

An Edition of *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn*  
in London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 491

KAITSUKA, Yasuyuki

Introduction:

This is the first part of an edition of *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn* preserved in London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 491. Its purpose is the presentation of the text, and therefore glossary and notes to the text will follow respectively. Collation of all the extant manuscripts or analyses of any linguistic features are not intended here because both of them have been exhaustively discussed by predecessors such as Robert J. Gates and Ralph Hanna in their editions.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Lambeth manuscript is “a large miscellaneous collection in paper and vellum”<sup>(2)</sup> with 329 folios measuring approximately 22.0 × 13.5 cm. Its contents are both secular and religious writings.<sup>(3)</sup>

*The Awntyrs off Arthure* occupies ff. 275-286, written in a 15th-century Anglicana hand in a single column containing 27 to 31 lines per page except the last column with 24 lines on f. 286v. Pages f. 275, ff. 282-3 are of vellum, and pages ff. 276-281 and ff. 284-286 of paper. The folios are relatively good in condition, but the bottom of f. 276 is torn away that more than a half portion of ll. 90-93 and ll. 120-123 are lost. The text also lacks l. 14, 48 (common in all four manuscripts), 275, 383-385, 616-617 and 707, probably because the scribe has failed to transcribe his exemplar, or because his exemplar is defective. Only the first letter of the text is written in blue ink; but there are “q”-shaped coloured symbols at the head of some lines between f. 275r and f. 281r, most of which are indicative of either the beginning of stanzas or wheels. Some of them are blue, the others red. There are a number of scribbles throughout the pages, especially in the margin at the bottom of f. 282v.

As A.G. Hooper comments<sup>(4)</sup>, the poem in this manuscript has been dismissed as

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(1) Robert J. Gates (1969); Ralph Hanna III (1974).

(2) Gates, p. 15.

(3) For further information on the content of the manuscript, see M.R. James and C. Jenkins (2011), pp. 681-4.

(4) A.G. Hooper, (1934), p. 38.

inferior to the other three versions<sup>(5)</sup>, despite its earliest date of production<sup>(6)</sup>. Also there are some other factors that make us treat the Lambeth version as unworthy of consideration. The toponyms are cases in point. Tarn Wadling, that is the ground-zero of the first adventure, is referred to in the Douce, Thornton, and Ireland texts, but it is replaced with “turmentis (l. 2)” in the Lambeth text. Both Hooper and Gates attribute the cause of some substitutions to the scribal unfamiliarity with northern place-names.<sup>(7)</sup> The replacement of some toponymical references, in particular the case of Tarn Wadling, must be considered as a serious flaw because of its importance in the narrative development.

The syntactical forms of verbs often witness to the dialect of the scribe; but at the same time, they also prove the Lambeth version a corrupt text. The suffix of the third person singular and plural commonly appears in -th, which is a feature of the southern dialect; on the other hand, it usually appears in -is/ -ys in the rhyming positions, which is a peculiar form to the northern dialect. “duellith (l. 4)”, for example, impairs the rhyme in the first stanza. Southernism, or the southern dialect feature, of the scribe is a cause of the Lambeth version’s inferiority.

Moreover, the scribe spoils alliterations in some cases.<sup>(8)</sup> Good examples are alliterative long lines which contain either the names of Guinevere or Gawain. In some works, especially alliterative poems such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Morte Arthure*, and *Golagros and Gawain*, Gawain’s name often begins with w- as in “Wawayn,” “Wawen,” etc. The queen’s name is also spelt as “Waynour,” “Wenore” in those works. These fluctuations are obviously for the sake of alliteration. In the Lambeth version, however, their names always begin with g- while the other three versions often read “Wayno (u) r” and “Wawa (y) ne.” This consistency often results in the scribal destruction of alliterative metre. As Hanna points out, the alliterative forms in the poem shows “a marked taste for” hyper-alliteration—alliteration falling on all four stressed syllables<sup>(9)</sup>; and the poet’s predilection for hyper-alliteration seems to defy the interpretation of the Lambeth text as authentic. Such features peculiar to this text therefore leads to the conclusion that the poem of the Lambeth manuscript is a mere bad copy.<sup>(10)</sup>

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(5) The poem survives in the other three manuscripts: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 324; Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 91, which is also known as the Thornton manuscript; Ireland Blackburn Manuscript, Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton, New Jersey.

(6) Rosamund Allen (1987), p. 7. Hanna refers to the date of the Lambeth manuscript as “the second quarter of the fifteenth century.” (p. 5)

(7) Hooper, p. 39; Gates, p. 73.

(8) Gates, p. 73.

(9) Hanna, p. 12.

(10) Some scholars might consider the losses of alliteration as an evidence of the scribe’s unfamiliarity to the alliterative tradition. They may be right, because the scribe’s choice apparently spoils the alliteration. On the other hand, the consistent spelling of the names irrespective of alliteration is perhaps an indication of the scribe’s sophistication, or revisions, of the poem on which Allen remarks (p. 8).

The inferiority may cause to create another unfortunate state of the poem in the Lambeth manuscript: the Lambethian *Awntyrs* have never been published separately.<sup>(11)</sup>

Recent critical editions, though they collate all four manuscripts, are almost unexceptionally based upon the Douce text.<sup>(12)</sup> With one exception to this general trend, Maldwyn Mills edits the poem using the so-called Ireland Blackburne MS as his base text.<sup>(13)</sup> As regards the poem in the Thornton MS, there is a manuscript facsimile with an introduction of Derek Brewer and A.E.B. Owen.<sup>(14)</sup> We have a direct access to the raw material of this poem preserved in the Thornton MS. Moreover, *Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas*<sup>(15)</sup> contains the parallel text edition: the Douce MS version and Thornton MS. Amours' work is "the best edition"<sup>(16)</sup> which makes it possible to compare both texts. All these editions mentioned above allow us to study the textual variants in three different versions of *The Awntyrs off Arthure*.

