si; endele Ca, Wa, Bu, Bat, PS
Gode] "gode MS; Gode Vn
Vertueʒ] "vertueʒ MS; "vertueʒ Ma, Mo, TG, GzG, Bar, Mm, Vn; "vertues Ca, Wa, Bu, Bat, PS; "vertuez TGD, AW, Si
Fyrst he watȝ funden fautleȝ in his fyue wytteȝ;
and efte fayled neuer þe freke in his fyue fyngres;
and alle his afyaunce vpon folde watȝ in þe Fyue Woundeȝ
þat Cryst kaȝt on þe croys, as þe Crede telleȝ;
and queresomeuer þys mon in melly watȝ stad,
his þro þoȝt watȝ in þat þurȝ alle oþer þyngȝeȝ,
þat alle his forsnes he fong at þe Fyue Joyeȝ
þat þe hende Heuen-quene had of hir Chylde.
At þis cause þe knyȝt comlyche hade
in þe inore half of his schelde hir ymage depaynted,
þat quen he blusched þerto his belde neuer payred.
Þe fyft fyue þat I finde þat þe frek vsed
watȝ Fraunchyse and Felaȝschyp forbe al þyng,
his Clannes and his Cortalysye croked were neuer,
and Pite þat passeȝ alle poynȝteȝ—þyse pure fyue
were harder happed on þat haȝel þen on any oþer.

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and efte fayled neuer þe freke in his fyue fyngres;
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were harder happed on þat haȝel þen on any oþer.
Now alle þese fyue syþe3 forsoþe were fetled on þis knyþt, and vchone halched in oþer þat non ende hade, and fyched vpon fyue poynþe3 þat fayld neuer, ne samned neuer in no syde ne sundred nouþer, withouten ende at any noke, I noquere fynde, whereuer þe gomen bygan or glod to an ende. Þerfore on his schene schelde schapen wat3 þe knot rially wyth red golde vpon rede gowle3 þat is þe pure pentanngel wyth þe peple called, [f. 100r/104r] with lore. Now grayþed is Gawan gay, and laþt his launce ryþt þore, and gef hem alle goud day he wende for euermore.

fayld] fayld MS (with 'f' and 'd' refreshed); faylede PS
I noquere] Iquelle MS; i quere Ma; [a]i quere Mo; [a]i quere, [I] TG; i[-wis no-]quere GzG; † [no]quere, [I] Ca; I oquere TGD, Bu, Bar, Mm, AW, Si; I owhere Wa, Bat; [a]quere Vn; that nowhere couthe man PS
gomen] gomen MS; game Bu, PS
ryally] rially MS; þo alle Ma; þus alle Mo
pentanngel] pentanngel or pentaungel MS; pentangel Bu, PS; pentaungel all other editors
He sperrer þe sted with þe spureȝ and sprong on his way so stif þat þe ston-fyr stroke out þerafter.  
Al þat seȝ þat semly syked in hert and sayde soply al same segges til oþer, carande for þat comly, “Bi Kryst hit is scaþe þat þou, leude, schal be lost þat art of lyf noble!” ”To fynde hys fere vpon folde, in fayth is not eþe!” “Warloker to haf wroȝt had more wyt bene, and haf dyȝt ȝonder dere a duk to haue worþed—a lowande leder of ledeȝ in londe hym wel semeȝ, and so had better haf ben þen britned to noȝt, hadet wyth an aluisch mon for angardeȝ pryde!” “Who knew euer any kyng such counsel to take as knyȝteȝ in cauelacionȝ on Crystmasse gomnȝe?” Wel much watȝ þe warme water þat waltered of yȝen when þat semly syre soȝt fro þo woneȝ þat daye. He made non abode, bot wyȝtly went hys way. Mony wylsum way he rode, þe bok as I herde say.
Now rideʒ ȝis renk ȝurʒ ȝe ryalme of Logres,
Syr Gauan on Godeʒ halue, ȝaʒ hym no gomen þoʒt.
Oft leuldʒeʒ, alone, he lengeʒ on nyʒteʒ
þer he fonde noʒt hym byfore þe fare þat he lyked.

Hade he no fere bot his fole, bi fyrtheʒ and douneʒ,
ne no gome bot God, bi gate wyth to karp.
Til þat he neʒed ful negh into þe Norþe Waleʒ,
alle þe iles of Anglesay on lyft half he haldeʒ,
and fareʒ ouer þe fordeʒ by þe forlondeʒ

ouer at þe Holy Hede, til he hade eft bonk
in þe Wyldrenesse of Wyrale—wonde þer bot lyte
þat auþer God oper gome wyth goud hert louied—
and ay he frayned as he ferde, at frekeʒ þat he met,
if þay hade herde any karp of a "Knyʒt" grene,
in any grounde þeraboute, "of þe Grene Chapel,"
and al nykked hym wyth "nay," þat neuer in her lyue
þay seʒe neuer no segge þat watʒ of suche hweʒ
of grene.
Þe knyʒt tok gates straunge

in mony a bonk vnbene;
his cher ful oft con chaunge
þat chapel er he myʒt sene.

697 negh: nogh MS; nogh Ma; noghe Vn; negh Bu, PS; n[e]ghe all other editors
702 louied] louied MS; loved PS
705 Chapel] clapel MS; c[h]apel or C[h]apel all editors
Mony klyf he ouerclambe in contrayeȝ straunge; fer floten fro his frendeȝ, fremedly he rydeȝ.

715 At vche warpe oþer water þer þe wyȝe passed, he fonde a foo hym byfore bot ferly hit were, and þat so foule and so felle þat feȝt hym byhode. So mony meruayl bi mount þer þe mon fyndeȝ, hit were to tote for to telle of þe tenþe dole.

720 Sumwylyle wyth wormeȝ he werreȝ and with wolues als, sumwylyle wyth wodwos þat woned in þe knarreȝ, boþe wyth bulleȝ and bereȝ and boreȝ oþerquyle, and etayneȝ þat hym aulede of þe heȝe felle.

Nade he ben duȝty and dryȝe and Dryȝtyn had serued,

725 douteles he hade ben ded and dreped ful ofte;

717 foule] fonle or focile MS (with joined top); fo[ul]le all editors
byhode] by hoðe MS; behoved PS
718 So] fo MS; [S]o all editors
723 aulede] aulede or anelede MS a-nelede Ma; anelede all other editors
for werre wrathed hym not so much þat wynter nas wors,
when þe colde cler water fro þe cloudeȝ schadde,
and fres er hit falle myȝt to þe fale erpe.
Ner slayn wyth þe slete he sleped in his yrnes
mo nyȝte þen innogh in naked rokke, 730
þeras claterande fro þe creste þe colde borne renneȝ
and henged heȝe ouer his hede in hard iisseqikkles.
Þus in peryl and payne and plytes ful harde
bi contray caryȝ þis knyȝt tyl Krystmasse euyn,
þe knyȝt wel þat tyde
to Mary made his mone,
þat ho hym red to ryde
and wysse hym to sum wone.

[nas] was MS; [n]as TGD, Wa, Bu, Si; was all other editors
schadde] schadde þen PS; schadde† TG, GzG, Ca, Wa, Bu, Bar, Mm, AW, Bat
innogh] innogh MS, Ma; in-nogh Mo, GzG; innogh Bu; inogh PS; innoghe all other editors
iisseqikkles] iisþe ikkles MS (altered from yþe ikkles in text ink); [y]þe-ikkles GzG, Ca, Mm, Vn, PS
caryȝ] caryȝ MS; c[ay]TG, GzG; cayres Bu; kayres PS
Krystmasse] kryȝt maſſe MS; Cristenmas PS
knyȝt] knyȝt MS; wye PS
Bi a mounte on þe morne, meryly he rydes, into a forest ful dep þat ferly watȝ wylde, hiȝe hilleȝ on vche a halue and holtwodeȝ vnder of hore okeȝ ful hoge a hundreth togeder. Þe hasel and Þe haȝþorne were harled al samen, with roȝe raged mosse rayled aywhere, with mony brydȝe vnblyþe vpon bare twyges, þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde. Þe gome vpon Gryngolet glydeȝ hem vnder þurȝ mony misy and myre, mon al hym one, carande for his costes, lest he ne keuer schulde to se þe seruyse of þat Syre þat on þat self nyȝt of a burde watȝ borne, oure baret to quelle, and þerfore sykyng he sayde, “I besech þe Lorde, and Mary þat is myldest moder so dere, of sum herber þer heȝly I myȝt here masse ande þy matyneȝ tommorne, mekely I ask, and þerto prestly I pray my Pater and Aue and Crede.”

He rode in his prayere and cryed for his mysdede; he sayned hym in sypes sere and sayde, "Cros Kryst me spede."

747  colde] cofde MS; co[l]de all editors (reading colde)
751  seruyse] feruy MS, Ma; seruy Vn; seruy[se] Mo, all other editors (with some spelling variation)
Nade he sayned hymself, segge, bot þrye
er he wær in þe wod of a won in a mote
abof a launde on a lawe, loken vnder boþe,
of mony borelych bole aboute bi þe ditches:
a castel, þe comlokest þat euer knyþt æþte,
pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,
with a pyked palays pyned ful þik

þat vmbeteþe mony tre, mo þen two myle.
þat holde on þat on syde þe hapel auysed
as hit schemered and schon þurþ þe schyre okeþ,
þenne hatþ he hendly of his helme and heþly he þonkeþ
Jesus and Sayn Gilyan, þat gentyle ar boþe,
þat cortaysy hade hym kydde and his cry herkened.

"Now bone hostel," coþe þe burne, "I beseche yow þette!"
þenne gedereþ he to Gryngolet with þe gilt heleþ,
and he ful chauncely hatþ chosen to þe chef gate,
þat bromeþ bremlly þe burne to þe bryge ende,
in haste.
þe bryge watþ breme vpbrayde,
þe æþteþ wer stoken faste,
þe walleþ were wel arayed.

hit dut no wyndeþ blasæ.
\[\text{785} \] De burne bode on bonk \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at on blonk houed
of \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e depe double dich \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at drof to \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e place.
\( \hat{\text{p}} \)e walle wod in \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e water wonderly depe,
ande eft a ful huge he\( \text{g} \)t hit haled vpon lofte
of harde hewen ston vp to \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e table3,
\[\text{790} \] enbaned vnder \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e abataylment in \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e best lawe,
and sy\( \beta \)en garyte3 ful gaye gered bitwene,
wyth mony lu\( \text{f} \)lych loupe \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at louked ful clene.
A better barbarc\( \hat{\text{p}} \)an \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at burne blusched vpon neuer,
and innermore he behelde \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at halle ful hy\( \text{g} \)e,
\[\text{795} \] towre3 telded bytwene, trochet ful \( \hat{\text{p}} \)ik,
fayre fy\( \text{y} \)ole3 \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at fy\( \text{z} \)ed and ferlyly long,
with coruon coprounes craftyly sle3e
chalk-whyt chymne\( \text{e} \) \( \hat{\text{p}} \)er ches he inno3e
vpon bastel roue3 \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at blenked ful quyte—
\[\text{800} \] so mony pynakle payntet wat3 poudred ayquere
among \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e castel carnele3, clambred so \( \hat{\text{p}} \)ik,
\( \hat{\text{p}} \)at pared out of papure purely hit semed.
\( \hat{\text{p}} \)e fre freke on \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e folc hit fayr innoghe \( \hat{\text{p}} \)o3t
if he my\( \text{g} \)t keuer to com \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e cloyster wythinne,
\[\text{805} \] to herber in \( \hat{\text{p}} \)at hostel whyl halyday lested,
auinant.
He calde and sone \( \hat{\text{p}} \)er com
a porter pure plesaunt.
On \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e wa\( \text{f} \) his ernd he nome
\[\text{810} \] and haylsed \( \hat{\text{p}} \)e kny\( \text{g} \)t erraunt.
“Gode sir,” copē Gawan, “Woldeȝ you go myn ernde to þe heȝ lorde of þis hous, herber to craue?”

“ȝe Peter!” copē þe porter, “and purely I trowe þat ȝe be, wyȝe, welcum to won quyle yow lykeȝ,”

815 þen ȝede þerwyth ȝeply, and com aȝayn swyþe, and folke frely hym wyth to fonge þe knyȝt.
Pay let doun þe grete draȝt and derely out ȝeden, and kneled doun on her knes vpon þe colde erþe to welcum þis ilk wyȝ as worþy hom þoȝt.
820 Pay ȝolden hym þe brode ȝate, ȝarked vp wyde, and he hem raysed rekenly and rod ouer þe bryȝge.
Sere seggeȝ hym sesed by sadel quel he lyȝt, and syþen stabeld his stede stif men innoȝe.
Knyȝteȝ and swyereȝ komen doun þenne

825 for to bryng þis buurne wyth blys into halle.
Quen he hef vp his helme þer higed innogh
for to hent hit at his honde, þe hende to seruen.
His bronde and his blasoun boþ þay token.
Þen haylsed he ful hendly þo haþeleȝ vchone,
830 and mony proud mon þer presed, þat prynce to honour.
Alle hasped in his heȝ wede to halle þay hym wonnen
þer fayre fyre vpon flet fersly brenned.
Þenne þe lorde of þe lede louteȝ fro his chambr
for to mete wyth menske þe mon on þe flor.

835 He sayde, “ȝe ar welcum to welde as yow lykeȝ
þat here is—al is yowre awen to haue at yowre wylle
and welde.”

“Graunt mercy,” coþe Gawayn,
“þer Kryst hit yow forȝelde.”

840 As frekeȝ þat semed fayn,
ayþer oþer in armȝ con felde.
Gawyn glyȝt on þe gome þat godly hym gret
and þuȝt hit a bolde burne þat þe burȝ aȝte,
a hoge hapel for þe noneȝ and of hyȝh elde.
845
Brode bryȝt his berde and al beuer-hwed,
sturne, stif on þe stryþpe, on stalworth schonkeȝ,
felle face as þe fyre, and fre of hys speche,
and wel hym semed, forsoþe, as þe segge þuȝt
to lede a lortschyp in lee of leudeȝ ful gode.
850
Þe lorde hym charred to a chambre and chefly cumaundeȝ 
[?102v/106v]
to delyuer hym a leude hym lȝ3ly to serue,
and þere were boun at his bode burneȝ innoȝe
þat broȝt hym to a bryȝt boure þer beddyng watȝ nobile,
of cortynes of clene sylk wyth cler golde hemmeȝ
855
and couertoreȝ ful curious, with comlych þaneȝ
of bryȝt blaunner aboue, enbrawded bisydeȝ, rudeleȝ rennande on ropeȝ, red golde ryngȝeȝ, tapyteȝ tyȝt to þe woste of tuly and Tars, and vnder fete on þe flet of folȝande sute,
860 þer he watȝ dispoyled wyth specheȝ of myrþe, þe burn of his bruny and of his bryȝt wedeȝ. Ryche robes ful rad renkkes hem broȝten for to charge and to chaunge and chose of þe best. Sone as he on hent and happed hym þerinne,
865 þat sete on hym semly (wyth saylande skyrteȝ, þe ver by his uisage) verayly hit semed welneȝ to vche hapel, alle on hwes lowande and lufty, alle his lymmeȝ vnder, þat a comloker knyȝt neuer Kryst made,
870 hem þoȝt. Wheȝen in worlde he were, hit semed as he moȝt be prynce withouten pere, in felde þer felle men foȝt.
A cheyer byfore þe chemne þer charcole brenned
watȝ grayþed for Sir Gawan grayþely with cloþeȝ,
whyssynes vpon queldepoynþe þat koyn þer boþe,
and þenne a mere mantyle watȝ on þat mon cast
of a broun bleeaunt, enbrauded ful ryche
and fayre furred wythinne with felþeȝ of þe best,
alle of ermyn in erde, his hode of þe same,
and he sete in þat settel semlych ryche
and achaufed hym cheþly and þenne his cher mended.
Sone watȝ telded vp a table on tresteȝ ful fayre,
clad wyth a clene cloþe þat cler quyþ schewed,
sanap and salure and syluerin sponeȝ.
Ye wyȝe wesche at his wylle and went to his mete; 
seggeȝ hyme served semly innoȝe
wyth sere sewes and sete, sesounde of þe best,

890 doublefelde as hit falleȝ, and fele kyn fischeȝ:
summe baken in bred, summe brad on þe gledeȝ,
summe soþen, summe in sewe, sauered with spyces,
and ay seȝeȝ so sleȝe þat þe segge lyked.
Þe freke calde hit a fest ful frely and ofte

895 ful hendely, quen alle þe haþeles rehayted hym at oneȝ
as hende:
“Þis penaunce now þe take,
and eft hit schal amende.”
Þat mon much merþe con make

900 for wyn in his hed þat wende.

889 sesounde] ofoûde MS; if[e]oûde Ma; s[e]ounde all other editors (reading sesounde)
893 ay seȝe so sleȝe] ayfawes fo sleȝeȝ MS, Ma; ay seȝes so sleȝeȝ Mo; ay sawes so sleȝeþ† TG, 
 TGD, Vn; ay sawes[s] so sleȝeþ† GzG (Napier), Bar, Mn, AW, Si; ay sawes[s] so sleyeþ† Ca, Wa, Bu;
aye sawes so sleyeþ Bat, PS
Þenne wat3 spyed and spured vpon spare wyse,
bi preue poynте3 of þat prynce put to hymseluen,
þat he beknew cortaysly of þe court þat he were,
þat aȝel Arthure þe hende halde3 hym one

þat is þe ryche ryal kyng of þe Rounde Table,
and hit wat3 Wawen hymself þat in þat won sytte3,
comen to þat Krystmasse as case hym þen lymped.
When þe lorde hade lerned þat he þe leude hade,
loude laȝed he þerat so lef hit hym þoȝt,
and alle þe men in þat mote maden much joye
to apere in his presense prestly þat tyme,
þat alle prys and prowes and pured þe wyes
apendes to hys persoun and pryysed is euer.
“Byfore alle men vpon molde his mensk is þe most:”

vch segge ful softly sayde to his fere,
“Now schal we semlych se sleȝte3 of þewe3
and þe teccheles termes of talkyng noble!
Wich spede is in speche vnspurd may we lerne
syn we haf fonged þat fyne fader of nuture.

God hatȝ geuen vus his grace godly, forsoþe,
þat such a gest as Gawan graunteȝ vus to haue,
when burneȝ blyþe of his burþe schal sitte
and synge.
In meuynge of manere3 mere

þis burne now schal vus bryng;
I hope þat may hym here
schal lerne of luf-talkyng.”

924 meuyng] meuȝg or menȝg MS; menȝg Ma, menyng all other editors
Bi þat þe diner watʒ done and þe dere vp,
hit watʒ neʒ at þe nyʒt neʒed þe tyme.
930 Chaplayneʒ to þe chapeles chosen þe gate,
rungen þul rychely ryʒt as þay schulden
to þe hersum euensong of þe hyʒe tyde.
Þe lorde loutes þerto and þe lady als,
into a cumly closet coyntyly ho entreʒ.
935 Gawan glydeʒ ful gay and gos þeder sone.
Þe lorde laches hym by þe lappe and ledeʒ hym to sytte
and couþly hym knoweʒ and calleʒ hym his nome
and sayde he watʒ þe welcomest wyʒe of þe worlde,
and he hym þonkked þroly and ayþer halched oþer,
and seten soberly samen þe seruise quyle.
Þenne lyst þe lady to loke on þe knyʒt,
þenne com ho of hir closet with mony cler burdeʒ.
Ho watʒ þe fayrest in felle, of flesche and of lyre,
and of compas and colour and costes of alle oþer,
940 and wener þen Wenore, as þe wyʒe þoʒt.
Ho ches þurʒ þe chaunsel to cheryche þat hende;
anþer lady hir lad bi þe lyft honde
þat watʒ alder þen ho—an auncian hit semed,
and heʒly honowred with haþeleʒ aboute.
Bot vnlyke on to loke þo ladyes were, for if þe ȝonge watȝ ȝep, ȝolȝe watȝ ȝat ȝober; riche red on þat on rayled ayquere; rugh ronkled chekeȝ ȝat ȝober on rolled, Kerchofes of þat on wyth mony cler perleȝ, hir brest and hir bryȝt þrote bare displayed, schon schyryr þen snaue þat schedeȝ on hilleȝ; þat ȝober wyth a gorger watȝ gered ouer þe swyre, chymbled ouer hir blake chyn with chalk-quyte vayles, hir frout folden in sylk, enfoubled ayquere, trvset and treleted with tryfleȝ aboute þat noȝt watȝ bare of þat burde bot þe blake broȝes, þe tweyne yȝen and þe nase, þe naked lyppeȝ, and þose were soure to se and sellyly blered—a mensk lady on molde mon may hir calle, for Gode.

Hir body watȝ schort and þik, hir buttokeȝ bȝaȝ and brode—more lykkerwys on to lyk watȝ þat scho hade on lode.

schedeȝ scheðer MS; schede[s] Mo, Ca, Wa, AW, Bat, PS; schede[ȝ] TG, GzG, Bar, Mm, Vn; schede[ȝ] TG, Si; shedes Bu

chalk-quyte kylyk MS; mylk-quyte Ma, Mo, Mm, Vn; [cha]kkuyte TG (Onions), GzG, TGD, Bar, Si; [cha][k]-quyte Ca, AW; [cha][k]-whyte Wa; chalkwhyte Bu; chalk-white PS

trvset] tvset MS; T[or]jet Ma, Mo, TG, GzG, Ca, Wa, Bu, Mm, AW, Vn, PS; t[or]jet[ed] TGD, Bar, Si
treleted] treleted MS; tre[jet]ed Ma, Mo; tre[jet]ed TG

Gode] godȝ MS; goode PS
When Gawayn glyȝt on þat gay þat graciously loked,
wyth leue laȝt of þe lorde he lent hem aȝaynes.
Þe alder he haylses heldande ful lowe;
þe loueloker he lappeȝ a lyttel in armeȝ,
he kysses hir comlyly and knyȝtly he meleȝ.

Þay kallen hym of aquoyntaunce and he hit quyk askeȝ
to be her seruaunt sothly if hem self lyked.
Þay tan hym bytwene hem, wyth talkyng hym leden
to chambre, to chemne and chefly þay asken
spycȝ þat vnsparely men speded hom to bryng,
and þe wynnelych wyne þerwith vche tyme.

lent] went MS; [l]ent GzG (Andrew), TGD, Wa, Bu, Bar, AW, Si, Bat; lut PS
Þe lorde luflych aloft lepeȝ ful ofte,
mynned merthe to be made vpon mony syȝeȝ,
hent heȝly of his hode and on a spere henged
and wayned hem to wynne þe worship þerof

985 þat most myrpe myȝt meue þat Crystenmas whyle—
“And I schal fonde, bi my fayth, to fylter wyth þe best
er me wont þe wedeȝ with help of my frendeȝ.”
Þus wyth laȝande loteȝ, þe lorde hit tayt makeȝ
for to glade Sir Gawayn with gomneȝ in halle,

990 þat nyȝt.
Til þat hit watȝ tyme
þe kyng comaundet lyȝt—
Sir Gawen his leue con nyme,
and to his bed hym diȝt.

981 luflych] luflych MS; lovely Bu
984 wayned] wayned or wayued MS; wayued TG
hem] hem MS ('e' in refresher's hand); hom all editors
985 meue] meue or mene MS; mene Ma
Crystenmas] cryȝtenmas MS; Cristmasse Bu
987 wedeȝ] wedeȝ MS; wedeȝ Mo'TG, GzG, Ca, TGD, Wa, Bu, Bar, Mm, AW, Si, Bat; wedes PS
989 gomneȝ] gomneȝ MS; games Bu
993 Sir Gawen] gawen MS; þ Gawayn PS
995  On þe morne, as vch mon myne þat tyme
þat Dryȝtyn for oure destyne to þeȝe watȝe borne,
wele waxȝe in vche a won in worlde for his sake.
So did hit þere on þat day þurȝe dayntes mony,
boþe at mes and at mele, messes ful quaynt
[f. 104v/108v]
1000  derf men vpon dece drest of þe best.
þe olde auncian wyf heȝest ho sytteȝe;
þe lorde lufly her by lent, as I trowe.
Gawan and þe gay burde togeder þay seten,
euen inmydȝeȝe as þe messe metely come,
1005  and syþen þurȝe al þe sale as hem best semed.
Bi vche grome at his degre grayȝe watȝe seryued,
þer watȝe mete, þer watȝe myrþe, þer watȝe much ioye,
þat for to telle þerof hit me tene were,
and to poynte hit þet I pyned me, perauenture!
1010  Bot þet I wot þat Waven and þe wale burde
such comfort of her compaynye caȝeten togeder
þurȝe her dere dalyaunce of her derne wordeȝe,
wyth clene cortays carp closed fro þyþe,
þat hor play watȝe passande vche pryncȝe gomen,
in vayres.
Trumpeȝe and nakerys,
much pyþynþ þer repayres.
Vche mon tented hys,
and þay two tented þayres.

995  tyme] tymy MS; ty[n]y Vn; tym[e] all other editors (reading tyme, except Bat, who reads tyny)
1000  drest] dreft MS; dressed PS
1002  lufly] lufly MS; lovely Bu, PS
    her by] her by MS; herby Ma
1004  inmydȝeȝe] i mydȝeȝ MS; in the mydȝe PS
1006  grome] grome MS; gome PS
    grayȝe] g’yþe MS; graythly Bu, PS
1014  þat]  MS; & Ma, Mo; And Vn; [þat] or [That] all other editors
gomen] gomen MS; game Bu, PS
Much dut watʒ per dryuen ʒat day and ʒat Ɔper,  
and ʒe ʒryd as ʒro ʒronge in ʒerafter.  
ʒe ioye of Sayn Joneʒ day watʒ gentyle to here  
and watʒ ʒe last of ʒe layk, leudeʒ per ʒoʒten.  
ʒe wer gestes to go vpon ʒe gray morno,  
forʒpy wonderly ʒay woke and ʒe wyn dronken,  
daunse ful dreʒly wyth dere caroleʒ.  
At ʒe last when hit watʒ late ʒay lachen her leue,  
vchon to wende on his way ʒat watʒ wyʒe strange.  
Gawan gef ʒym god day, ʒe godmon ʒym lachcheʒ,  
ledes ʒym to his awen chambre ʒe chymne bysyde  
and ʒere he draʒeʒ ʒym on dryʒe and derely ʒym ʒonkkeʒ.
of þe wynne worship þat he hym wayned hade
as to honour his hous on þat hyȝe tyde
and enbelyse his burȝ with his bele chere.

1035 "Iwysse, sir, quyl I leue me worþe þe better
þat Gawayn hatȝ ben my gest at Goddeȝ awen fest."

"Grant merci," coþe Sir Gawayn, "in god fayth hit is yowreȝ,
al þe honour is your awen, þe Heȝe Kyng yowȝ ȝelde,
and I am wyȝe at your wylle to worch youre hest

1040 as I am halden þerto in hyȝe and in loȝe
bi riȝȝt."
Þe lorde fast can hym payne
to holde lenger þe knyȝt.
To hym answreȝ Gawayn

1045 bi non way þat he myȝt.
Then frayned þe freke ful fayre at himseluen
quat derue dede had hym dryuen at þat dere tyme
so kenly fro þe kyngeȝ kourt to kayre al his one,
er þe halidayeȝ holly were halet out of toun.

"For sope, sir," coþe þe segge, "þe sayn bot þe trawþe!
A heȝe ernde and a hasty me hade fro þo woneȝ,
for I am sumned myselfe to sech to a place,
I wot not in worlde whederwarde to wende hit to fynde!
I nolde bot if I hit negh myȝt on Nw ȝeres morne,
for alle þe londe inwyth Logres, so me oure Lorde help.
Forþy, sir, þis enquest I require yow here,
þat þe me telle with trawþe if euer þe tale herde
of þe Grene Chapel, quere hit on grounde stondeȝ,
and of þe kynȝt þat hit kepes of colour of grene.

1046  [derue] dɛrne or dɛrue MS; deme Ma
1050  [coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo4; quoth or quoth all other editors
1053  wot not] wot MS; wot Ma, Mo, Vn; [n]ot Wa, AW, Si; [ne] wot all other editors
Per wat3 stabled bi statut a steuen vus bytwene, to mete þat mon at þat mere ȝif I myȝt last, and of þat ilk Nw ȝere bot neked now wosteȝ and I wolde loke on þat lede, if God me let wolde, gladloker, bi Goddeȝ Sun, þen any god welde.

Forþi iwyss, bi ȝowre wylle, wende me bihoues. Naf I now to busy bot bare þre dayȝ, and me als fayn to falle feye as fayly of myn ernde. Þenne læande coþe þe lorde, "Now leng þe byhoues, for I schal teche yow to þat terme bi þe tymeȝ ende.

Þe Grene Chapayle vpon grounde greue yow no more, bot ȝe schal be in yowre bed, burne at þyn esȝe, quyle forth dayȝ, and ferk on þe fyrst of þe ȝere, and cum to þat merk at mydmorn to make quat yow likeȝ [f. 105v/109v] in spenne.

Dowellez whyle New ȝeres daye and rys and raykeȝ þenne. Mon schal yow sette in waye: hit is not two myle henne!"
"Now I onk yow þryuandely, þurʒ alle oper þyne. Now acheued is my chaunce, I schal at your wylle dowelle and elleʒ do quat ʒe demen."

Þenne sesed hym þe syre, and set hym bysyde, let þe ladieʒ be fette to lyke hem þe better;

þer watʒ seme solace by hemself stille.

þe lorde let for luf loteʒ so myry as wyʒ þat wolde of his wyte, ne wyst quat he myʒt. Þenne he carped to þe knyʒt, cryande loude, "3e hau demed to do þe dede þat I bidde—

wyl ʒe halde þis hes here at þys oneʒ?"

"3e sir, forsoþpe," sayd þe segge trwe, "Whyl I byde in yowre borʒe be bayn to ʒowre hest."

"For ʒe haf trauayled," cøþ þe tulk, "towen fro ferre, and syþen waked me wyth, ʒe arn not wel waryst, nauþer of sostnaunce ne of slepe, soply I knowe. ʒe schal lenge in your lofte and lyʒe in your ese tomorn quyle þe messequyle, and to mete wende when ʒe wyl, wyth my wyf þat wyth yow schal sitte and comfort yow with compauny til I to cort torne,

ʒe lende;

and I schal erly ryse
on huntyng wyl I wende." Gauayn granteʒ alle þyse, hym heldande as þe hende.
"Set firre," coþe þe freke, "a forwarde we make:
quatsoeuer I wynne in þe wod, hit worþe3 to youre3, and quart chek so ȝe acheue, chaunge me þerforne! Swete, swap we so, sware with trawþe, queþer leude so lymp lere oþer better!"

"Bi god," coþe Gawyn þe gode, "I grant þertylle, and þat yow lust forto layke lef hit me þynke3." "Who brynge3 vus þis beuerage, þis bargayn is maked!"—so sayde þe lorde of þat lede. Þay laþed vchone. Þay dronken and daylyeden and dalten vntyt3tel, þise lorde3 and ladye3, quyle þat hem lyked, and syþen with frenkysch fare and fele fayre lote3 þay stoden and stemed and stylyl speken, kysten ful comlyly and kaþten her leue. With mony leude ful lyȝt and lemande torches vche burne to his bed watȝ broþt at þe laste, ful softe.

To bed þet er þay þede, recorded couenaunte3 ofte. Þe olde lorde of þat leude cowþe wel halde layk alofte!
Ful erly biforn þe day þe folk vp rysen.
Gestes þat go wolde hor grome þay calden,
and þay busken vp bilyue, blonkke to sadel,
tyffen her takles, trussen her males;
1130 richen hem þe rychest to ryde alle arayde,
lepen vp lyȝtly, lachen her brydeles,
vche wyȝe on his way þer hym wel lyked.
þe leue lorde of þe londe watȝ not þe last,
arayed for þe rydyng with renkkeȝ ful mony,
ete a sop hastyly when he hade herde masse;
with bugle to bent felde he buskeȝ bylyue
by þat þat any daylyȝt lemed vpon erþe,
he with his hæpeles on hyȝe horses weren.
Þenne þise cacheres þat couþe cowpled hor houndeȝ,
1140 uclosed þe kenel dore and calde hem þeroute,
blwe bygly in bugleȝ þre bare mote.
Braches bayed þerfore and breme noyse maked
and þay chastysed and charred, on chasyng þat went,
a hundreth of hunteres, as I haþ herde telle,
of þe best.
To trystors vewters ȝod;
couples huntes of kest;
þer ros for blasteȝ gode
[gret rurd in þat forest.

1126 vp rysen] vpyȝen MS; are uprysen PS
1129 her] he MS, Vn; he[r] all other editors
1137 þat þat þat þat MS; þat TG, GzG, TGD, Bar, Mm, AW, Si; þat Ca, Wa, Bat; þa[n] that Bu
1140 mote] mote MS; mote[3] GzG; mote[s] Ca, PS
1143 went] went MS; wenten PS
1144 hundreth] hundreth MS; hundred PS
1145 of þe] of þe MS; þe GzG
1146 trystors] tryȝtoþs MS; trysteres PS
At þe fyrst queche of þe quest quaked þe wylde.
Der drof in þe dale doted for drede,
hí3ed to þe hy3e, bot heterly þay were
restayd with þe stablye þat stoutly ascryed.
þay let þe hertte3 haf þe gate with þe hy3e hedes,
þe breme bukke3 also with hor brode paume3,
for þe fre lorde hade defende in fermysoun tyme
þat þer schulde no mon meue to þe male dere.
þe hinde3 were halden in with "hay" and "war,"
þe does dryuen with gret dyn to þe depe slade3.
þer my3t mon se as þay slypte slentyng of arwes:
at vche wende vnder wande wapped a flone
þat bigly bote on þe broun with ful brode hede3.
What! þay brayen and bleden bi bonkke3 þay de3en,
and ay rachches in a res radly hem fol3es.

1150 queche] queche MS; quethe all editors
1157 meue] meue or mene MS; mene Ma, Mo (the latter suggesting meue)
1158 "hay"] hay MS; 'Hay, hay!' PS
1160 slentyng] slentyg or fleutyg MS; sleutyg Ma
1161 vche] vche MS; vche [þat] Mo
1165  Hunteneȝ wyth hyȝe horne hasted hem after
wyth such a crakkande kry as klyffeȝ haden brusten.
What wylde so atwaped wyȝes þat schotten
watȝ al toraced and rent at þe resayt.
Bi þay were tened at þe hyȝe and taysed to þe wattrȝeȝ,
1170  þe ledeȝe were so lerned at þe loȝe trysteres,
and þe grehoundeȝ so grete þat geten hem bylyue,
and hem tofylched as fast as frekeȝ myȝt loke
þer ryȝt.
þe lorde for blys abloy
1175  ful oft con launce and lyȝt,
and drof þat day wyth joy
thus to þe derk nyȝt.
Þus layke þis lorde by lyndewode þis eue3,
and Gawayn þe god mon in gay bed lyge3,
1180 lurkke þuyl þe daylyȝt lemed on þe wowes
vnder couertour ful clere, cortyned aboute,
and as in slomeryng he slode sleȝly he herde
a littel dyn at his dor and dernly vpon;
and he heueȝ vp his hed out of þe cloȝes,
a corner of þe cortyn he caȝt vp a lyttel [f. 107r/111r]
and wayteȝ warly þiderwarde quat hit be myȝt.
Hit watȝ þe ladi, loflyest to beholde,
þat droȝ þe dor after hir ful dernly and style
and boȝed towarde þe bed; and þe burne schamed,
1190 and layde hym doun lystyly and let as he slepte;
and ho stepped stilly, and stel to his bedde,
kest vp þe cortyn and creped withinne,
and set hir ful softly on þe bed syde,
and lenged þere selly longe to loke quen he wakened.
1195 Þe lede lay lurked a ful longe quyle,
    compast in his conciense to quat þat cace myȝt
mene ðer amount—to meruayle hym þoȝt,
bot ðet he sayde in hymself, "More semly hit were
to aspye wyth my spelle in space quat ho wolde!"
1200 Þen he wakenede and wroth and to hir warde torned,
    and vnlooiked his yȝelyddeȝ and let as hym wondered,
and sayned hym, as bi his saȝe þe sauer to worthe,
    with hande.
    Wyth chynne and cheke ful swete,
1205 boȝe quit and red in blande,
    ful luȝly con ho lete
wyth lyppeȝ smal laȝande.
"God moroun, Sir Gawayn," sayde þat gaye lady, 
3e ar a sleper vslyȝe þat mon may slyde hider!