On the contrary, the Lambethian *Awntyrs*, though once edited separately, remains unpublished. The only transcription of the poem in the Lambeth MS is presented by Florence Ann Paton, but Gates dismisses it as unsatisfactory, because it includes no emendation and its glossary is only selective.<sup>(17)</sup> Clayton Paul Christianson also gives parallel transcriptions of all four manuscripts. According to Gates, Christianson's edition contains a number of mistakes "in transcribing the MSS."<sup>(18)</sup> Both of them, moreover, are unpublished doctoral theses; and the access to *The Awntyrs off Arthure* in the Lambeth MS is therefore only limited. That alone would be enough reason to make this poem in the Lambeth MS available to any students of Middle English literature.

### Editorial Policy:

The spelling of the manuscript is diplomatically reproduced. Emendations are not indicated, and the forms which appear in the manuscript are provided in the side notes. A few words such as *Clegis* (l. 96), *kyng* (l. 265), *I* (l. 430) clearly need emendation; I shall discuss them later in the notes. Abbreviations are expanded in accordance with the spellings used in the manuscript; they are indicated in italics. However, the spellings

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(11) Cf. Gates, pp. 17-18; Allen, p. 12.

(12) Both Gates and Hanna use the Douce text as their base text. Hanna gives a sensible justification for using the Douce text as a copy text (pp. 53-54). Allen, though his edition unpublished, adopts the Douce text as a copy text (p. 14).

(13) Maldwyn Mills (1992), pp. 161-182. The Ireland MS is also edited by John Robson (1842; rept. 1968) in the 19th century.

(14) Thornton (1977).

(15) F.J. Amours (1892; rpt. 1966).

(16) Gates, p. 17.

(17) Gates, p. 18.

(18) Gates, p. 18.

in the manuscript are not fixed as modern English spellings. I therefore attempt to expand all the abbreviated forms in agreement with the spellings which most frequently occur in the text.

Some words which are spelt as one word in modern English are written in more than one word in some cases in the manuscript. These are linked with hyphens such as *vn-to* (l. 175), *ber-of* (l. 241), *with-yn* (l. 566). Hyphenations are also given to such archaic words as *by-claggyd* (l. 106), *y-wis* (l. 196), *y-wonne* (l. 274), *by-dene* (l. 380), *a-right* (l. 550).

The proper names are all capitalized as in Present-day English, and the first letter at the beginning of all lines are also capitalized. The manuscript is responsible for any other examples of capital letters used in the text. Punctuations are editorial, for they are not provided in the manuscript. Stanza divisions, on the other hand, are original; nine alliterative long lines are always followed by a wheel of four short lines, which must therefore exhibit a stanzaic structure of the poem.

#### Acknowledgement:

My thanks must go to Dr Rachel Cosgrave, Senior Archivist at Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. Shanine Salmon, Archives Assistant at Lambeth Palace Library, Mr. Krzysztof Adamiec, Reprographic Assistant; their support enables me to consult both the digital images of the manuscript and the manuscript itself at the library. I am also indebted to Professor Ad Putter and Professor Shin'ichi Takeuchi, who have given me many helpful suggestions for interpretation of some obscure lines in the manuscript. And I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library.

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In the tyme of Arthur an Auntur bytid;	f. 275r
In talkyng of his turmentis þe tale of hym tellis, As he to Carlille was comyn, conquerour y-kyd, Dukes <i>and</i> duspers þat wiþ þe kyng duellith, To hunt at þe herdis þat long had be hid.	5
On a day þei hem dight to the depe dellis To felle of þe femals þat in þe forest were fryd, So faire in felawship by fritthis and fellis. Thus wyde are þei went, þe worthiest in wedis: Bothe the kyng and the qwene	10
And alle þe dospers by-dene. Gawayn, gaynest on grene, Dame Gunnore he ledis.	
...	
In a gliteryng gyte þat glemith so gay	15
<i>With</i> rich rubyes reuercid—who so right redis— Rayed with rybans of ryalle aray; Her hood of an hye hewe þat þe hede hidis Wiþ perrey and perlis was pelurid to pay; Shrowdid in a short cloke þer-on þe reyne slidis	20
Set ouere with saphires, sothely to say, Wiþ selcouþe stonys cerclyd on the sydis. Her sadil set of þat ilk With riche seyntis of silk;	
On a mule whit as mylk	25
Ful gayly she glidis.	
Thus al gliteryng in gold ful gayly she glidis The gate with sir Gawayn by þe grene welle. None but þat berde wiþ þe berne bydis Þat bore was in Burgoyne by boke <i>and</i> by belle.	30
He lediþ þat lady so longe by þe lawnde sydis Þat vndir a lorer she light lowe by þe fellis;	f. 275v
And Arthur wiþ his erlis earnestly ridis To teche hem to tristris, so right he hem tellis. To her tristris he hem told, ho so right trowis.	35
Eche lord with-out lette To a tristre tre is sette With bowe <i>and</i> wiþ bracelet	

Vndur the bowys.

Vndur þe bowis bodyn þe barons so bolde 40

To bykir at þe wild bore by þe bankis so bare.

Þei cast on kenettis cowplis by þe cliffis so colde

To comfort þe knyghtis and kele hem of care.

Ther might men hendely herdis byholde,

Here huntynge wiþ hornys in holtis so hore. 45

They fellid femals ful meny-folde

Wiþ fele fressh hondis to folow þe fare.

...

With qwestis and qwellis

By fritthis and fellis 50

The dere in the dellys

They drowpyn and dare.

Alle droupe þe dere *and* to þe doun dryvis,

And for drede of dethe drowpid þe do.

By þe streme so strong þat swiftly sweyvis, 55

Wery were þe wild swyne, wroght ful of wo.

Hying to halowe the hertis with hound,

Alle þe rennyng racchis rayle to þe roo;

They gyue no game grith þat on þe ground.

Grete houndis of þe grasse so gladly þei go; 60

They go so gladly in greuys so grene.

The kyng blewe a rechace

And folowid fast on þe chace

Wiþ meny *sergaunt* of þe mace, f. 276r

That solas to sene. 65

Thus wiþ solas þei semblid, þe kyng pruddest in pal,

And seke to the game in shawis so shene.

None but *sir* Gawayn, þe greithest of alle,

Levith wiþ dame Gunnore the grevis so grene.

Vndur a lorer she light, þat lady smalle, 70

Wiþ bowis of barbaryn byggid ful clene.

Fast by for vndrun this ferly byfalle,

And þis miche *merveil* þat y of mene.

Now wole y of þis *merveil* melle, if y mote.

The day wax al derke, 75

As it were mydnight merke.  
Therof was Arthur yrke  
And light on his foot.

Thus on foot are þei light, þe frekis vnfayn,  
And fled to þe fritthes for þe flawis þat felle. 80  
And to resettyng þei ronne for rydour of reyne,  
For þe sliteryng snow þat snowid hem so snelle.  
Ther come a lothly to loke — on lede not to layne —  
In liknes of Lucifer, lothliest of helle,  
Glode to dame Gunore gatys vngayne, 85  
þollyng þernely wiþ meny a lowd 3e[ ]e;  
Hit lollid and 3anyd wiþ wonges ful wete,  
And seyð sighyng sare:  
“I ban þe body þat me bare.  
Alas now kyndlis my [ ]! 90  
I gloupe and [ ].”

Than [ ]

...

“Hit is þe clips of þe mone; y herd a clerk sey.” f. 276v  
Thus he comfort þe qwene of his knyghthe[d]e. 95  
“Sir Cador, *sir* Clegis, sir Constans, *sir* Kay, Clegis MS] Gawayn  
They are vncurteys, by crosse and by crede,  
þat levip me þus in desert to do me dye þus þis day  
Wiþ on þe grislyest gost þat euere herd y grede!”  
“That goost,” quod Gawayn, “shal greve þe no more. 100  
I wil speke wiþ þat spirit  
And of his wo shal y wyte,  
If y the balis may bete  
Of þat body sore.”

Bare was þe body blak by the bone, 105  
Al by-claggyd in clay vncomely clad.  
Hit wonyd and wayvid as a woman,  
But neiþer of hide ne of here helyng it had.  
Hit starid and stonyd, stood stil as stone;  
Hit marrid *and* mornyd, musyd for mad. 110  
To þat grisly gost Gawayn is gone,  
Raykyd to here rathely, for he was neuere rad;



Rad was he neuere—who so right redis.  
 On the clyst of her cholle  
 Paddoks pykid on her polle. 115  
 Here eyen holkyd holle;  
 They glymerid as gledis.

Alle glowid as gledis þe goost, whan he glidis  
 Cloþhid w[ ]wde wiþ clothing vnclere  
 [ ] her sydis 120  
 [ ] to tere  
 [ ]dis  
 ...

The houndis hyes to þe holt *and* þe hede hydis, f. 277r  
 For þat grisly goost made so grym giere. 125  
 Ful grisly þe goost grynnyd in her gere;  
 The briddis on bewys  
 That on þe grene growys  
 Shrikys and Showys  
 That herdis myght here. 130

Herkenys þat wil here, hendest in halle!  
 Alle her chawlis claterid chille to her chynne.  
 Ðan coniuroid þe knyght, on crist gan he calle:  
 “As þow were crucified on crosse to clense vs of syn,  
 Now, wrecche, sey me sothely whidir þow shal, 135  
 And why þu walkys þis wey þes wodis with-yn.”  
 “I was,” *quod* she, “of figure and flessh fairest of alle,  
 Cristnyd and knowyn wiþ kyngis of my kyn,  
 And have kyngis of my kyn ful kene.  
 God hath lent me þis grace 140  
 To dry my penance in this place.  
 I am comyn in this cas  
 To speke wiþ your qwene.

Qwene crownyd was y sumtyme, brighter of browis  
 Than Berelle or Brangwayne, berdis so bolde; 145  
 Of game or gle þat on þe ground growis,  
 Now greyþer þan Gunnor greythid in gold;  
 Of paleys prowð, of parkis to pay,  
 Of townys, of towris, of tresoir vntold,

Of cuntres, of castels, countes, y 3ow say. 150  
 Now am y cast fro þat tyre to caris so cold.  
 In care am y cacchid and closyd in clay.  
 Lo! lo! curteys knyght,  
 How dethe hath me dight! f. 277v  
 Lete me onys have a sight 155  
 Of Gunnore the gay.”