1210 Now ar ȝe tan astyt, bot true vus may schape,
I schal bynde yow in your bedde, þat be ȝe trayst!"
Al laȝande þe lady lauced ȝo bourdeȝ.
"Goud moroun, gai," coþe Gawayn þe lyþe,
"Me schal worþe at yourr wille and þat me wel lykeȝ,

1215 for I ȝelde me ȝederly and ȝeȝe after grace,
and þat is þe best, be my dome, for me byhouȝeȝ nede!"
And þus he bourded aȝayn with mony a blyþe læȝter.
"Bot wolde ȝe, lady louely, þen leue me grante
and deprece your prysoun and pray hym to ryse,

1220 I wolde boȝe of þis bed and busk me better—
I schulde keuer þe more comfort to karp yow wyth!"
"Nay forsoþe, beau sir," sayd þat swete, 3e schal not rise of your bedde. I rych yow better: I schal happe yow here þat oþer half als, 1225 and syþen karp wyth my knyþt þat I kaþt haue, for I wene wel iwyssse Sir Wowen þe are þat alle þe worlde worchipæþ quereso þe ride. Your honour, your hendelayk is hendely praysed with lordeþ, wyth ladyes with alle þat lyf bere, 1230 and now þe ar here iwyssse and we bot oure one! My lorde and his ledeþ ar on lenþe faren, oþer burnþæ in her bedde and my burdeþ als, þe dor drawen and dit with a derf haspe, and syþen I haue in þis hous hym þat al lykeþ, 1235 I schal ware my whyle wel quyþl hit lasteþ with tale. 3e ar welcum, to my cors, yowre awen won to wale. Me behoueþ of fyne force 1240 your seruauent be and schale."
"In god fayth," coþe Gawayn, "gayn hit me þynkke3, þaȝ I be not now he þat ȝe of speken, to reche to such reuerence as ȝe reherce here, I am wyȝe vnworȝy I wot wel my seluen.

1245 Bi god I were glad and yow god þoȝt at sȝȝe òþer at seruyce þat I sette myȝt to þe plesaunce of your prys—hit were a pure ioye!"
"In god fayth, Sir Gawayn," coþe þe gay lady, "þe prys and þe prowes þat plese al oþer, if I hit lakked oþer set at lyȝt hit were littel daynte; bot hit ar ladyes innoȝe þat leuer wer nowþe haf þe, hende, in hor holde as I þe habbe here to daly with derely your daynte wordeȝ3, keuer hem comfort and colen her careȝ.

1250 þen much of þe garysoun oþer golde þat þay hauen. Bot I louue þat ilk Lorde þat þe lyfte haldeȝ I haf hit holly in my honde þat al desyres, þurȝe grace."
Scho made hym so gret chere

1260 þat watȝ so fayr of face; [f. 108r/112r] þe knyȝt with speches skere answared to vche a cace.
"Madame," coþe þe myry mon, "Mary yow ȝelde! For I haf founden, in god fayth, yowre fraunchis nobele and ful much of oþer folk fongen hor dede3, bot þe daynte þat þay delen for my disert nys sen, hit is þe worchyp of yourself þat noȝt bot wel conne3." "Bi Mary," coþe þe menskful, "me ſynk hit anoþer, for were I worth al þe wone of wymmen alyue, and al þe wele of þe worlde were in my honde, and I schulde chepen and chose to cheue me a lorde, for þe costes þat I haf knowen vpon þe, knyȝt, here of bewte and debonerte and blyþe semblaunt, and þat I haf er herkkened and halde hit here trwe, þer schulde no freke vpon folde biforn yow be chosen."

1263 coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo4; quoth or quoth all other editors
1265 ful] oþ ful MS; oþ9 ful Mo, TG, GzG, TGD, Bar, Mm, AW, Vn, Si; other ful Ca, Wa, Bu, Bat, PS fongen hor] fongen hor MS; fongen [bi] hor TGD, Si, Bat; fongen [for] hor Wa; fongen [by] her Bu
1266 for my] for my MS; † my Wa nys sen] nyfen or nyfene; nyfen Ma; nysen Mo, TG, GzG, Ca, Mm; nys eu[en] TGD, Si; nys ev[er] Wa, Bat; nis ev[er] Bu; nys eu[er] Bar, AW; nys en Vn, Vn; nis hit PS
1268 coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo4; quoth or quoth all other editors
1273 semblaunt] semblaunt MS; semblaunce PS
1274 trwe] trwee MS, Mo, TG, GzG, Ca, TGD, Bar, Mm, AW, Vn, Si; trwe† Ma; truee Wa; true Bu, Bat
"Iwysse worpy," coþe þe wyþe, "þe haf waled wel better, bot I am proude of þe prys þat þe put on me, and, soberly your seruaunt, my souerayn I holde yow, and youre knyȝt I becom and Kryst yow forȝelde!"

1280  Þus þay meled of muchquat til mydmore past, and ay þe lady let lyk as ho hym loued mych. þe freke ferde with defence and feted ful fayre. þaȝ ho were burde bryȝtest, þe burne in mynde hade þe lasse luf in his lode for lur þat he soȝt, boute hone: þe dunte þat schulde hym deue, and nedeȝ hit most be done. þe lady þenn spek of leue—he granted hir ful sone.
penne ho gef hym godday and wyth a glent læged, and as ho stod, ho stonyed hym wyth ful stor worde:
"Now he þat spede vche spech þis disport ȝelde yow, bot þat ȝe be Gawan hit gotʒ not in mynde!"
"Querfore?" coþe þe freke, and freschly he aske,
ferde lest he hade fayled in fourme of his castes.
Bot þe burde hym blessed and "Bi þis skyl" sayde:
"So god as Gawayn gaynly is halden, and cortaysye is closed so clene in hymseluen, couth not lȝȝtly haf lenged so long wyth a lady
bot he had craued a cosse bi his courtaysye, bi sum towch of summe tryfle at sum tale ende."
þen coþe Wowen, "Iwysse, worþe as yow lyke!
I schal kysse at your comaundement as a knyȝt falle and fire lest he displese yow, so plede hit no more."

1290 stonyed] stōned MS; stōned Bu, PS
1293 hit gotʒ not in] hit gotʒ ð MS; hit gotʒ [not] in GzG, Bar; hit gos [not] in Ca, Bu, Bat; † ungayn
1294 coþe] qu MS, Ma; quod Mo
1295 castes] caþes MS; c[o]stes GzG
1300 and fire] fire MS; [ær]e[s] GzG, Mm; And fyr[e] Ca; And fyr[e] Bu; And [prestly] PS
1302 coþe] qu MS, Ma; quod Mo
1304 and fire] fire MS; [ær]e[s] GzG, Mm; And fyr[e] Ca; And fyr[e] Bu; And [prestly] PS

Ho comes nerre with þat and cacheȝ hym in armeȝ, louteȝ luftyȝ adoun and þe leude kyseȝ. Þay comly bykennen to Kryst ayþer òþer. Ho dos hir forth at þe dore withouten dyn more, and he ryches hym to ryse and rapes hym sone,

clepes to his chamberlayn, choses his wede, boȝeȝ forth quen he watȝ boun blypely to masse, and þenne he meued to his mete þat menskly hym keped, and made myry al day til þe mone rysed with game.

Watȝ neuer freke fayrer fonge bitwene two so dyngne dame, þe alder and þe longe: much solace set þay same.

boȝeȝ boȝeȝ MS; [G]oȝeȝ Si
hym] hy MS; hy Ma
watȝ W MS; W’ Ma (suggesting Was or Nas); With Mo (suggesting Was or Nas); W[atȝ] Mo
TG, GzG, Bar, Mm; W[as] Ca, Wa, Bu, Bat, PS; W[atȝ] TGD, AW, Si; Wyth Vn
And ay þe lorde of þe londe is lent on his gamne, to hunt in holte and heþe at hynde barayne.
Such a sowme he þer slowe, bi þat þe sunne heldet, of dos and of òþer dere, to deme were wonder. Þenne fersly þay flokked in, folk at þe laste, and quykly of þe quelled dere a querre þay maked.

Þe best boȝed þerto with burne innogh, gedered þe grattest of gres þat þer were, and didden hem derely vnso as þe dede askeþ. Serched hem at þe asay summ þat þer were: two fyngeres þay fonde of þe fowlest of alle.

Syþen þay slyt þe slot, sesed þe erber, schaued wyth a scharp knyf and þe schyre knitten; syþen rytte þay þe foure lymmes and rent of þe hyde, þen brek þay þe bale, þe bowele out token lystily for laucyng and lere of þe knot. [f. 109r/113r]
1335  Þay gryped to þe gargulun, and graybely departed
þe wesaunt fro þe wynt-hole and walt out þe gutteʒ.
Þen scher þay out þe schuldereʒ with her scharp knyueʒ,
haled hem by a lyttel hole to haue hole sydes;
siþen britned þay þe brest and brayden hit in twynne,
1340  and eft at þe gargulun bigyneʒ on þenne:
ryueʒ hit vp radly ryʒt to þe byʒt,
voʒdeʒ out þe avan ters and verayly þerafter
alle þe rymeʒ by þe rybbeʒ radly þay lauce.
So ryde þay of by resoun bi þe rygge boneʒ.
1345  euenden to þe hauynchron þat henged alle samen,
and heuen hit vp al hole and hwen hit of þere,
and þat þay neme for þe noumbles bi nome as I trowe,
bi kynde.
Bi þe byʒt al of þe hyʒes
1350  þe lappeʒ þay lauce bihyaende.
To hewe hit in two þay hyʒes,
bi þe bakbon to vnhyaende.

1339  britned] britned MS; brittened PS
1343  lauce] lauce or lance MS; lance Ma, Mo, TG, TGD, Bar, Mm, Si; lausen PS
1344  So] fo MS; Fo Vn; [S]o Ma, Mo, TG, GzG, Ca, Wa, Bu, Bar, Mm, AW, Si, Bat
1345  euenden] euendʃen MS; Euend[ou]n GzG; Evend[ou]n Bu; Even doun PS
1350  lauce] lance or lauce MS; lance Ma, Mo, TG, TGD, Mm, Bar, Si; lauce GzG, Ca, Wa, AW, Vn;
lausen Bu, PS
Bope þe hede and þe hals þay hwen of þenne,
and syþen sunder þay þe sydeð swyft fro þe chyne,
and þe corbeles þee þay kest in a greue,
þenn þurled þay ayþer þik side þurð bi þe rybbe,
and henged þenne ayþer bi hò3e3 of þe fourche3
vche þréke for his þee as falle3 forþo þauæ.
Uþon a felle of þe fayre best þede þay þayr houndes
wyþ þe lyuer and þe lyȝte3, þe leþer of þe paunche3,
and bred bæþed in blod blende þeramonge3.
Baldely þay þlw þryþ; bayed þayr rachche3.
Syþen fonge þay her þlesche, folden to home,
strakande ful stoutly mony stif mote3.
Bi þat þe daylyȝt watʒ done, þe douthe watʒ al wonen
into þe comly castel þer þe knyȝt bideʒ
ful stille,
wyþ blys and bryȝt þyr bette.
Þe lord is comen þertylæ;
1370 When Gawayn wyþ þym mette,
þer watʒ bot wele at wylæ.
Thenne sumned þe syre in þat sale þe meny, boþe þe ladyes on logh to lyȝt with her burdes.
Bifore alle þe folk on þe flette, frekeȝ he beddeȝ
verayly his venysoun to fech hym byforne, and al godly in gomen Gawyn he called, techeȝ hym to þe tayles of ful tayt bestes, scheweȝ hym þe schyrre grece, schorne vpon rymbes. "How payeȝ yow þis play? Haf I prys wonnen?
Haue I þryuandely þonk þurȝ my craft serued?" "3e iwysse," coþe þat oþer wyȝe, "here is wayth fayrest þat I seȝ þis seuen ȝere in sesoun of wynter!" "And al I gif yow, Gawyn," coþe þe gome þenne, "for by acorde of couenaunt ȝe craue hit as your awen."
"Þis is soth," coþe þe segge. "I say yow þat ilke, and I haf worthyly þis wonnen, woneȝ wythinne;
iwysse with as god wylle hit worþe3 to 3oure3."
He hasppe3 his fayre hals his arme3 wythinne
and kysses hym as comlyly as he couþe awyse.

1390 "Tas yow þere my cheuicaunce, I cheued no more:
I wowche hit saf fynly, þa3 feler hit were."
"Hit is god," coþe þe godmon, "grantmercy þefore!
Hit may be such hit is þe better, and 3e me breue wolde
where 3e wan þis ilk wele bi wytte of yowreseluen."

1395 "Þat wat3 not forward!" coþe he, "frayst me no more!
For 3e haf tan þat yow tyde3, trawe 3e non oþer
3e mowe."
Þay laþed and made hem blyþe
wyth lote3 þat were to lowe;

1400 to soper þat 3ede asswyþe
wyth dayntes nwe innowe.
And sypen by þe chymne in chamber þay seten.
Wyȝeþ þe walle wyn weȝed to hem oft.
And eft in her bourdyng þay bayþen in þe morn
to fylle þe same forward þat þay byfore maden:
what chaunce so bytyde3 hor cheuysaunce to chaunge,
what nweȝ so þay nome, at naȝt quen þay mette.
Þay acorped of þe couenaunte3 byfore þe court alle.
Þe beuerage watȝ broȝt forth in bourde at þat tyme. [f. 110r/114r]

1405

1410
Þenne þay louelych leȝten leue at þe last;
vche burne to his bedde busked bylyue.
Bi þat þe coke hade crowen and cakled bot þryse,
þe lorde watȝ lopen of his bedde, þe leudeȝe vchone,
so þat þe mete and þe masse watȝ metely deluyered,
þe douthe dressed to þe wod er any day sprenged
to chace.
Heȝ with hunte and horneȝ
þurȝ playneȝ þay passe in space;
vncoupled among þo þorneȝ
1420
racheȝ þat ran on race.
Sone þay calle of a quest in a ker syde.
Þe hunt rehayted þe hounde þat hit fyrst mynged,
wylde worde þym warp wyth a wrast uoyce.
Þe hownde þat hit herde hastid þider swyþe,
1425 and fallen as fast to þe fuyt, fourty at ones.
Þenne such a glauerande glam of gedered rachche
ros þat þe rochere rungen aboute;
huntereþ hem hardened with horne and wyth muthe.
Þen al in assemble sweyed togeder
1430 bitwene a flosche in þat fyrth and a foo cragge.
In a knot bi a clyffe at þe kerre syde,
þeras þe rogh rocher vnrydely wat3 fallen,
þay ferden to þe fyndyng and frekeþ hem after.
Þay vmbekesten þe knarre and þe knot boþe,
1435 wyþþe, whyl þay wysten wel wythinne hem hit were,
þe best þat þer breued watþ wyth þe blodhounde.
Þenne ðay beten on ðe buskeȝ and bede hym vprye,
and he vnsoundyly out soȝt, seggeȝ ouerþwert.
On ðe sellokest swyn swenged out þere,
long sythen fro ðe sounder, þat syre ful olde,
for he watȝ a borelych best, bor alpergrattest.
Ful grymme quen he gronyed, þenne greued mony,
for þre at þe fyrst þrast he þryȝt to þe erþe
and spurred forth good sped boute spyt more.
ise oþer halowed "Hygh!" ful hyȝe and "Hay!" þay cryed, 

haden horneȝ to mouþe, heterly rechated. [f. 110v/114v]

Mony watȝ þe myry mouþe of men and of houndeȝ 
þat buskkeȝ after þis bor with bost and wyth noyse 
to quelle.

Ful oft he bydeȝ þe baye 
and maymeȝ þe mute in melle; 
he hurteȝ of þe houndeȝ and þay 
ful 3omerly ȝaule and ȝelle.
Schalke to schote at hym schowen to þenne,
1455 haled to hym of her arewe3, hiten hym oft,
bot þe poynte3 payred at þe pyth þat pyȝt in his schelde3,
and þe barbe3 of his browe bite non wolde:
þaȝ þe schauen schaft schyndered in pece3
þe hede hypped aȝayn weresoeuer hit hitte.
1460 Bot quen þe dynte3 hym dered of her dryȝe stroke3,
þen braynwod for bate on burne3 he rase3,
hurte3 hem ful heterly þer he forth hyȝe3,
and mony arȝed þerat and on lyte droȝen.
Bot þe lorde on a lyȝt horce launces hym after
1465 as burne bolde vpon bent his bugle he bloweȝ;
he rechated and rydeȝ þurȝ roneȝ ful þyk,
suande þis wylde swyn til þe sunne schafted.
Þis day wyþ þis ilk dede þay dryuen on þis wyse
whyle oure luȝlych lede lys in his bedde,
1470 Gawayn grayȝely at home in gereȝ ful ryche
of hewe.
þe lady noȝt forȝate,
com to hym to salue.
Ful erly ho watȝ hym ate,
1475 his mode for to remwe.

1457 browe] browe MS; browe[n] TG
1460 strokeȝ] stroȝe MS; arweȝ Ma
1463 on lyte] on lyte MS; allyte PS
1466 rydeȝ] rydȝ MS (by image manipulation); r . . . Ma; rydȝ Vn (citing UV), Si; rides Bat; rode all
other editors
roneȝ] rouȝe or roneȝ MS; rouȝe Ma; roneȝ all other editors
1469 luȝlych] luȝlych MS; lovely Bu
1470 grayȝely] gȝyȝely MS; graythly Bu, PS
1473 com to] com to MS; To† co[m] Wa, Bar, AW, Si; To come PS
Ho commes to þe cortyn and at þe knyȝt totes.
Sir Wawen her welcomed worpyly on fyrst
and ho hym ȝeldeȝ æȝayn ful ðerne of hir wordeȝ,
seteȝ hir sofly by his syde and swyþely ho laȝeȝ
and wyþ a luflych loke ho layde hym þyse wordeȝ:
"Sir, ȝif þe be Wawen wonder me þynkkeȝ,
wȝȝe þat is so wel wrast alway to god,
and conneȝ not of compaynye þe costeȝ vndertake,
and if mon kennes yow hom to knowe þe kest hom of mynde! [f. 111/115r]
Þou hatȝ forȝeten ȝederly þat ȝisterday I taȝt te
bi aldertruest token of tulk þat I cowþe."
"What is þat?" coþe þe wygh, "Iwysse, I wot neuer!
If hit be sothe þat ȝe breue, þe blame is myn awne."
"ȝet I kende yow of kyssyng," coþe þe clere þenne,
"quereso countenaunce is couþe quikly to clayme—
þat bicumes vche a knyȝt þat cortaysy vses!"

1477 Sir] MS; [&] Ma, Mo
worthyly] worþy MS; worthy all editors
1479 sofly] sofly MS; sof[ly Mo, Si, Bat
1480 luflych] luflych MS; lovely Bu, PS
layde] løyde MS; [l]ayde Ma
þyse] þye MS; þye Ma; þe Mo
1482 alway] alway MS; alwayes PS
1485 taȝte] taȝte MS; taȝt te Wa; taȝt the Bu; taȝt te Bar, AW
1486 tulk] tulk MS; [t]all[k all editors
1487 coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo45; quþ or quoth all other editors
wygh] wyȝh MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of 'h'); wyȝh Ma; wyȝhe all other editors.
1489 coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo45; quþ or quoth all other editors
"Do way," coþe þat derf mon, "my dere, þat speche, for þat durst I not do lest I deuayed were. 
If I were werned I were wrang, iwysse, ȝif I profered."

1495 "Mafay," coþe þe mere wyf, "ȝe may not be werned! 
3e ar stif innogh to constrayne wyth strenkþe ȝif yow lykeȝ, 
ȝif any were so vilanous þat yow devaye wolde!"
"ȝe, be God," coþe Gawyn, "good is your speche, 
bot þrete is vnþryuande in þede þer I lende, 
and vche gift þat is geuen not with goud wylle. 
I am at your comaundement, to kysse quen yow lykeȝ: 
ȝe may lach quen yow lyst and leue quen yow þynckeȝ in space!"
Þe lady louteȝ adoun 
1500 and comlyly kysses his face. 
Much speche þay þer expoun 
of druryes greme and grace.
“I woled wyt at yow, wyȝe,” þat worþy þer sayde,  
“and yow wrathed not þeryth, what were þe skylle

1510 þat so song and so þepe as þe at þis tyme,  
so cortayse, so knyȝtyly as þe ar knowen oute—  
and of alle cheualry to chose, þe chef þyng alosed  
is þe lel layk of luf, þe lettrure of armes;  
for to telle of þis teuelyng of þis trwe knyȝteʒ,

1515 hit is þe tytelet token and tyxt of her werkkeʒ,  
how ledes for her lele luf hor lyueʒ hau auntered,  
endured for her drury dulful stoundeʒ,  
and after wenged with her walour and voyded her care  
and broȝt blysse into boure with bountees hor awen.

1520 And þe ar knyȝt comlokest kyd of your elde;  
your worde and your worship walkeʒ ayquere,  
and I haf seten by yourself here sere twyes  
þet herde I neuer of your hed helde no wordeʒ  
þat euer longed to luf lasse ne more;

1525 and þe þat ar so cortays and coyn of your hetes  
ogh to a þonke þynk ʒern to schewe  
and teche sum tokeneʒ of trwelulf craftes.  
Why, ar þe lewed, þat alle þe los weldeʒ,  
opær elles þe demen me to dille your dalyaunce to herken?

1530 For schame!  
I com hider sengel, and sitte  
to lerne at yow sum game;  
dos, techeʒ me of your wytte  
whil my lorde is fro hame.”

1510 þe [ar] MS; ʒe [ar] Mo
1514 teuelynȝ] teuelyɡ or tenelyɡ MS; tenelayɡ Ma; tenelyng Mo
1516 ledes] ledes (probably) MS; le... Ma
1526 ogh] ogh MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of ‘h’); ogh Ma; oghe all other editors
“In goud fayʃe,” coʃe Gawayn, “God yow forʃelde!
Gret is þe gode gle, and gomen to me huge,
þat so worʃy as ȝe wolde wynne hidere
and pyne yow with so pouer a mon, as play wyth your kynes
to yow þat, I wot wel, welde more slyȝt
of þat art bi þe half or a hundredth of seche
as I am, oþer euer schal, in erde þer I leue—
hit were a fole felefolde, my fre, by my trawʃe.
I wolde yowre wylnyng worche at my myȝt
as I am hyȝly bihalden, and euer more wylle
be seruaunt to yourseluen, so saue me Dryȝtyn!”
Þus hym frayned þat fre and fondet hym ofte
for to haf wonnen hym to woȝe, whatso scho þoȝt elleȝ;
but he defended hym so fayr þat no faut semed,
ne non euel on nawȝer halue, nawȝer þay wysten
bot blysse.
Þay laȝed and layked longe;
at þe last scho con hym kysse.
Hir leue fayre con scho fonge
and went hir waye ñwysse.
Then ruþes hym þe renk and ryſes to þe masse, and siþen hor diner watʒ dyʒt and derely serued.

1560 þe lede with þe ladyeʒ layked alle day, bot þe lorde ouer þe londeʒ launced ful ofte, sweʒ his vnecly swyn, þat swyngeʒ bi þe bonkkeʒ and bote þe best of his bracheʒ þe bakkeʒ in sunder. Þer he bode in his bay, tel bawemen hit breken and made hym mawgref his hed forto mwe vtter, so felle floneʒ þer flete when þe folk gedered. Bot þet þe styffest to start bi stoundeʒ he made, til at þe last he watʒ so mat he myʒt no more renne, bot in þe hast þat he myʒt he to a hole wynneʒ of a rasse bi a rokk þer renneʒ þe bornʒe.

1570 Þer he bode in his bay, tel bawemen hit breken and made hym mawgref his hed forto mwe vtter, so felle floneʒ þer flete when þe folk gedered. Bot þet þe styffest to start bi stoundeʒ he made, til at þe last he watʒ so mat he myʒt no more renne, bot in þe hast þat he myʒt he to a hole wynneʒ of a rasse bi a rokk þer renneʒ þe bornʒe.

1575 to nye hym onferum, bot þeʒe hym non durst for woþe—
he hade hurt so mony byforne þat al þuʒt þenne ful loþe be more wyth his tuscheʒ torne

1580 þat breme watʒ and braynwod bothe—

1562 sweʒ [weʒ MS; Swey Ca]
1565 made] madee MS; made[n] Ma; made† Mo; made all other non-normalizing editors
1570 borne] boʒme MS; boʒme Ma; borne Mo; bo[e]rme all other non-normalizing editors
1578 þuʒt] þuʒt MS; þoʒt Ma
1579 tuscheʒ] tuþcheʒ MS; tusches TG, TGD, AW
1580 and] not in MS; [/&] Mo, GzG, Mm; [and] all editors but Ma, Vn bothe] bothe MS; both Ma
til þe knyzt com hymself, kachande his blonk,  
syʒ hym byde at þe bay, his burneʒ bysyde.  
He lyʒt eylflyc adoun, leueʒ his corsour,  
braydʒ out a bryʒt bront and bigly forth styreʒ.

1585  foundeʒ fast þurʒ þe forth þer þe felle bydeʒ.  
Þe wylde watʒ war of þe wyʒe with wepen in honde,  
hef hyʒly þe here; so hetterly he fnast  
þat fele ferde for þe freke lest felle hym þe worre.  
Þe swyn setteʒ hym out on þe segge euṇ

1590  þat þe burne and þe bor were boþe vpon heþe  
in þe wyʒtęest of þe water. Þe worre hade þat oþer,  
for þe mon merkkeʒ hym wel as þay mette fyｒst,  
set sadly þe scharp in þe slot euṇ,  
hit hym vp to þe hult þat þe hert schyndered,  
and he ʒarrande hym ʒelde and ʒedoun þe water  
[þrif. 112v/116v]  
A hundreth houndeʒ hym hent  
þat bremely con hym bite;  
burneʒ him broʒt to bent

1600  and doggeʒ to dethe endite.

1583  luflıcy]  luflıcy MS;  luſlcıy Vn;  luʃʃlcy all other editors
1585  forth]  foʒth MS;  forde Bu;  PS
1587  fnast]  fnaʃt MS;  fnasted PS
1588  freke]  frekeʒ MS,  Mo (suggesting freke);  frekeʒ Vn (defending MS reading);  freke all other editors
1591  wyʒtęest]  wyʒtęest MS (though difficult to make out);  wyʒt[cr]est Ma;  wyʒt[-]est Mo,  GzG,  Mm;  wyʒtęest TG,  TGD,  Bar,  AW,  Vn,  Si;  wyȝhtęest Ca,  Wa,  Bat;  wighṭest Bu,  PS
1595  ʒedoun]  ʒedʊn MS;  ʒed ouer TG;  yede doun Bu
There watȝ blawyn of prys in mony breme horne, heȝe halowing on hiȝe with hȝeleȝ pat myȝt;
brachetes bayed pat best as bidden pe maystereȝ of pat chargeaunt chace pat were chef hunteȝ.

1605 þenne a wyȝe þat watȝ wys vpon wodcratȝ to vnlace þis bor lufly bigynneȝ.
Fyrst he hewes of his hed and on hiȝe setteȝ, and syþen rendeȝ him al rogh bi þe rygge after, braydeȝ out þe boweles, brenneȝ hom on glede, with bred blent þerwith his braches rewardeȝ.

1610 Syþen he britneȝ out þe brawen in bryȝt brode cheldeȝ and hatȝ out þe hastletteȝ, as hiȝtly besemeȝ, and þet hem halcheȝ al hole þe halueȝ togeder, and syþen on a stif stange stoutly hem henges.

1615 Now with þis ilk swyn þay swengen to home; þe bores hed watȝ borne bifore þe burnes seluen þat him forferde in þe forþþ þurȝ forse of his honde so stronge.
Til he seȝ Sir Gawayne

1620 in halle, hym þoȝt ful longe; he calde and he com gayn his feeȝ þer forto fonge.

1603 brachetes] brachetes MS; braches PS
1606 lufly] lufly MS; lovely Bu, PS
1608 rogh] rogh MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of 'h'); rogh Ma; roghe all other editors
1611 britneȝ] britneȝ MS; brittenes PS
cheldeȝ] cheldeȝ MS; [s]cheldeȝ Mo, GzG; [s]cheldes Ca
1614 stoutly] stoutly MS; stoutly all editors
1615 Now with] Now with MS; Now [swythe] with PS
1617 forþþ] forþþe MS; forde Bu, PS
1619 seȝ] feȝ MS; sey Ma
The lorde ful lowde with lote, lægende myry,
when he seȝe Sir Gawyn, with solace he spekeȝ.

1625
The goude ladyeȝ were geten and gedered þe myny;
he schewȝ hem þe scheldeȝ and schapes hem þe tale
of þe largesse and þe lêne, þe liþerneȝ alse,
of þe were of þe wylde swyn in wod þer he fled.
Þat óþer knyt full comly comended his dedeȝ

1630
and praysed hit as gret prys þat he proved hade,
for suche a brawne of a best, þe bolde burne sayde,
ne such sydes of a swyn segh he neuer are.
Þenne hondeled þay þe hoge hed; þe hende mon hit praysed
“Now Gawayn,” coþe þe godmon, “þis gomen is your awen
bi fyn forwarde and faste, faythely þe knowe.”
“Hit is sothe,” coþe þe segge, “and as siker trwe
alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe.”
He hent þe hþel aboute þe halse and hendely hym kysses,
and eftersones of þe same he serued hym pere.
“Now ar we euen,” coþe þe hþel, “in þis euentide
of alle þe couenantes þat we knyt syþen I com hider,
bi lawe.”
Þe lorde sayde “Bi saynt Gile,
3e ar þe best þat I knowe!
3e ben ryche in a whyle,
such chaffer and 3e drowe!”
Þenne þay teldet table3 trestes alofte, kesten cloþe3 vpon; clere ly3t þenne

1650 wakned bi wɔ3e3, waxen torches segge3 sette, and serued in sale al aboute. Much glam and gle glent vp þerinne aboute þe fyre vpon flet and on fele wyse, at þe soper and after mony æpel songe3

1655 as coundutes of Krystmasse and caroleʒ newe, with alle þe manerly merþe þat mon may of telle, and euer oure luflych knyþt þe lady bisyde. Such semblaut to þat segge semly ho made wyth stille stollen countenaunce þat stalworth to plesse, 1660 þat al forwondered watʒ þe wyʒe and wroth with hymseluen. Bot he nolde not for his nurture nurne hir aʒayneʒ, bot dalt with hir al in daynte, how-se-euer þe dede turned towrast. Quen þay hade played in halle

1665 as longe as hor wyle hom last, to chambre he con hym calle, and to þe chemne þay past.

1648 trestes] trestes MS; [on] trestes Mo
1649 lyʒt] lyʒt MS; [white] PS
1650 wakned] wakned MS; wakened Bu, PS
1652 and gle] gle MS; and [much] gle PS
1657 luflych] luflych MS; lovely Bu knyþt] knyþt MS; [lede] PS
1658 semly] semly MS; semely Bu, PS
1660 hymseluen] hỳ feluen MS; hỳ[m]-seluen TG
1662 how-se-euer] how se euʒ MS; how so PS
1663 towrast] to wraft MS; to wrast Ma, Mo, GzG, Vn; To wrast PS; towrast or Towrast all other editors
1666 longe] longe MS; lange Ma, Mo
1667 past] paft MS; passed Bu, PS
Ande þer þay dronken and dalten and demed eft nwe
to norne on þe same note on Nwe-ȝereȝ Euen;
1670 bot þe knyȝt craued leue to kayre on þe morn
for hit watȝ neȝ at þe terme þat he to schulde.
þe lorde hym letted of þat, to lenge hym resteyed,
[f. 113v/117v]
and sayde, "As I am trwe segge, I siker my trawþe
þou schal cheue to þe Grene Chapel þy charres to make,
1675 leude, on Nw-ȝeres lyȝt longe bifoire pryme.
Forþy þow lye in þy loft and lach þyn eþe
and I schal hunt in þis holt and halde þe towcheȝ,
chaunge wyth þe cheuisaunce bi þat I charre hider,
for I haf fraysted þe twys and faythful I fynde þe.
1680 Now þrid tyme þrowe best' þenk on þe morne.
Make we mery quyl we may, and mynne vpon joye,
for þe lur may mon lach whenso mon lykeȝ.
Þis watȝ grayȝely graunted and Gawyn is lenged.
Bliþe broȝt watȝ hym drynk and þay to bedde ȝeden
1685 with liȝt.
Sir Gawyn lis and slepes
ful stille and softe al niȝt;
þe lorde þat his crafteȝ kepes
ful erly he watȝ diȝt.

1673 siker] siker MS; þwer Ma
1675 leuþe] leuþe or lendo MS; lende Bu
After messe a morsel he and his men token.
Miry watȝ he mornynge; his mounture he askes.
Alle þe haþeles þat on horse schulde helden hym after
were boun busked on hor blonkkeȝ bifoþre þe halle ȝateȝ.
Ferly fayre watȝ he folde, for þe forst clenged;
in rede, rudende vpon rak, rises þe sunne
and ful clere costȝ þe clowdes of þe welkyn.
Hunteres vnhardeled bi a holt syde;
rocheres roungen bi rys for rurde of her hornes;
summe fel in þe fute þer þe fox bade
trayleȝ eftþe a trayteres bi traunt of her wyles.
A kennet kryes þerof; þe hunt on hym calles;
his felaȝes fallen hym to þat fnasted ful þike,
rinnen forth in a rabel in his ryȝt fare
and he fyskeȝ hem byfore; þay founden hym sone
1705 and quen þay segȝ hyn with syȝt, þay sued hym fast, 
and he trantes and tornayeeȝ þurȝ mony tene greue, 
hauiloȝeȝ and herkeneȝ bi heȝgeȝ ful ofte. 
At þe last, bi a littel dich, he lepeȝ ouer a spenne, 
[f. 114r/118r] [f. 114r/118r]
1710 steleȝ out ful stilly bi a strothe rande, 
went haf wyȝt of þe wode with wyleȝ fro þe houndes. 
Þenne watȝ he went er he wyst to a wale tryster, 
þer þre þro at a þricȝ þrat hym at ones, 
al graye. 
1715 He blenched aȝayn bilyue 
and stifly start onstray; 
with alle þe wo on lyue 
to þe wod he went away.
Thenne watȝ hit lef vpon list to lyen þe houndeȝ
when alle þe mute hade hym met menged togeder;
suche a sorȝe at þat syȝt þay sette on his hede
as alle þe clamberande cliffes hade clatered on hepes.
Here he watȝ halawed when haþeȝleȝ hym metten,
loude he watȝ ȝayned with ȝarande speche,
þer he watȝ preted and ofte þef called;
and ay þe titeres at his þayl þat tary he ne myȝt.
Ofte he watȝ runnen at when he out rayked
and ofte reled in aȝayn, so Ren iarde watȝ wyle;
and þe! he lad hem bi lagmon, þe lorde and his meyny,
on þis maner bi þe mountes, quyle myd-ouer-vnder—
whyle þe hende knyt at home holsumly slepes
withinne þe comly cortynes on þe colde morne.
Bot þe lady for luf let not to slepe
ne þe purpose to payre þat pyȝt in hir hert,

1719 lef vpon list] l.f vpon lift MS, with the middle letter of 'L.f' unintelligible; lif vpon lift Ma; lif vpon list Mo, TG; li[st] vpon li[f] GzG, TGD, Bar, Mm, AW, Si; li[st] upon li[f] Ca, Wa; l[ist] upon l[ive] Bu; l[o]f vpon list Vn, relying on UV; l[e]f upon list PS
1724 loude] loude or londe MS; [l]onde GzG; [Y]onde PS
1729 bi lagmon] bi lag mon MS; bi lag, mon Mo
1730 myd-ouer-vnder] myd ou vnder MS; myd, ou9, vnder Ma; myd, ouer, vnder Mo
1731 holsumly] holfuly MS; halfuly Ma
slepes] flepes MS; slepeȝ Mo, TG, GzG, Bar, Mm
bot ros hir vp radly, rayked hir þeder,
in a mery mantyle mete to þe erþe
þat watȝ furred ful fyne with felleȝ wel pured.
No hweȝ goud on hir hede bot þe haȝer stones
trased aboute hir tressour be twenty in clusteres,
hir þryuen face and hir prote þrowen al naked
hir brest bare before and bihinde eke.
Ho comeȝ withinne þe chambre dore and closes hit hir after
wayneȝ vp a wyndow and on þe wyȝe calleȝ,
and radly þus rehayted hym with hir riche wordes
with chere.
"A mon, how may þou slepe?
Þis morning is so clere!"
He watȝ in drowping depe,
bot þenne he con hir here.
1750 In dreȝ droupyng of dreme draueled þat noble, 
as mon þat watȝ in mornyng of mony þro þoȝtes, 
how þat destine schulde þat day dele hym his wyrde 
at þe Grene Chapel, when he þe gome metes, 
and bihoues his buffet abide withoute debate more.

1755 Bot quen coþe þat þat comly, he keuered his wyttes, 
swenges out of þe sweuenes and swareȝ with hast. 
þe lady luþly com læȝande swete, 
felle ouer his fayre face and fetly hym kyssed; 
he welcomeȝ hir worþily with a wale chere,

1760 he seȝ hir so glorious and gayly atyred, 
so faȝtes of hir fetures and of so fyne hewes; 
wiȝt wallande joye warmed his hert. 
With smoþe smylyng and smolt, þay smeten into merþe, 
þat al watȝ blis and bonchef þat breke hem bitwene,

1765 andwynne. 
Þay launce wordes gode, 
much wele þen watȝ þerinne; 
gret perile bitwene hem stod 
nif Mare of hir knyȝt mynne.
For ðat pryncesse of pris depresed hym so þikke, nurned hym so neȝe þe þred, þat nede hym bihoued Ȝer lach þer hir luf, Ȝer lodly refuse. He cared for his cortaysye, lest craþayn he were, and more for his meschef ȝif he schulde make synne and be traytor to þat tolke þat þat telde aȝt. "God schylde," coþe þe schalk, "þat schal not befalle!" With luf-lȝaȝnyng a lyt he layd hym bysyde alle þe speche3 of specialte þat sprange of her mouthe. Coþe þat burde to þe burne, "Blame ȝe disserue, ȝif ȝe luf not þat lyf þat ȝe lye nexte, bifoire alle þe wyȝeȝ in þe worlde wounded in hert, bot if ȝe haf a leman, a leuer, þat yow lykȝe better, and folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde þat yow lausen ne lyst—and þat I leue nouȝe— [f.115r/119r] and þat ȝe telle me þat now trwly I pray yow: for alle þe lufeȝ vpon lyue layne not þe soþe for gile." Þe knyȝt sayde, "Be Sayn Jon," and smeþely con he smyle, "In fayth I welde riȝt non ne non wil welde þe quile."
"That is a worde," coþe þat wyȝt, "Þat worst is of alle, 
bot I am swared forsoþe, þat sore me þinkkeȝ. 
Kysse me now comly, and I schal cach heþen. 

1795 I may bot mourn vue þpon molde, as may þat much louyes." 
Sykande ho sweȝe doun and semly hym kyssed, 
and siþen ho seueres hym fro, and says as ho stondes, 
"Now, dere, at þis departynge do me þis eþe, 
gif me sumquat of þy gifte, þi gloue if hit were 

1800 þat I may mynne on þe, mon, my mournyng to lass." 
"Now iwysse," coþe þat wyȝe, "I wolde I hade here þe leuest þing for þy luf þat I in londe welde, 
for þe haf deserued, forsoþe, sellyly ofte 
more rewarde bi resoun þen I reche myȝt;
bot to dele yow for drurye þat dawed bot neked, 
hit is not your honour to haf at þis tyme
a gloue for a garysoun of Gawayne3 gifte3, 
and I am here an erande in erde3 vncoupe, 
and haue no men wyth no male3 with menskful þinge3.

Þat mislyke3 me, lade, for luf at þis tyme!
Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille ne pine."

"Nay, hende of hy3e honours,"
cophe þat lu3sum vn3er lyne,

"Þa3 I hade no3t of youre3, 
3et schulde 3e haue of myne."

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1805 bot to dele yow for drurye þat dawed bot neked, 
hit is not your honour to haf at þis tyme
a gloue for a garysoun of Gawayne3 gifte3, 
and I am here an erande in erde3 vncoupe, 
and haue no men wyth no male3 with menskful þinge3.

1810 Þat mislyke3 me, lade, for luf at þis tyme!
Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille ne pine."

"Nay, hende of hy3e honours,"
cophe þat lu3sum vn3er lyne,

1815 "Þa3 I hade no3t of youre3, 
3et schulde 3e haue of myne."
Ho raȝt hym a riche rynk of red golde werkeȝ
wyth a starande ston stondande alofte
þat bere blusschande bemeȝ as þe bryȝt sunne—
1820 wyt þe wel, hit watȝ worth wele ful hoge.
Bot þe renk hit renayed, and redyly he sayde,
"I wil no gifteȝ for gode, my gay, at þis tyme."
I haf none yow to norne, ne noȝt wyl I take."
Ho bede hit hym ful bysily, and he hir bode wernes,
1825 and swere swyftely his sothe þat he hit sese nolde,
and ho sore þat he forsoke, and sayde þerafter,
"If þe renay my rynk, to ryche for hit semeȝ,
þe wolde not so hyȝly halden be to me,
I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse."
Ho last a lace lystly, that that leke vmbe hir syde,
knit vpon hir kyrtel vnder þe clere mantyle.
Gered hit wat3 with grene sylke and with golde schaped
no3t bot arounde brayden, beten with fyngle3,
and þat ho bede to þe burne, and blypely biso3t,
þat hit vnworþi were þat he hit take wolde.
And he nay þat he nolde negh in no wyse,
nauþer golde ne garysoun er God hym grace sende
to acheue to þe chaunce þat he hade chosen þere—
"And þerfore, I pray yow, displesse yow no3t,
and lete3 be your businesse, for I bayþe hit yow neuer
to graunte.
I am derely to yow biholde
becaus of your semblaunt,
and euer in hot and colde
1845
to be your trwe seruaunt."
"Now forsake þe þis silke," sayde þe burde þenne, "for hit is symple in hitself? And so hit wel seme: lo, so hit is littel, and lasse hit is worpy, bot whoso knew þe costes þat knit ar þerinne, he wolde hit prayse at more prys, parauenture!

For quat gome so is gorde with þis grene lace, while he hit hade, hemely halched aboute, þer is no hapel vnder heuen tohewe hym þat myȝt, for he myȝt not be slayn for slyȝt vpon erpe."

Þen kest þe knyȝt, and hit come to his hert
hit were a juel for þe joparde þat hym iugged were:
when he acheued to þe chapel his chek forto fech, myȝt he haf slypped to be vnslayn, þe sleȝt were noble. Þenne he þulged with hir þrepe and þoled hir to speke,
[f. 116r/120r]

and ho bere on hym þe belt and bede hit hym swyȝe—
and he granted—and hym gafe with a goud wylle
and bisoȝt hym for hir sake disceuer hit neuer,
bot to lelly layne fro hir lorde. Þe leude hym acordeȝ
þat neuer wyȝe schulde hit wyt, iwysse, bot þay twayne

for noȝte.
He þonkked hir oft ful swyȝe,
ful þro with hert and þoȝt.
Bi þat on þrynne syȝe
ho hatȝ kyst þe knyȝt so toȝt.
Thenne lachche ho hir leue and leue3 hym þere, for more myrþe of þat mon moȝt ho not gete.
When ho watȝ gon Sir Gawayne gereȝ hym sone, rises and riches hym in araye noble,
lays vp þe luf-lace þe lady hym raȝt,
hid hit ful holdely þer he hit eft fonde.
Syȝen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye, preuely aproached to a prest, and prayed hym þere þat he wolde lyste his lyf and lern hym better how his sawle schulde be saued when he schuld seye heþen.
Þere he schrof hym schyrly and schewed his mysdeneȝ,
of þe more and þe mynne, and merci bescheȝ,
and of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;
and he asoyled hym surely and sette hym so clene as Domeȝ day schulde haf ben diȝt on þe morn;
and syȝen he mace hym as mery among þe fre ladyes, with comlych caroles and alle kynnes ioye, as neuer he did bot þat daye, to þe derk nyȝt, with blys.
Vche mon hade daynte þare
of hym, and sayde, “Iwysse, þus myrhe watȝ neuer are, syn he com hider, er þis.”
Now let hym lenge in þat lee: þer luf hym bityde!
3et is þe lorde on þe launde ēdande his gomnes—

1895 he hatȝ forgaren þis fox þat he folȝed longe.
As he spreȝ ouer a spenne to spye þe schrewę,
þeras he herd þe howndes þat hasted hym swyþe,
Renaud com richchande þurȝ a roȝe greue,
and alle þe rabel in a res ryȝt at his heleȝ.

1900 þe wyȝe watȝ war of þe wylde, and warly abides,
and braydeȝ out þe bryȝt bronȝde, and at þe best casteȝ,
and he schunt for þe scharp, and schulde haf arered.
A rach rapes hym to, ryȝt er he myȝt,
and ryȝt biforesh þe hors fete þay fel on hym alle,

1905 and woried me þis wyly wyth a wroþ noyse.
þe lorde lyȝte bilyue, and lacheȝ hym sone,
raised hym ful radly out of þe rach mouþes.
haldeʒ heʒe ouer his hede, halowez faste,
and þer bayen hym mony braþ houndez.

1910 Huntes hyʒed hem þeder with horneʒ ful mony,
ay rechatande aryʒt til þay þe renk seʒen.
Bi þat watʒ comen his compeyny noble,
alle þat euer ber bugle blewed at ones,
and alle þise ðer ðalowed þat hade no hornes;

1915 hitwatʒ þe myriest mute þat euer mon herde,
þe rich rurd þat þer watʒ rysed for Renaude saule
with lote.
Hor houndez þay þer rewarde,
her hedeʒ þay fawne and frote,

1920 and syþen þay tan Reynarde
and tyruen of his cote.

1909 bray] bray MS; bray Ma, Mo (suggesting braþ), Vn; bra[p] TG, GzG, TGD, Bar, Mm, AW, Si;
bra[th] Ca, Wa, Bu, Bat; brothe PS
1911 seʒen] seʒen MS; sawen PS
1915 mon] mō MS; m[e]n Ma, Mo, TG, GzG, Ca, TGD, Bar, Mm, Si, Bat
1916 Renaude} renauéd MS; Reynarde Bu, PS
1919 her] her MS; Her her Vn; Her † all other editors
1921 tyruen] tyruen MS; t[u]r[n]en Ma; tyr[n]en Mo
And þenne þay helden to home for hit watȝ neȝȝ nyȝȝt,
strakande ful stoutly in hor store horneȝ.
Þe lorde is lyȝȝt at þe laste at hys lef home,
1925 fyndeȝ fire vpon flet, þe freke þer-byside,
Sir Gawayn þe gode þat glad watȝ withalle—
among þe ladies for luf he ladde much ioye.
He were a bleaunt of blwe þat bradde to þe erpȜe,
his surkot semed hym wel þat softe watȝ forred,
1930 and his hode of þat ilke henged on his schulder;
blande al of blunner were boȝe al aboute.
He meteȝ me þis godmon inmydȜeȝ þe flore,
and al with gomen he hym gret, and goudly he sayde,
“Þat we spedly hau spoken, þer spared watȝ no drynk.”
1935 [f. 117r/121r]
Þen acoles he þe knyȝt and kynses hym þryes,
as sauerly and sadly as he hem sette couþe.
“Bi Kryst,” coþe þat oþer knyȝt, “þe cach much sele
in cheuisaunce of þis chaffer, ȝif ȝe hade goud chepeȝ.”

1940 “3e, of þe chepe no charg,” coþe chefly þat oþer,
as is pertly payed þe porchas þat I aȝte.”
“Mary,” coþe þat oþer mon, “myn is bihynde,
for I haf hunted al þis day and noȝt haf I geten
bot þis foule fox felle—þe fende haf þe godeȝ!—
and þat is ful pore for to pay for suche prys þinges
as ȝe haf þryȝt me here þro, suche þre cosses
so gode.”
“Inoȝ,” coþe Syr Gawayn,
“I þonk yow, bi þe rode”—

1950 and how þe fox watȝ slayn
he tolde hym as þay stode.
With mëpe and mëynstralsye, wyth metë3 at hor wyll, 
þay maden as mëry as any men moȝten—
with læ3yn of ladies, with lote3 of bordes,

1955 Gawayn and þe godemon so glad were þay boþe—
bot if þe douthe had doted, oþer dronken ben oþer.
Boþe þe mon and þe meyny maden mony iape3,
til þe sesoun wat3 seȝen þat þay seuer moste;
burneȝ to hor bedde behoued at þe laste.

1960 Þenne loȝly his leue at þe lorde fyrst
fochche3 þis fre mon, and fayre he hym þonkke3
“of such a sellyly soiorne as I haf hade here.
Your honour at þis hyȝe fest, þe Hyȝe Kyng yow ȝelde!
I ȝef yow me for on of youre3, if yowreselv lyke3,

1953 moȝten] moȝten MS; myȝten Bu, PS
1956 oþer] oþ MS; or PS
1961 fochche3] fochche3 MS; f[œ]chche3 Ma
1962 sellyly] fellyly MS, Ma (suggesting felly); sellyly Mo (suggesting selly), Vn, PS; selly†† all other editors
1964 yowreselv] yowre selpf MS; yourselyn PS
for I mot nedes, as ȝe wot, meue tomorne, 
and ȝe me take sum tolke to teche, as ȝe hyȝt, 
Ȝe gate to Ȝe Grene Chapel, as God wyl me suffer 
to dele on Nwȝereȝ Day Ȝe dome of my wyrdes.”
“In god faye,” coþe Ȝe godmon, “wyth a goud wyle 
al ȝat euer I yow hyȝt halde schal I rede.”
Per asyngnes he a seruaunt to sett hym in Ȝe waye, 
and countue hym by Ȝe downeȝ, ȝat he no drechch had,  
for to ferk þurȝ ȝe fyrth and fare at ȝe gaynest 
bi greue.
Þe lorde Gawayn con þonk, 
such worship he wolde hym weue; 
þen at þo ladyȝ wlonk 
þe knyȝt hatȝ tan his leue.

côþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo<sup>+</sup>; quod or quoth all other editors

to ferk] tofrk MS; to [f]y[k Vn; to [f]e[rk all other editors
With care and wyth kyssyng he carppeȝ hem tille,
and fele þryuande þonkkeȝ he þrat hom to haue,
and þay ȝelden hym aȝayn ȝeple þat ilk;
þay bikende hym to Kryst with ful colde sykyngȝeȝ. 
Syþen fro þe meyny he menskly departes;
vche mon þat he mette, he made hym a þonke
for his seruyse and his solace and his sere pyne,
þat þay wyth busynes had ben aboute hym to serue;
and vche segge as sore to seuer with hym þere
as þay hade wonde worþyly with þat wlonk euer.
Þen with ledes and lyȝt he watȝ ladde to his chambre
and blypely broȝt to his bedde to be at his rest.
3if he ne slepe soundyly say ne dar I,
for he hade muche on þe morn to mynne, 3if he wolde,
in þoȝt.
Let hym lyȝe þere stille—
he hatȝ nere þat he soȝt.
And þe wyl a whyle be styyle,
I schal telle yow how þay wroȝt.
IV

Now neȝe þe Nwȝere and þe nyȝt passeȝ; þe day dryueȝ to þe derk, as Dryȝtyn biddeȝ.

2000 Bot wylde wedereȝ of þe worlde wakned þeroute; clowdes kesten kenly þe colde to þe erþe, wyþ nyȝe innogh of þe norþe þe naked to tene. Þe snaue snitered ful snart, þat snayped þe wylde; þe werbelande wynde wapped fro þe hyȝe and drof vche dale ful of dryftes ful grete. Þe leude lystened ful wel at leȝ in his bedde. Þæȝ he lowkeȝ his lidde, ful lyttel he slepes—bi vch kok þat crue he knwe wel þe steuen. Deliuerly he dressed vp er þe day sprenged. [f. 118r/122r]

2010 for þere watȝ lyȝt of a lampe þat lemed in his chambre. He called to his chamberlayn, þat cofly hym swared, and bede hym bryng hym his bruny and his blonk sadel. Þat oþer ferkeȝ hym vp and fecheȝ hym his wedeȝ, and grayþeȝ me Sir Gawayn vpon a grett wyse.

1999 Dryȝtyn] dryȝtyn MS; the Dryȝtyn PS
2002 innogh] in nogli MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of 'h'); innogh Ma; innogh Bu; inogh PS; innoghe all other editors
2010 lampe] lanpe or laupe MS; laupe Ma (suggesting laumpe); lampe Vn; lamp PS; lau[m]pe all other editors
2011 hym] hȝ MS; him TG
Fyrst he clad hym in his cloþe þe colde for to were,
and syþen his oþer harnays, þat holdely watʒ kepéd,
bôþe his paunce and his plateʒ, piked ful clene,
þe ryngeʒ rokked of þe rouste of his riche bruny;
and al watʒ fresch as vpon fyrst, and he watʒ fayn þenne
to þonk.

He hade vpon vche pece,
wyppt ful wel and wlonk.
þe gayest into Grece
þe burne bede bryng his blonk.
Whyle þe wlonkest wedes he warp on hymselfen,
his cote wyth þe conysaunce of þe clere werke
ennurned vpon veluet, vertuuus stone
aboute beten and bounden, enbraudhed seme,
and fayre furred withinne wyth fayre pelures,

3et laft he not þe lace, þe ladie3 gifte,
þat forgat not Gawayn for gode of hymselfen.
Bi he hade belted þe bronde vpon his balȝe haunche3,
þenn dressed he his drurye double hym aboute,
swyþe sweþled vmbe his swange swetely þat knyt.

þe gordel of þe grene silke þat gay wel bisemed,
vpon þat ryol red cloþe þat ryche watȝ3 to schewe,
bot wered not þis ilk wyȝ3 for wele þis gordel,
for pryde of þe pendaunte3, þaȝ polyst þay were,
and þaȝ þe glyterande golde glent vpon ende3,

bot forto sauen hymself, when suffer hym byhoued
to byde bale withoute dabate of bronde hym to were,
oþer knyffe.
Bi þat þe bolde mon boun
wynneȝ þeroute bilyue,

alle þe meyny of renoun
he þonkke3 ofte ful ryue.
Thenne wat3 Gryngolet grayþe þat gret wat3 and huge, and hade ben soiurned sauerly and in a siker wyse; hym lyst prik for poynþ, þat proude hors þenne.

2050 þe wyþe wynne3 hym to and wyte3 on his lyre, and sayde soberly hymself and by his soth swere3: “Here is a meyny in þis mote þat on menske þenkke3. þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot he haue! þe leue lady on lyue, luf hir bityde!”

2055 þe wyþe wynne3 hym to and wyte3 on his lyre, and sayde soberly hymself and by his soth swere3: “Here is a meyny in þis mote þat on menske þenkke3. þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot he haue! þe leue lady on lyue, luf hir bityde!”

2060 þenn steppe3 he into stirop and stryde3 alofte.
His schalk schewed hym his schelde, on schulder he hit laȝt; gorde3 to Gryngolet with his gilt hele3, and he starte3 on þe ston; stod he no lenger To praunce.

2065 His haþel on hors wat3 þenne, þat bere his spere and launce: “Þis kastel to Kryst I kenne! He gef hit ay god chaunce!”
The brygge watȝ brayde doun, and þe brode ȝateȝ
vnbarred and born open vpon bope halue.
Þe burne blessed hym bilyue and þe bredeȝ passed,
prayses þe porter bifoþ þe prynce kneled,
gef hym God and goud day, þat Gawayn he saue,
and went on his way with his wyȝe one,
þat schulde teche hym to tourne to þat tene place
þer þe rulfal race he schulde resayue.
Þay boȝen bi bonkkeȝ þer boȝe ar bare;
þay clomþen bi clyffeȝ þer clengeȝ þe colde.
Þe heuen watȝ vphalt, bot vgly þervnder:
mist muged on þe mor, malt on þe mounteȝ;
þch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge;
brokeȝ byled and breke bi bonkkeȝ aboute,
schyre schaterande on schoreȝ þer þay doun schowued.
Welawylle watȝ þe way þer þay bi wod schulden,
þat watȝ sone sesoun þat þe sunne ryses
þat tyde.
Þay were on a hille ful hyȝe;
þe quyte snaw lay bisyde.
Þe burne þat rod hym by
bede his mayster abide.

[2083 schowued] ſchowued or ſchowned MS; ſchnowned Ma
"For I haf wonnen yow hider, wyȝe, at þis tyme, and now nar þe not fer fro þat note place þat þe hau spied and spuryed so specially after. Bot I schal say yow for soþe, syþen I yow knowe, and þe ar a lede vpon lyue þat I wel louy, wolde þe worch bi my wytte, þe worþe þe better. Þe place þat þe prece to ful perelous is halden; þer woneȝ a wyȝe in þat waste, þe worst vpon erþe, for he is stiffe and sturne, and to strike louies, and more he is þen any mon vpon myddelerde,

2093 hau] hau or han MS; have PS; han all other editors
spuryed] spuryed MS; spured Bu, PS
2096 þe] þe MS; [yow] GzG
and his body bigger þen þe best fowre
þat ar in Arþure3 hous, Hestor, oþer oþer.
He cheueþat chaunce at þe Chapel Grene,
þer passes non bi þat place so proude in his armes

2105 þat he ne dynges hym to deþe with dynt of his honde.
For he is a mon methles, and mercy non vses,
for be hit chorle oþer chaplayn þat bi þe chapel rydes,
monk oþer masseprest, oþer any mon elles,
hym þynk as queme hym to quelle as quyk go hymseluen.

2110 Forþy, I say þe, as soþe as ȝe in sadel sitte,
com ȝe þere, ȝe be kyllen, may þe knyȝt rede,
trawe ȝe me þat trwely, þat þe ȝe had twenty lyues
to spende.
He hatȝ wonȝd here ful ȝore,

2115 on bent much baret bende;
ȝayn his dynȝe sore
ȝe may not yow defende.

\[\text{2105 dynȝe]\ dȝynges MS; dyn[g]e\TG, GzG, Bar, Mm; dyn[g]es Ca, Wa, Bu, Bat, PS; dyn[g]ez TGD, AW, Si; dymnȝe Vn}\]
\[\text{2108 oþer (2“) oþ MS; or PS}\]
\[\text{2110 þe} ðe MS; [yow] GzG, PS\]
\[\text{2111 may] may MS; [I] may Mo}\]
“Forpy goude Sir Gawayn, let þe gome one, and gotʒ away sum ɔþer gate vpon Goddeʒ halue, cayreʒ bi sum ɔþer kyth, þer Kryst mot yow spede, and I schal hyʒ me hom ɑʒayn and hete yow fyrre þat I schal swere bi God and alle his gode halʒeʒ as ‘Help me God and þe halydam!’ and ɔþeʒ innogh, þat I schal lelly yow layne and lauce neuer tale þat euer ʒe fondet to fle for freke þat I wyst.”

“Grant merci,” coþe Gawayn, and gruchyng he sayde: “Wel worth þe, wyʒe, þat wolde ʒe gode, and þat lelly me layne I leue wel þou wolde, bot helde þou hit neuer so holde and I here passed, founded for ferde for to fle in fourme þat þou telleʒ, I were a knyʒt kowarde; I myʒt not be excused. Bot I wyl chos to þe chapel for chaunce þat may falle, and talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat me lyste, worþ þe hit wele oþer wo, as þe wyrde lykeʒ, hit hafe. ʒaʒe he be a sturn knape to stiʒtel and stad with staue, ful wel con Dryʒtyn schape his seruauntesʒ forto saue.”

2120 bi sum] bifū MS; bi [f]ū Ma; bi [s]um Mo, all other editors
2123 innogh] ñogī MS (with comma-shaped stroke on ascender of 'h'); ñogī Ma; innowe Bu; inoghe PS; in-noghe or innoghe all other editors
2124 lance] lauce or lance MS; lance Ma, Mo, TG, TGD, Bar, Mm, Si
2125 euer] eu MS; eu9 Ma; eu[er] or ev[er] all other editors
2126 cope] q MS, Ma; quod Mo5; quoþ or quoth all other editors
2130 not] mot MS; [n]ot all editors
2132 I wyl chos] I wyl MS; I wil [chose] PS
2137 and] MS; and and Vn; † & or † and all other editors
“Mary,” coþe þat oþer mon, “now þou so much spelleȝ þat þou wylþ þyn aven nye nyme to þyseluen, and þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe. Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere in þi honde, and ryde me doun þis ilk rake bi þon rokke syde, til þou be broȝt to þe boþem of þe brem valay. Þenne loke a littel on þe launde on þi lyfte honde, and þou schal se in þat slade þe self chapel, and þe borelych burne on bent þat hit kepeȝ. Now fareȝ wel on Godeȝ half, Gawayn þe noble! For alle þe golde vpon grounde I nolde go wyth þe, ne bere þe felaȝschip þurȝ þis fryth on fote fyrre.” Bi þat þe wyȝe in þe wod wendeȝ his brydel, hit þe hors with þe heleȝ as harde as he myȝt, lepeȝ hym ouer þe launde, and leueȝ þe knyȝt þere alone. “Bi goddeȝ self,” coþe Gawayn, “I wyl nauȝer grete ne greue; to Goddeȝ wylle I am ful bayn and to hym I haf me tone.”

2140 coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo4, quoth or quoth all other editors
2150 go] ge MS; g[o] Ma (reading go); gé Vn; g[o] all other editors, some reading go, some ge.
2151 on] on MS; [not] on PS
2156 coþe] q MS; Ma; quod Mo4; quoth or quoth all other editors
2157 grone] grene or greue MS; gr[o]ne all editors, reading grone
Thenne gyrde ḥe to Gryngolet and gedere ḥe rake, schowue ḥe in bi a schore at a schaȝe syde, ride ḥe ḥe roȝe bonk ryȝt to ḥe dale, and þenne he wayted hym aboute and wylde hit hym þoȝt, and seȝe no sygne of resette bisydeȝe nowhere, bot hyȝe bonkkeȝe and brent vpon boȝe halue, and ruȝe knokled knarreȝ with knorned stoneȝ; þe skweȝ of þe scowtes skayned hym þoȝt. Þenne he houed and wythhyldæ his hors at þat tyde, and ofte chaunged his cher þe chapel to seche.

He seȝ non suche in no syde—and selly hym þoȝt— saue a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit were, a balȝ berȝ bi a bonke þe brymme bysyde, bi a forȝ of a flode þat ferked þare;

2160

2165

2170

2167  skayned] skayned or skayued MS; skayued Mo

2171  saue] saue MS (with ‘i’ and ‘a’ largely obliterated); S[o]ne Ma, Mo, TG were] we MS, Vn; we[re] Ma, all other editors
Þe borne blubred Þerinne as hit boyled hade.

2175 Þe knyȝt kacheȝ his caple and com to Þe lawe,  
liȝte3 doun luftyly and at a lynde tacheȝ  
Þe rayne and his riche, with a roȝe braunche.  
Þenne he boȝeȝ to Þe berȝe, aboute hit he walkeȝ,  
debatande with hymself quat hit be myȝt.

2180 Hit hade a hole on Þe ende and on ayȝer syde,  
and ouergrown with gresse in glodes aywhere,  
and al watȝ holȝ inwith, nobot an olde caue 
or a creuissse of an olde cragge—he couȝe hit noȝt deme 
with spelle.

2185 “We, Lorde!” coȝe Þe gentyle knyȝt,  
“Whȝer Þis be Þe Grene Chapelle?  
Here myȝt aboute mydnyȝt  
Þe dele his matynnes telle.”

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2177 and] MS: [of] Wa, AW  
his riche] his riche MS (with ‘ri’ almost illegible); hi[t] riche[d] GzG, PS; hi[t] riche[s] Bu  
2179 debatande] debatande MS; Debetande Ma, Mo  
2187 Here] he MS; He Ma, Mo, Vn; Here TG; all other editors  
2188 dele] dèle MS; devel Bu
“Now iwissey,” coþe Wowayn, “wysty is here.

2190 þis oritore is ugly, with erbeȝ ouergrown.
Wel bisemeȝ þe wyȝe wruxled in grene
dele here his deuocioun on þe deueleȝ wyse.
Now I fele hit is þe fende, in my fyue wytȝe, ȝat hatȝ stoken me þis stuyen to strye me here.

2195 þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit bytyde;
hit is þe corsedest kyrk þat euer I com inne.”
With heȝe helme on his hede, his launce in his honde, 
he romeȝ vp to þe roffe of þo roȝ woneȝ.
Þene herde he of þat hyȝe hil in a harde roche 2200 biȝonde þe broke, in a bonk, a wonder breȝe noyse.
Quat! Hit clatered in þe cylyff as hit cleue schulde, as one vpon a gryndelston hade grounden a syþe.
What! Hit wharred and whette as water at a mulne.
What! Hit rusched and ronge, rawþe to here.

2205 Þenne, “Bi Godde,” coþe Gawayn, “þat gere, as I trowe, is ryched at þe reuerence, me renk to mete ȝi rote.
Let God worche! We loo!
Hit helppeȝ me not a mote:

2210 my lif þaȝ I forgoo ȝi drede dotȝ me no lote.”

2192 deueleȝ] deueleȝ MS; Deles PS
2196 corsedest] corsdeȝt MS; c[ra]deȝt Ma
2198 roffe] rofte MS; ro[kk]e Ma, Mo, TG
2203 mulne] mulne or mulue MS; mul[le] GzG, Mm
2205 as] at MS; at Ma (suggesting as), Vn; a[s] all other editors
2206 renk] renk MS; reken PS
2208 worche] woȝe MS; worke PS
Thenne þe knyȝt con calle ful hyȝe:

“Who stiȝtlēʒ in þis sted me steuen to holde?—
for now is gode Gawayn goande ryȝt here,
if any wyȝe oȝt wyl wynne hider fast,
oþer now oþer nieu, his nedeȝ to spede.”

“Abyde!” coþe on on þe bonke abouen, ouer his hede,
“and þou schal haf al in hast þat I þe hyȝt ones.”

3et he rusched on þat turde rapely a þrowe
and wyþ quettyng awharf, er he wolde lyȝt;
and syþen he keuereȝ bi a cragge and comeȝ of a hole,
whyrlande out of a wro wyþ a felle weppen,
a deneȝ ax nwe dyȝt, þe dyȝt with to ȝelde
with a borelych bytte, bende by þe halme,
fyled in a fylor, fowre fote large—
hit watȝ no lasse bi þat lace þat lemed ful bryȝt—
and þe gome in þe grene gered as fyrst,
boge þe lyre and þe leggeȝ, lokkeȝ and berde,
sauþ þat fayre on his fote he foundeȝ on þe erpe,
sette þe stel to þe stone and stalked bysyde.
When he wan to þe watter, þer he wade nolde:
he hypped ouer on hys ax and orpedly strydeȝ,
bremly broȝ þe on a bent þat brode watȝ aboute,
on snawe.

Sir Gawayn þe knyȝt con mete;
he ne lutte hym nофyng lowe.
Þat oþer sayde, “Now, sir swete,
of steuen mon may þe trowe.”

coþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo4; quoth or quoth all other editors

to ȝelde] o ȝelde MS, Ma (suggesting to); [t]o yelde Ca, Wa, Bu, Bat, PS; oȝelde Vn; [t]o ȝelde all
other editors
“Gawayn,” coþe þat grene gome, “God þe mot loke!

Iwysse þou art welcom, wyȝe, to my place,
and þou hatȝ tymed þi trauayl as true mon schulde;
and þou knoweȝ þe couenaunteȝ kest vus bytwene:
at þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat þe falled,
and I schulde at þis New ȝere ȝeple þe quyte,
and we ar in þis valay verayly ȝoure one—
here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as vus likeȝ.
Haf þy helme of þy hede and haf here þy pay—
busk no more debate þen I þe bede þenne
when þou wypad of my hede at a wap one.”

“Nay, bi God,” coþe Gawayn, “þat me gost lante,
I schal gruch þe no grwe for greȝ þat falleȝ;
bot styȝtel þe vpon on strok and I schal stonde stylye,
and warp þe no wernynge to worch as þe lykeȝ
nowhare.

He lened with þe nek and lutte
and schewed þat schyre al bare,
and lette as he noȝt dutte—
for drede he wolde not dare.
Then þe gome in þe grene grayþed hym swyþe,

gedere3 vp hys grymme tole, Gawyn to smyte.
With alle þe bur in his body, he ber hit on lofte,
munt as maþtyly as marre hym he wolde.
Hade hit dryuen adoun as dreþ as he atled,
þer hade ben ded of his dynt þat doþy watþ euer.

Bot Gawyn on þat giserne glyfte hym bysyde,
as hit com glydande adoun on glode hym to schende,
and schranke a lytel for þe schulderes for þe scharp yrne.
þat oþer schalk wyth a schunt þe schene wythhaldeþ,
and þenne repreued he þe prync with mony prowde wordþ:

“Þou art not Gawyn,” coþe þe gome, “þat is so goud halden,
þat neuer arþed for no here by hylle ne be vale,
and now þou fles for ferde er þou fele harmeþ. [f. 121/125v]
Such cowardise of þat knyþt cowþe I neuer here!
Nawþer fyked I ne flaþe, freke, quen þou mynteþ,
ne keþ no kauelacioun in kyngþ hous Arthur.
My hede flaþ to my fote, and þet flaþ I neuer,
and þou, er any harme hent, arþed in hert,
wherfore, þe better burne me burde be called þerfore.”

Coþe Gawyn, “I schunt oneþ
and so wyl I no moþer.
bot þaþ my hede falle on þe stoneþ
I con not hit restore.”

2265 on þat on þat MS; † þat Si
2270 coþe] Q MS, Ma; quod Mo4; quoþ or quoth all other editors
2274 mynteþ mynteþt MS; mynteþ† Si
2275 kauelacioun] kauelacþn or kauelacþnu MS; kauelacþnu Ma; kauelacþnu Mo; kauelacion Ca, Wa,
BAT; cavelacioun Bu, PS; kauelacion all other editors
2280 Coþe] Q MS, Ma; Quod Mo5; Quoþ or Quoth all other editors
Gawyn] G: MS, Ma, Mo; G[awayn] all other editors
“Bot busk burne, bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt;
dele to me my destine, and do hit out of honde,
for I schal stonde þe a strok and start no more,
til þyn ax haue me hitte. Haf here my trawþe!”
“Haf at þe þenne!” coþe þat ofer, and heueþ hit alofte
and wayteþ as wroþely as he wode were.

He mynteþ at hym maþtyly, bot not þe mon ryneþ,
withhelde heterly his honde er hit hurt myþt.
Gawayn grayþely hit bydeþ and glent with no membre,
bot stode stylye as þe ston, ofer a stubbe auþer
þat raþeled is in roche grounde with roteþ a hundreth.
2295  þen murly efte con he mele, þe mon in þe grene:
    “So now þou hatþ þi hert holle, hitte me bihous.
Halde þe now þe hyȝe hode þat Arþur þe raȝt
and kepe þy kauel at þis kest, þif hit keuer may.”
Gawyn ful gryndelly with greme þenne sayde:
2300  “Wy, þresch on, þou þro mon! Þou þreteȝ to longe!
I hope þat þi hert arȝe wyth þyn awen seluen!”
    “Forsoþe,” çoþe þat òþer freke, “so felly þou spekeȝ,
I wyl no lenger on lyte lette þin ernde
riȝt nowe.”
2305  þene tas he hym stryþe to stryke,
and frounceȝ boþe lyppe and browe—
    no meruayle þaȝ hym myslyke
þat hoped of no rescowe.