Aftir dame Gunnore þe gay *sir* Gawayn is gone  
 And broght to that body the berde so bright.  
 “Welcome art þu, Gunnore, worthily in wone.  
 Se how dolfully dethe þi dame hath y-dight. 160  
 I was redder on ronde þan rose on þe rise;  
 My leyr as þe lillie, lovesom and light.  
 Now am y graceles gost *and* grisly in þis wise;  
 Wiþ Lucifers lymes ful low am y light.  
 Thus am y lik Lucifer, tende now to me 165  
 For alle thi fresshe furroure!  
 Loke on thy mirroure!  
 Kyng and Emperour,  
 Thus dight shul 3e be.

Thus Dethe wol 3ow dight, y do yow out of dout. 170  
 Þerfor hertly take hede, whil þu art here;  
 Whan þow art ricchest arayd *and* ridist on rout,  
 Have pite on þe pore, whil þu art on powere.  
 Bernes and bierdis are bysny the aboute;  
 Be thy lyf byreft and broght vn-to bere, 175  
 Þan wol þei leve þe lightly þat now wil þe loute.  
 Than helpith the noght but holy prayere:  
 Þe holy *prayers* of þe pore may *purchase* þe pes.  
 On hem þat 3ollyn at thy yate,  
 Whan þu art set in thy sete 180  
 Wiþ al mirthis at thy mete  
 And deyntes on dese.

With alle riche deyntes þat to the are dight, f. 278r  
 Thus in daunger and dole in donioun y dwelle,  
 Nasty and nedeful and nakyd vp-on nyght. 185  
 Þer folwis me a ferdnes of fendis of helle;

They hurle me vnhendly *and* hovis me on hight.  
 In brasse and brymstone y brenne as a belle.  
 Was neuere in þis world a wofuller wight!  
 I am to tery of tung my turment to telle; 190  
 Now wil some of my turmentis telle or i go.  
 Think hertly on this  
 For to mende thi mis.  
 Thow art warnyd, y-wis,  
 To be ware wiþ my wo.” 195

“Wo is me for the,” quod Gunnore “y-wis,  
 But o þing wold y wite, if þi wil were.  
 If eny matyns or masse might mende þi misse,  
 Or eny meble of þis mold, my mirthe were þe more,  
 Or bedis or bunfetis might bring þe to blis, 200  
 Or couentis of cloystris might kele þe of care.  
 If þow be my modir, grete wondur it is  
 Þat al þi baleful body now left is so bare.”  
 “I bare þe of my body; what bote is to leyne?  
 By a takyn that þow knewe, 205  
 I brak a solempne vowe.  
 None wist but y and thow,  
 The soþe for to sayne.”

“Sey me soþely what may þe mende of þi sytis,  
 And y shal smartly do seke seyntis for þi sake. 210  
 But þo baleful bestis þat on þi body bitis  
 Alle blendis my blood; þi blee is so blake.” f. 278v  
 “That is love *paramour*, lustis and delices,  
 Þat makip me now lewd *and* ly low in a lake.  
 Al the welthe of þis world þus a-way wites 215  
*With* þes wykkid wormys þat worke me þis wrake;  
 Wrake þei work me, Gaynor, y-wys.  
 Were xxx trentals done  
 Bytwix midday and none,  
 My sowle were socourid sone 220  
 And broght vn-to blisse.

To blis bring þe þat berne þat boght þe on rode,  
 Was crucified wiþ crosse and crownyd wiþ þorne,

Cristnyd and crysmyd wiþ candelle and code,  
 Halowyd in þe funtstone frely byforne; 225  
 Mary, our modir myldest of mode,  
 Of whom þat blisful barn was in Bethlem y-born;  
 Leve me grace to þi sowle wiþ soule do gode  
 Þat may bettir to thi bote on evyn *and* a morn;  
 To mede þe wiþ messis grete menske it were. 230  
 For hym þat restith on rode,  
 Yeve part of thy good  
 To folk þat failiþ her food,  
 While þow art here.”

“Here hertly y hote þe wiþ hestis to holde 235  
 Wiþ messis a mylioun to make þi menyng.  
 O word,” *quod* Gunnor, “wyten y wolde  
 What wratthiþ god most at þi wytyng.”  
 “Pryde in *processioun*, as *prophetis* have told f. 279r  
 Byfor þe apertly in her prechyng; 240  
 Þer-of þe bowis are bitir, þer-of be þow bold,  
 And makिþ bernis ful bayne to breke his biddyng;  
 But who his biddyng brekiþ bare is of blis.  
 But he sonner salvid of þat sore,  
 Or the tyme that he come thore. 245  
 He may ban þe body hym bore,  
 Gunnore, y-wys.”

“Wisse me,” *quod* Gunnor, “some wey if þu wost.  
 What *bunfaites* may me vn-to blis bryng?”  
 “Mekenes and mercy, thes are the most, 250  
 And have pite of þe pore: it is his biddyng.  
 After þis charite is chevest *and* cherisshid moost,  
 And sethyn almesdede aftir alle thing.  
 Thes be gracious ʒeftis of þe holy gost  
 That enspiris eche a spirit wiþ-out spilling. 255  
 Of spiritual thingis spire þu me no mare.  
 Whil þu art qwene in qwert,  
 Take þes wordis in thin hert.  
 Here shalt þu dwelle but a stert,  
 Hennys shalt þow fare.” 260

“How shul we fare,” *quod* þe freke, “þat fondis to fight  
 And defoulith þe folk in fele kyngis londis,  
 Ridis *and* rennis in rewmys wiþ e[n]y right,  
 And wynniss worship *and* wele *with* wightnes of hondis?”  
 “3our kyng is to coueytous knowyn, *sir* knyght. 265 kyng: MS] kynd  
 May no *man* stere *hym* *with* strengþe, whil he wele standis.  
 Whan he is in his mageste most in his might,  
 Hym shal be-tyde a chaunce on þe se sandis: f. 279v  
 Þat cheuallerous knyght bycheve shal a chaunce,  
 Fals fortune in fight. 270  
 Þat wondirful wight  
 Makip lordis lowe light.  
 Take witnessse at Fraunce.