2296  bihous; bihous MS (with ‘s’ written over ‘l’); bihou[e]s Ma, Mo, GzG, Mm; bihov[e]s Ca, Bu, PS;
bihovs Wa; bihouis Vn
2298  kauel or kanel MS; kanel all editors
2299  Gawyn] G; MS, Ma, Mo; G[awan] PS G[awayn] all other editors
2302  çoþe] q MS, Ma; quod Mo±; quoth or quoth all other editors
2303  lenger] leng MS; longer Wa
    ernde] ernde MS; erande Bu
2305  þene] Pene MS; Pene Ma; Pe[n]ne or The[n]ne all other editors
tas he] MS tas he he (first word quite unclear); tas he † all editors
2306  frounceȝ] froûceȝ MS; froûþes Ma; frounses Mo, GzG, Ca, Wa, Bu, Mm, Bat, PS; frounseȝ TG, Bar, Vn; frounéz TGD, AW, Si
He lyftes lyȝtly his lome and let hit doun fayre

with þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek. [f. 122/126r]

Þaȝ he homered heterly, hurt hym no more
bot snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde.

Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre grece,
þat þe schene blod ouer his schulderes schot to þe erȝe,

and quen þe burne seȝ þe blode blenk on þe snawe,
he sprit forth spenne-fote more þen a spere lenȝe,
hent heterly his helme and on his hed cast,
schot with his schuldereȝ his fayre schelde vnder,
braydeȝ out a bryȝt sworde and bremely he spekeȝ—

neuer, syn þat he watȝ burne borne of his moder,
watȝ he neuer in þis worlde wyȝe half so blyȝe—
“Blynne, burne, of þy bur! Bede me no mo!
I haf a stroke in þis sted withoute stryf hent,
and if þow recheȝ me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,

and þelde þederly aȝayn, and þerto þe tryst,
and foo.
Bot on stroke here me falleȝ;
þe couenaunt schop ryȝt so
fermed in Arþureȝ halleg

and þerfore, hende, now hoo!”

2319 sworde] sworde MS; [bronde] Bu
2320 burne] barne Wa, AW, Si
2328 schop] þchop MS; þchap Ma
2329 fermed in] illegible except for ‘f’ beginning the line in MS, but reversing and superimposing the offset from the opposite page makes ‘fer’ and two following minims clear; first word not transcribed by Ma, who reads the second as Þ; [Sikered] in Mo; [Fermed] in TG, TGD, Bar, Si, Bat; [Fetted] in GzG, Mm; [Festned] in Ca, Wa, Bu, AW, Vn, PS
The haþel heldet hym fro and on his ax rested,  
sette þe schaft vpon schore and to þe scharp lened,  
and loked to þe leude þat on þe launde þede,  
how þat doþty, dредles, deruely þer stonde3

armed ful æ3le3; in hert hit hym lyke3.

Þenn he mele3 murly wyth a much steuen,  
and wyth a rynkande rurde he to þe renk sayde:  
“Bólde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel.  
No mon here vnmanerly þe mysboden habbe3,  
ne kyd bot as couenaunde at kynge3 kort schaped.  
I hyȝt þe a strok and þou hit hat3. Halde þe wel payed!
I relece þe of þe remnaunt of ryȝtes alle oper.

2335  deruely] dernely or deruely MS; dernely Ma
2334  rynkande] rykande MS; rykande Ma, Vn; ry[n]kande Mo; ry[n]kande TG, GzG, Ca, TGD, Wa, Bar, Mm, AW, Si, Bat; ry[n]gande Bu, PS
2339  habbe3] habbe MS, Ma, Mo, Vn; habbe[z], habbe[z], or habbe[s] all other editors
If I deliuer had bene, a boffet, paraunter,
I couþe wroþeloker haf waret, to þe haf wroþt anger.

Fyrst I mansed þe muryly with a mynt one
and roue þe wyth no rof-sore. With ryþt I þe profered
for þe forwarde þat we fest in þe fyrst nyȝt
and þou trystyly þy trawþe and trwly me halþe:
al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde.

Pat oþer munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,
þou kyssedes my clare wyf; þe cosseȝ me raȝteȝ.
For boþe two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes
boute scaþe.
Trwe mon trwe restore;
þenne þar mon drede no waþe.
At þe þrid þou fayled þore,
and þerfor þat tappe ta þe.

If] iif MS; [3]if Ma, Mo, GzG; Uf Vn; Iif all other non-normalizing editors
paraunter] paraunter MS; paraventure Bu
to þe] to þe MS; [&] to þe Mo
rof-sore] rof sore MS; rof, sore Ma, Mo
clore] clare MS; cl[e]re all editors
ta þe] tapæ MS, Ma, Vn
“For hit is my wede þat þou wereȝ, þat ilke wouen girdel. Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel forsoþe.

2360 Now know I wel þy cosses and þy costes als, and þe wowyng of my wyf—I wroȝt hit myseluen. I sende hir to asay þe and sothly me þynkkeȝ on þe fautlest freke þat euer on fote þede. As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,

2365 so is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oper gay knyȝteȝ. Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, sir, and lewte yow wonted, bot þat watȝ for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauȝer, bot for þe lufied your lyf —þe lasse I yow blame.” Þat oper stif mon in study stod a gret whyle,

2370 so agreued for greme he gryed withinne. Alle þe blode of his brest blende in his face, þat al he schrank for schome þat þe schalk talked.

2362 me] me MS; [þou] me Si
2367 ne] ne MS; ne [for] PS
2368 lufied] lufied MS (with ‘e’ missing left stroke); luf[u]d Ma, Mo; lufêted all other non-normalizing editors
ðe forme worde vpon folde þat þe freke meled:
“Corsed worth cowarddyse and couetyse bøpe!

2375 In yow is vylany and vyse þat vertue disstryeȝ."
ðenne he kaȝt to þe knot and þe kest lawseȝ.
brayeþ broþely þe belt to þe burne seluyn:
“Lo þer þe fals þyng, foule mot hit falle!
For care of þy knokke, cowardyse me taȝt

2380 to acorde me with couetyse, my kynde to forsake,
þat is larges and lewte þat longeȝ to knyȝteȝ.
Now am I fawty and falce, and ferde haf ben euer
of trecherye and vntrawȝe; bøpe bityde sorȝe
and care.

2385 I biknowe yow, knyȝt, here stylle
al fawty is my fare;
leteȝ me ouertake yoȝr wylle
and efte I schal beware.”

2378 fals þyng falȝȝg MS (with some other letter begun and then overwritten with the double ‘ff’);
falȝȝg Ma; falssyng all other editors
2382 am I] am I MS; [I am] TG
ferde] ferde MS (i.e. with -er abbreviation sign over the ‘r’); ferride Vn; ferde all other editors
Thenn loȝe þat oþer leude and luȝly sayde,

2390 “I halde hit hardily hole, þe harme þat I hade.
Þou art confessed so clene, bekown of þy mysses, and hatȝ þe penaunce apert of þe poynt of myn egge,
I halde þe polysed of þat plyȝt and pured as clene as þou hadeȝ neuer forfeted syþen þou watȝ fyrst borne.

2395 And I gif þe, sir, þe gurdel þat is golde-hemmed; for hit is grene as my goune, Sir Gawayȝ, þe maye þenk vpon þis ilke þreþe þer þou forth þryngeȝ among prynces of prys, and þis a pure token of þe chaunce of þe Grene Chapel, at cheualrous knyȝteȝ.

2400 And þe schal in þis Nwe ȝer ȝayn to my woneȝ, and we schyn reuel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest ful bene.”
Þer laȝed hym fast þe lord, and sayde, “With my wyf I wene

2405 we schal yow wel acorde, þat watȝ your enmy kene.”
“Nay, forsope,” coþe þe segge, and sesed hys helme, 
and hatȝ hit of hendely, and þe haþel þonkkeȝ:
“I haf soiorned sadly. Sele yow bytyde,
and he þelde hit yow ȝare þat ȝarkkeh al menskes!
And comaundeȝ me to þat cortay, your comlych fere, 
boþe þat on and þat oþer, myn honoured ladyeȝ,  
þat þus hor kynȝt wyth hor keste hau koyntly bigyled. 
Bot hit is no ferly þaȝ a folde madde
and þurȝ wyles of wymmen be wonen to sorȝe;
for so watȝ Adam in erde with one bygyled,  
and Salamon with fele sere, and Samson eftsonȝ—
Dalyda dalt hym hys wyrde—and Daȝyth þerafter,  
watȝ blended with Barsabe, þat much bale þoled.
Now were þese wrathed wyth her wyles, hit were a wynne huge
to luf hom wel and leue hem not, a leude þat couþe.
For þes wer forne þe freest, þat folȝed alle þe sele  
exellently of alle þyse oþer vnder heuen-ryche  
þat mused.
And alle þay were biwyled
wyth wymmen þat þay vsed.
Þaȝ I be now bigyled,
me þïnk me burde be excused.
“Bot your gordel,” coþe Gawayn, “God yow forȝelde!

2430 Þat wyl I welde wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne golde—
ne þe saynt ne þe sylk ne þe syde-pendaundes,
for wele ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk werkkeʒ—
bot in syngne of my surfet. I schal se hit ofte
when I ride in renoun, remorde to myseluen

2435 þe faut and þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,
how tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe.
And þus, quen pryde schal me pryk for prowes of armes,
þe loke to þis luf-lace schal leþe my hert.
Bot on I wolde yow pray, displeses yow neuer:

2440  syn ȝe be lorde of þe ȝondre londe þat I haf lent inne
wyth yow wyth worschyp—þe Wyȝe hit yow ȝelde
þat vphalde þe heuen and on hyȝ sitte—
how norne ȝe yowre ryȝt nome, and þenne no more?”

“Þat schal I telle þe trwly,” coþ þat oþer þenne:

2445  “Bertilak de Hautdesert I hat in þis londe.
Þurȝ of Morgue la Faye þat in my hous lenges,
and koȝntyse of clergye, bi craftes wel lerned—
þe maystres of Merlyn mony hatȝ ho taken
for ho hatȝ dalt drwry ful dere sumtyme

2450  with þat conable klerk þat knowes alle your knyȝteȝ
at hame;
Morgue þe Goddes,
þerfor, hit is hir name;
weldeȝ non so hyȝe hawtesse

2455  þat ho ne con make ful tame—

2440  þondre] ȝondre MS; ȝondre† TG
þat] þi MS; þi Ma; þer Mo, TG, GzG, TGD, Bar, Mm, Si; ther Ca; that Wa, Bu, PS; þat AW, Vn
2444  coþe] Q MS, Ma; quod Mo; quod or quoth all other editors
2445  Bertilak] Bertilak or Bercilak MS; Ber[ni]lak Ma, Mo; Bercilak TG, Mm, Vn; Bertilak GzG, Ca,
TGD, Wa, Bu, Bar, AW, Si, PS
2445*  GzG adds a line: “[þat bus am aȝlych of hwe & al ouer brawden]”
2446  Morgue] morgne or morgue MS; Morgue PS; Morgne all other editors
2448  hatȝ ho] ho MS, Ma, Mo (both suggesting ho hatȝ), Vn; ho [hatȝ] TG, GzG, Mm; ho [has] Ca,
Wa; h[atȝ] TGD, Bar; h[as] Bu, Bat, PS; ho [hatz] AW; h[atz] Si
2452  Morgue] morgne or morgue MS; Morgue PS; Morgne all other editors
“Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to your wynne halle
for to assay þe surquidre, ȝif hit soth were
þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table.
Ho wayned me, þis wonder, your wytte3 to reue,
for to haf greued Gaynour and gart hir to dy3e
with gopnynge of þat ilke gomen þat gostlych speked
with his hede in his honde bifoire þe hy3e table.
þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady;
ho is euen þyn aunt, Arpuren3 half suster,
þe Duches doȝter of Tyntagelle, þat dere Vter after
hade Arpur vpon, þat aþel is nowþe.
Perfore I eþe þe, haþel, to com to þyn aunt.
Make myry in my hous! My meny þe louies,
and I wol þe as wel, wyþe, bi my faythe,
as any gome vnder God for þy grete traȝfe,”
And he nikked hym naye, he nolde bi no wayes.
Þay acolen and kyssen and bikennen ay oþer
to þe Prynce of Paradise, and parten ryȝt þere
on coolde.
Gawayn on blonk ful bene
to þe kynges burȝ buske3 bolde,
and þe knyȝt in þe enker grene
whiderwarde-so-euer he wolde.
Wylde waye3 in þe worlde Wowen now ryde3
on Gryngolet, þat þe grace hade geten of his lyue;
ofte he herbered in house and ofte al þeroute,
and mony aventure in vale, and venquyst ofte,
þat I ne ty3t at þis tyme in tale to remene.
þe hurt wat3 hole þat he hade hent in his nek
and þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboute,
abelef, as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,
loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, with a knot,
in tokenyng he wat3 tane in tech of a faute.
And þus he commes to þe court, kny3t al in sounde.
Þer wakned wele in þat wone when wyst þe grete
þat gode Gawayn wat3 commen; gayn hit hym þo3t.
Þe kynge kysse þe kny3t and þe whene alce,
and syþen mony syker kny3t þat so3t hym to haylce.
of his fare þat hym frayned; and ferlyly he telles,
biknowe3 alle þe costes of care þat he hade,
þe chaunce of þe chapel, þe chere of þe kny3t,
þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last.
Þe nirt in þe nek he naked hem schewed
þat he la3t for his vnleute at þe leudes hondes
for blame.
He tened quen he schulde telle,
he groned for gref and grame;
þe blod in his face con melle,
when he hit schulde schewe for schame.

2482 aventure] aventure MS; a venture GzG, Wa, Mm, AW
and (2nd)] MS; [he] GzG, Wa, Bu, AW, PS
2486 abelef] abelef MS; A belef Ma, Mo
2490 wakned] wakned MS; wak[e]ned PS
2491 Gawayn] G: MS, Ma, Mo; G[awayn] or G[awan] all other editors
Hym] hym MS; h[e]m Bu, PS
“Lo, lorde,” coþe þe leude, and þe lace hondeled,
“Þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere in my nek;
þis is þe laþe and þe losse þat I laȝt haue
of couardise and couetyse þat I haf caȝt þare.
Þis is þe token of vntrawþat I am tan inne,
and I mot nedeȝ hit were wyle I may last,
for mon may hyden his harme bot vnhap ne may hit,
for þer hit oneȝ is tachched twynne wil hit neuer.’’
Þe kyng comforteȝ þe knyȝt, and alle þe court als,
lȝen loude þerat, and luȝlyly acorden
þat lordes and ladis þat longed to þe Table,
vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue,
a bende abelef hym aboute, of a bryȝt grene,
and þat, for sake of þat segge in swete to were.
For þat watȝ acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table,
2520 and he honoured þat hit hade euermore after,
as hit is breued in þe best boke of romaunce.
Þus in Arthurez day þis aunter bitidde;
þe Brutus bokeȝ þerof beres wyttenesse,
2525 after þe segge and þe asaute watȝ sesed at Troye,
iwysse.
Mony auntereȝ here-biforne
haf fallen suche er þis.
Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,
2530 he bryng vus to his blysse! Amen.
Hony soyt qui mal pence.
1 – 19 The Trojan beginning of a poem set in ancient Britain would not have seemed unnatural to a nation that often in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries conceived of itself and its monarchy as having Trojan origins. The account by Geoffrey of Monmouth of the arrival of Brutus in England and his founding of the eponymous nation of Britain and the city of New Troy or Troynovant (i.e. London) was not only taken seriously, but was the matter of contemporary political claims and ideological positions. See Sylvia Frederico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2003). For example, Nicholas Brembre (d. 1388), the mayor of London and a royal favorite accused of treason by the lords appellant, is reported by Thomas Walsingham (*Historia anglicana* ed. Riley, 2:174) to have been rumoured to want to change the name of London to Little Troy and be made duke of it. What exactly the resonances of the opening of this poem would have been depends to some extent on when exactly and in what milieu the poem was composed and therefore which uses of the Troy-origin story would have been most operative on its first reception, but its association of Troy with treason and treachery and of the Trojans with ostentation and arrogance
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("bobbaunce") and with violence ("werre and wrake and wonder") would likely have been highly charged politically.

3  *pe tulk pat pe trammes of tresoun per wro3t* There has been considerable scholarly discussion about whether Antenor or Aeneas himself is intended in this line. They conspired in treachery to end the destruction of the Trojan war in what were considered the historical accounts, those of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis (and Guido delle Colonne's widely-known *Historia destructionis Troiae*, based on those), and only Aeneas is mentioned in this poem, so the preponderance of evidence would suggest that he is the one meant.

4  *tried for his tricherie* "exposed for his treachery" (see MED s.v. trien, sense 3b). Neither Gollancz's (1940) "distinguished, famous" nor Tolkien and Gordon's (1925) "tried (for crime)" fit the facts of the case (Aeneas's fame did not derive from his treason, and he was tried but by the Greeks and not for treason in Guido) or the ME semantics of *trien* very well.

*trewest* "most genuine (treason)". An ironic use: the word would normally imply honour, faithfulness, honesty, and moral behaviour.

Signor, oï avez en livre et en romanz

Que de totes citez fut Troie la plus granz;

Ainz qu'ele fust fondue, a ardoir mist set anz.

Une genz en isirent qui mout furent sachanz,

Hardiz comme leons et fiers et combatanz;

Par terre s'expandirent icelles fieres genz,

Chacuns dreça citez et torz et mandemenz:

Anthioche fonda Antiocus le Granz,

Et Jherusalem fist uns rois Cornumaranz,

Et reis Babilonus, que mout refu poisanz,

Il fonda Babiloine, si la popla d'enfanz,

Et la cité d'Aufrique uns fors rois Aufriquanz,

Et Romulus fist Rome, qui mout fut aparanz.

(Lords, you have heard in books and in romances that Troy was the greatest of all cities. Before it was destroyed it took seven years to burn. A people came from it
that were very capable, brave as lions and proud and warlike. This proud people spread through the earth. Each one built cities and castles and fortresses. Antiocus the Great founded Antioch, and a King Cornumarant built Jerusalem, and King Babilonus, who was very powerful, founded Babylon and peopled it with children, and a strong King Aufriquant the city of Africa, and Romulus built Rome, which was very eminent.)

11 Ticius Gollancz (1940) suggests an error for Tuscus or Tuscius but does not emend; Silverstein (1984) prints the latter. Silverstein had earlier argued for Tirius ("Sir Gawain, Dear Brutus, and Britain's Fortunate Founding: A Study in Comedy and Convention," Modern Philology 62 [1965]: 196), a reading adopted by Davis in his 1967 revision of Tolkein and Gordon. The name Ticius seems otherwise unknown, but the arguments for emendation are not strong.

22 tene pat wrosten "who did harm", referring back to the bolde ("bold [knights]") of line 21.
23  *hau* MS reads *hau* or *han*. Previous editors have preferred *han*; I have chosen *hau* because of instances where the same verb form is spelled *haf*.

25  *of Bretaygne kynges* "kings of Britain," that is, of the kingdom of the Britons before the establishment of England.

28  *halden* MS reads *halden*, though the *a* is imperfectly formed and has been made by crossing an *o* previously written. Previous editors have ignored the crossing and have read *holden*.

35-6  *with lel letteres loken, in londe so hatʒ ben longe* "enclosed in true letters, as it has been here (‘in londe’) for a long time" The mention of *lel letteres* and antiquity has been taken as a specific reference to the alliterative metre of the poem, most prominently by Davis (1967) in his revision of Tolkien and Gordon, who calls it "a kind of manifesto by a self-consciously traditionalist poet," but it is probably the story that is alleged to be antique in line 36 rather than the metre, and P.J. Frankis has shown (*Notes and Queries* 8.9 [1961]: 329-30) that "loyal letters" is an
alliterative phrase that refers to the veracity of the message rather than its formal features.

39 *pe Rounde Table* Famously instituted by King Arthur as a non-hierarchical way of seating his knights, this is mentioned many times in the poem, but the knights do not sit at it at Camelot; rather, they follow the more normal hierarchical seating pattern. See note to line 73.

43 *caroles to make* "to compose (or sing?) songs" In Middle English a *carol* was originally a round dance with sung accompaniment, but the word was later applied to songs without any dancing, and in combination with the verb *maken*, to write or compose, or sometimes to sing, songs are probably what is meant here.

See *MED* s.v. *carole* n. senses 1b and 1c, and *maken* v1, senses 5a and 8b.

44 *watȝ ilyche ful fiften dayes* Putter and Stokes argue that *ful* belongs in the a-verse to provide double alliteration, and that *ilyche* must then be an adverb modifying adjective *ful*, which they take to be "a semi-technical term indicating the plenary court . . . preceded by a general summons, and involving the formal wearing of
his crown by the king." They would therefore understand that the feast (i.e.
court?) was constantly plenary (for) fifteen days. A more usual way of reading the
line is to take ilyche as an adjective meaning "unvarying, constant" (see MED s.v.
ilich adj., sense 3) and ful as an adverb modifying fiften; with alle þe mete and þe
mirþe þat men couþe avyse and subsequent lines then describe the ways in which
the feasting carried on the same for the fifteen days.

46 glamm ande MS reads glamnande, or glaumande etc. (i.e. five minims follow the
first a), probably by minim error. Compare line 1652.

51 vnder Krysteȝ seluen "after Christ himself" Silverstein (1984) persuasively
connects this expression to lines in Laȝamon's Brut (ed. Madden): "þe beoð under
criste cnihten alre kennest/ and ich æm rihchest alre kinge vnder God seolue" ("You are
bravest of knights under Christ, and I am the most powerful of all kings under
God himself," 13591-2), where vnder has as here the implication, "after," "with the
exception of."
55  *on sille* Literally "on a paved floor" (and therefore in a castle) this, like *on hille* in line 59 ("on an elevation" and therefore in a castle built on a mound) is a tag line with the implication "among the knighthood or nobility."

58  *hit were . . . gret nye to neuen* "it would be very difficult to name"

60  *Wyle* "when" (*MED* s.v. *while* conj. sense 2) rather than "while, during the time that," as "þat day" in the following line makes clear.

61  *doublle . . . watȝ be douth serued* As lines 482-3 and 888-90 make clear, this means that the company was served double quantities of all the delicacies of the feast.

65  "*Nowel!*" *nayted onewe* "'Nowel!' repeated once again" Presumably the courtiers had shouted "Nowel," which is from OF *nouel* and ultimately from Latin (*dies*) *natalis* ("Nativity"), at the beginning of the Christmas festivities as well. By the fourteenth century it had become a general cry of rejoicing, not necessarily at Christmas; it is also associated with New Year's feasting in Chaucer: "Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd,/ And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn;/ Biforn hym stant
brawen of the tusked swyn,/ And 'Nowel' crieth every lusty man" (FrankT 1252-5).

66-67 *hondeselle . . . ȝeres ȝiftes* These are probably intended as synonyms: both are terms for gifts given at New Year's, a medieval custom that became the modern exchange of Christmas presents. Gollancz (1940) suggested that the terms were differentiated: "The nobles ran forward to distribute New Year largess [i.e. *hondeselle*], evidently among the retainers, not among their fellow-guests. The New Years gifts to the guests are referred to in the lines that follow . . . ."

67-70 *ȝesed . . . trawe* "announced New Year's gifts loudly, gave them by hand, contended busily about those gifts. Ladies laughed very loudly even though they had lost, and he who won was not unhappy, you may well believe." Some kind of game involving the New Year's presents is certainly understood here, and Emerson ("Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*" *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 21 [1922]: 364-5) is probably right that it involved kissing, which still continues as a New Year's custom to this day. Perhaps the game, rather than Gollancz's (1940) suggestion of Handy Dandy, or Cyril Brett's suggestion of Ragman's Roll (in his
review of Tolkien and Gordon [1925]; Modern Language Review 22 [1927]: 455)

is a variety of casting of cavils: see note to line 2298. Gollancz (1940) thought that lines 69-70 referred to contests among women, and therefore would have emended (but did not) to ho pat wan.

73 be best burne ay abof as hit best semed "the highest ranked man always closer to the king, as was most seemly" Medieval feast seating was completely hierarchical, with a long head table at the end of the hall, often on a dais (des 75), at which the king and queen sat at the center (in pe myddes 74) of the most important nobles, and perpendicular to that long side tables for the lower ranked, with the lowest ranked always the farthest from the king. Many modern weddings and political banquets still retain traces of this arrangement.

82 glent with yzen gray Gray eyes are a conventional attribute of romance heroines; the adjective gray seems to denote reflectiveness and clarity when applied to their eyes rather than designating a color, as the expressions "gray as crystal" and "gray as glass" (e.g. Chaucer, General Prologue 152, the Prioress) would indicate. The verb glent is ambiguous here: it can mean to glance or look askance as at line 476, or to shine brightly as at line 604; since Guinevere's ornamental jeweled setting
has been described in the previous lines, the ambiguity is no doubt intentional, and one might translate either "gleemed with bright eyes" or "glanced with bright eyes."

88 *auper to lenge lye or to longe sitte* "either to lie longer [in bed] or to sit long"

Most editors emend lenge to longe, but this does not seem necessary: see *MED* s.v. lenge adv.

92 *such a dere day* "an important day like this" Like *veh farand fest* ("each splendid feast", l. 101), this makes clear that Arthur's custom only obtains on important feasts and holidays. In the French romances, it is typically Pentecost when Arthur awaits a marvel in this way before permitting the meal to begin.

95 *oper of alderes of armes, oper of auenturus* "either about princes of arms, or about adventures" MS reads *of alderes of armes of o p’auentur?,* which is clearly garbled. Editors have assumed simple dittography for the repetition at the beginning of the line, but the previously preferred reading and punctuation, *of alderes, of armes, of other auenturus*, remains somewhat mysterious.
100  *pe kynges countenaunce* (Morris). "the king's customary behaviour" MS reads only  *kynges coūtenaūce*.

110  *Aladuremayn* This cognomen of Agravain's must be pronounced with the accent on the first syllable to alliterate, so should not be analyzed into the French *à la dure main* ("of the strong hand").

  *on pat oħer syde sittes* i.e. on the other side of Gawain, forming a dining pair with him as Bawdewyn does with Ywan (l. 128 makes clear that the diners are served in pairs).

113  *with* (TG). MS reads *wit*.

  *with hymseluen* i.e. with Bawdewyn: see note to line 110.

117  *herbi* from the shafts of the trumpets

123  *pine to fynde þe place* "[it was] difficult to find space"
silueren (Morris). MS reads *fylue* or *fyluen* with the *er* abbreviation sign over the final letter. Madden prints *siluen*⁹; other editors emend to *silueren*, generally glossing as “silver dishes, plate.” There does not seem to be other evidence for such a noun in Middle English, though the word is well-attested as an adjective from Old English on (OED s.v. *silvern*). The two supposed supporting instances for the noun in the MED (i.e. beyond this passage, which is cited) are both better seen as adjectival, a noun being understood. The form here is clearly understood as a plural rather than collective noun given the plural verb *halden*, and perhaps results from metanalysis of the -en ending as denoting a plural.

pat þe lude myȝt haƚe lleode to cach "so that the man [i.e. Arthur] could have leave to take food": the unspecified noise heralds the arrival of the marvel or challenge that Arthur must hear or witness before he eats.

þe noyce i.e. of the music that played in the first course.

an aghlich mayster "an awe-inspiring master," with the precise sense of "master" to be established by the ensuing story. See MED s.v. *maister* for possible senses that
would have occurred to readers (high official, ruler, leader, man of consequence, educator, skilled person) and sense 3c for the meaning "largest" and for *maister-man* meaning giant.

138 *so sware* (Madden). MS reads *fo sware* (previously transcribed *so sware* by all editors.)

140-1 *half etayn in erde I hope pat he were;/ bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene* "I expect that he was half giant on earth ['on earth' being a meaningless tag], but I must nevertheless designate him a man." The Tolkien-Gordon (1925) reading of *mon most* as "the biggest of men" is possible and has proven attractive to editors, but is awkward both syntactically and metrically. Davis's assertion in his revision of Tolkien-Gordon (1967) that *most* is only used in the manuscript for the past and for the second person present of *moten* appears to be in error.

144 *bot* "yet, nevertheless" See OED s.v. *but*, sense 25. Many editors follow Tolkien and Gordon (1925) in adopting Arthur Napier's suggestion ("Notes on *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight,*" *Modern Language Notes* 17 [1902]: 85-86) to emend to "both"
here, but very minor attenuation of the usual sense of the conjunction makes it compatible with *al were* in the previous line: "even if his body was powerful of back and breast, yet his stomach and waist were admirably slim."

147 *For* Some editors have been troubled by this word, with its implication of some kind of logical causal connection between the knight's color (147-50) and the previous statements about his body (137-46); Waldron (1970), later Andrew and Waldron (1978), suggests that suggest that *forme* l. 145 is a covert reference to color, so that *for* is "in its usual sense." Putter and Stokes combine it in a nonce compound as *forwonder* ("amazement"), citing the well-attested *forwondered* (l. 1660) and OE *forwundorlic*, which would be more persuasive if *for-* were a genuinely productive noun element in ME. I think it best to allow the author a somewhat specious narrative transition.

149 *fade* "discolored; of unnatural color" Editors have understood this as the Northern word *fade* ("fierce, bold"; *MED* s.v. *fad(e)* pred. adj.), which is not impossible, but the color word (*MED* s.v. *fade* adj.) suits the context here much better.
155  *and his hod bope* "and his hood also" (i.e. his hood also was lined *with pelure pured* apert, . . . *with blype blaunner ful bryȝt*)

157  *ilke* MS reads *same*, leaving the line without alliteration in the b-verse.

171  *arsounȝ al after* i.e. the cantle or raised back part of the saddle behind the knight's seat. Medieval knightly saddles had high raised front and back *arsounȝ*, corresponding to modern pommel and cantle, to keep the rider firmly seated.

*scurtes* This is clearly the manuscript reading (*ſcurtes*), but many editors have read *sturtes*, though several follow Gollancz's (1940) "emendation" to *skurtes*.

173  *of þat ilke* "of that same [color]"

178  *ful gayn* "very suitable; a good match"

180  *of his hors swete* "matching his horse" See *MED s.v. sute* n. sense 1a (b) and (c).
182  *a much berd as a busk* (Madden). "a beard as big as a bush" MS reads *as as a busk*.

186  *a kyngeʒ capados* There has been much discussion about the word *capados*, which appears here and in line 572. Madden (1839) said that "its derivation is clear, from the French *cap-à-dos*, and, doubtless, means a hood or close cap, descending low in the neck." F.J. Amours ("Capados," *Notes and Queries* 9th Series, IV.308, 1899) points to an arming scene in *Fierebras* where the knight puts on "Cuire de Capadoce" (leather from Cappadocia) as an under-layer before his hauberk, and suggests that Gawain's *capados* "is not a hood, but a gambison, reaching up to and fitting close round, the neck... doubtless of Cappadocian leather, hence its name." George L. Hamilton ("'Capados' and the Date of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Modern Philology* 5 [1908]: 365-376) adduces a form "capidocis of veluet" from Aberdeen Council Records of 1548 (see also s.v. *capedosé* in *DOST* and *DSL* for further instances), "capedehustes Regis" from the General Wardrobe accounts of Edward III for 1348, and "cappe de huse" from John Russell's *Boke of Nurture*, and argues that the Gawain references must be to a style of hood, named after the Cappadocian leather it was originally made from. Tolkien and Gordon (1925),
citing Napier (presumably from the lecture notes they mention in their introduction p. vi, since this is not in his published work), say that a capados is "not a hood . . . but a tunic of Cappadocian leather." Elizabeth Wright ("Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 34 [1935]: 166) also cites Napier's notes but to different effect ("a close cap, fitting over the head, and hanging down round the neck in a sort of cape"), though Wright herself follows Hamilton in considering capados to refer to a hood, as do Gollancz (1940), Davis in his revision of Tolkien and Gordon (1967), and Andrew and Waldron (1978+; "a short leather cape with a hood") but forms such as cappe de huse remain a problem for the Cappadocian hypothesis. Putter and Stokes (2014) apparently reject these forms entirely, saying that "capados does not occur outside this poem." Based on its appearance in Gawain's arming at line 572, they consider this a knightly garment (and indeed emend kyngeʒ capados here to knightes capados on that logic), similar to a camail (or protective piece for the neck and shoulders), but with a hood. There is good evidence for French houce or housse as a garment for the upper body, however: AND s.v. huce defines it as a "tabard" or a "mantle"; Godefroy s.v. houce defines it rather more elaborately than his sources would permit as "a sort of long gown, bigger than a surcoat, which had wings or a kind of open hanging sleeves
and as well an additional part called a languette," but the sources he cites do list it with other garments for the upper body, though they leave its exact nature unclear;

Littré s.v. *housse* includes the definition "formerly, covering that peasant women put on their heads and shoulders to protect themselves from rain and cold." It therefore seems likely that *capados* and forms like *cappe de huse* are related, the former perhaps being a corruption by folk etymology ("cap-à-dos") of the latter, which would probably originally mean "huse-type cape," or perhaps the terms *cappe de huse* and *(cuir de)* Capadoce were confused. Here a *kynges capados* is probably a rather long hooded cape extending almost to the elbows; at 572 Gawain's *capados* must be a slightly different garment since it is worn under armor, so probably a shorter cape just covering the shoulders, either with or without a hood.

191 *twynnen of a sute* "are plaited to match" Editors have taken *twynnen* as the past participle of *MED twinen* ("to twine"), but Putter and Stokes (2014) point out that there are no other instances of *twinen* with a strong-verb past participle -en ending. They instead propose the present plural of *MED twinnen* v2 ("consider [two groups] alike, join conceptually, couple"); but the present plural of *twinen* seems
more to the point (attested elsewhere about braiding of horses' manes) and equally
valid grammatically.

203  *ne no hawbergh* MS reads *ne hawbrgh*. Morris (1864) first emended *hawbrgh* to
*hawbergh*, and editors have followed except Silverstein (1984). The addition of
*no* seems justified by the way the series continues in the following two lines; it
was probably missed through homeoarchon.

205  *to schwne ne to smyte*: "to prevent nor to strike." Editors since Tolkien and
Gordon (1925) have transcribed *to schwue ne to smyte* and understood the first
verb as the reflex of modern English *shove*, but although that word is used in martial
descriptions in Middle English, it is used of the thrusting of offensive weapons.

More likely, we have a fully chiastic line here, with the first verb (reflex of
modern English *shun*) relating to the action of a *schelde* (see MED s.v. *shonen*,
senses 2b and 3b, and the quotation from the Lydgate Troy Book, "From hors-bak eche
bare ṭer doun, For noon ṭe strok of ṭer myȝt schoone"), and the second to the action
of a *schafte*. 
209  *a spetos sparpe to expoun in spelle quoso myʒt* "a vicious battle-ax to describe in a story, whoever might [do so]"

210  *Pe hede of an elnʒerde be large lenkpe hade* "the head had the extensive length of a ell- yard [i.e. of a measuring stick an ell long, just more than a meter]" Davis (1967) in his revision of Tolkien and Gordon inverted the line to read *Pe lenkpe of an elnʒerde be large hede hade* for alliteration and sense, and this emendation is adopted by several editors, but it seems unnecessary on either ground.

211  *pe grayn* Probably this refers to the rear spike or back of the ax, the edge or bit being accounted for in the next line.

214  *Pe stele of a stif staf be sturne hit bi grypte* "The bold [man] gripped it by the handle [consisting] of a stiff staff"

215  *waunden* So reads the MS, although the 'a' has been created by crossing an 'o'. Previous editors except Madden have transcribed *wounden.*
228-230 yʒen . . . studien MS reads yʒe . . . studie but the pronoun hym is plural; cf. line 304.

248 let MS reads bot let. This instance of dittography (repetition of “bot” from the beginning of the preceding line) has stood uncorrected by editors, despite the fact that removing the accidental second bot improves both the sense and meter of this wheel: “I judge it not all [to have been] for fear, but some out of courtesy allowed the one to whom all should bow [i.e. the king] to address that person.” Note the slippage between “al” and “som,” the first an adverb (“entirely”), the second a pronoun.

250 pat auenture "that marvel”, i.e. the Green Knight.

251 rekenly hym reuerenced, for rad was he neuer "greeted him nobly, for he (Arthur) was never frightened"
**255** *cope* MS has the crossed 'q' abbreviation used for Latin *quod*, which is expanded to *quoth* or *quop* by previous editors, but is spelled out as *cope* the one time the abbreviation is not used, at line 776.

**256** *as help me . . . he þat on hyȝe syttes* periphrastic for "so help me God"

**267** *for had I founded in fere"* if I had come to attack [you]" See *MED s.v. founden* v1 sense 3, "to advance in attack"; *fere* n2 sense 2f, especially the expression *fighten in* *fere"* fight together," i.e. against one another. The term *in fere* has been understood as "'in company', i.e with a company of fighting men" (Tolkien and Gordon, 1925) or as "in martial fashion, array" (Waldron, 1970); there is too little lexicographical evidence for the latter understanding, while the former has the Green Knight raising an irrelevant consideration.

**275** *hym con* MS reads merely *con*, but the line is metrically too short.
282 so MS reads fo, previously transcribed so by editors except Madden and
Vantuono, who retains fo in his edition, understanding "foe" in a syntactically
impossible collocation ("due to my powers to enfeeble foes")
for myȝteȝ so wayke "on account of [their] so feeble martial powers"

286 brayn "furious, mad" Probably derived by truncating from such an expression as
brain-wod; see DSL s.v. brain adj.

294-96 And I schal stonde hym . . . barlay "and I will endure a stroke from him bravely
on   this floor, provided you will grant me the provision to give him a further stay"
(i.e. beyond letting him give the first blow unopposed). The word barley, possibly
from OF par ley ("by law") is attested in English dialects, especially Scots (DSL [SND
s.v. barley], see also EDD s.v. barley int.), as a noun referring to a truce or respite or
as an exclamation claiming the right to a truce or respite, and in later children's
games as a "truce term" called out when asking for a cessation of play (see Iona and
Peter Opie, The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren [Oxford: Clarendon, 1959], 146-9). That is its most probable connection here, rather than being an exclamation
claiming possession as in later children's games (see Opies, 135, EDD s.v. barley
v.), or a mere synonym for "blow" (as proposed by White, "TwoNotes on Middle
English," *Neophilologus* 37 [1953], 115).

305  *bende his bresed broȝe* "arched his shaggy brows"

306  *wayued his berde* Editors have seen this phrase as indicating a turning of the head
from side to side as the Green Knight surveys the room, but he may just have

*stroked* his beard while awaiting a response. See line 334.

307  *kepe hym with carp* "retain him with speech," i.e. engage him in conversation.

*coȝed ful hyȝe* "cleared his throat very loudly"

308  *ryȝt hym to* "directly to him" or "directly to them" (both are possible given
spellings in the manuscript, though the first (directly to Arthur) is more likely).

309  *cope* See note to line 255.
175  gryndellayk (Madden). MS reads gry dellayk, with the ink of 'd' partly flaked off.

It is unclear whether the 'n' has similarly disappeared entirely or whether it never existed. It is invisible in the MS itself, even with UV illumination, and also the 1923 Gollancz facsimile, but is recorded by Madden (1839), so traces may have remained at that time (or Madden may have emended without recording the fact).

321  as kene bi kynde "being brave by nature" (as already mentioned in line 251).

322  stod . . . nere "stood nearer to", i.e. approached.

327  beden MS reads boden. Although there is some confusion of forms in ME

between MED bidden ("ask", OE biddan) and MED beden ("offer, present", OE beodan), of the latter of which this looks like a part, it seems most likely that this form is an error caused by repetition of the beginning of bone earlier in the line.

328  laȝt hit at (Waldron). "received it from" MS reads only laȝt at.

330-1  Arthure . . . pat stryke wyth hit þoȝt "Arthur . . . who intended to strike with it"
wyth a countenaunce dryȝe he droȝ doun his cote "with a dry [that is, unmoved] face he pulled down his coat" (to expose his neck to the coming blow). Editors and the MED have assigned dryȝe here to MED drie adj 2 (from ON drjúgr, which is influenced by OE dreogan etc. to give a sense "long-suffering" in ME), but that would impart an oddly reluctant quality to the Green Knight's passivity; it more likely belongs to MED drie adj 1 sense 7 ("unfeeling, apathetic, unresponsive").

hys (Madden, though possibly by mistranscription; Gollancz is the first editor to note this as an emendation). MS reads hȳs.

for hys mayn dinteȝ "in the face of [the prospect of] his powerful blows" Some readers, notably Denver Ewing Baughan ("The Role of Morgan le Fay in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," ELH 17 [1950]: 246-7) have suggested that Arthur here actually attempts to behead the Green Knight (who is protected by Morgan le Fay's magic) with several ineffectual blows, but it would seem that such an event would attract more commentary from the narrator!
337-8 *pen any burne . . . to drynk of wyne* "than [he would have been dismayed] if any man on the bench had brought him wine to drink"

343 *cope* See note to line 255.

Wawan (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads *Gawan*, but the name is typically spelled with a W when alliterating so.

355 *lest lur of my lyf* "least loss of my life" i.e. "my life would be the least loss"

358 *his note is so nys þat noþt hit yow falles* "this combat is so peculiar that it is not appropriate for you"

360-1 *let alle his cort rych bout blame* Probably, "may all this rich court [remain] without blame" (*MED leten* v. sense 10a), see Davis (1967, note). Many editors have interpreted *rych* here as a part of *MED richen* v. ("to arrange, dispose" etc.) but there does not seem to be evidence that *richen* can be used in the sense required, that is, of the determinations of an assembly. However, a possible alternative
reading is "may all this court redress (my offence) without blame (from me),"

_MED_ *richen* v. sense 2b.

372  _Kepe be . . . pat pou on kyrf sette_ "take heed . . . that you inflict [only] one cut"

(so as not to break the bargain).

373  _redeȝ hym ryȝt_ "deal with him properly"

384  _so_ (Madden). MS reads _fo_.

390, 398  _cope_ See note to line 255.

394  _saf þat_ The logic of this expression would imply that the Green Knight had

already specified what follows, and that Gawain has omitted it from an otherwise
correct account of the bargain; of course, we know that is not true, because we have heard the whole challenge given in lines 279-300.

402-11 Editors have dealt quite differently with punctuation in this section, with different effects on meaning. Putter and Stokes (2014), give an excellent reasoned account of the probable grammar of 406-9: "the contrast between the object-verb order (characteristic of subordinate clauses) in 406-8 . . . and the verb-object order at 409 . . . seems designed to mark the transition from subordinate clauses introduced by If (406) to a main clause introduced by Then (409)." One might add that this if-then structure is repeated in 410-11. In itself, this seems a strong argument for taking 406-411 as a single unit of thought: "If I tell you my name and home after you have struck the blow, then you can seek me out and keep your promise; if, on the other hand, I am unable to speak (because dead), you will save yourself the journey." The remaining problem is the meaning of 404, which is generally glossed over by editors, though all assign it to the Green Knight. Waldron (1970) has a promising start to explanation: "The New Year is still a time for making solemn resolutions. The Green Knight discourages Gawain from taking a stronger oath."

But is it really likely that Gawain's antagonist hopes to spare him from inordinate
commitment? Instead, I have assigned 404 to Gawain himself, who thus, by alleging the solemnity of the day, expresses his reluctance to commit himself further than "by my truth" to an engagement that has escalated a few lines earlier with the Green Knight's addition of the demand that Gawain seek him out "whereso þou hopes I may be funde upon folde." Gawain's reluctance is also clearly present in his rewording of that demand so that what he is swearing to is merely doing his best ("I schal ware alle my wyt") to find the Green Knight at home, providing he is given his name and the location.

405, 416 cope See note to line 255.

409 frayst my fare There has been much discussion about this expression, discussion which has been devoted to arguing for one or another particular translation, but perhaps the point is precisely the wide semantic reach of the verb and noun in combination, from "taste my hospitality" to "experience my way of managing (an axe)". See MED svv. fraisten v, fare n1.
slokes! Of rather uncertain origin (perhaps ultimately from ON slokna "to be extinguished"), this seems to be an imperative plural meaning roughly, "stop!" or "enough of that!"

to be note "for the purpose"

schade (Gollancz). MS reads scade.

Pe blod brayd fro pe body hat blykked on pe grene "the blood spurted from the body, which shone (i.e. was bright red) against the green"

runyschly (Morris). MS reads ruyfchly or rnyfchly

he were (suggested by Madden). MS reads howe with misshapen 'h', or possibly nowe with a misshapen 'n', which some editors have adopted though it is less satisfactory metrically.
brayde his blenk aboute: “turned his gaze around,” i.e. turned his head by the hair so that it faced the dias, the action retold more expansively in 444 – 446. See

*DOST* s.v. *blenk*. MS reads *blnk* or *bluk*. Madden (1839) suggests emendation to *blunk*, glossing “steed” (i.e. OE *blancia*, elsewhere *blonk* as at line 434); Morris (1864) glosses *bluk* as “trunk,” understanding it as a variant of ‘bulk’; O.F. Emerson (“Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 21 [1922]: 371) derives *bluk* from OF *bloc* and wants to gloss "headless body" (followed by Tolkien and Gordon 1925), though the vowel is suspect; C.T. Onions (“Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*” *Notes and Queries* 146 [1924]: 244) argues for emendation to “bulk” (in the sense, “trunk of the body”), but the *MED* has not produced a dating for this sense earlier than the latter half of the 15th century; Davis (1967) and Barron (1974) accept Onions’ suggestion and emend to *bulk*. The emendation proposed here assumes that “þat ugly bodi þat bledde” is appositive with “he” rather than with ‘bluk/blnk’.

Holding his head as he does, the Green Knight, the ugly bleeding body, has no need to twist his whole body around (still less his horse) to intimidate the company; instead, he turns his head by the hair, finally (line 445) directing its gaze to the dias.
443 *Bi pat his resounz were redde:* “by the time he had finished speaking” (Andrew and Waldron 1978+). The Davis (1967) interpretation, “‘By the time his words were uttered’, i.e. before he spoke,” is unlikely: this whole wheel anticipates the following stanza.

453 *ȝederly golden* "completely at [my] mercy" The word *ȝederly* if derived from OE *ædre* (which is plausible) ought to mean as *MED* defines it "Without delay, promptly, readily; also, quickly" but in this manuscript it has a more general intensifying sense, "very much, entirely, completely", as *Cleanness* 463 makes clear.

456 *recreaunt* Silverstein (1984) points out that this word has a juridical meaning here, "one who acknowledges defeat in judicial combat, one who is in default."

*behoue* The manuscript reads *be houe*, where the abbreviation sign is one used in Latin manuscripts to represent a *-us* ending, but in the current manuscript it also can represent the plural ending and the ending of third person present verbs, most commonly spelled *-e*. Editorial forms such as *behoueus* (Tolkien and Gordon, 1925) cannot be intended.
460-1  *To quat... wonnen.* Waldron (1970) notes that this is "a 'fairy' formula," pointing out that similar expressions are used about the "king o fairy wiþ his rout" in *Sir Orfeo* 288 ("No neuer he nist whider þai bi-come") and 296 (ed. Bliss, 1966).

462  *What þenne* Editors have universally punctuated this as a question, presumably understanding that the narrator is asking rhetorically, "What [happened] then?", but it seems more likely that it is an instance of the interjection *what* (*MED* s.v. *what* interj) serving to emphatically introduce the following narrative statement (sense 2 a), the sequence *what þenne* being modeled on the earlier attested *hwæt þa* (see *MED* quotations s.v.).

467  *Arþur* The name is abbreviated here and in line 536 by using the squiggle above þ that elsewhere signifies -er (for example in the frequent word *þer*), but it seems unlikely that the scribe intends thereby a spelling *Arper*, as earlier editors have expanded.

477  *heng vp þyn ax* Although appropriate to the situation, this was also a proverbial expression meaning to bring an activity (other than chopping!) to an end (see

480 *bi trwe tytel herof* "by the true justification of it"; that is, the strange story of the visit of the Green Knight would be told and the axe shown as a piece of evidence guaranteeing its veracity.

488-9 *for wope . . . for to frayn* "that you do not avoid because of (its) peril seeking out this adventure"

491 *This* An ornamented blue and red initial five lines high begins this stanza, and a preceding blank line also signals that this is the beginning of a new section of the poem. These sections indicated by large initials (there are four of them in all) have been romantically called "fits," a word often associated with recitation sections, as recently as Putter and Stokes (2014). There is some debate about how to understand them in the various poems of the manuscript. In this instance, there is clearly a major narrative transition associated with the section marking.
auenture (Burrow, spelling aventures, possibly intended as a modernization rather than an emendation). MS reads auenturus. The form of plural in the manuscript reading presumably results from the following scribal error: seeing in his exemplar an instance of the curlicue abbreviation that in Latin manuscripts is used for –us but in the usage of the scribe of Cotton Nero A.x. represents either a word-final –us or, for plural nouns and third-person verbs, the ending otherwise most commonly spelled –eȝ in the manuscript, the scribe has expanded the abbreviation in a manner inappropriate to this particular word. The curlicue -us abbreviation seems to have been the preferred spelling for this word in the exemplar: it is used in line 95 for the plural (and in line 93 for the adjective meaning adventurous).

492 zelpyng The precise meaning of this word, boasting, is probably not intended here. In lines 91-99 Arthur is said to await either a tale of adventure or a challenge to single combat before eating, and this is presumably a reference to the former.

494 stafful The etymology of this word is in doubt, but the quotations collected by MED show that it means "Full to the utmost; also, filled full of food, stuffed" (MED s.v.). It seems a bit unlikely given the word's use for overeating that there
is "an oblique ironical reference to the axe" in the inclusion of the word *staff* as Waldron (1970) suggested, but it is possible.

499 *be forme to be fynisment folde3 ful seldom* "the beginning very seldom matches the end"

501 *vche sesoun serlepes* "each season separately" The poet names four seasons, Lentoun (i.e. Spring), Somer, Heruest (i.e. Autumn), and Wynter, and describes them in order. Nevertheless, both Burrow (1972) and Putter and Stokes (2014) believe that the sequence of the year described here is on a two-season model consisting of Winter and Summer, the colder and warmer parts of the year. There is no doubt that such a model was in operation in the later Middle Ages (see *MED s.vv. winter*, *somer*), but this poem clearly uses a four-season model. This seems to be the "husbandman's year" as described by George Caspar Homans: "Winter . . . was . . . the name given to the working season from Michaelmas to Christmas. . . . The forty days before Easter were kept in much the same way they are now, but the name Lent was loosely given to the whole time from the end of the Christmas
holidays to Holy Week. . . . The seasons were divided as the planting seasons were divided. The time from Hocktide, after Easter Week, to Lammas (August 1) was summer . . . . And the time from Lammas back to Michaelmas again was harvest . . . Michaelmas (September 29), the feast of St. Michael and all Angels, marked the beginning and end of the husbandman's year" (*English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* [New York: Russell, 1960], 354).

502  
*pe crabbed Lentoun* Although *Lentoun* is the name for the season we call Spring, there is also a reference here to the austerities of Lent in comparison with Christmas feasting.

517  
*Zephyrus* The association of Zephyrus, the god of the west wind, with summer in this poem is somewhat surprising, since he is usually associated with spring, as in the opening sentence of the *Canterbury Tales* (and indeed was the Greek god of spring); it is worth noting that in *Patience* 470 ff. he is the author of the blasting hot wind that kills Jonah's "woodbind."
518  *wela-wynne* The first element, either derived from OE adverb *wel* and OE emphatic enclitic particle *la* (the explanation in Tolkien and Gordon 1925 and *MED*) or reanalyzed from the OE/ME interjection *weg la weg/ welawei*, is only attested in ME as an intensifier preceding short adjectives and adverbs beginning with *w-* , and only in alliterative poetry (see *MED s.v. wella*). Translate “very delightful” or "very joyful".

521-22  *hardenes hym sone, warneȝ hym* The pronouns are not reflexive (*pace MED*), but refer back to the *wort* of line 518. The sense of *hardenes* is related to that still used when gardeners "harden off" plants raised in frames or indoors: "makes robust and hardy."

526  *laucen* Given the identity of the glyphs used for *n* and *u* in the MS, this could either be *MED v. launcen* ("to be cast") or *MED v3 losen* ("to be released"), and editors have been divided, but the latter is more context-appropriate.
The repetition of vocabulary from line 498 serves to draw the mind of the audience back to Sir Gawain and his predicament even before he is mentioned.

As ðe worlde aske3 A tag that means roughly, "as generally happens in this world."

No fage (MS reads no fage [fagei?], with a partially erased or uncompleted minim following the ‘e’.) C.T. Onions argued for emendation to no fage, which here probably means "truly" or "invariably," in TLS (August 16, 1923, p. 545, with further examples of fage September 20, 1923, p. 620; February 11, 1926, p. 99; February 5, 1931, p. 99), attributing the idea to Henry Bradley.

Meȝelmas mone Either the full moon closest to Michaelmas (the feast of Saint Michael and All Angels, September 29) or the month beginning with Michaelmas. The evidence for "Michaelmas Moon" as meaning "the Harvest Moon" (that is, the full moon closest to the autumnal equinox) is not extensive and is rather late, see EDD s.v. Michaelmas.
"wynter wage" "a pledge or surety of winter's arrival" is the primary meaning, but George Pace ("Gawain and Michaelmas," Traditio 25 [1969], 404-11) provides evidence that Michaelmas had long been associated with the settling of accounts and that its arrival might well remind Sir Gawain of his obligation to seek out the Green Chapel to collect what the Green Knight has earlier called his wages (line 396), the return blow. (It was also the day that began the husbandman's season of winter, which ended with Christmas, see note to line 501.)

"quyl Alhalday" "until All Saints' Day" (November 1)

"Arbur" See note on line 467.

"made a fare" Madden (1839) translates fare as “unusual display, entertainment,” Tolkien and Gordon (1925) followed by others as “feast.” It would, however, be usual for Arthur to put on a feast on All Saint's Day, "the time for Arthur's autumn high court" (Silverstein, 1984). The expression “maken fare” is well attested in another sense, however (see MED s.v. fare n1 sense 6, cf. also sense 5b).

Translate, “made a fuss, celebrated more than usual.”
Editors have taken *ryche* as a second adjective modifying *reuel* ("much and rich reveling"), but it seems more likely to be an instance of the use of *ryche* as a collective noun to refer to the members of the nobility, as in lines 66 and 362.

The expressions *neuer pe lece* and *neuer pe later* were interchangeable in Middle English, both meaning "nevertheless, however"; see *MED s.nv. never-the-later, never-the-les.*

"You know the nature of this situation."

"I no longer care to tell you the harms of it, (which are) nothing but a trifle, but I am heading for the blow tomorrow for sure, to seek the man of the green as God will guide me."

MS reads *a ywan* (with a substantial gap between *a* and *ywan*) and the name is given as Ywan in line 113. Editors except Burrow (1972) and Putter and Stokes (2014)—who regularize spelling to *Ywan* rather than emending—have
printed Aywan, but it is hard to see how that could be a possible spelling for the name of the knight in question. Likely the scribe miswrote an a for the ser/sir abbreviation (a long-s crossed from top right to bottom left with an ogee) in his/her exemplar, as used in lines 552 and 554, since there are graphic similarities between the two glyphs.

552 Sir Doddinal de Sauage (Silverstein, 1984). MS reads doddinanal or doddinaual, most likely the first via dittography. Silverstein believed there was an erased s under the second n, which is possible but my inspection does not confirm. In any case, the spelling Doddinaual is exceedingly unlikely, as Silverstein argued. He is elsewhere and properly Sir Dodinal (or Dodinel) le Savage (“the wild,” so called for his love of hunting), but “de Sauage” is required for alliteration (though apparently on an unstressed syllable).

558 derne doel "hidden unhappiness" The first word, because u and n are indistinguishable in this manuscript, could be derue (MED derf, "strong, painful")
or *derne* (*MED* *dern*, "secret, private") and editors have differed, but the latter
interpretation accords with lines 540-2.

560-1 *dele no more wyth bronde* "give no more [strokes] with sword" either to return the
Green Knight's blow or, by implication, ever again.

563 *Quat, schuld I wonde?* "What, should I hold back?" *Quat* is the interjection
"associated with a question, and expressing real or rhetorical surprise, distress, or
indignation" (*MED* s.v. *what* interj), rather than the object of *wonde*.

568 *tule tapit* A decorative cloth of bright red: *tule* is probably short for *Tuly silk*, a
deep or bright red silk.

572 *capados* See note on line 186.

572 *closed aloft* Putter and Stokes (2014) comment that this expression "is usually
glossed 'fastened at the top', but the sense is probably 'not open at the top'."
The words *thik* (var. *þiker*) and *þrawen* alliterate here and at *Cleanness* 504 and 1384, in all cases with *thik* moderating *þrawen*. In the *Cleanness* lines, the references are to crowding thickly together (the animals trooping from the ark, closely crowded towers on the wall of Babylon), and this is also the sense of *þrawen* at *Cleanness* 1775, so perhaps the sense here is "densely muscular, tightly-packed" thighs. Another possibility is to connect this usage to places like line 194, where *þrawen* refers to twisting or braiding, which would give "densely entwined, tightly knitted" thighs. Putter and Stokes (2014) emend or regularize to "thik-throwen" and gloss "densely curving, i.e. solid, muscular," pointing to lines where that may be the sense of *thrawn/thrawin* in Douglas's *Aeneid*. See MED s.v. *throuen* v.1, senses 6 and 8; also DOST s.v. *thrawin*.

*with þwonges to cachched* "fastened closed with straps" Previous editors have read the MS as *tachched* but although there is a slight protuberance of the top crossing stroke leftwards, the letter is much more like *c* than *t*.

*opber* (Morris, 1864, spelling *ouber*). MS reads *ouer* (i.e. with a sign for -*er* over the *u*). Editors who do not emend generally understand *ouer* as a spelling of *or*, but that
is unlikely. Vantuono (1984) and Putter and Stokes (2014) take the word to be *over*, but the syntax is suspect for that interpretation and one would instead expect *be lest lachet ouer a loupe.*

**592** *Ai* This word is somewhat damaged and hard to read. Editors have read it as *lo* (or *so*?) and printed *So* except for Vantuono (1984) who prints *Al* and says, "U[ltra] V[iiolet] R[adiation] shows *al* more clearly [than *so*]." Image manipulation of the new photographs seems to substantiate a first letter *a*, but the stroke to the right of it is not higher than minim height, so the word is more likely *ai* than *al.*

**593** *offred and honoured* Waldron (1970, also Andrew and Waldron, 1978+) says that these are past participles, i.e. that it is the mass that is offered and honored; Putter and Stokes (2014) argue instead that they are past tense verbs, and that Gawain participates in the Offertorium, the portion of the mass in which the species are offered on the altar, but which has historically sometimes included the offering of gifts to the poor or to the church by laypeople in procession.
Gryngolet The name of Gawain’s horse is apparently so well known in Arthurian tradition that he needs no introduction here from the author.

apparayl In general, this word means furnishings, equipment, ornaments, but here it must refer particularly to the style of ornamentation of the horse’s breastpiece (paytreure), ornamental skirts, crupper, and caparison or ornamental blanket (couertor), all of which match the arsounȝ or raised saddle-bows, the whole being ornamented with gold studs arranged on a red background.

bounden The o in this word is not currently legible in the MS, although some traces of ink can be seen, and has been supplied from Madden (1839), who may perhaps have been able to see it clearly (but who might certainly have guessed at it if not).

stapled stifly "riveted securely" The adverb would seem to militate against the argument of Paul Southwood ("Gawain's Helmet," Notes and Queries 44.2 [1997]: 165) that stapled refers to the vervals around the bottom of the helm to which the aventail is attached, since in his view Gawain's helmet is a conical basinet beaten out of a single sheet of steel and therefore unstapled and unriveted.
The elaborate description given of this would suggest that it is rather grander and more obvious to the observer than a "tiny and intimate strip of knightly equipment" (Southwood, 167) attaching the aventail (a circular curtain of chainmail covering the neck and shoulders) to the helm by threading through its top rings and the loops (vervelles) at the bottom of the helm. Instead, this must be a development from that originally simple lace (as seen on the effigy of the Black Prince [d. 1376] in Canterbury Cathedral), into "a colorfully embroidered and jewelled fabric cover . . . over the mail of the aventail" (Helmut Nickel, "Arthurian Armings for Love and War," Arthuriana 5.4 [1995], 13—and see illustration, 12).

"decorated so densely as if many a woman had been about it (i.e. engaged in creating it) for seven years in town"

This used to be explained as an instance of the Old French expression a devis (see Godefroy s.v. devis), meaning "in good order, as one might wish, marvellously"). More recently, critics have tended to see it as an instance of
MED  

*devis* n, sense 4b, "a heraldic design, device," and some have gone on to speculate that Gawain has the sign of the pentangle as his arms on his helm in addition to the pentangle on his shield (especially Laura Hodges, "'Syngne,' 'Conysaunce,,'

'Deuys': Three Pentangles in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*" *Arthuriana* 5.4 [1995], 22-31). But that would be an unusual (and perhaps aggressively self-promoting) additional display of arms; probably as a royal relative Gawain has a simple circlet built into his helm like the one in the Canterbury Cathedral effigy of the Black Prince. Likely the noun *deuys* here means merely an ornament or piece of jewelry: see MED s.v. *devis*, sense 4a, and especially the *Paston Letters* citation.

Translate: “The circlet was more valuable that encircled the crown of his head, an ornament of diamonds . . . “

618  

*briȝt and broun* Andrew and Waldron (1978+) translate “both clear and brown (i.e. of all tints),” following Davis (1967), who argues that Tolkien and Gordon’s (1925) gloss “shining” makes the word “redundant,” but “briȝt and broun” is a verse tag, often applied to swords, which simply means “bright and shining.”
Then This word begins with a red and blue decorated initial with included drawing of a face, three lines high.

schyr goule3 "bright red" The color name goule3 (modern English gules) is one of a series of such names used almost exclusively in heraldic description, and thus signals a formal description of Gawain's escutcheon or armorial bearings.

brayde3 hit by þe baudryk "lifts it up by the strap" For baudryk, MS reads baud e:ryk, with the colon-shaped double dot indicating deletion of the preceding e.

intent Many editors read “in tent” here, taking “tent” as the noun (MED s.v. tent(e) n2, derived from OF entente) meaning "intention, purpose", but despite the manuscript spacing the expression is more likely, as Tolkien and Gordon (1925), MED (s.v: intent adj) and Vantuono (1984) suggest, one of the earliest uses of “to be intent to (do something),” which comes from Latin “intentus” via OF intent.

a syngne þat Salamon set sumquyle Phillipa Hardman ("Gawain's Practice of Piety in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Medium Aevum 68.2 [1999], 248) notes that a description of the pentangle by William of Auvergne may have ultimately
been the source from which it and its Solomonic association reached the poet.

Richard Hamilton Green ("Gawain's Shield and the Quest for Perfection," ELH 29 [1962]) shows that the only Biblical association of Solomon with a five-pointed figure occurs in III Kings 6: 31, where the pillars at the entrance to the Holy of Holies are described as "postes . . . angulorum quinque" (exegized by Bede and therefore by the Glossa Ordinaria as a reference to the five senses and the body), but provides much evidence that the pentangle as "seal of Solomon" ("sigilla Salomonis") had widespread currency as a magical device in the Middle Ages. Hardman provides some evidence to attenuate what Green sees as a sharp divide between condemned magical uses of the pentangle and true religious practices, but her citation of condemnations of apotropaic uses of the pentangle underlines his conclusion that "the poet transforms a suspect magical sign into an emblem of perfection to achieve the simultaneous suggestion of greatness and potential failure" (Green 132). Solomon himself has a rather double reputation as on the one hand a perfect king and type of Christ and on the other a disgraced monarch seduced from that standard; he appears briefly in the latter guise later in the poem (line 2417).

endeleʒ (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads emdeleʒ.
630-1  *Forby hit acordez to his knyzt and to his cler armez, for . . . "*For this reason it matches the knight and [is appropriate for] his pure arms, that . . ."

632  *in fyue and sere fyue syhez* "in five and an additional five times" This rather obscure expression must have in mind the exposition of the following stanza, in which Gawain's virtues form five groups of five, which in line 656 are called *fyue syhez*.

Here we should understand, "in five [times] and an additional five times [for each of the first five times, giving 25 'times' in all]."

634  *verturez* (Madden). MS reads *verturez*, i.e. the v is surmounted with an abbreviation for *er*, which is then also written out.

635  *in mote* A relatively meaningless tag, this literally means "in a castle," so "among knights."

636  *be pentangel nwe* Probably this does not mean either that the pentangle is freshly painted (Davis, 1967) or that Gawain has taken new arms for the occasion
(J.A.W. Bennett, *Supplementary Notes on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* [Cambridge: J.A.W. Bennett, 1973], 7), but that the arms are novel, out of the ordinary, not seen before Gawain's use of them.

639-40 *of tale most trwe and gentylest . . . of lote* The wheel expands on the general meaning of the pentangle given in line 626 ("bytoknyng . . . trawþe") by specifying two important components of Gawain's *trawþe*, truthful speech and noble behaviour, that will be tested as the story unfolds.

640 *his fyue wytte* Either Gawain is faultless in his five senses or his five "inner wits," will, reason, mind, imagination, and thought; though probably the former are intended in an unelaborated reference. As Chaucer's Parson explains, "delices [that is, sinful bodily desires] ben after the appetites of the fyve wittes, as sighte, herynge, smellynge, savorynge, and touchynge" (ParT 207).

641 *fyue fyngres* A somewhat obscure reference. Richard Hamilton Green ("Gawain's Shield and the Quest for Perfection," *ELH* 29 [1962], 134) finds the five fingers allegorized as five virtues in John of San Geminiano; and Robert W. Ackerman
(Gawain's Shield: Penitential Doctrine in *Gawain and the Green Knight,* " Anglia

76 [1958], 263) compared the allegorizing of the five fingers such as those of

Gluttony and those of Lechery in the Parson's Tale, but although the latter is

intriguing neither is very persuasive. Perhaps the poet intends only the works of

Gawain's hand, that is, his martial and other deeds.

643 *as be Crede telle3* The Apostle's Creed does not specifically mention Christ's Five

Wounds (to his hands, feet, and side), but does contain a general reference to the

Crucifixion that could be taken to imply the wounds: "passus sub Pontio Pilato,

crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus" ("suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,
died, and was buried"). The Nicene Creed is much the same.

644 *queresomeuer* Emendation from MS *quere foev’* (*MED* s.v. *wher-so-ever*) to

*queresomeuer* (*MED* s.v. *wher-sum-ever*) restores the alliteration.

645-6 *his þro þoȝt watȝ in þat þurȝ alle oþer þynges, þat alle his forsnes he fong "his

fearless thought through all other things was that he received all his strength" (The

first þat is a place-holder for the following þat-clause.)
The list varies, but perhaps the adjective clause *pat pe hende Heuen-quene had of hir Chylde* helps to narrow the options to something like the series contained in a lyric in MS Harley 2253 ("The Five Joys of Mary") or a similar version: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Epiphany, the Resurrection, and the Assumption of the Virgin.

*In be inore half of his schelde hir image depaynted:* Geoffrey of Monmouth reports the same of Arthur’s shield: “clipeum uocabulo pridwen in quo imago sancte marie dei genitrices in picta ipsum in memoriam ipsius sepissime reuocabat” (“the shield named Pridwen, in which the painted image of Saint Mary the Mother of God very frequently recalled her to his memory” [ed. Griscom, p. 438]).

*knyȝt* The ȝ in this word is illegible in the Gollancz facsimile, the new photographs, and the manuscript itself. Perhaps Madden was able to see it in the 1830s, or perhaps he inserted it without noting the emendation, an obvious one.
This word is written on an area of bad parchment from which much ink has
been lost, and the letters $f$ and $d$ have been refreshed in a different hand and ink.
The orthography is quite suspect, and we may suspect that an original *fayled* or
*faylid* has been altered when refreshed, but I do not see real evidence of that.

*I noquere* (Cawley, who prints *noquere I*). MS reads *Iquere*, that is, the letter $u$
has the scribe’s usual mark abbreviating –*er* above it, here almost circular in aspect,
so that these letters when written out afterwards duplicate the expanded abbreviation.

Editors have struggled over this, with none interpreting the –*er* abbreviation
correctly and most determining on an emendation to some variant of *I oure* (*I anywhere*). It should be pointed out that the MS reading, once the double
writing of –*er* is eliminated, makes sense as it stands if *quere* is taken as the
adverb, meaning “anywhere” (*MED* s.v. *wher*, sense 1), and that it also makes
(quite unsatisfactory) alliteration with the *w* of *withouten*. This cannot be the intended
alliteration of the line, however. I agree with Cawley that the line probably
alliterates on *n* rather than the vowels of *ende, any*, and *ouere* (as assumed by
editors other than Gollancz [1940] and Putter and Stokes [2014], who emend
wholesale but also include *nowhere*), the first alliterand being provided by ellision of the syllabic boundary between *withouten* and *ende* (as in 1552 *non euel*) and thus adopt his emendation.

662-5 *Perfore . . . with lore*. Probably this means, "Therefore on his bright shield the knot was drawn, royally with red gold on red gules, that is called the pure pentangle by the people with lore [i.e. by learned people]"; but *be peple* in Middle English almost always refers to the common people, so it is (just) possible that the poet intends a repetition of 629-30 rather than an inversion: "Therefore on his bright shield the 'knot' was drawn, royally with red gold on red gules, which the pentangle is called by the [common] people, with lore."

664 *pentannel* Editors have transcribed *pentaungel*, but orthography with *au* or *o* appears to be associated with the Middle English word for angel, and not at all with that for angle.

673 *al same . . . til oper* "all together to one another" Note that there are separate utterances addressing different topics from different points of view in lines 674-
I have punctuated as a babble of competing voices rather than as a complaint in unison.

The word *angard* must come from OF *angarde*, a military term that normally refers to a height or eminence for observation or defense, but also to a vanguard or sentinel. The semantic development to Middle English is unclear, but it is often yoked to pride, and apparently means excessive. The poem avoids mentioning whose pride the courtiers mean: Gawain's? Arthur's? the Green Knight's? the court's?

(Morris, spelling *cauelacioun*). Editors have taken the manuscript reading as *caueloū*, but the horizontal stroke is over both *o* and *u*, and longer than the scribe's usual macron indicating a nasal (though only fractionally longer than the one over the *y* in *kīg* directly above), so probably should be considered to be the longer horizontal stroke that represents an extensive abbreviation in Latin manuscripts: for such abbreviations as *or o i s* for *orationis*, *le o nis* for *lectionis*, etc., directly comparable to the present case, see Cappelli, *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane*, xxii. Most editors accept Morris's emendation (which is not
really the emendation he and others think it is but a correct expansion of an abbreviation since the same word is used in line 2275, but two recent editions try to retain what they think is the manuscript reading, Vantuono (1984) by reading caue loun and interpreting improbably as "cave weapons"; Putter and Stokes (2014) by suggesting that "caveloun may be an authentic form showing the influence from haveloun which . . . is used of oversubtle reasoning (which is the accusation here) at *Laud Troy Book* 2 and *P[iers] P[lowman]* B.10.131" but they neither clarify who is being accused of having reasoned over-subtly (both Arthur and Gawain seem rather to blunder into things with the Green Knight than to overthink them) nor how c has been substituted for h in the word. For additional commentary on cauelacioun, see the note to line 2298.

686 *bat* MS reads *pad*, which is clearly erroneous but which most editors have retained, for reasons unknown.

690 *he bok as I herde say* "as I heard the book say" Allusions to real or fictional bookish sources are common in the Middle English romances (and other literature of the time).
Logres A general name in French and English Arthurian romance for the realm of King Arthur, corresponding roughly to England south of the Humber. Whether or not it includes Wales in this poem depends on where one takes Camelot to be; many commentators have taken it to be in Caerleon, South Wales, designated Arthur's capital by Geoffrey of Monmouth, which would make Gawain's journey in this stanza one northward through Wales, likely along the coast, where the Gough Map (see www.goughmap.org) shows a road. But other identifications of Camelot are possible, such as Malory's Winchester, or the poet may have, like many Arthurian writers, have left its location vague.

Til þat he neȝed ful negh into þe Norþe Waleȝ Editors have attached this clause to the preceding sentence despite the oddity of the implication that Gawain finds some relief from his loneliness in rugged North Wales. I have punctuated in accord with a journey that begins in southern England and enters Wales shortly before the crossing to the Wirral.

negh MS reads nogh, with a comma-shaped stroke attached to the ascender of the letter h, which I note is the scribe’s usual way of finishing the word innogh when
that word is written with –gh rather than -ȝ, and which the scribe hardly uses elsewhere; other editors expand to neghe but the hook seems to me to be part of the same process of error that began with writing o for e.