Fraunce have ferlily wiþ fight y-wonne  
 Folk *and* 275  
 Britayne and Burgoyne boþ are to yow bowne,  
 Þat alle þe *duspers* of Fraunce are *with* 3our dyntis dyuyd;  
 Gynys *and* Grece may grete þat werre was bygonne—  
 They have no lord in that lond leuid.  
 3et shal þe riche Romayns *with* 3ow be ouer-ronne, 280  
 And wiþ þe Round Table her rentis be by-revid;  
 Þer shal tristily, y trowe, tymbre 3our tene.  
 Gete 3e, *sir* Gawayn.  
 Turne 3ow to Tuskayn.  
 3e shul lese Brytayne 285  
 Wiþ a knyght kene.

A knyght þat is kyndely crownyd wiþ crowne,  
 And at Carlille, y say, is crownyd a kyng;  
 He shal ensege sikirly þan in þat sesoun  
 Þat mych baret and bro to Briteyne shal bring. 290  
 Hit shal in Tuskayn be told for a tresoun,  
 And ye shul ride a yeen for that tydyng.  
 Þan shal þe Round Table lese þe renoun  
 By-side Ramsey ful right at a rydyng.  
 In Dorsete shal dy þe doghtyest of alle. 295  
 Gye þe wele, *sir* Gawayn.  
 Boldest of Brytayne f. 280r  
 In a slade shal be slayne;

Such chaunce shal be-falle.

But a ferly shal falle wiþ-out eny fable: 300

Vpon Cornwaille coste wiþ knyghtis ful kene,

Sir Arthur þe auenaunt, honest and able,

Shal be woundid, forsoþe, wrothely y wene;

And alle þe rial rowte of þe Round Table

Shal dye on a day þe doghtyng by-dene. 305

A sheld wiþ a sege he berip it of sable

Wiþ-in a sawtre englorid wiþ siluir ful shene;

Of seluir he it berith, the sothe for to say.

In riche Arthours halle

The child pleyth at þe balle 310

Þat bytray shal 3ow alle

Ful derfly that day.

Have good day, dame Gunnore, Gawayn þe good!

I have no lenger tyme tythings to telle.

I must walk on my way thurgh þis wood 315

Vnto my wonyng stede in wo þer to dwelle.

For hym þat rightwisly ros *and* raght hym on rood,

Þenk on þe daunger *and* þe dole þat y on dwelle.

Fede folk for my sake þat wantis her food,

And mene me *with* matyns *and* messis y-melle. 320

Messis be medicine to hem þat bale bydis;

Vs thinkip massis as swete

As euere spicis that þow etc.”

And þan wiþ a grisly grete

The goost a-way glidis. 325 f. 280v

And gothe wiþ a gretyng in grevis so greue.

Þe wyndis, þe wedris, þe welkyn þat wid is

Vnclosyd þe clowdis; þe sonne gan shyne.

Þe knyght his bugle hath blowe *and* on þe bent bydis.

His faire folk in þe fritthe flokkis in fere; 330

And alle þe rialle route to the qwene ridis,

And melyd to her mekely on her manere.

Knyghtis *and* squyers on euerych sydis,

Þe wightis of þes wedris a-wondrid þei were.

The prins pruddest yn palle, 335

Gay Gunnore and alle  
Rode to Randilsete halle,  
To her Soupere.

The kyng to soper is set *and* servid in sale  
Vndur a celour of Sylk swetely of sight. 340  
Right yn so come syphoners *and* symbale,  
A lady lousesom of leyr ledyng a knyght;  
He ridith vp to þe deys by-for the rial  
And askis kyng Arthur hendly on hight.  
Þer led hym by þe bridel a lady gent *and* smalle, 345  
And to þat renk rial he raykid ful right.  
She seyde to þat soverayn, worthiest in wede,  
“Man makeles of myght,  
Here comith a knyght.  
Do hym reson and right 350  
For thy manhede.”

Manly in his mantel he sittis at his mete  
In palle puryd *with* pane prowldy y-pight,  
Tracyd and travercid *with* trewlovys; f. 281r  
Þe lace was of grene silk þat þer-to was dight. 355  
He glysid wiþ his eyen þat grey were and grete  
Wiþ his brode berd on þat bierde bright.  
He was þe souereynest, forsoþe, syttyng in sete  
That euere ey saw or sene was wiþ sight.  
The crownyd kyng to her talkyd on hight: 360  
“Welcome, comely knyght,  
Wher is þat worthy wight?  
Thow shalt have resoun and right  
Atte thi wille right.”

She was þe worþiest wight þat eny weld wolde: 365  
Here gyte was glorious *and* gay as gras grene;  
Her belle was blounkyd *with* briddis ful bolde,  
Betyn wiþ besauntis and botenyd ful shene;  
Her forhed in perrey was frettyd in folde,  
Contreflettid *and* kellyd, colourid ful clene 370  
Wiþ a crowne of cristalle *and* of clere gold;  
Her kerchefs were glorious *with* meny a proud prene;

Her fairhede was praysid wiþ *prest and* wiþ knyght.  
 Bright barins and bolde  
 Had blisse her to byholde: 375  
 They waytid manyfolde  
 On that hende wight.

The knyght in his colours was armyd ful clene,  
 Wiþ his comly creste clerly to byholde,  
 And his bright basnet burnysshid by-dene 380  
 Wiþ bordure about al of brent golde;  
 His maylis were mylkwhite closid by-dene;  
 ...  
 ...  
 ... 385  
 His hors trappid trily wer trappid to þe hele;  
 Ther was in his frounte byforn, f. 281v  
 As it were an vnicorne,  
 As sharp as a thorne,  
 An andlas of stele. 390

In stele was he stuffyd, stif on his stede,  
 Alle of sterris of gold strykelyd on stray;  
 His ienewbris *and* his iaumbis glowyd as glede,  
 With greyvis and his Cusshewis þat greiþid ful gay; 394  
 And his shene shynbandis þat shapyn were to shede;  
 His poleyns *and* his pelydodis þat powdrid wer to pay,  
 Wiþ a launce vp-on loft lovely in lede.  
 A fawnt on a fair folower hym folowid in fay;  
 The faunt was a-ferd for fray of þat fare.  
 He was wont not to se, 400  
 Neuere in þe Round Table,  
 Such game nor gle;  
 Saw he neuere are.

Arthour askyd in hight, heryng hem alle:  
 “What woldist þu, wight? If it be þi wille, 405  
 Tel me what þow says *and* whidir þu shalle,  
*And* whi þu studiest in þis stede *and* stondist stille.”  
 He left vp his visere from his ventaille  
*And with* a knyghtly contenance carpid hym till:



- “Be þu caiser or kyng, here y þe bycalle 410  
 To fynd me a freke to fight on my fille;  
 For fightyng to frayst y am fondyn fro hame.”  
 The kyng carpis on hight:  
 “Lyght *and* lende here al nyght.  
 If þow be a curteys knyght, 415  
 Telle me thy name.”
- “My name is Gaveron wiþ-out eny lye.  
 The grettest of Galawey, of greuys *and* gyllis, f. 282r  
 Of Connok, of Careyk, of Coynham, of Kylle,  
 Of Lomomid, of Leyname, of Lewans Hillis; 420  
 And þow wan hem *with* werre *and* *with* wrang wille,  
 And ʒaf hem *sir* Gawayn; myn hert þer-of grillis.  
 He shal wryngyn his hondis *and* warie þe while,  
 Or he weld hem, y-wis, at myn vnwillis.  
 By al þe wilis of þis world, he shal hem neuere weld,  
 Whil y may myn hede bere, 426  
 But he wyn hem *with* werre  
 With sheld and wiþ spere  
 On a faire felde.
- I wole fight yn a feld, y hote by my feith, 430 I MSJ In  
 Wiþ a freke of þis fold that is fre born.  
 To lese such a lordship me þink it ful lath;  
 Eche lyvyng lede wil lagh me to scorn.”  
 “We be in þe wode here walkyng on our wayþ;  
 We hunt at þes herdis wiþ hound *and* *with* horn. 435  
 We are in owr game; we have here no graiþ.  
 But ʒet þu shalt be macchid by mydday to-morn:  
 By mydday to-morn on shal wiþ the fight.”  
 Gawayn, þe graithest of alle,  
 Led hym owt of the halle 440  
 In-to a pavelon of palle  
 Prowdily y-pight.
- Pight was it proudly wiþ purple *and* palle,  
 Wiþ dosers and cussyhyns *and* bankers bright;  
 Wiþ-in was a chaumbre, chapelle *and* halle, 445  
 A chymney wiþ carkele to chauf *with* a knyght.

His stede was stablyd *and* led yn-to stalle;  
 Hay hendly þei hevid in hekkys on hight. f. 282v  
 Seth þei breydin vp bordis *and* clothis gan calle,  
 Sanapis and salers semely in sight, 450  
 Torchis and tortys stondyng by-twene.  
 Than þei servid þat knyght  
 And þis worthy wight  
 Wiþ riche deyntes y-dight  
 In siluir so schene. 455

In selvir so shene þei servyn of þe beste  
 Wiþ vernage in verris and coupis so clene.  
 And þus þis galyard *men* gladis her geste  
*With* rich deyntes endorid in disshis by-dene.  
*And* whan þe rial renke was raght to his rest, 460  
 Þe kyng to counseil haþ callid his knyghtis so kene:  
 “Loke now, lordynges! Our loos be not y-lost.  
 Who shal encountre þis knyght? Cast vs bytwene”  
 Than seyð sir Gawayn, “y wole þe not greve.  
 I shal encountre wiþ þat knyght— 465  
 Here my trouthe y þe plight—  
 That is hardy and wight,  
 Lord, with thy leve.”

“I leue þe wele,” *quod* þe kyng, “in lystines be light.  
 But y nold for no lordship se thy self lorn.” 470  
 “Let go,” *quod* Gawayn, “god dele the right.  
 If he scape scapeles, it were a grete scorn.”  
 In þe dawnyng of þe day þe doghty were dight;  
 They herd matyns *and* masse erly by þe morne.  
 By þat in Plontoun Land a place was y-pight, 475  
 Wher neuere freke of þis fold had foght byform.  
 They set listis on lengthe on þat longe lande.  
 Two soppys atte demayn  
 They broght to sir Gawayn f. 283r  
 For to comforte his brayn; 480  
 The kyng dede comaunde.

The kyng dede comaunde to þe Erl of Kent:  
 “Curteisly in þis cas, take tent to þat knyght.”