699  ouer be fordeȝ by be forlondeȝ "over the fords by the headlands" Despite the definite articles, these may be generic coastal landscape features. Those who hold a coastal-road theory of Gawain's journey sometimes have a specific interpretation:

"Apparently a reference to his crossing of the Conway and Clwyd" (Waldron, 1970). But pe fordeȝ by pe forlondeȝ may instead be features of Gawain's crossing of the Dee estuary; a ford in OE and ME need not be a crossing place fit for horseback travel, but could be a crossing navigated by boat.

700  pe Holy-hede  There has been much discussion of this place name, and a kind of consensus has arisen around the notion that it is a reference to Holywell near the south bank of the Dee estuary; the element Hede could then be MED hed n1, sense 6a ("Origin of a river or other water supply, source, fountainhead"). Holywell is not near anything that could be called a headland, though, if the forlondeȝ of 699 are presumed to be near it, and not a very advisable place to ford the Dee, though as
noted in reference to line 699, a *ford* in ME need not by on horseback (Waldron, 1970, also points out that *hade eft bonk* "perhaps suggests" "a boat-crossing").

Though this has been confidently dismissed, could Holy Hede be a reference to the place now called Holyhead on Holy Island, Anglesey, then as now a port? Gawain would then take ship there for the Wirral, perhaps landing on its northwest corner, near present-day Hoylake and West Kirby.

701 *pe Wyldrenesse of Wyrale* This last place-name mentioned, though Gawain’s journey continues, presumably northward, refers to the forest-covered Wirral peninsula, which extends between the Dee estuary and the Mersey. In the fourteenth century, it was home to bands of marauders that "were such a menace to the citizens of Chester that they petitioned the Black Prince to cause the region to be disforested" to remove the protection that forest status gave to outlaws; this was granted in 1376, but lawlessness and violence continued through the late century (Henry L. Savage, "A Note on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," *Modern Language Notes* 46 [1931], 455).
There lived but few who loved either God or man with a good heart" This could also mean "Very few lived there whom either God or a good-hearted man loved" (Waldron 1970; also Andrew and Waldron 1978+), but it seems more likely that the depravity (who, in the Middle Ages, does not love God?) and hostility of the inhabitants is at issue than their unlikableness.

Chapel (Madden). MS reads clapel

foule (Madden). MS reads fonle or focile.

"unless it was a wonder" (i.e. he encountered foes so frequently that it was strange not to meet one)

So (Madden). MS reads fo.

"it would be too difficult to tell the tenth part of it"
720  *worme*3  Probably dragons rather than snakes (or worms!), though the Middle English word is ambiguous.

721  *wodwos*  Wild people of the wood, which appear as furry bearded naked men, often carrying clubs, when used as a decorative motif.

723  *etayne*3  *pat hym auelede of heȝe felle*“giants that descended to him from the high mountains.” Previous editors have transcribed the word as *anelede*, which TG (followed by *MED*) explained by reference to OF *aneler*, to breathe or pant, positing an extension of the word to a meaning “pursue.” See *MED* s.v. *avalen*.

726  *nas* (Davis). MS reads *was*, and many editors have retained that reading, with awkwardness of sense.

727  *schadde* (Gollancz). MS reads *schadden*, which would seem to be a plural form.
The manuscript initially read *yſſe ikkles*, but the scribe then for reasons that are hard to guess changed the *y* to *ii* (same hand and ink), dotting the *ii* fairly obtrusively with two upward-slanting strokes to make the intended reading clear (the tail of the *y* was not erased). Some editors have read the manuscript facts the opposite way: that *ii* has been altered to *y*, but that seems much less likely on paleographic grounds.

The MS would actually appear to read *colde*.

*i.e.* to attend the Mass

*seruyse* (Morris). MS reads only *seruy*.

Probably a reference to the first mass of Christmas morning and the service preceding: see *MED s.v. matin* n, sense 1b.

*Pater and Ave and Crede* The Pater noster (Lord's Prayer), Ave Maria (Hail Mary), and Apostles’ Creed were the first texts memorized by children; although the
Creed is not technically a prayer but a profession of faith, it is to this day included among the devotions of the rosary.

761 *he sayned hym in sypes sere* "he crossed himself separate times" (probably after repetitions of the three prayers)

762 *Cros Kryst me spede* "may the cross of Christ bring me success"

764-6 *a won in a mote abof a launde . . . diches* "a dwelling inside a moat, above a clearing on a knoll, hemmed in under boughs of many a sturdy tree about by the ditches (i.e. moat[s])"

768-70 *pyched on a prayere . . two myle* "erected on a meadow, a game preserve all around, with a palisade of spiked poles fastened very closely that enclosed many a tree, more than two miles (in diameter? in radius? in circumference?)"
Sayn Gilyan Saint Julian the Hospitaller, the patron saint of innkeepers and travellers, invoked when seeking (and thanked when finding) lodgings. MS reads say, which editors since Morris (1864) have emended to sayn or saynt.

Pat cortaysy hade hym kydde and his cry herkened "who had shown him courtesy (i.e. kindness, here) and listened to his cry" Editors before Putter and Stokes (2014) retained the MS reading cortaysly, but "kithen + some good quality + to someone" is a standard piece of Middle English syntax (MED s.v. kithen v, sense 3c).

Bone hostel . . . I beseche yow zette! "I beseech you to grant good lodgings"

gedere3 he to Gryngolet "he spurs Gryngolet"

ful chauncely "completely by chance" (which presumably implies divine aid)

dut no wynde3 blaste "doubted (i.e. need fear) no blast of wind"
Davis's (1967) emendation of this to *bode on blonk* is tempting for its easier syntax, and the transposition would be a typical memorial error, but emendation is finally unnecessary.

Michael Thompson ("Castles," *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, 125) expands on the suggestion of earlier students that this means a moat twice as wide as usual: "seems to mean . . . one that required a double throw or cast when digging to clear the spoil: . . . to dig a moat forty feet wide the soil had to be thrown twice either side to empty the ditch." But double moats consisting of two ditches did exist, and a fantasy castle could certainly have one.

This is the outermost castle wall or *barbican* (793).

Table 3. *enbaned vnder pe abataylment in pe best lawe* "horizontal courses of stone built out under the battlement (crenellated parapet) in the best manner" Thompson (125) interprets this whole line as a reference to "machicolation" (without further discussion), probably intending thereby not a specific reference to holes through which stones etc. were dropped on attackers but a general reference to a
projecting structure built into the top of a wall to discourage scaling. This seems the most likely explanation: at Cleanness 1459 a similar line (*enbaned vnder batelment with* *bantelles quoynt*) describes castle-like covered cups from the temple treasury as decorated with cunning *bantelles*, which are projecting courses of masonry (see Gordon, E.V. and C.T. Onions, "Notes on the Text and Interpretation of Pearl," *Medium Aevum* 2 [1933], 184). Here as in Pearl 1004, *table* is probably intended as equivalent to *bantelles*. Menner (1920), in an extended note to the same line in Cleanness, 1459, argues for reading *enbaned* as a reference to *ouvrage de corne*, which is the building of projecting three-sided sections of castle wall enabling the defenders more effectively to survey longer sections of wall that might be the subject of scaling or mining attempts, but although this has been taken up by *MED s.v. enbaned* it fits less well with the use of *bantelles* in Cleanness and what that term must mean at Pearl 992 and 1017.

792 *loupe hat louked ful clene* "arrowslit that was closed very neatly" Arrowslits or loopholes were vertical slots cut into the castle wall in such a way as to enable the archer to aim from a wide recess cut into the wall behind the slit, but closed
narrowly enough at the outer face of stone to protect him from arrows from below.

795  *towre* (Morris). MS reads *towre*.

*telled bytwene* "built here and there"

803  *innoghe* (Madden). MS reads *tinghe*.

809  *On þe wal his ernde he nome* "from the wall he [asked for and] received his [Gawain’s] [account of his] business"

811  *go myn ernde* "take my message"

813  *trowe* MS reads ‘trowoe’. A series of editors following Gollancz (1940) have emended to *trowee*, though his argument that elsewhere in a few instances letter *e* is doubled at line end does not seem a strong one.
There are three problems with the MS reading: the line is unmetrically short, missing an alliterand, and (pace Vantuono, 1984) does not make sense in context.

Contrary to what editors have claimed, the third word consists of a letter thorn with a mark above its shoulder that is a classic -er abbreviation in appearance.

Editors have read this mark as an tiny letter e or as a letter t, but the first does not seem a very likely reading of the shape of glyph actually present (there is no crossing stroke, and moreover superscript –e is not used with thorn in the manuscript elsewhere and the combination does not seem to form part of the scribe’s normal writing system—and compare the quite different miniature superscript e above the right shoulder of g in greued, f. 67v/71v, Cleanness 774); whereas the second is simply impossible as an understanding of the glyph. Instead, this is most likely just the scribe’s usual way of writing the adverb per. Gollancz (1940), understanding pe, emended by adding ȝare and com after wyȝe, glossing ȝare as “quickly”; Davis (1967) substituted ȝerne for ȝare commenting that it “suits the poet’s diction better” but otherwise followed Gollancz. Most editors since have taken the Davis emendation, but a few have resisted emending, and in a way that is the wisest course given the extent of error. Putter and Stokes (2014), after the argument
by Myra Stokes that *wyȝ* is simply copied in error from the line above ("Metre and Emendation: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* 660b and 815b," *Approaches to the Metres of Alliterative Verse*, ed. Judith Jefferson and Ad Putter [Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 2009], 266), emend dramatically to "Then yede him the yateward, and com ayain swythe," but the mechanism for error causing the existing reading then becomes difficult to determine and it would also be better to retain as much as we already have in attempting the restoration. In fact, *ȝeply* occurs more frequently in the MS than *ȝerne* in alliteration with *ȝaȝyn* and suits the context, and thus is a better candidate if “the poet’s diction” is to be the deciding factor, for an alliterand.

816  *folke* These are officers and servants of the castle, commoners; members of the knightly class (*knyȝteȝ* and *swyereȝ* 824) come down, after he is dismounted, from the *halles* to accompany him within; finally the lord comes down from his *chambre* (833) to the *halles* to greet him, completing the hierarchical series of greetings.

821  *raysed* i.e. told them to rise
fersly MS reads ferfly (previously transcribed "fersly"), with the second f apparently resulting from alteration by overwriting of a letter l. It is also possible, but not as good an explanation of the graphic appearance here, that the scribe first wrote an f and then attempted to alter it to an l by darkening the long stroke.

elde (Madden). MS reads eldee.

beuer-hwed The Eurasian beaver varies in colour geographically now, from a chestnut red to an almost black-brown, but perhaps the reference is to a reddish-brown colour here.

stif on þe stryþþe "strong in his stance"

fre of hys speche "noble in his speaking; of refined speech"

chefly "first of all, quickly" MS reads clefly. Most editors have followed Madden (1839) in emending to chefly here (so glossed by Madden, though his text actually
reads *chefly*). Andrew and Waldron (1978+) emend to *chesly* from OE *cis*, comparing *Cleanness* 543, but despite *MED* this may be a lexicographical ghost:

Olsen emends to *chyfly* there for better sense. Vantuono (1984) retains the MS reading here, understanding it as an “e-o variant spelling” of ‘closly.’” See *MED* s.v. *chefli*, sense b.

852 *at his bode* This is usually taken as "at his command," but given the spellings in this manuscript, could equally well be "at his body": squires "of the body" assisted a prince with matters regarding his own person.

856 *blaunner* (Madden). MS reads *blaumn* or more likely *blaumn* (i.e. with five minimis for four).

860 *per he watʒ dispoyled* "where he was stripped" Editors have begun a new sentence with this line, but understanding *per* in relation to the floor-cloth of *tuly* and *Tars* rather than the whole room brings Gawain full circle from his arming, which was on a tule tapit tyʒt ouer pe flet (568), and emphasizes in that way the nobility of custom that reigns in the strange castle as at Arthur's court.
myrþe MS reads myþe, though the squiggle for -er is not placed directly over the y, but squeezed between it and the þ. Clearly it is an afterthought, and although editors have printed myrþe, it is unlikely that even the scribe intended more than the r he had accidentally omitted: the word is normally spelled myrþe or merþe in the MS.

862-3 Ryche . . . best. Many editors have emended hem to hym in this sentence, but the activities associated with the clothes (putting away and exchanging, especially) are more probably those of the servants than of the knight.

864 happed hym MS reads just happed, and almost all editors have left the line that way, but the verb happen ("to cover, wrap, clothe") seems to be only transitive, so happed here must either be a past participle (in which case a verb is missing; Gollancz [1940] emended to watȝ happed) or an active verb missing its reflexive object.

864-70 "As soon as he took one that sat nicely on him and clothed himself in it (with sailing skirts and fur trim by his face), truly it seemed almost to each man, all in
colours glowing and lovely, all his limbs beneath [it], that Christ never made a handsomer knight, it seemed to them."

866  *ver* Madden (1839) and Morris (1864) gloss “man, knight,” the latter referring the etymology to ON *ver* (*recte verr*); Oliver Farrar Emerson's explanation ("Two Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*" *Modern Language Notes* 36 [1921], 214) taken up by Tolkien and Gordon (1925) that Gawain makes everyone think it is “spring-time” (see *MED* s.v. *ver* n. 1) because of the bright colour (green!) in which he dresses has since been very influential. The current edition is punctuated following the suggestion, perhaps more pedestrian but also more suitable to the context, by Robert J. Menner ("Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*" *Modern Language Review* 19 [1924]: 206) that the reference is rather to fur trimming (*MED* s.v. *veir*).

871  *Whepen in worlde he were* "wherever in the world he might be from" Gawain does not reveal his name and the court he comes from until lines 903-06, when he is engaged in conversation after he has eaten.
872-4 *moȝt . . . foȝt* (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads *myȝt . . . fyȝt*.

877 *bat* (Morris). MS reads *ba*.

883 *chefly* (Madden). MS reads *cefly*.

884 *table* (suggested by Madden in glossary). MS reads *tapit*. Almost all editors emend to *tabil*, an unlikely spelling, on the basis of the pre-21st century prejudice that scribal errors are most likely to be substitutions of individual letters.

889 *sesounde* (Madden). MS clearly reads *foloûde*, but the second letter has been read as an *e* by all previous editors.

890 *doublefelde as hit falleȝ* and *fele kyn fisçeȝ* "double servings, as is fitting, with many kinds of fish" As at Arthurs court at Christmas, servings are doubled from the usual amount for Christmas feasting; however, Christmas eve is also a fast day, so the dishes are all fish. Gawain and the courtiers banter about this in lines 894-8,
Gawain praising the food as a feast, the courtiers apologizing (that there is no red
meat or fowl) and describing the meal as *penaunce*.

893  *sawseȝ so sleȝe* (Arthur S. Napier, "Notes on *Sir Gawayne and the Green
Knight,*" *Modern Language Notes* 17 [1902], 86; I have altered Napier's spelling).

The scribe has transferred the plural ending from one word to the other by memorial
error.

895-6  *ful hendely . . . as hende* "very graciously, while all the men encouraged him at
once, politely" Davis (1967) included *as hende* in the speech of the courtiers, translating
it as "Of your courtesy." Waldron (1970, also Andrew and Waldron (1978+))
suggest as another possibility that *as* can "introduce a polite imperative in ME: 'Do,
gracious sir, accept this penance for the time being.'"

901  *vpon spare wyse* "in a subtle or delicate way"
as case hym þen lymped Perhaps hem (of which hym is a spelling in the MS)

should be understood in this phrase, "as fate then happened to them," since it is the

members of the strange court who are the beneficiaries of chance in this instance.

When . . . po3t Davis (1967) thinks that these lines are a narrative error because a)

the lord should have recognized Gawain when he arrived and b) he is not in the

room when Gawain reveals his identity, since he greets him first by name at 937.

The first of these is best described as a narrative strategem rather than an error,

since the lord's true identity must be concealed until 2345-61; the second may

presume that the lord forms part of a secondary audience for Gawain's revelation

of his court and name, of knights in the main hall, receiving word by message and

hoping then to meet the famous knight soon (911).

pat such a gest as Gawan . . . and syinge "who grants us to have such a guest as

Gawain at the time when men happy because of his (God's) birth shall sit and sing

[i.e. at Christmas-time]"
924-5 In meuyng of manereʒ mere/ ðis burne now schal vus bryng "This man will now bring us to talking in splendid (or merry?) manners" The adjective mere is more probably MED mere adj 1 ("glorious, splendid, fine") than MED miri ("merry, joyful"); either would be a possible interpretation given the scribe's spelling system, but rhyme would seem to constrain to the first.

meuyng Previously transcribed “menyng” (glossed “knowledge, remembrance” (Madden, 1839), “understanding” (Tolkien and Gordon, 1925), MED s.v. menen v I related to OE manan, which is also possible, though the semantics are a bit stretched, but compare SGGK 985.

926 I hope þat may hym here "I expect that one who may hear him"

929 nyʒt (Madden). MS reads myʒt as reported correctly by Madden (1839) and Gollancz (1940); Morris (1864) followed by Tolkien and Gordon (1925) and most other editors reads the MS as niyʒt, but although three minims in a row may certainly be read so, there is no special warrant for this in the shapes or spacing of the minims themselves, of which the scribe has simply written one too many.
Chaplaynes (Madden). MS reads clapaynes.

loutes perto "comes down for it" The same verb is used when the lord descends to greet Gawain in line 833.

closet An enclosed pew, or possibly an enclosed chapel within the larger church, where the lady attends service with other women (the mony cler burde of 942) in privacy.

Penne . . . penne . . . "When . . . then . . ."

of compas . . . and costes Some suggestive word-play may be involved here: the lady is fairest of compas "in proportion," but her compas could also refer to her circumference or waist; she is fairest of costes "in qualities" (MED s.v. cost n1), but her costes could also be her sides or flanks (MED s.v. coste n).
Ho (Elizabeth Mary Wright, "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 34 [1935], 173). MS reads he, but Wright points out that Gawain does not leave his seat until line 971, when he asks the lord's leave.

\[946\]

\[954\] pat oper on rolled "hung on the other one in folds"

\[955\] hir brest and hir bryȝt brest bare displayed Besides its obvious symbolism as a marker of sexual availability, the bareness of the lady’s throat and chest may signal that she is very up to date. A fashion for very revealing necklines swept European noble society in the 1380s (Margaret Scott, Late Gothic Europe, 1400 – 1500, History of Dress Series [London: Mills and Boon, 1980], 44) leading to Eustache Deschamps’ lyric, "Dame aiez pitié de tettine” (“Lady, show mercy to your breasts”—Oeuvres complètes, SATF, v. 8, p. 169) and to this passage in his Miroir de mariage (ca. 1400):

Or couvient un large colet

Es robes de nouvelle forge,

Par quoy les tettins et la gorge
Par la façon des entrepans

Puissent estre plus apparans. (v. 9, p. 49)

(“The dresses of the new fashion come with an open neckline, allowing the breasts and the throat, because of the cut of the bodice, to be more visible.”)

956 schede3 (Morris, spelling schedes). MS reads scheder.

958 chalk-quyte (C.T. Onions, "Notes on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Notes and Queries 146 [1924], 245). MS reads mylk quyte.

960 trvset and treleted. "trussed and latticed" MS reads tvset and treleted. Madden read this as toret and trejeted, and editors have followed him in the misreading of the first word, but though the area has some damage the second letter is much more likely to be a v than an o, and the third is too tall for an r and more like the long-s the scribe is writing on this page (compare the first letter in samen, line 940); moreover, to be interpreted as r, the glyph needs to be a malformed version of the standard two-stroke minuscule r, whereas a leaning 2-shaped r is almost exclusively used after o. These terms seem to describe the older lady’s headgear (the
most likely noun to attach them to is “hir frount” in any case, though they could also, by a quite usual shift in grammar, apply to the lady herself). The second must be related to OF treillette, a diminutive of treille, which refers to a trellis, lattice, espalier, grating or grille—some kind of a criss-cross structure, in any case. The aged lady’s “trellis” may consist of some kind of embroidery, but it is tempting instead to relate it to the mid-fourteenth century English fashion for elaborately crimped and architectonic layered starched veils surrounding the face, for which see Stella Mary Newton (Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince: A Study of the Years 1340–1365 [Woodbridge: Boydell, 1980]), in particular pl. 33 p. 96 of a corbel from the Church of St. Mary at Bury St. Edmonds showing the head of a young woman whose very substantial and architectural outermost veil is crimped into a lattice of diamond-shaped cells. If this is the kind of “trellis” our lady wears, then trvset ("trussed up") might simply refer to the wrapping afforded by the same piece of head-gear—and the two adjectives together then suggest a confining defensive structure built up of its starched “tryfles” (ornamental folds of cloth?).

Alternatively but not as likely, treleted might be a reference to the kind of criss-cross jewelled hair-net worn by Jeanne de Boulogne in a carving on the chimney-piece of

965 for Gode T.N. Smallwood, "Middle English For Gode: 'In Truth' and not 'By God'," *Notes and Queries* 55 (2008), 4-13, has argued persuasively that in some early Middle English texts differentiation of spelling between the Middle English reflexes of God and good shows that editors have mistaken one noun for the other and have "before God," i.e. roughly "by God," where they should have "for good," meaning something like "in truth." I am less persuaded by the argument in the same author's "For gode in Chaucer and the Gawain-poet," *Chaucer Review* 46 (2012), 466-71, about this line, which relies too heavily, in my view, on an alleged consistency of spelling in this MS, and on a supposed avoidance of oaths in bobs in the alliterative tradition, and must in any case admit that the rhyme here would be rendered inaccurate if this were the good word rather than the God word.

967 balȝ (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads bay, which in context would most probably be the horse-colour word (attempts to connect it to the bay in *bay window* are
unconvincing), but although we know the colour of her chin despite it being wrapped in veils (958), it seems unlikely that we are meant to know the colour of her buttocks. However, the emendation is not very explicable on paleographical grounds: Tolkien and Gordon allege a similarity between \( l \) and \( y \) in the MS that does not seem to me to obtain.

968 more lykkerwys on to lyk “More delicious to lick on.” Editors have been shy of giving ME \( l yk \) its full force here, asserting for example that it “has not the modern sense ‘lick’, but rather ‘taste’” (Tolkien and Gordon [1925] note). There is little evidence of such an attenuated sense elsewhere in ME, and no particular reason to assume it here. The similarly bashful attempt of Gollancz (1940) to assign it to ME “liken” (with long \( i \)—“to like”) would seem to be foiled by the rhyme (though it is taken up by \( MED \)). George B. Pace (“Physiognomy and \textit{Sir Gawain and the Green Knight},” \textit{English Language Notes} 4 [1967], 164) noted possible word-play with another meaning of ME likerous: "lecherous."

970 lent (S.O. Andrew, "The Text of \textit{Sir Gawayn and the Grene Knyzt}," \textit{Review of English Studies} 6 (1930), 175). MS reads \textit{went}. \( MED \) records the idiom \textit{lenden}
*ayenes* (s.v. *lenden* sense 2b), "to go or come against (sb.), fight against, confront." A few editors have retained the MS reading, perhaps considering the alliteration completed by the three alliterands in the a-verse.

975 *kallen hym of aquoyntaunce* "ask to get to know him", literally, "ask for [closer] familiarity"

979 *spyce*3 Spices were taken with wine or in wine after the evening meal in the Middle Ages in noble society for their digestive, breath-sweetening, and (supposed) medicinal qualities.

983-5 *hent . . whyle* "took his hood off nobly and hung it on a spear, and encouraged them to get the honour of [winning] it, who might occasion the most mirth that Christmas season" The precise nature of this game is mysterious: Who will judge who gives the most mirth? Do the courtiers compete individually ("I schal fonde") or in teams ("wayned hem"; "with help of my frende")? If in teams, who gets the hood? Is the hood alone the prize, or does it stand for a whole livery ("pe wede")?
984  *hem* This has previously been transcribed *hom*, but the *e* here is in the hand of the person who went through this page refreshing faded letters, and this is one of the ways that person wrote the letter *e*; compare the first *e*, also in the refresher’s hand, of *frenede* line 987.

987  *wede* This is frequently emended to the singular, but see note on 983-5.

988  *hit tayt make* "behaves cheerfully"

992  *kyng* (MS) Emended to “lord” by Gollancz (1912 revision of Morris) followed by later editors except Moorman (1978) and Vantuono (1984), presumably on the basis that Bertilak “is not regarded as a king in this poem” (Thomas A. Knott, "The Text of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight,*" *Modern Language Notes* 30 [1915], 106), though the reason given by Tolkien and Gordon (1925) is to improve the alliteration. However, as Vantuono (1984) points out, “kyng” does alliterate with “comaundet” (though on an unstressed syllable, which Vantuono does not note).

It also seems presumptuous in an editor to dictate to the poet the social structure of
his imagined Arthurian world by denying that Bertilak can be properly described
as a “king”: whether Bertilak is “regarded as a king in this poem” or not depends
entirely on whether the editor has emended this line. (Vantuono retains the MS
reading but understands it in a metaphorical sense: “king of his castle just as a
father today may be thought of as a king of his household.”)

995  *tyme* MS reads *tymy*, apparently corrected from *tyny* by the addition of a second
right stroke to the already-completed final y, with darkening of the left stroke of
that y to make it into a third minim of m; there may also be (unsuccessful)
Attempts to erase the new y. All editors except Vantuono, who reads *tyny* and
translates "tiny Child," seem to have read the MS erroneously as *tyme*.

996  *þat* Very difficult to read in the MS itself, and the þ marked as illegible or
supplied by some editors; it is, however, verifiable using image manipulation
(inversion, particularly with the blue channel selected) in the digital images; it is also
partly visible as an offset on the opposite page.
1000  *derf men vpon dece drest of þe best* This line could mean a number of different things. I have punctuated it to make *messes ful quaynt* the object of *drest*, so "bold men on the dias arranged very elegant dishes of the best," but another strong possibility is suggested by comparison with *Cleanness 1399* (*non watȝ dressed vpon dece bot þe dere seluen*) and *SGGK 74-5*, (*Guenore ful gay . . . dressed on þe dere des*); this line would then mean "bold men of the best [were] seated on the dias," more awkward syntactically, but certainly possible.

1005  *as hem best semed* This looks like a reference to an arbitrary seating arrangement, but it means, "as was most appropriate for them" (that is, "in strict order of rank,"

1006  *Bi "by the time that"

1009  *to poynte hit ȝet I pyned me" and nevertheless I made an effort to summarize it*

1012  *derne* Given the spellings and letter-forms of the manuscript, this could also be *derue*, "noble," but all editors have seen it as a reference to private conversation.
241

1014 *bat* (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads (i.e. *and*).

1018-9 Vche mon tented hys, and *bat* two tented *payres*. "Each man paid attention to his [own business] and the two of them attended to theirs."

1020-2 *bat* day and *bat* oher . . . *pe bryd* . . . Sayn Jone day The poem appears to designate a series of four days of feasting here: Christmas day, the following two days, and then Saint John's day. This is not problematic in the broader time-scheme of the poem, since it would take us up to December 28, and assign the three hunts correctly to December 29-31, but the feast of Saint John the Apostle is and was 27 December. Either a textual error has occurred or the poet has made a temporal error here, which would be most unusual in a carefully-timed poem. Gollancz (1940) suggested the omission of a line referring to the Feast of the Holy Innocents (also known as Childermass), 28 December, and proposed (in his notes) *With most myrpe and mynstralsye Childermas sued*, modelled on line 985, a suggestion implemented by Silverstein (1984) in his text as his line 1022a. Putter and Stokes (2014) instead exchange lines 1021 and 1022, making *pe bryd* a reference to the third of the post-
Christmas days, which in their proposal (an advance on Ad Putter, "In Search of Lost Time: Missing Days in Sir Cleges and Sir Gawain," *Time in the Medieval World*, ed. Humphreys and Ormond [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001], 119-36) has been misunderstood by the scribe as completing the sequence *pat day and pat oper*, rather than the (implicit) sequence of three saints' days *after* Christmas beginning with St. Stephen, December 26. Other editors, such as Davis (1967), content themselves with noting an apparent problem, as do I, noting also the possible suggestion offered by Tolkien and Gordon (1925) in their note on 1025 (though they do not address the temporal point directly), that the visitors stay up all night on Saint John's day and take their leave (lines 1027-8) the next day, making the conversation of the host and Gawain that begins in the current stanza (line 1031 and following) one that takes place on Holy Innocents', not on Saint John's day. See further Victor Yelverton Haines, "Morgan and the Missing Day in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Mediaeval Studies* 33 (1971), 354-9.

1028 *strange* (Gollancz). MS reads *stronge*. Possibly this could be understood as a pleonastic reference to the noble status of the guests, the presumption being that a man of the knightly class is necessarily *wy3e stronge*, but it seems more likely
that Gollancz is right that it is a reference to revellers who are not of the household.

Compare *Cleanness* 875.

1029 *gef hym god day* Usually translated as "said goodbye to him" (Waldron, 1970), but *hym* could equally likely be a spelling for the plural *hem* (not uncommon in the MS), since Gawain has been invited to stay *quyle yow lyke* (814), and might thus join the host in saying goodbye to the departing Christmas-only guests.

1030 *be chynne* (Madden). MS reads *pehyn.*

1031 *draȝeȝ hym on dryȝe* "takes him aside"

1032 *hat* (suggested by Madden). MS reads , which only Vantuono (1984) retains.

1037 *Grant merci* (Madden). "much thanks" MS reads *nerci.*

1037 *cope Sir Gawayn* MS reads *q gawayn,* that is, the abbreviation for *sir* consisting of a long-s crossed from top-right to bottom left, followed by the abbreviation used
for Latin *quod* in Latin manuscripts, consisting of a letter *q* crossed from top-right to bottom left. These are graphically similar, especially as realized here, and I suggest that they have been confused and reversed. For *cope* as an expansion of the *quod* glyph, see the note on line 255.

1038  _be Heȝe Kyng yow ȝelde_ "may God ('the High King') reward you for it"

1052-3 _a place, I wot not in worlde whederwarde to wende hit to fynde_ "a place that I do not know in what direction to travel to find"

1053  _wot not_ MS reads simply _wot_, other editors have emended to _not_ or _ne wot_.

1054  _I nolde bot if I hit negh myȝt_ "I would not want not to approach it"

1060  _stabled bi statut a steuen_ "established by agreement an appointment"

1062  _bot neked now wonteȝ_ "only a very little is now lacking", i.e. New Year is very nearby
1067  *myn* (Madden). MS reads *myȳ*.

1069  *pat* (Morris). MS reads *pa*.

1070  *Pe Grene Chapayle vpon grounde greue yow no more* "let the Green Chapel distress you no more" (*vpon grounde* is a tag of minor semantic content); i.e. "do not worry any more about reaching the Green Chapel."

1072  *quyle forth daye3* "until late in the day"

1074  *in spenne* "there"; spenne may refer to a hedge or a hedge-enclosed piece of land, but here in a tag it has very attenuated sense.

1088  *cryande* MS reads *crrande*, but this has been mistranscribed as *criande* since Madden (1839); *y* is more graphically similar to *r* in this hand than *i* is.

1089  *hau* See note on line 23.
wyl ȝe halde þis hes here at þys onʒe? "will you keep that promise here right now?"

(jowre (2nd; suggested by Madden). MS reads jowe.

tomorn quyle þe mesسقوyle "tomorrow until time for Mass" The interpretation "during Mass" is an incorrect understanding of the preposition quyle here.

wyth my wyf þat wyth yow schal sitte The looseness of the syntax here allows two interpretations: that the wife will sit with Gawain as he takes his meal, or that she will sit with him while he sleeps in, up in his lofte (upstairs room).

quat chek so þe acheue "whatever success you have" The word chek, often elsewhere meaning failure, evil fate, etc., seems to have acquired the meaning "success" in the romances, as a passage from the Wars of Alexander makes clear: "Was noʒt Sexes him-selfe þe souereynest in erth, And cheued him of cheualry chekis out of nombre?" See MED s.v. chek n. sense 3. Waldron (1970—later Andrew and
Waldron 1978+) simply translates "whatever bad luck you have" and describes the word as having "sinister overtones" in its possible other reference to losing at chess, the failure of hawks to catch their quarry, and so on, but here and at 1857 the surface meaning is at worst neutral.

1108-9 Swete . . . better! "Dear [sir], let us swap like that, answer [me] truly, whether to a man empty[ness] happens that way (i.e. he gets nothing in the exchange) or better."

1114 dalten vnty3tel "engaged in revelry; partied"

1116 frenkysch fare "French (i.e. sophisticated, courtly) behaviour"

1123 recorded couenaunte3 ofe "[they] often rehearsed [the] agreements" The plural here and 3et firre in line 1105 suggest that there are two agreements: that Gawain will remain in his room each day and lounge at his ease until Mass while his host goes hunting; and that they will swap whatever they get for whatever the other has gotten.
1126 *Ful* This stanza marks the beginning of a new section of the poem, signalled in the MS by leaving a blank line before it and beginning the stanza with an ornamented initial six lines high.

1137 *by þat þat* "by the time that"

1139 *þise cacheres þat cuepe* "hunters who knew" (well how to hunt); *þise* can be omitted in translation.

1146 *To trystors vewters þod* "dog-handlers went to hunting stations" (to which the deer will be driven by hunters and hounds in the next stanza to be shot at with arrows and brought down by the greyhounds).

1147 *couples hutnes of keste* "hunters released the coupling leashes" (the dogs are coupled together on leashes at 1139 before being released from the kennel).
1150  At þe fyrst queche of þe quest quaked þe wylde "At the first advance of the pack of hounds the wild (animals) quivered." queche has previously been transcribed quethe ("utterance"—see MED s.v. quethe n.), but the letter looks more like a c than a t (the two can be similar in this script and hand): see MED s.v. quecchen v. and OED s.vv. quetch, quinch.

1151-75 Der drof in þe dale . . . ful oft con launce and lyȝt The deer hunt described in this stanza is similar to the "ordinance and the manner of hunting when the king will hunt in forests or in parks for the hart with bows and greyhounds and stable" (Master of Game 188), with the exceptions that the male deer (hertteȝ and bukkeȝ, the males of the red and fallow deer) are here excluded from a hunt that takes place in fermysoun tyme (closed season) when only female deer (hindeȝ and does, again the red and fallow) could be hunted, and that the lord in this poem, rather than remaining at one hunting station as in the Master of Game, rides and alights repeatedly (1175, probably from station to station). As described in the Master of Game (188-199), the hunt begins with the quiet early-morning establishment of the stablye, an open-mouthed ring of hunting stations (trystors, 1146) at the borders of the area of the hunt. Once the king has arrived and is in position, the
pack of scenting hounds (*pe quest*, 1150; *rachches*, 1164; *braches* 1142)) is loosed at the mouth of the ring, to drive the deer towards the stations where hunters shoot at them with bow and arrow and/or set greyhounds on them to bring them down.

1161 *at vche wende vnder wande wapped a flone* "at every turn in the woods an arrow flew"

1162 *on pe broun* "into the brown (hides)"

1179 *he god mon* Although *god* ("good") is a frequent collocation with Gawain's name, there may be a subtle insinuation in this phrase, with the accent forced to the adjective by the alliteration: see *MED* s.v. *god man* phrase: householder, husband.

1183 *dernly* (Davis). The MS reads *derfly*, likely as a scribal misreading of an exemplar's *dernly as deruly*, then respelled. Both Tolkien and Gordon (1925) and Gollancz (1940) consider but reject the emendation, but Mabel Day argues that "wherever 'derf(ly)' occurs in Gawain, Patience and Cleanness, it has a sense of bold, vigorous action, which is quite out of place here" (in Gollancz, 1940).
1195  *lay lurked* Possibly a calque on the French verbal formation *gésir coi/coite* ("to lie silent/motionless") though Putter and Stokes (2014) for metrical reasons emend to *lay and lurking*.

1196-7 *compast . . . po3t* "reflected in his mind upon what that event might mean or signify—it seemed astonishing to him" MS *meue* or *mene* has been interpreted by most editors as *meue*, but *mene* and *amount* are rough synonyms here: see *MED* s.v. *amounten*, sense 4.

1199  *to aspye wyth my spelle in space* "to find out by (my) speaking right now" The word *in* is illegible in the MS, though there appear to be the remnants of ink of a macron extending to the left of the damaged area, so the reading was probably *ī*.