Riche deyntes or day he dynyd in his tent, Briddis bakyn in brede on brent gold bright.	485
And sethin to Gaynor worthely he went, And left in her warde his worthely wight. And þan þes boþe men her horsis have hent, And at þe lystis in þe laund lustily þei alight, Alle but þe bernys boldest of blood.	490
The kyng on hight was sette Above yn a Castelet; Were meny galyard þat grette For Gawayn the good.	
Gawayn <i>and</i> Galroun are dight on stedis; Alle glytering in gold gay was her gere. To lordis wiþ love hem to þe lyst ledis <i>With</i> meny <i>sergaunt</i> of mace, as was þe manere. The bernes broches her bodyes þat her sidis bledis; Fast þes frekis on this feld foghtyn yn fere, Shaftis of shene wode þei shyverid on shredis. So iolyly thes gentils iustyn on were; Shaftis þei shyverid on sheldis, þo shent. Seth wiþ brondis bright Riche maylis they right.	495 500
Þus encountris the knyght Wiþ Gawayn on the grene.	505
Gawayn was graipely graithid on grene Wiþ Griffons of gold englorid so gay, Tracid <i>and</i> travercid <i>with</i> trewlovis bytwene. On his stertelyng stede he strikis on stray. The toþir in his turnyng he takith in tene. “Why drawis þu on so drighly <i>and</i> make such dirray!” He swappid on þe swithe wiþ a swerd kene; That grevid <i>sir</i> Gawayn to his deth day, Þe dede of þat doghty <i>and</i> his dyntis by-dene. Fifty maylis and mo, Þe swerd swappid yn two, His kanelle bone also, Wiþ þat swerde kene.	f. 283v 510 515 520

He clefe þurgh þe cantelle þat coueryd þe knyght.  
 Þurgh shuldre *and* sheld a shaftmound *and* more.  
 And lobely þat lord he laght vp on hyght,  
 And Gawayn grynyd gresily *and* gronyd ful sore:  
 “I shal reward þe *with* a rowte, if y may rede right!”  
 He folowiþ on þat freke wiþ a fresshe fare 526  
 Þurgh his blasyng basnet þat burnysshid was bright;  
 Wiþ a bytyng swerd thurgh hym bare,  
 Þurgh þe blasyng basnet of þat hende wight.  
 Than Galaron þe gay 530  
 Was no wondur in fay,  
 Þogh he were in affray  
 Wiþ tho dyntis y-dight.

Sternely in his stiropis stilly he strikis,  
 And wayvis at *sir* Gawayn, as he wer wood. 535  
 Þan his lemman on loft sorowis *and* shrikyis,  
 Whan þat bold berne so blenkis in his blood.  
 Lordis and ladyes þat the layke lykis f. 284r  
 Þonk god of his grace for Gawayn þe good.  
 With a swappe of his swerd þe toþer at hym strikis, 540  
 And stroke of þe stedis heed wiþ strengþe þere he stood;  
 And þan þe fayr stede fowndrid on fote.  
 Gawayn grynnid in hert;  
 He was swithely smert.  
 Owt of his stiropis he stert, 545  
 From Gryselle the good.

“Now is gay Griselle gone þat was so good.  
 He was þe best body þat euere bare knyght.  
 By hym þat rufully ros and raght hym on rood,  
 I shal venge hym to-day, if y may a-right!” 550  
 “Go fecche forth my frysoun, fayrest on food;  
 He wil stand in a stour in as mych stede.”  
 “No more for þe good stede þan a resshe rote.  
 But for dole of þe dombe best þat þus shold be dede;  
 No more for no monkyre, for y may gete more.” 555  
 As he stode by his stede  
 That was good in eche nede,  
 He bythoght hym of rede

And sighid sore.

He sighyd for wo, Gawayn þe wight, 560  
And wendiþ to his enemy þat woundid was sore.  
Þe toþer wiþdrow hym dernely for drede of þe knyght,  
And boldily plis his stede on þe bent bare.  
“Þus may 3e dryve þe day to þe derk nyght.  
þe son is passid þe mark of mydday *and* more!” 565  
*With-yn* þe listis on þe laund ful lightly he lyght,  
Toward þe berne wiþ a brond he buskyd ful yore.  
Thus to bataille be þei boun wiþ brondis so bright; f. 284v  
Riche mayles were shred  
Wiþ bright brondis y-bred. 570  
Meny doghty dred;  
So fersly þei fight.

Thus they fight on her foot on her faire felde  
As fryke as a lyon þat of fight fawtis his fille.  
Wysely þes wight men her wepenys þei weld; 575  
Wyte 3e wele, *sir* Gawayn wantis no wille.  
He brochid hym wiþ his brond vndur þe sheld;  
Þurgh [þe] waste he went, þat woundyd hym ylle.  
þe swerd stynt for no stuf—it was wel stelid.  
Þat eiþer for þat stroke stode stone stille: 580  
“Pogh y were stonyed þat stound—” he strikyd ful sore  
And gert *sir* Gawayn  
Þurgh ventaille and polayn.  
He went litil to have be slayn;  
He mayed hym þe more. 585

Hastily on helmys þan þes hardy gan hewe;  
Þei bete douun berelles *and* borduris so bright.  
Sheldis on shuldris þat shene were to shewe  
Þat frettyd were wiþ fyne gold faylith in þat fight.  
Stonys of grete strengthe þei strynkil *and* strewe, 590  
Stiff staplis of stele strykyn doun-right.  
Bernys bannith þe tyme þat bargayn was brow.  
So dolefully þo doghty wiþ dyntis were dight;  
Þe dyntis of þo doghty were doutous by-dene.  
Bothe *sir* Lete and *sir* Lake, 595

Miche mornyng þei make.  
Gaynor gret for her sake  
Wiþ her grey eyen.