1201  *let as hym wondered* "pretended he was surprised"

1202  *as bi his sa3e be sauer to worthe* "as if to become the more secure in his speech"
1208  *gay* (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads *fayr*.

1210  *bot true vus may schape* "unless a truce may happen for us" The lady evokes a martial situation in which she has captured a sleeping enemy soldier, who is now her prisoner unless a truce is declared between the warring parties.

1215  *gai* This word is illegible in the manuscript except for its first letter; there is space for two more letters.

   *cope* See note to line 255.

   *pe lype* "the agreeable/compliant/obedient" MS reads *pellype*, which has apparently been read as *pelype* by all previous editors, who have printed *pe blype*.

1214  *yourr*: MS reads *yo* ?(i.e. abbreviation for 'our' followed by 2-shaped 'r'), which only Davis (1967) and Vantuono (1984) record, Davis emending to *your* and Vantuono retaining the MS reading.
I surrender quickly and call for mercy, and that is best, in my judgement, for I must do so necessarily (i.e. have no other choice)” Gawain evokes the same situation as the lady has earlier in the stanza.

deprece your prysoun "release your prisoner"

drawn and dit with a derf haspe "pulled shut and closed with a sturdy latch"

3e ar welcum, to my cors, youre awen won to wale "You are welcome, to me (i.e. I welcome you), to adopt your own usual manner of behaving." See MED s.v. wonen1, senses 2a, c, e. There is a history of titillated scholarly misreading of welcum to my cors as a more or less literal offer to Sir Gawain to enjoy the lady's body, but the sense "to be allowed to take advantage of (something)" for "to be welcome to (something)" is post-medieval, and my cors is a simple periphrasis for "me."

Me behoue3 of fyne force "I must by pure necessity" The lady cedes control to Sir Gawain as the superior in nobility and courtesy (honour and hendelayk, line 1228).
and yow god þoȝt at saȝe oper at seruyce . . . þe plesaunce of your pryſ "if it seemed good to you that I might apply (anything) in speech or service towards pleasing your nobility (i.e. your noble self) " The syntax is not easy here.

hit were littel daynte "it would show little regard/respect"

hit ar ladyes innoȝe þat leuer wer nowþe "there are plenty of ladys who would rather at this time"

to daly with derely your daynte wordeȝ "to converse splendidly with (i.e. in response to) your elegant words" The word daly can indicate romantic or sexually charged talk, but more usually means elegant or leisurely conversation.

þat (Madden). MS reads þat þī.

I louue þat ilk Lorde . . . in my honde þat al desyres "I thank the Lord who rules the heavens (that) I have entirely in my hand what everyone desires"
1262  answered (Madden—suggested in note). MS reads *afwarded*.

1264-67 *For I haf founden* . . . wel conne3. "For I have found, in good faith, your generosity noble, and have very much from other people (i.e. in this castle) received their (kind) deeds, but the honour that they give me is not (properly) seen (to be) for my merit: it is to your own credit, who only know how to do well." Lines 1265-6 are clearly botched by the scribe, though early editors and Vantuono make efforts to interpret them without any emendation: *ophul much of opholk fongen ho? dede3*. /bot *be daynte h' hay delen fo? my difert nyfen*. The discussion over this crux (these cruces?) is too extensive to summarize in a note with any profit, but probably the best attempt to understand line 1265 as it stands is Davis's (1967), which Barron (1974) manages to fit with some degree of plausible sense into his translation:

"for, truly, I have found in you a noble generosity; and some people [the first *oper*] take their line of conduct very much from others, but the honour that such people accord me is by no means by no means due to my merit." The semantics and
grammar of the first *oper* seem fiercely twisted in this, however, and good sense can be achieved by omitting it as a probable relic of scribal eye-skip badly recovered.

The other problem is MS *nysen*, impossible to relate plausibly to *nice* ("foolish"—Morris, 1864; Tolkien and Gordon, 1925), and not persuasively separated as *nys en* ("is not ever"—Vantuono, 1984, suggesting *MED ene* adv). Davis (1967) emends to *nys euen* ("is not equal to"); Waldron (1970, also Andrew and Waldron, 1984+) to *nys ever* ("is not at all"), the first assuming haplography, the second omission of the abbreviation mark, both of which have been influential suggestions. Putter and Stokes (2014) reject both of those emendations on metrical grounds, and print *nis hit*, commenting, "Since we can torture no convincing sense out of *nysen* . . . we have settled for an unobtrusive emendment that preserves metre without altering the plain sense of the line."

1274 *trwe* (Madden). MS reads *trwee*.

1281 *let lyk as ho hym loued mych* "behaved as if she loved him much" MS reads *let lyk a*, in which many editors have seen an unstressed form *a* of the feminine pronoun *ho*, which would however be the only such form in the manuscript. Tolkien and
Gordon (1925) emended *lyk a* to *lyk as*. Putter and Stokes (2014) argue that "[t]he idiom is in fact *let as* . . . ; there is no example in *MED* of *let as* being varied to *let lik(e) as*." They emend the line substantially to "And aye the lady let as ho liked him and loved him swythe," which also has the advantage of conforming to their metrical rules, but *leten as* means "to pretend," and it would seem a narrative mistake for the poet to introduce the idea of deception on the lady's part so pointedly at this point in the poem. Rather, *let* has the meaning "behaved" (*MED* s.v. *leten* v, sense 17b), *lyk as* goes together as "as if" (*MED* s.v. *like* adv, sense 1b), and a pronoun subject must be supplied.

1283-5 *þaȝ ho were burde bryȝtest . . . boute hone* "Even if she were the most resplendent of women, the man had the less love available (literally, "in his load, baggage; along with him") in his mind because of the destruction/loss he was seeking without delay." MS reads *þaȝ I were burde bryȝtest þe burde*; the substitution of *ho* for *I* and *burne* for the second *burde*, suggested by Morris (1864), though resisted by many editors, resolves a rhetorical/metrical awkwardness (the repetition of *burde*), a narrative awkwardness (the sudden eruption of the lady's
thoughts, otherwise veiled from us), and a structural awkwardness (we would then be privy to the lady's knowledge that Gawain must face the blow).

1292  *he pat spedeȝ vche spech* "he who makes each speech successful" i.e. God

1293  *gotȝ not in mynde* (Gollancz) "does not occur to one." Many editors retain MS *gotȝ i mynde*, and the assumption that this itself is an idiom meaning "is incredible" is hard to combat when there seem to be no other instances of similar expressions in the corpus, but cf. *MED mind(e) n1*, sense 3e(c), *comen in minde* ("to come to (one's) memory or thought, occur to (sb.)"); see also *MED comen v* sense 14.

1295  *castes* Probably to be seen as a spelling of *MED cost n1* (to which Gollancz emends—"moral conduct, behavior; customs, manners") rather than *MED cast n* ("speaking, utterance"), *pace MED*.

1301  *bi sum towch of summe tryfle at sum taleȝ ende* "by touching on some small thing at the conclusion of a conversation"
1303-4 as a knyȝt falleȝ and fire lest he disples[e] yow "as befits a knight, and (he shall do)

further lest he displease you"

1304 so (Morris—suggested by Madden). MS reads fo.

1312 pat menskly hym kep[ed] "which looked after him honourably"

1315 Watȝ (Gollancz—1897 edition of Morris, with Was or Nas suggested by both

Madden and Morris but not implemented in their texts). MS reads w'.

1324 a querre A formal display of the animals that had been killed.

1326 be grat[est of] gres hat þer were "the greatest in fat (i.e. the fattest) that there were

there"

1327 as þe dede askeȝ "as is appropriate to the task" The succeeding lines outline the

correct procedure for field dressing the deer.
1328  *pe asay* A formal examination of the catch, in which the animals were sliced open along the brisket before the lord to judge the thickness of their fat (here *two fyngeres* thick at least); fat animals are better eating than scrawny ones because their flesh is marbled with fat, making it more tender to the tooth.

1330  *slyt pe slot, sesed pe erber* The *slot* is the hollow at the base of the throat where the breastbone begins, and the word *erber* has been explained as the first stomach of ruminants (i.e. the rumen—see Godefroy *s.v. herbiere* s.f. 2, Littré *s.v. herbier; MED s.v. erber*) and as the throat or gullet (another definition in Godefroy).

However, no part of the paunch could be plausibly accessed by slitting open the throat, as some editors have had it! J. Douglas Bruce, "The Breaking of the Deer in *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*" (*Englische Studien* 32 [1903]: 32-36) showed that the *erber*, meaning the gullet, was "made" (tied up—to avoid spilling stomach contents on the carcass) as a first step towards gutting the animal: "begin first to make the arbor, which is the conduit which leadeth vnto the stomake, guts and bag, and must be made fast and close by a round knot" (*A Iewell for Gentrie*, 1614, G.2v).
1331 *pe schyre knitten* "knotted the bright (gullet)? If, as seems likely, this is the adjective *schyre* ("bright, shining"), the application seems unusual.

1332 *rytte pay pe foure lymmes* "they sliced open the four limbs"

1333 *boweleȝ* (Gollancz, spelling *boueleȝ*). MS reads *baleȝ*.

1334 *lystily for laucyng and lere of pe knot* "skillfully to avoid loosening and loss of the knot" Gollancz's emendation to *pe lere of pe knot*, which he translates as "the ligature of the knot" has been attractive to many editors, but although the OF *liëure* does get borrowed into Middle English (for binding tape and for thickeners for sauces), it is most frequently spelled *liour(e)* (the MED headword), and only once appears as *lere*, in a late southern text, so the emendation seems both audacious and unnecessary.

1337-8 *pen scher . . . hole sides*: George Gascoigne in *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting*, 1575, gives this description of the ceremony attending the cutting off of the shoulders in the English manner of breaking up the deer:
We use some ceremonie in taking out the shoulder. For first he which
taketh it out, cuts the thinne skin of the flesch (when the Deares skinne is
taken off) round about the legge, a little aboue the elbowe ioynt. And there
he rayseth out the synew or muskle with his knife, and putteth his
forefinger of his left hand, through under the sayd muskle to hold
the legge by. If afterwardes he touch the shoulder or any part of the legge,
with any other thing than his knyfe, vntill he haue taken it out, it is a
forfayture, and he is thought to be no handsome woodman. Then
with his shoulder knyfe he cuts an hole betweene the legge and the
brysket, and there puts in his knife, and looseneth the shoulder from the
syde, going about with his knyfe, neare to the outside of the skynne,
vntill he haue quyte taken out the shoulder, and yet lefte the skynne of the
syde fayre and whole. And if he doe it not at three boutes, it is also a
forfayture. (134-5)

There are two small holes mentioned here, and Tolkien and Gordon (1925)
thought the lyttel hole of line 1338 was a reference to the first one, into which the
left forefinger is inserted, while Davis in his revision (1967) picked the second
one. The first hole matches better with the verb haled ("lifted"), whereas the second,
through which it seems that a narrow knife is inserted and then moved in a circular way without enlarging the entry hole ("looseneth the shoulder from the syde, going about with his knyfe") and without cutting the skin ("and yet lefte the skynne of the syde fayre and whole"), matches better the phrase to haue hole sydes. Recent editors have chosen the latter explanation, which on the whole seems preferable despite the fact that the poet has already had the beast skinned (1332).

1342 *pe avanters* The 1614 *A Jewell for Gentrie* says that "That part of the vmbles which cleaue vnto the throat-bole is called the aduancers" (G.2v); in addition to the wesaunt and wynt-hole, this would include, for example, the large arteries and veins of the neck. However, the poet may understand the term as applying also to the forward chest contents (heart and lungs), since loosening the diaphram from the ribs follows immediately here.

1347 *alle pe ryme3 by pe rybbe3* "all the membranes by the ribs" Probably the diaphram, which most impedes the voiding of the thoracic and abdominal cavities, is primarily intended, since it is directly attached to the ribs, but the peritoneum (see

349) might also need to be cut loose in some places.

1345  *euenden* "made uniform, trimmed smooth" (i.e. by cutting away adhesions etc.).

The Gollancz (1940) emendation to *euen doun*, partly replicated by the Waldron (1970; also Andrew and Waldron 1978+) glossing of *euenden* as "right down," is attractive but does not seem necessary. Another possibility is that the *de juncture* here, immediately below that of *ryde* in the line above, has been accidentally transferred from there, the original reading then being *euen to be haunche*.

1347  *neme for be nombies* Given manuscript spellings, this could either mean "take as the nombies" (*MED s.v. nimen* v.) or "designate the nombies" (*MED s.v. nemnen* v.), with the former more likely, given that the construction of *nemnen* with *for* usually means "name to (an office, etc.)" or "to name after (something else)."

1350  *be lappe*3 *pay lauce bihynde* "they cut loose the flaps behind," with *be lappe*3 perhaps referring specifically to the vulva; see *MED s.v. lappe* n, sense 6b. Cutting out around the anus and sexual parts at the rump to allow them to be drawn in
through the pelvic bone still attached to the intestines, bladder, etc., would be the last step in voiding the cavity.

1351 *hewe hit*: i.e. the remaining carcass; the two *hits* in line 1344 and the *pat* in the previous line refer to the mass of internal organs (the numbles).

1355 *be corbeles fee* "the raven's reward": the xiphoid process, a cartiliginous continuation of the breast bone, was thrown away for the ravens to eat: "There is a little gristle which is upon the spoone of the brysket, which we call the Ravens bone, bycause it is cast vp to the Crowes or Ravens whiche attende hunters" (George Gascoigne, *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting*, 1575, 135).

1357 *ayper* (Morris). MS reads *ap*.

1358 *vche freke for his fee as falle3 forto haue* "each man for his reward as it is appropriate for him to have" The hunting manuals give sometimes quite elaborate lists of the division of the spoils of the hunt, certain parts of each deer being reserved for the master hunter, etc., but probably what is meant in this line is the simpler right of
each hunter who has killed a deer to claim its skin as his fee: "And it is to be
known that every man[,] bow and fewterer[,] that hath slain anything should mark
it that he might challenge his fee, and have it at the curée" (*Master of Game*, 196).

1372  *Thenne sumned be syre in hat sale be meny* The manuscript reading, *Thene
comaūded  be lorde i p' tale to lamen alle be meny*, is suspiciously periphrastic-
sounding, probably unmetrical, and lacking one alliterand in the a-verse. Gollancz
(followed by Putter and Stokes) replaced *lorde* with *syre* and Silverstein *comaunded*
with *summed*, in each case without other intervention, but neither substitution fixes the
other problems with the line.

1373  *on logh to lyȝt* "to come down (to the main hall from their upper chamber)"

1372  *Gawayn* (Madden). MS reads *gaway*.

1377  *to be tayles* The tails were not cut off when the animals were skinned and would
facilitate a count of the total number of deer after the carcasses had been
quartered.
and I haf worthyly þis wonnen, wones wythinne "I have honourably won this (i.e. the kiss he is about to give), indoors" (see MED s.v. wonen n2, sense 1c for withinne wones). For the sequence worthyly þis wonnen, wones wythinne the MS reads only wo thly þis wones wythîne. Tolkien and Gordon (1925) inserted wonnen before þis for sense, understanding the latter as a plural demonstrative modifying wones, and also emended and to hat to provide an antecedent for hit in line 1387. They have been followed by all later editors except Vantuono (1984), who concocts a doubtful understanding of the MS line as it stands.

he (Madden). MS reads ho. Here and in line 1394, where the scribe has written wytte of hor seluen, the lady has been inappropriately brought into the text.

Tas: the MS actually appears to read cas here.

I wowche hit saf fynly, þaz feler hit were "I bestow it entirely, even if it were greater" i.e. "I bestow it entirely, as I would have done also had it been greater."
1394  *yowreseluen* (Tolkien and Gordon, spelling *yorseluen*). MS reads *ho ſeluen*.

1406  *what* (Tolkien and Gordon, spelling *Wat*). MS reads *pat*.

1407  *mette*: This word is much obscured by ink transfer from the opposite page, but there does not seem to be a macron over the second *e* as many previous editors have thought (though it is not always clear whether editors who are not as precise about manuscript readings may not be seeing a spelled-out *metten*, also not the case).

1412  *crowen* (Tolkien and Gordon); MS reads *croweȝ*.

1419  *po borneȝ*: where the wild boar would be encountered: "they lie moste commonly in the strongest holdes of Thornes and thicke Bushes" (Gascoigne, *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting*, 1575, p. 151).

1422  *wyth a wrast uoyce* "in a high/excited voice" See MED s.v. *wresten* v., senses 2c and 2d, and compare *Cleanness* 1166. Editors have all followed Madden (1839) in transcribing the last word *noyce*, but *uoyce* gives better sense.
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1426  *glauerande glam* "loud-voiced clamour" Almost all editors since Tolkien and Gordon (1925) have followed them in emending to *glauer ande glam*, but Putter and Stokes (2014) point out that "The verb *glaveren* . . . is well attested; the noun *glaver* is not," the only other instance (in *Wars of Alexander*) possibly being an error for *glaverande*.

1435  *whyl* "until"

1438  *vnsoundly* This could mean either "in a manner dāngerous to himself, unwisely,"
or  "in a manner dangerous to the hunters and dogs, threateningly."

1440  *fro þe sounder, þat syre ful olde* MS reads *fór þe fööder þat wiȝt ful olde*, where *wiȝt* is clearly a scribal substitution for a less common alliterating word.

1441  *a borelych best* (Burrow). These words are not in the manuscript, which has an area of obliterated text at this point. See *Cleanness* 1488.
"Hay!" paid The MS reading appears to be hay hay, which makes the line chiastic, but has been transcribed hay hay by all editors since Madden (1839).

"Be poynete payred at be pyth þat pyȝt in his schelde" "the points failed at the strength that was present in his shields." The "shields" of a wild boar are the tough skin of its shoulders and flanks.

ryde (Vantuono 1984). The manuscript is close to illegible here, with only the initial r clearly visible. Most editors have read rode, but Vantuono (1984) believed he saw ryde by ultraviolet light, Silverstein (1984), also using UV, reports seeing ryde "plus another illegible letter," and that seems to be substantiated by the little I can make out by image manipulation (inversion of the blue channel), where the final þ is faintly visible, where ligature of d and e is fairly clear, and where the left stroke of a y seems likelier than the left stroke of o. (The colour image also has what appears to be the tail of a y, though that does not get clearer with image manipulation.)
Waldron (1970, later Andrew and Waldron 1978) suggests a double meaning here: "no doubt deliberately ambiguous: 'Very early she visited him (or 'was pestering him') in order to bring about a change in his attitude."

**worthyly**  MS reads *worthy*, and this has been accepted by all editors and made its way into the MED (as an adverbial use), but seems unlikely and is probably a scribal error.

*wrast* The mild definition "disposed" initiated by Madden (1839) and followed by all subsequent editors seems unlikely given the general semantics of this verb (it would be the only instance of this sense in the *MED* corpus), which generally implies forcible twisting rather than unforced turning. Better to translate "compelled, constrained" (*MED* *wresten* sense 4b, c) here.

*conne3 not of compaynye pe coste3 vndertake* "does not know how to perform the normal actions (or "cannot afford the costs") of familiarity/friendship/intimacy"

The word *compaynye* is especially ambiguous in this charge of the lady's, with
meanings ranging from the relationship between members of a social gathering to actual sexual intimacy.

1484 *kennes* This is the reading of the first line of f. 111r/115r (actually, *kēnes*); the catchword at the bottom of the previous page (f. 110v/114v) has *kēnez*.

3e kest hom of mynde MS reads 3e kest hom of yo mûde, which is metrically doubtful and likely scribal.

1485 *taȝte* "taught you," a collapsed form of *taȝt he* (as suggested by Waldron 1970).

1486 *bi aldertruest token of tulk pat I cowpe* "about the very truest sign of a man that I knew" The word *tulk* ("man," "knight") is clear in the MS, but has been transcribed *talk* by all previous editors, with various translations.

1494-5 *If I were werned I were wrang, . . . 3e may not be werned!* "If I were rebuked I would be in the wrong, indeed, if I had made the attempt." "My goodness," said the comely woman, "you can not be ordered about!" The exchange puns on two meanings of "werned" (*MED* s.v. *warnen*, senses 5 and 4c).
1499  prete is vnpryuande in pede per I lende "force (or compulsion) is (considered) ignoble in the country where I live"

1507  druryes greme and grace "love's sorrow and graciousness"

1509  what were pe skylle "what the reason/explanation might be" The grammar begun here is suspended at the end of 1511 and only finally returned to (in a different construction) in 1522 ff.; Davis (1967) suggests that this is to "reproduce the occasional incoherence of colloquial language."


suggests reading this phrase with sensitivity for the full range of meanings, since ‘luf,’ ‘lel,’ and ‘layk’ all have varied and highly contextual definitions. He further suggests that the ambiguity is deliberate, and a part of Gawain’s own test.
for The letter ‘r’ is illegible in the MS.

his teuelyng of his trwe kny3te3 "the contending of these true knights" The verb tevelen refers to warfare at Cleaness 1189, but its implication here is perhaps what appears to be its more usual meaning in Middle English (i.e. verbal argument or debate): the lady asserts that when knights are contending with one another, their faithfulness in love and deeds done for their mistresses are prime points brought forward ("tytelet token and tyxt of her werkke3").

be tytelet token and tyxt of her werkke3 "the title (literally, the sign made into a title) and text of their works" The lady evokes knighthood as a literary phenomenon, perhaps referring specifically to knights in romances. The word werkke3 here could refer to literary works or to the deeds of actual knights.

ledes The letters ‘des’ are illegible in the MS.

endured The letter ‘e’ is illegible and the final ‘d’ only partly legible in the MS.
1528  Why  Not the interrogative adverb but the interjection signallng an indignant
question or rebuke. The effect is something along the lines of "My goodness, are
you, who are praised everywhere, ignorant (about love)?"

1540  toruayle  Rather than being a hapax legomenon as in MED, this is probably
intended as a spelling of what is elsewhere in the MS travayle, the form here
influenced either by the adjective tore ("difficult") or confusion with ON
trorveldr/torveldi ("difficult/difficulty").

1542-4 to yow pat . . . euer schal "to you, who, as I know well, have more skill in that art
by half, more than (do) a hundred of such as I am or shall ever (be)"

1543 of (2nd)  The reading has not been questioned by editors, but Hoyt N. Duggan
("The Shape of the B-Verse in Middle English Alliterative Poetry," Speculum 61 [1986]:
579) argues on metrical grounds that 'of' is an otiose, sribally-added preposition
and ought to be deleted.

1546  at my myȝt "as far as I am able"
1549 – 1552 *bus . . . blysse* "What else she thought" is, of course, unknown, and these lines might support some quite different critical interpretations of her emotional state and motivations, any of which colour an understanding of the nature of her appeals and temptations during subsequent conversations. Lois Bragg ("Sir Gawain and the *Green Knight* and the Elusion of Clarity," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 86 [1985]: 484) points out the most serious internal and external contradictions of this passage, perhaps intentional.

1550 *to woz e* This could mean either "to sinful behaviour" (*MED* s.v. *wough* n2, sense 2), "to harm" (sense 5 of the same noun) or "to woo (her)" (*MED* s.v. *wouen* v), the latter as suggested by Davis (1967). Mention of *faute* and *euel* in 1551-2 make the first almost certain, however.

1563 *bote be best of his brache3 be bakke3 in sunder* "bit the backs apart of the best of his dogs"
1567 *be styffest to start bi stoundeʒ he made* "he made the strongest (pursuers) jump from time to time"

1565 *made* MS reads *madee*.

1570 *rasse* "watercourse" Tolkien and Gordon (1925) cite *Cleanness* 446, where the sense is a ridge (OFr *ras*), but Ralph W.V. Elliott ("Some Northern Landscape Features in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," in *Iceland and the Medieval World: Studies in Honour of Ian Maxwell*, ed. Gabriel Turville-Petre and John Stanley Martin [Melbourne: n.p., 1974] 132-43) argues that the etymology is rather from ON *rás*, “water-course, channel,” in keeping with the *bonk* at 1571 and the *forth* at 1585.

*borne* Most editors have transcribed this as *boerne*, but it seems just as likely to be *boɅne*, with 2-shaped *r* followed by regular *r*.

1571 *geteʒ* MS reads *gete*, which all previous editors have retained as a form of the past tense, despite the doubtful vowel.
breme wat3 and braynwod (Morris 1864). MS reads breme wat3 braŷ wod, with an unusually wide space between braŷ and wod.

kachande "encouraging" See MED s.v. cacchen sense 6c, “to urge . . ., incite, provoke . . .; urge (a horse) to greater speed.”

luflych (Madden). MS reads lufllych through omission of the cross-bar of the f.

leue3 his corsour, brayde3 out a bry3t bront Both engaging the boar on foot and using a sword (rather than a spear) to dispatch it are exceptionally dangerous manoeuvres, counselled against by Gaston Phoebus in his Livre de chasse (ed. Tilander, chapter 54), who nevertheless says that "It is a lovely accomplishment and a lovely thing to know how to kill a boar well with the sword."

freke (suggested by Madden). MS reads freke3.

wy3t3est MS is very unclear here due to damage. Madden (1839) transcribes wy3crest; Morris (1864) wy3t-est; other editors wy3test; but what Madden apparently
saw as a 2-shaped \( r \) (very unlikely after \( y \)) is most likely the shoulder of a damaged yogh.

1595 \textit{3edoun} A contracted form of “3ede doun”: the boar went (or more likely was carried) downstream.

1600 \textit{to dethe endite} “Condemn to death”, i.e. kill; see \textit{MED} s.v. \textit{enditen}, quotations under senses 4 b, c, d, and e, many of which better support a general definition, “condemn,” rather than the definitions assigned by MED editors.

1602 \textit{with hapele\textasciitilde{} pat my\textasciitilde{}} "by men who were able"—presumably those uninjured by the boar's tusks.

1603-4 \textit{as bidden \#e maystere\textasciitilde{} . . . pat were chef hunte\textasciitilde{}} "as the masters (i.e. masters of game) commanded who were chief hunters of that difficult hunt"

1607 \textit{on hi\textasciitilde{} sette\textasciitilde{}} Tolkien and Gordon (1925) drew attention to a parallel in \textit{The Avowyng\textasciitilde{} of King Arther} ed. Robson, stanza xvii: “The kyng couthe of venery,/
Colurt [i.e. beheaded] him fulle kyndely./The hed of that hardy [i.e. the boar] / He sette on a stake,” suggesting that a stake is perhaps understood here.

1610  *braydez out þe boweles, brennez hom on glede,/ With bred blent þerwith his*

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In *The Craft of Venery* (ed. Tilander), 120-4, “reward” is the technical term for this portion of the boar, which is cooked, mixed with bread, and given to the hounds. Gollancz (1940) cites a similar passage from the *Book of St. Albans* (fol. E. iii).

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1612  *hastletteʒ* In *The Craft of Venery* the boar is described as having “xxxii hasteletts.” Josefa Kropp (“On the Translation of Middle English hastlettez,” *Notes and Queries* New Series 39 [1992], 438-41) cites a number of hunting treatises to explore the changing meaning of this technical term in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and concludes that in this poem the term likely refers to the roasts or cuts of meat (not internal organs, a later meaning) into which the man separates the carcass, perhaps, then, including the *cheldeʒ* (“shields,” i.e. neck and shoulders) of 1609. (Much the same ground is covered at greater length but with the same conclusion.
in David Scott-Macnab, "The Medieval Boar and its Hastlets,"

1622 *his feeȝ pero fonde* "to collect his exchange (i.e. winnings) there" A punctus in the MS before the word *for* seems to be inserted to forestall an alternate word-division that would mean "to collect his exchange *for that* (*perfor*)"

1623 *with lote, laȝande myrȝ* MS reads *with lote, laȝed myrȝ* with the 7-shaped *and* abbreviation between *lote* and *laȝed*. Morris (1864) thought a verb should follow *lowde* and he (1869 revision) proposed *lalede* ("cried") without incorporating it in his text. Gollancz (1940) rejected this solution on metrical grounds and suggested deletion of *and* (understanding *laȝed* as trisyllabic). Davis (1967) retained *and* and emended to *laȝter*, arguing that *myrȝ* is used only as an adjective elsewhere in the manuscript.

1628 *were* Stratmann and Bradley's suggestion (*A Middle English Dictionary*, s.v.) that this means "defence, protection" has been followed by many editors, but the other instances proposed by Gollancz (1940) are unconvincing. Likely in those as here
it is simply a spelling of *MED werre* ("war"), with the special meaning here of the fighting of the cornered animal against the hunters, both defence and attack.

1634 *let lodly þerat* "expressed horror thereat" (Tolkien and Gordon, 1925).

*þe lorde forto here* "in order to praise the lord"

1636 *faythely ȝe knowe* "truly you (must) acknowledge"

1639 *hent* (suggested by Madden). Madden (1839) noted that a verb was missing and proposed *hent* or *hasped* in a note, the former adopted by all subsequent editors except Vantuono (who repeats Madden's suggestions without changing his text).

1645, 1647 *knowe, drowe* These are scribal spellings, the second a very unlikely one (of the word normally spelled *drawe*) that has probably been called up by the scribe's substitution of *knowe* (the normal form in the MS) for *knaue*.

1648 *telde table ȝestes alofte*: "set tables up on trestles." *aloft* is a postposed preposition, as Tolkien and Gordon (1925) argued on the basis of *peralofte* at 569.
1649-51 *kesten . . . aboute* The punctuation here follows roughly that of Cawley (1962), which, however, presumes two instances of enjambement, generally avoided by the poet. Several other punctuation schemes have been adopted by editors, none satisfactory.

1655 *coundutes of Krystmasse and carole3 newe* The *coundutes* are a type of part-song derived from processional motets; by contrast, the *carole3* are Christmas songs derived from earlier dancing songs. See note on line 43.

1659 *stille stollen countenaunce*: “secret furtive facial expression(s)” The similar expression, *at style stollen steuen* (“at a secret furtive appointment”) being used of a sexual encounter at *Cleanness* 706, suggests that the words “stille stollen” are loaded with similar implication here.

1661 – 1663 *Bot . . . towrast*. “But he would not because of his breeding speak against her (i.e. contradict her? refuse her? betray her?), but treated her always with honour,
however much doing so went all amiss.” The precise meaning of this passage is rather up for grabs, partly because the word *nurne* is unknown outside this poem, *Cleanness* and *St. Erkenwald*, partly because *towrast* (or *to wrast*) is of uncertain meaning. W.A. Davenport (The Word *norne* and the Temptation of Sir Gawain,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78 [1977]: 256-63) develops a subtle and extensive gloss of *nurne*/*norne* based on the word's various contexts and a proposed etymology relating it to Swedish *norna*/*nyrna*. The basic denotation is always “to say”, but the nuances are that what is said has been previously secret or unrevealed, often for cause, and perhaps should have remained so. Of the various interpretations proposed of *towrast*, that it is a past participle of *wresten*, with nonce affixing of *to-* (*MED* s.v. *to-* pref 2, signifying destruction or completion), seems most likely: “turned all twisted up/torn up.”

1669 *to norne on be same note* “to discuss the same business,” probably with the implication “to make the same bargain”

1671 *ne4 at be terme pat he to schulde* “close to the appointment to which he was obliged to go”
1674 *by charres* “your business” Probably this has a belittling implication (“your chores”, “your little tasks”); it also could refer to a turn, which may echo the gaming vocabulary used in 1680.

1680 *prid tyme prowe best* A proverbial expression equivalent to “Third time pays for all,” “Third time lucky” or “Third time’s the charm.” *Seven Sages* (ed. K. Campbell) has “Men sais þe thrid time thrawes best” (2062). Presumably the allusion is to a game involving throwing something, such as the medieval game of dice called hazard. The form *prowe* here must be an imperative, as suggested by Gollancz (1940), or a subjunctive (“may one throw best”); the noun “throw” being postmedieval.

1682 *þe lur may mon lach whenso mon lyke* “one can have loss (death, disaster) whenever one wants”

1688 *pat his crafte3 kepes* Probably “who pays attention to his (manly) conduct.”
morsel The m has four minims.

bifore (Madden). MS reads bifoʃere.

in rede rudende vpon rak rises þe sunne “the sun rises in red, reddening the clouds” MS reads ruded (“ruddied”), which does make minimal sense, but probably a macron has been omitted.

costeʒ “sails past” (MED s.v. costeien). Several editors, including Waldron (1970, also Andrew and Waldron 1978) have adopted the emendation by Gollancz (1940) to casteȝ (“drives”—the clouds from the sky), but this does not seem to be necessary.

trayleʒ efte a trayteres bi traunt of her wyles “trace back in the other direction by a trick of their cleverness” Despite the editorial consensus, the first word though damaged is almost certainly efte rather than ofte in the MS. Morris (1864) first suggests a trayveres (i.e. a travers, “from one side to another” [Tolkien and Gordon 1925]), followed by many editors. Tolkien and Gordon (1925), while
emending to *a traueres*, suggest the possibility that *a trayteres* may be derived from the OF phrase *al tretour or a tretours* ("in a detour"). followed here and by Silverstein (1984) (see AND s.v. *trestur*, *tresturner*). Alternative understandings of the MS reading are provided by Oliver Farrar Emerson ("Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 21 [1922]: 395; "a traitoress [that is a vixen or some other game]") and Vantuono (1984: "traitorous one"), but these do not convince.

1701  *kennet* The *Master of Game* (Chapter XIV) identifies kenets as small “running hounds” that “run well to all manner of game.”

*pe hunt on hym calles* “the hunter calls on him,” that is, calls the other dogs to the kennet.

1704  *founden hym* Not the *he* of the first half of the line, which is the kennet, but the fox himself.

1706  *hym* (Madden). The second glyph (y with macron?) is illegible and likely was even in Madden’s time; Morris (1864) encloses “ym” in square brackets, probably
signalling that he could not see it.

\textbf{1706} \textit{weterly} The \textit{w} and first \textit{e} are mostly illegible, although there are faint traces and \textit{e} can be made out. Thomas A. Knott (“The Text of \textit{Sir Gawain and the Green Knight},” \textit{Modern Language Notes} 30 [1915]: 103) observed that there is, however, a reversed \textit{w} blotted onto a blank space on the facing leaf, f. 114r/118r. This follows a clear mirror-image \textit{ful}, and supplies the reading.

\textbf{1712} \textit{to} (Madden). MS reads \textit{to to}.

\textbf{1719} \textit{lef . . . list} (Putter and Stokes): "pleasant to the ear" MS reads \textit{l.f upon lift}, with the vowel of the first word unintelligible, possibly affected by offsetting from the opposite page. Its usual transcription as ‘i’ is doubtful (though perhaps the closest graphic form among the vowels) because it seems rather to form a part circle from top left to bottom right (but this shape may be an offset). Vantuono (1984) thought that UV light supported a reading of \textit{lof} and cited MED where \textit{lof} is listed as a variant spelling of \textit{lef}, “pleasing.”

The word \textit{list} would then be \textit{MED list n1}, "(the sense of) hearing." Putter and Stokes (2014) say, perhaps overconfidently, that the first word "is hard to
decipher, but appears to be *lof* or *lef*, not *lif*, as is generally assumed" and print *lef upon list*, the first word being *MED lef* adj ("pleasing"); this seems to be the most likely reading, and is not technically an emendation since the letter is in doubt. Morris (1864) proposed what became the standard emendation reversing the order of *list* and (the word he read as) *lif*, giving "joy in life," the last two words a more or less meaningless tag (which as Putter and Stokes point out has just been used two lines earlier, so its employment here is unlikely), the first word being *MED list* n2 sense 2 ("pleasure").

1721 *suche a sor3e at pat sy3t bay sette on his hede* "at that sight (i.e. of the fox) they called down such a sorrow on his head," that is, the hounds curse the fox: "may sorrow befall him!"

1724 *loude* Gollancz (1940) follows S.O. Andrew ("The Text of *Sir Gawayn and the Grene Kny3t,*" Review of English Studies 6 [1930]: 181) in emending *3onde* but although the alliteration would be fixed, the sense is acceptable without the change, and the emendation was not accepted by other editors.
until Putter and Stokes (2014).

1726  *titleres*  Hounds who are held at a relay station and then released as the quarry passes (Davis 1967).

1728  *Reniarde*  The conventional medieval name for a fox was Reynard.

1729  *lad hem bi lagmon*  Tolkien and Gordon (1924) and others cite the appearance of this phrase in a fifteenth century poem by Audelay (ed. E.K. Whiting, EETS 184 (1931), p. 232, l. 114) in which the pleasures of the flesh "ledys ȝoue be lagmon be lyus" (leads you by lagmon by lies").

Menner  ("Middle English 'Lagmon' [Gawain 1729] and Modern English 'Lag',"  *Philological Quaterly* 10 [1931]: 165) suggests meanings for the phrase of "got the best of them" or "led them astray," deriving this partly from the Shropshire meaning "last of a gang of reapers" for "lagman." Contextually here in *Gawain*, given the Shropshire use, a more likely meaning is "forced them to follow him at a distance," "made them string out behind
him," as suggested by Davis (1967).

1730 *quyle myd-ouer-vnder "until mid-afternoon"

1738 *hweȝ goud "fine colors" Many editors have been tempted by Gollancz's (1940) emendation to *hwe (as a spelling of MED *houve n., "a headdress, esp. a close-fitting cap or coif") or variations thereof, but this does not seem necessary for good sense.

1750 *drauled Probably "muttered" (see modern Icelandic *drafa, *drafla, "to mutter, speak indistinctly", MED s.v. *dravelen) as per the editors, but this might also mean "drooled, slobbered" (see OE *dreflian, represented in DOE by *drefliende, "to sniffle, drool", MED s.v. *drevelen)

1752 *schulde þat day dele him his wyrd (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads only *schulde þat day his wyrde. Either þat day is to be read together with when he þe gome metes in the following line ("how destiny would deal him his fate that day when he meets [i.e. will meet] the man at the Green Chapel"), or
Gawain is dreaming that he is about to meet the Green Knight at the chapel today, rather than on the morrow.

1755  *quen cope pat pat comly* "when the lovely one said that" MS reads only *quen pat comly*. Because the line lacks a verb, Oliver Farrar Emerson proposed inserting *com* after *quen* ("Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*" *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 21 [1922]: 397) and Tolkien and Gordon (1925) insert it after *comly*, followed by nearly all subsequent editors. The alternative emendation proposed here supposes the scribe confused by the *q*-based "quod" abbreviation (in this edition expanded *cope*) following *quen* and by the apparent accidental repetition of *pat*. Gawain does not, in fact, awake at her entrance, but at her words on opening the window (see 1748-49).

1769  *nif Mare of hir knyzt mynne* "unless Mary should remember her knight" The MS line presents two distinct problems, one the shift of verb tenses and the other the meaning of *mare*. On the issue of verb tense, *mynne* must be present subjunctive while *stod* is most likely past indicative. On the issue of *mare*, all editors after Madden (1839) and Morris (1864), who printed *mare* and did not provide a gloss,
have accepted the word as a version of the name ‘Mary’, whose portrait of course adorns the inside of Gawain’s shield (648 – 49) and to whom he prays for shelter (736 – 739). Gollancz in his 1897 revision of Morris prints marë; in his own edition (1940) Mar[yl]e; most other editors Maré. Knott ("The Text of Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight," Modern Language Notes 30 [1915]: 107), based on a suggestion by Hulbert, argued that the word is better taken as “more”; "had he not thought more of her (the lady's) knight." However, more is only once elsewhere in the manuscript spelled with an a, and there for a sight-rhyme (Pearl 145).

1770 – 1772 For þat pryncesse of pris . . . refuse "For that noble princess urged him so closely, engaged him in conversation so near the limit, that he was necessarily obliged either to seize her love there or refuse ignobly." Oliver Farrar Emerson ("Notes on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 21 [1922]: 397-98) proposed, and subsequent editors except Vantuono 1984 have accepted, an emendation of MS prynce to prynces (i.e. princess) here, making the lady the active figure in this passage. W.A. Davenport ("The Word Norne and the Temptation of Sir Gawain," Neophilologische Mitteilungen 78 [1977]: 256-63) argues that pred is a boundary line specifically delineating
another man’s property, and gives *nurne* the connotation of revealing something secret
that ought not to be revealed (see note to l. 1661). The passage would then be read
without emendation as “That prince of price checked himself so urgently, revealed
himself so near the boundary, that it required him either to seize her love or
discourteously refuse.” There is, however, no compelling evidence that *pred* has
the meaning of boundary line except in the specific concrete legal instance of a
property boundary consisting of a flowing stream, and there are no early instances of
this signification. (The translation of *depressed hym* as “checked himself” rests on
even thinner lexicographical evidence and seems very unlikely.)

1772 *oper* (2nd) Hoyt N. Duggan ("The Shape of the B-Verse in Middle English
Alliterative Poetry," *Speculum* 61 [1986]: 579-80) argues on metrical grounds that
the second *oper* has been expanded from *or* by the scribe, and proposes correcting
to *or*, and emendation adopted by Putter and Stokes 2014.

1773 *crapayn* Silverstein 1984 provides a very extensive overview of possible
etymologies for this word. Accepting in part the MED’s definition (*s.v. crachoun*) “a
worthless person,” he points to the use of the word in *Cursor Mundi* where the
primary context is cowardice in battle and in one instance worthlessness is connected to subservience to a woman. Silverstein connects the word to a cluster of Scots, Northern and Scandinavian terms suggesting something diminutive or sorry-looking. Gawain would be “wretched, insignificant, or menial” if he were to offend the Lady with the form of his refusal.

1777 he layd hym bysyde alle þe specheʒ of specialte "he deflected all the declarations of special fondness"

1781 before alle þe wyʒʒ in þe worlde wounded in hert Editors have tended to take this as an adjectival phrase modifying bat lyf ("that person you are lying beside, [who is] wounded in heart more than anybody in the world"—Andrew and Waldrone 1978), but it could also be adverbial: "if you do not love the one you are lying beside more than all the (other) heart-wounded people in the world."

1786 for alle þe lufeʒ vpon lyue i.e. for all the loves that exist
1794  *Kysse me now comly* This could either mean, "kiss me now, handsome," or "now kiss me nicely," depending on whether *comly* is taken as an adjective or adverb.

1799  *if (Madden). MS reads of.*

1805  *to dele yow for drurye pat dawed bot neked* "to give you as a love-token (something, like a glove) that would be of little worth"

1808  *here an erande* While Morris (1864), inserted ‘on’ before ‘an’, most other editors have accepted *an* itself as the preposition (i.e. a spelling of *on*) and the left the line unaltered. There is even greater unanimity in taking “erande” as a disyllabic form of the noun usually spelled “ernde” in this poem, that is, Gawain is “on business, on an errand.” Greater logic for his inability to provide a token of his own would be supplied, however, if the word were taken as a noun use of the adjective “errant,” as in “knight-errant” (cf. line 810, where Gawain is described as *he knyȝt erraunt*, and *AND s.v. errant* sense 2, *AND2 s.v. errer* p.pr. as s., and *DMLBS s.v. 2 errare*, sense 1b, c): Gawain is “a wanderer, a questing knight here,” and therefore travelling
light.

1810  

tyme (Madden). MS reads tyne.

1811-12  

_Iche tolke mon do as he is tan,tas to non ille ne pine._ "Each man must do as he is taken (i.e. as he finds himself); do not take it at all badly or feel hurt by it."

1814  

_lufsum vnder lyne_ "beautiful under (i.e. dressed in) linen": a conventional romance phrase for a beautiful woman.

1815  

_noȝt_ (Morris). MS reads _oȝt_.

1821  

_ redyly_ Editors may be right in referring this to the meaning "quickly, promptly" associated with _MED redili_ v.2, especially since that is the meaning at line 2324, but it could also in the circumstances here be _MED redili_ v.1, "shrewdly, cautiously."

1822  

_for gode_ Most editors capitalize _gode_ and punctuate as an oath, but the suggestion of T.N. Davenport that the phrase is a milder asseveration "for good," meaning "in
truth," "indeed," seems viable here: see note on line 925.


1824 bysily i.e. constantly or repeatedly

1825 swyftely (Madden). MS reads swyftel.

1830 fat fat leke vmbe "the one that encircled" All previous editions except that of Vantuono (1984) have assumed that the repetition of fat is a scribal error.

1833 noȝt bot arounde brayden, beten with fyngreȝ "only braided around, ornamented by hand"

1840 for Hoyt N. Duggan ("The Shape of the B-Verse in Middle English Alliterative
Poetry," *Speculum* 61 [1986]: 579) argues on metrical grounds that ‘for’ is an otiose conjunction and ought to be deleted.

1857 *his chek for to fech:* “to receive his blow,” likely with word-play on another *chek,* “to receive his evil fortune.” Vantuono (1984) notes that the conventional gloss “doom, evil fortune, fate” (*MED chek* adj. and n. sense 4) may be supplanted or supplemented by reference to *MED s.v.* sense 2, *geven chekkes,* “to deliver blows”.

1858 *myȝt* (suggested by Madden). MS reads *myȝ.*

1859 *þulged with hir þrepe* "endured her importunity" The first minim of the *u* of *þulged* appears to be "dotted" with the angular line the scribe uses to distinguish an *i* from surrounding minims; if so, the word might be intended as *þinged,* though the second stroke of what would then be *n* is very long: “reconciled himself to, came to terms with" *MED s.v. thingen* and cf. OE *þingian* and its senses in Bosworth-Toller.
1863 *fro* (suggested by Morris). MS reads *fro?*

1872 *ho* (Madden). MS reads *he*.

1878 *lyste* The MS reading is ambiguously *lyfte* with the top of the *f* touching the top of the *t* or *lyfte* with a badly-formed *ft* ligature (especially the cross-bar of the *t* extending left to touch the ascender of *f*). Editors have generally read *lyfte*, with Davis (1967) arguing for that as the MS reading on the basis that *f* and *t* would be in ligature (which the letters however seem to be). Several editors beginning with Davis (1967) have "emended" to *lyste his lyf* ("listen to his life", i.e. hear his confession), most citing J.A. Burrow *A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (London: Routledge, 1965), 105, though the reading had earlier been suggested by Madden in 1839 (as an emendation). To *lyfte his lyf* ("exhalt or imroove his life") is sensible in context and has been defended and adopted by some, but *lyste his lyf* is more apposite and probably in any case the reading intended by the scribe.

1880-4 *pere he schrof... díʒt on þe morn* A number of critics have suggested that this
confession is fraudulent and the absolution therefore of no effect, perhaps most
prominently Gollancz (1940) in his note to 1880 ("Though the poet does not
notice it, Gawain makes a sacriligious confession.") and John Burrow, "The Two
Confession Scenes in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Modern Philology 57
(1959): 73-79 ("To such a reader [i.e. a medieval reader], it would have been
clear, I think, that Gawain was not 'clene' and that the priest's absolution was
invalid.") Gollancz is not clear what sin Gawain has concealed from the priest;
Burrow, bringing medieval authorities on penance to bear, thinks that intending to
keep the girdel despite his promise is both a concealed sin in itself and evidence of
Gawain's failure to resolve to sin no more (75), both of which should invalidate
confession. The poet does not appear to share this view of the matter, since he
explicitly declares the confession complete (shrof hym schyrly and schewed his
mysdele, of pe more and pe mynne, and merci beseche)—"confessed himself
completely and showed his misdeeds, the greater and the lesser [i.e. mortal and
venial sins], and beseeches mercy") and the absolution effective (he asoyled hym
surely and sette hym so clene as Domeȝday schulde haf ben diȝt on pe morn—"he
absolved him completely and made him as pure as if the Day of Judgment had been set
for the next day," i.e. in such a way that he was ready to face his creator). Perhaps
in the poet's view no sin occurs until Gawain actually conceals the gift of the girdel from Bertilak in line 1940 by declaring the three kisses his complete winnings of the day.

1893 Now This word begins with a 3-line high ornamented initial.

let hym (Burrow). MS reads merely hym and most editors have not emended, but the grammar of the line as received is obscure. Compare line 1994.

1895 he hatʒ forfaren pis fox This could either be "he has killed the fox" (MED forfaren v1) or "he has gotten ahead of the fox" (MED forfaren v2). The argument that the former is diegetically inappropriate, since the death of the fox is narrated in the next few lines, is weakened when it is recollected that many bobs in the poem sum up the following stanza.

1902 schulde haf arered "would have doubled back" "was about to double back"

1906 lacheʒ (Tolkien and Gordon); hym (suggested by Madden). MS reads cacheʒ by.
1909  *brah* (suggested by Morris). MS reads *bray*.

1915  *mon* Many editors have read the manuscript as *mē* here and printed *men*, but although a full *o* is not drawn, there is no crossing stroke to make an *e*, and the MS is best interpreted as *mō*.

1919  *her* (Madden). MS reads *her her*.

1922  *neȝ* The MS reads *nīeȝ*, but this is likely not an intentional or authorial spelling; rather, it probably results from the scribe first writing *meȝ*, with three minims rather than two, then "correcting" by turning the third one into an *i* by dotting it, to avoid the labour of erasure.

1932  *godmon* Some editors print this as two separate words, here and at 1955 (*godemon*) and 1970 (*godmon*), but the intentional repetition of the common Middle English word for the male head of a household (or for a husband) at this juncture in the poem would seem more likely than repeated allusion to the virtue of the host.
1936  *be* (Madden). Not in MS.

1939  *in cheuisaunce of his chaffer, ȝif ȝe hade goud chepe* "in acquisition of this merchandise, if you made a good bargain"

1940  *of ȝe chepe no charg* "the price is of no importance" "don't concern yourself about the price"

1941  *porchas* (suggested by Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads *chepe*, which does not alliterate and is likely carried over from 1939 and 1940.

1956  *bot if ȝe douthe had doted, ȝoper dronken ben ȝoper* "unless the company had been befuddled, or else had been drunk" The syntax is odd here, but this clause can only attach to *as any men moȝten* ("as any men could") in line 1953. In other words, the company made as merry as they could without being befuddled or drunk.

Although Waldron (1970, later Andrew and Waldron 1978+) is right to paraphrase this as "without overstepping the bounds of propriety," the recent context of Gawain's
description of their most recent bargain as concluded "per spared watʒ no drynk"

(1935) may also tilt the phrase into alluding backward to previous episodes of
drunkenness. Hoyt N. Duggan argued that the first oper is metrically
inappropriate and argued for replacement with or, an emendation adopted by Putter and
Stokes (2014); see note to line 1772.

1962 sellyly The emendation of this MS reading to selly, suggested by Madden (1839)
and Morris (1864) and adopted by editors since then with the exception of Vantuono
(1984) and Putter and Stokes (2014) seems entirely unnecessary. See MED s.v.

selili adj.

1967-68 as God . . . dome of my wyrdes "where God will allow me to receive the
judgement of my fate"

1970 al þat euer I yow hyʒt halde schal I rede "all that ever I promised you, I shall hold
ready" Perhaps a sly allusion to Gawain's concealment of the girdel, breaking the
bargain, is intended here.
1973  *ferk* (Madden). MS reads *frk*.

1975  *Pe lorde Gawayn con þonk* Probably "Gawain thanked the lord" rather than "the lord thanked Gawain," although either grammar is possible.

1981  *aȝayn* (Madden). MS reads *aȝay*.

1984  *hyn* The MS appears to read *hom* here, though all editors have read *hem*, but either form of the plural pronoun is unlikely in a line that insists (*vche mon*) on the singular and is directly followed by a line with singular pronouns. Line 1986 is a different case: there the summing up of their individual devotion to duty with a plural pronoun is perfectly usual in Middle English; the same applies to 1988.

1989  *Pen with ledes and lyȝt he watz ladde to his chambre* Hoyt N. Duggan ("The Shape of the B-Verse in Middle English Alliterative Poetry," *Speculum* 61 [1986]: 579) argues on metrical grounds that the line is corrupt (the sticking point being a succession of two "double-dips" in the b-verse, outlawed by his system).
1998-9 *be nyȝt passeȝ; be day dryȝeȝ to be derk* Probably “the night advances; the day becomes darkness.” The explanation that here *be day dryȝeȝ to be derk* refers to the day arriving and replacing darkness has been frequent in the editorial history (see Tolkien and Gordon 1925, Gollancz 1940, etc.), but would require a common poetic idiom to mean its precise opposite here. See *MED* s.v. *driven* v., sense 7b(a), especially quotations from the *Wars of Alexander* and the *Song of Roland*.

The weather happenings of lines 2000-05 and Gawain’s inability to sleep though his eyes are closed (lines 2006-07) would seem to be night-time events, and we are explicitly told that he needs a lamp to dress because day has not yet sprung (2009-10).

2002 *be naked to tene* “for the misery of the underclothed” The word *naked* in Middle English can refer to complete nudity, but often is used, as here, of the poorly clothed condition of the indigent or impoverished.

2008 *bi vch kok þat crue he knwe wel þe steuen* “by crowing of each rooster he knew well what time it was.” Cawley (1962) suggests plausibly that this is an “allusion
to the belief that cocks crow three times during the night—at midnight, 3 a.m.,
and an hour before dawn.” A steuen is also the appointed time for a meeting, so
the line may also indicate the ominous approach of daybreak and the meeting with
the Green Knight.

2009  dressed vp Not “got dressed,” which happens a few lines later, but “got up,
arose.”

2010 lampe (Vantuono). MS reads either lanpe or laupe; editors have in general read
the latter and emended to laumpe, but the omission of a single minim rather than a
whole letter is the more probable explanation of the MS form.

2012 and his blonk sadel Two grammars are possible here: “and to saddle his horse” or
“and (to bring him) his horse’s saddle.” The latter seems more likely, though
Gringolet is apparently fully harnessed and saddled by line 2047.
graypeȝ me Sir Gawayn “dresses Sir Gawain” The pronoun me is an ethic dative showing the narrator’s vague interest in the matter and can be omitted in translation.

rokked of be roust Chain armour was cleaned of rust by shaking or scrubbing it about, perhaps with sand.

be conysaunce of be clere werkeȝ This could either mean “the emblem of beautiful needleworks” (Vantuono 1984) or “the emblem of the pure deeds,” the latter referring to the meaning of Gawain’s armorial device the pentangle (lines 619-41). Though the following lines here concentrate on the workmanship of the insignia, the ambiguity is doubtless intentional.

vertuus (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads vīuȝ.

when suffer hym byhoued to byde bale withoute dabate of bronde hym to were

“when he would need to endure awaiting death (bale) without resistance by sword to defend himself”
2049 hym lyst prik for point “he wanted to gallop, he was in such good shape” See

       MED priken v sense 4b(a) and MED pointe n1 sense 10b, c.

2050 wyteȝ on his lyre Slightly mysterious, but probably “knows (his good condition)

by his face”.

2053 ioy mot he haue (Gollancz). MS reads ioy mot bay haue, which is sensible enough

that some recent editors (notably Davis 1967) have retained it, but rhetorically, a

failure to commend the lord of the castle would be very strange. The whole line

with the Gollancz emendation then reads, “The lord who commands/supports

them, may he have joy.”

2071 be bredeȝ passed “passed the planks” i.e., presumably, rode over the planks of the

drawbridge.
2072-4 *prays he porter . . . with his wyȝe one* This is largely confusing because of social presumptions rather than incoherent syntax: “(Gawain) praises the porter who kneeled before the prince (i.e. before Gawain); (the porter) commended him (Gawain) to God and wished him good day, that he (God) should save Gawain; and (Gawain) went on his way with just his man.”

2102 *Hestor* might be either Hector de Maris, a knight of Arthur’s court and half-brother of Lancelot, or Hector of Troy. The spelling is a common one.

2103 *cheueȝ pat chaunce* “carries out that exploit,” i.e. of defeating and killing all.

2105 *dyngeȝ* (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads *dŷneȝ*.

2120 *bi ȝam* MS reads *bifû* (previously transcribed as if *bifû* by all editors).

2123 *he halydam* Literally “the relic,” though apparently this is a conventional oath that did not require the presence of an actual saint’s relic.
lauce The MS reading could be either lance or lauce, both of which are sensible in context; editors are divided.

gruchyng Probably not a reference to Gawain’s emotional state (e.g. “grudgingly” Putter and Stokes 2014; “ill-humoredly” Andrew and Waldron 1978+) but rather to his refusal of the ignoble offer. See MED s.v. grucchen v., senses 4 and 5.

Translate “and declining/refusing he said . . . . “

helde pou hit neuer so holde “if you were to keep it ever so faithfully (i.e. ever so secret)”

not (Madden). MS reads mot.

chos (Putter and Stokes). Not in MS.

and stad with staue “and equipped with a staff,” i.e. with the romance giant’s usual club. MS reads ſtad w’ ſtæue
and þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe “if you wish to lose your life, I do not care to prevent you”

ryde me doun þis ilk rake The pronoun me is an ethic dative: “ride down this path here for me”

go (Madden, reading go or emending silently). MS reads ge.

on fote fyrre “one foot further”

grone (Madden, reading grone or emending silently), MS reads grene or greue.

gedere3 þe rake Probably this means “enters the path.”

schowue3 in bi a schore at a scha3e syde “pushes his way in by a bank beside a wood”
be skweȝ of þe scowtes skayned hym þoȝt

The word skweȝ might be either MED skeu n1, in plural “clouds” or MED skeu n2 “pieces of beveled stone.” With the first meaning, the line might mean, “the clouds seemed to him to be wounded/scraped by the outcroppings”; with the second “the beveled stones of the outcroppings seemed hacked/scraped to him.” The second seems less likely because such pieces of beveled stone are the result of careful artistry, hard to reconcile with the imagined ruggedness of the scene.

chaunged his cher

Normally this means “changed his mood,” but in context must be intended to be understood here as “changed (the direction of) his face,” i.e. looked from side to side.

lawe . . . berȝ

Both words have Old English etymons that may refer to burial mounds (hlæw and beorg), though it is unclear that the poet has these etymologies in mind, since both by Middle English were simply words for small hills or knolls.

were (Madden). MS reads we.
This is either from ON *fors*, “waterfall,” or OE *furh*, “trench, furrow,”

depending on whether the final letter is taken as a *z* or *yogh*. Both are potentially relevant, but the *MED* quotations do not include an analogue to the proposed meaning of “channel, bed” (Davis 1967), and the first better suits the wild roughness of the surroundings.

“and his splendid (horse)” Several commentators have attempted to connect this phrase with the verb *richen* (*MED* richen v1, sense 3a), meaning to pull or jerk on the reins, but no satisfactory emendation has been proposed.

Here (Tolkien and Gordon). MS reads *he*.

“who has imposed this appointment on me to kill me here”

“may it have misfortune” (i.e., Gawain is cursing it)
2199-2200 Pene herde . . . noyse “Then from that high hill (i.e. from the top of the Green Chapel mound, whose “roof” [roffe] he has ridden up onto) he heard a wondrously violent noise in a hard cliff, in a bank, beyond the brook.”

2203 mulne This is the MS reading, although the right stroke of n is a little taller than usual and the left stroke is surmounted by a dot in text ink. Gollancz (1940) interpreted the dot as a cancellation by expunction and read mulle; Moorman (1977) read the MS as mulile and “emended” to mulle.

2205 as (suggested by Madden). MS reads at.

2205-7 pat gere, as I trowe, . . . bi rote “That equipment, I believe, is prepared in honour (reuerence) of meeting me, knight, according to custom (bi rote),” that is, presumably, according to the Green Knight’s custom of killing any knight (priest, etc.) who approaches the Green Chapel, as outlined by the guide, lines 2103-13.

2211 drede dotʒ me no lote Probably “no sound (lote) makes me fear (dotʒ me drede).
2215 *if any wyȝe oȝt wyl wynne hider fast* “if any doughty person wishes to come here fast” Editors have usually punctuated this line with a comma after *wyl*, presumably understanding *oȝt* as the pronoun (“anything”): “if any person wants anything, let him come here fast.” This is possible, but syntactically less satisfactory. See *MED* s.v. *ought* adj.

2219-20 *Set he rusched . . . er he wolde lyȝt* “Still he continued quickly to make that loud noise for a time, and turned aside to the whetting before he would descend.”

2223 *to* (suggested by Madden). MS reads *o*.

2226 *hit watȝ no lasse bi þat lace þat lemed ful bryȝt* A mysterious statement. The Green Knight’s previous axe had a *lace* attached at its head and then twisted or braided around its handle (lines 217-18), but this could hardly be used to measure the size of an axe, assuming a similar feature here. It seems even less likely that the lace (girdle) that the lady has given Gawain could be used for measuring the axe (Putter and Stokes 2014). The suggestion of Stoddard Malarkey and J. Barre Toelken (“Gawain and the Green Girdle,” *Journal of English and Germanic*
that the line be understood as meaning, “It was no smaller by reason of that girdle that gleamed so brightly” (16), i.e. “the fact that Gawain was protected by the girdle did not make the axe seem any smaller” is intriguing but forced-seeming; that of Waldron (1970) that bi pat lace pat lemed ful bryȝt is “an oath on the green girdle . . . spoken in petto by Gawain” is diegetically awkward and therefore unlikely. Could the line refer to the lace-wrapped haft of the axe, with bi having its basic meaning of “along (the length of)”? “it was no less (than four feet) along the length of the lace”; i.e., the haft of the axe was at least the length of the blade?

2237-8 Now, sir swete, of steuen mon may þe trowe! “Now, sweet sir, you can be believed about keeping appointments.”

2239 God þe mot loke! “May God watch over you!”

2240 welcom (Madden). MS reads welcon.
true (Madden). MS reads *truee*, which editors since Tolkien and Gordon (1925) have printed.

here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as vus like3 “here there are no men to clear us off (i.e. to stop us fighting), (we may) lay about us as we please”

*py* (1") is repeated in MS as *py* *py*. Silverstein, believing the MS originally read *p*

*py*, emends to *pou* *py*, but close inspection does not confirm a scribal correction here or Silverstein’s belief about an original reading, so simple dittography is a more compelling explanation.

bi God . . . pat me gost lante “by God who granted me a soul”

sty3tel *he vpon on strok* “prepare yourself for (i.e. confine yourself to) one stroke”

for drede he wolde not dare “he would not be daunted (tremble, etc., *MED* s.v.

daren) in fear” See line 355 for the expression *daren for drede*. 
hade ben ded of his dynt þat doȝty watȝ euer “(he) who was ever doughty would have been dead from his blow”

bot þaȝ my hede falle on þe stoneȝ This line is probably too long for any possible theory of the metre of the wheels, but none of the possible metrical adjustments are very convincing, and editors, even those inclined to emendation for metre, such as Gollancz and Putter/Stokes, have left it alone.

wayteȝ “glares”

his (Madden). MS reads hs.

Halde þe nów þe hyȝe hode þat Arþur þe raȝt “may the high order (of knighthood) that Arthur gave you hold you (still? safe?) now”

kepe þy kauel at þis kest “keep your prize at this throw” The evidence for a Middle English word kanel, meaning “neck”, which only occurs here (as per all previous editions), is really limited to the actual existence of well-attested kanel-
bone, “the two collar-bones as a unit.” It is unclear, however, that the kanel in that word means “neck” rather than “channel” (etc.), so kanel itself may well be a lexicographic ghost in the MED. More likely, the word in this line is MED cavel (see also OED s.v.), a lot that is cast (perhaps in the form of a marked stick of wood given likely derivation from ON cafl/cafli) or also a prize obtained in casting of cavel(s), such as an allotment of land (see OED). Gaming with cavel(s) may also be punningly invoked by the poet in lines 683 and 2275, where cauelacioun[kaeuelacioun] are mentioned in connection with the beheading game and with Christmas gomne3 more generally at Arthur’s court.

2305 Pene Transcribed Þene by Madden (1839), followed by all subsequent editors, but MS, though difficult to read here, appears to have only Þene with no macron.

2306 froûce3. MS appears to read froûce3, though editors seem to have read the MS as either froûle3 or froûles. The word is written on an area of bad parchment.
fermed As Thomas A. Knott (“The Text of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight,*” *Modern Language Notes* 30 [1915]: 103) noted, this word, though illegible on its own page, is partly present in offset on the opposite page. Knott himself misread the offset combined with remaining traces as *schapen*, which Robert J. Menner (review of Tolkien and Gordon edition, *Modern Language Notes* 41 [1926]: 398) corrected to “fer or possibly fet . . . the word is probably *fermed*, ‘confirmed’ or *fetled*, ‘arranged.’” Taking the offset from the digital image, reversing it, and superimposing it on the ink traces still visible on the image of the current page, makes Menner’s *fer* much more certain, with remains of two minims to the right of the *r* apparently confirming *fermed*.


*habbeȝ* (suggested by Napier, cited in Sisam). MS reads *habbe*.
if MS reads \textit{iiif} or possibly \textit{uf}. This unlikely spelling has been accepted by many editors, but is most likely an error either for \textit{if} or \textit{3if}, the scribe’s usual spellings for the word.

\textbf{2343-4} \textit{if I deliuer} . . . \textit{anger} “if I had been unrestrained, I could have delivered a blow more grievously, to have caused you distress” The word \textit{anger} is quite faded and only the letters \textit{ang} are certain from the photographs, though traces of ink may indicate a now-missing –\textit{er} abbreviation.

\textbf{2348} \textit{and þou trystyly by trawþe and truly me halde} “and you faithfully and truly kept your oath to me” MS reads \textit{be trawþe}, which though plausible on the surface is not as pointed as the probable original reading (all other editors, however, have retained \textit{be}).

\textbf{2351} \textit{clare} This seems to be the MS reading, though all previous editors have read \textit{clere}.

\textbf{2354} \textit{Trwe mon trwe restore} “(A) true (person) must truly compensate.”
on be fautlest freke “one most faultless man” Perhaps this should read on be fautlesest freke.

lufied: so reads the MS, although the e is imperfectly formed (missing most of its left stroke). Editors after Morris (1864) have read this as lufed.

fals pyng MS reads fallfyg, but the first long-f is written over part of another letter first written in error. The evidence for a Middle English gerundal form of falsen (“to deceive”) with the specific meaning “something that deceives or misleads” (MED s.v. falsing ger.) is weak to non-existent and has few models, so the paleographic muddle here may signal the scribe’s incomplete recovery from a leap from l to the p or y of the exemplar’s fall fyg.

ferde: MS reads ferde; that is, ferde with the –er abbreviation sign over the r, as Gollancz (1940) correctly noted; Vantuono (1984) expands as ferride, connecting the form improbably to MED ferien v.
biknowe This word is spelled be knowe in the catchword on the previous folio.

ouertake your wylle “regain your good will”

hardily (Madden). MS reads hardilyly, presumably under the influence of luflyly in the previous line.

and pured The Green Knight/Bertilak responds to Gawain’s language of confession and repentence in the previous stanza with an absolution invoking the axe-blows as penance for the withholding of the girdle.

among chivalrous knights

“I have stayed long enough. May you be prosperous, and may he who awards all benefits (i.e. God) reward you for it fully.”
were pese wrathed wyth her wyles “if these were harmed by their (i.e. women’s) wiles” MS reads pese were wrathed wyth her wyles.

For þese . . . þat mused. “For these were of old the most noble, whom all good fortune followed beyond all others under the heavens, who marveled (at them).”

þat pay vsed “with whom they had sex”

God yow forʒelde! “may God reward you (for it),” i.e. thank you very much!

remorde to myseluen “feel remorse for” “reproach myself for”

leþe my hert Probably “assuage/comfort my heart” rather than specifically “humble my heart” as editors and the MED have it, pride being viewed as a torment in the previous line.

on I wolde yow pray “I would ask you one (thing)”
Bertilak The manuscript could read either Bercilak or Bertilak, since the name is written with an intermediate letter-form resembling both c and t. Vantuono (1984—note at bottom of the page) claims that “U[ltra-]V[iolet] R[adiation] shows Bercilak clearly,” but his comparison glyph (note p. 358, the t of pat just above) has an unusually distinct and prolonged crossing stroke; the t (or c) we see in this name is more similar to the t of telle in the previous line. The form Bertilak has a better pedigree, in the Vulgate cycle, so is more likely, whether the scribe intended c or t here (see J.R. Hulbert, “The Name of the Green Knight: Bercilak or Bertilak,” The Manly Anniversary Studies in Language and Literature [Chicago: U Chicago P, 1923], 12-19; and P.R. Kitson, “The Name of the Green Knight,” Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 99 [1998]: 39-52). (The form Bernlak, as Madden (1839) and Morris (1864) have the name, and which Kitson argues for renewed consideration of, is simply an incorrect transcription: the right stroke is a minim, but to its left is not the single minim that we would expect for an n, but a vertical stroke unseriffed but curved and crossed with a second stroke at the top as with c and t.)

de Hautdesert Presumably this is a reference to the Green Knight/Bertilak dwelling in the “high wilderness” (i.e. in his forest-surrounded castle) rather than
to the Green Chapel itself, which though in a “desert” seems to be at the bottom of a valley.

2446 *Morgue la Faye* Arthur’s half-sister and enemy to his court, also sister to Gawain’s mother Morgause. The name was transcribed *Morgne* rather than *Morgue* by editors until the publication of Michael W. Twomey’s article “Is *Morgne* La Faye in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*—or Anywhere in Middle English?”, Anglia 117 (1999): 542-7.

2448 *hatʒ ho*: MS reads only *ho*.

2456-8 *Ho wayned . . . Roundle Table*. “She sent me in this way (i.e. in the Green Knight garb and coloration) to your delightful hall, to test its pride, whether it is true what is said about the renown of the Round Table.”

2461 *gloptnyng* (suggested by Morris). MS reads *gopnýg*.

*gomen* Here in the ironic sense “a humorous spectacle or illusion” (*MED* s.v. *game* n. sense 4d), but reminiscent of the Green Knight’s own ironic
characterization of the beheading game as a *Crystemas gomen* (283, also 273).

The emendation to *go*me (“man”) adopted by Tolkien and Gordon (1925, also Davis 1967), Waldron (1970, also Andrew and Waldron 1978), and some other editors, is unnecessary.

2465-6 *be Duches doȝter . . . pat apel is nowpe* “the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel, with whom noble Uther afterwards begat Arthur, who is now of high rank”

Morgue was the daughter of Ygrain and Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall; Ygrain later conceived Arthur with Uther, disguised as Gorlois the night of Gorlois’s death.

2472 *and bikennen* Not in the MS, which has a short line here requiring either this verb or plain *kennen*. See line 1307.

2474 *on coolde* Probably “coldly, with no love lost,” though editors have seen it as a reference to the snowy surroundings.

2482 *and mony aventure in vale, and venquyst ofte* “and (had) many an adventure in valleys, and often defeated (foes)” The diction is elliptical.
in sounde “whole, unharmed”

pe grete Probably plural in implication, so “the great (ones), the nobles” (in which case hym in the following lines means “to them”) though it could also be singular and a reference to Arthur himself (“the great [king]”).

The MS either reads iny or my, with the former more likely given the shapes and heights of the minims—probably the scribe took his own in as an m and completed the following word by adding a y. Editors have read the MS as my, and in general emended to in my.

for mon may hyden his harme bot vnhap ne may hit “for one may hide his fault but cannot unwrap/unbind it” The emendation was proposed by S.O. Andrew (“The Text of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,” Review of English Studies 6 [1930]: 82), who commented merely that the “emendation ‘mon’ for ‘non’ removes all difficulty.” While it is not true that the line without emendation is senseless in context (“for none can hide his sin without calamity striking”—vnhap
is then taken as a noun and hit as a verb), nor that the emendation “removes all difficulty”—that sin once committed cannot be removed is a strikingly heretical statement—it is attractive as a lectio difficilior because it extends the play of lines 2506-10 on the idea that the bende and the blame are almost the same thing in being related as signifier and signified. Although unhap is not recorded in MED as a verb it could easily be formed as a nonce alteration of MED happen v2, “to cover, enclose; to wrap, wrap up, clothe,” and would imply here that just as the fault could be hidden but could not be removed, so the lace itself must be worn and cannot be unbound.

2519  *bat watȝ acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table* “to it was granted the fame of the Round Table”—i.e., it became a symbol of belonging to Arthur’s prestigious Round Table.

2518  *in swete* Ambiguous in context, this might mean “following (the example of Gawain),” “to match (Gawain’s own),” or “as a company.”
Hony soyt qui mal pense. Sometimes considered to be a later addition to the manuscript, this motto of the Order of the Garter is in a different script, but may be in the same hand as the main text. Whether scribal or authorial, it draws attention to the similarity of the Arthurian order created when the knights and ladies of the Round Table agree to distinguish themselves by wearing a bright green baudrick in the final stanza of the poem, and the Knights of the Garter, created by Edward III probably in 1348, who wore a blue garter.