Thus grette dame Gaynor þat grete grefe was to sene f. 285r  
For greef of *sir* Gawayn þat was grisly woundid. 600  
The knyght of Corage was cruelle and kene,  
And wiþ a stelyn bronde strikyd þat stound.  
Alle þe coste of the knyght he cleviþ doun clene  
Thurgh riche maylis þat ranke were *and* round.  
Such a stroke he hym raght yn a tene; 605  
He gerd *sir* Galeroun doun to the ground;  
To þe ground was cast þat doghty bedene.  
But al doun as he was,  
Wondir rathely he ras,  
Coverid vp in that cas 610  
Wiþ his swerd kene.

Kenely þat kene knyght couerid on hight,  
And as a kene kempe kyndely he strykis,  
And *with* strokis rewardiþ Gawayn þe wight.  
But zet hym happith þe wors, *and* þat me wel likys: 615

...  
...

And Gawayn by þe coler blekys þat knyght.  
And þan his lemman low shrillis *and* shrikis,  
And grette on dame Gunnore *with* gronyng ful grille:  
“Lady makeles of myght, 621  
Have pyte on that knyght  
Þat is dolefully dight,  
If it be thy wille!”

Than wightly dame Gunnor to þe kyng went; 625  
She caght of her coronal *and* knelid hym til:  
“As thow art roy ricchest of rent,  
And y thy wif weddid euere at thy wille,  
Ðo bernis in batayle þat blede on þe bent,  
Þei be wery, y-wis, *and* woundid ful ylle; 630  
Þurgh sharp swerdis her shuldris are shent.  
The grevis of sir Gawayn do my hert grille; f. 285v

The grevis of sir Gawayn grevis me sore.  
But wold þow, lovely lorde,  
Make tho knyghtis acorde? 635  
Hit were a grete comforte  
To alle þat here wore.”

Than spak Galroun to Gawayn þe good:  
“I wend þer had be none in world halvyndel so wight.  
Here y make þe a reles, renke, by the rood, 640  
And byfor 3on ryalle resigne y my right.

And seth y mouthe þe as menys *with* a myld mode,  
As a *man* in þis world þat moost is of myght.”  
He callid toward þe kyng on height þer he stode; 645  
He bede forth his brond þat burnysshid was right.  
“Of rentis, of ricchesse y make the relees.”

kyng MS] knyght\*

Down knelyd þe knyght,  
And seyð wordis on hight.  
The kyng stert vp a-non-right  
And comaundid pees. 650

The kyng comaundid pees *and* cryed on hight,  
And Gawayn ful goodly left for his sake.  
Four lordis in-to þe laund lepyd ful right:  
Sir Eweyn, *sir* Realle, *sir* Errak, sir Lake.  
Sir Marcaduk, *sir* Marrak þat mych were of myght 655

Bothe þes travaylid men a-twyn þei take.  
Vnneþes might þei þat stound stondyn vp-right,  
What for bete, what for bled, þe bernys were blake:  
The bernes were blody forbetyn wiþ brondis.

Wiþ-out more rehercyng 660  
Made was her sawghtlyng;

And that comly kyng f. 286r  
Yaf hem her landys.

“Here y gyve þe, Gawayn, wiþ garnysoun of gold,  
Alle Glomorgans londis wiþ grevis *and* grene, 665  
Wiþ worship in Walis to have *and* to hold,  
Wiþ cuntres *and* castels kernellyd ful clene,  
Hulster al holy to have and to hold,  
Wayteford *and* Watirford, wallyd y wene,

Two baronyes in Brytayn in burghes so bolde 670  
 That be bataillid a-bout and byggid ful clene.  
 I shal dubbe þe duke doghty wiþ hondis,  
 Þat þow sawghtille with þat knyght  
 That is hardy and wyght,  
 And reles hym his right, 675  
 And yeve hym his londis.

Here y zeve þe, Galroun, wiþ-out eny grylle,  
 Alle the londis and litthis fro Lowyk to Leyre,  
 Cunnok and Carrok, Conyngham and Kylle  
 Wiþ her fritthis *and* forestis frely so feire 680  
 Vndur our lordship to lende at þi wille,  
 And to þe Round Table make thy repeire  
 Vp-on þis couenant, if þat þow wille.  
 I shal refeffe þe felefold in forestis so faire,  
 In forestis and fritthes þat bene so faire.” 685  
 Thus the kyng and the qwene  
 And þe doghty by-dene,  
 Thurgh þe grevis so grene  
 To Carlille they faire.

The kyng to Carlil is come wiþ knyghtis so kene, 690  
 And hold þe Round Table on ryalle aray.  
 Thes doghty þat were woundid so wroþely, y wene, f. 286v  
 Soiournis tul þei be salvid, sothely to say.  
 Boþe *com*fortith hem kyndely, the kyng *and* þe qwene.  
 They were dubbyd dukis bothe on o day. 695  
 Ther he weddid his wyf, semely to sene,  
 Wiþ giftis and garsons, sir Galroun þe gay.  
 Thus þe kyng for ioi wiþholdis þat hende.  
 Whan he was saf and sownd,  
 The kyng made hym þat stound 700  
 A knyght of þe Table Round  
 To hys lyvis ende.

Gaynor gart wightly write in-to þe weste,  
 To alle the religious to rede and to synge.  
 Prestis wiþ *processioun* to pray þei were prest 705  
 With massis a mylioun to make menyng;



Boþe lelid men and bysshopis right of þe best  
Thurgh brood Englonde belle dede ryng.  
This ferly byfelle þus fair in foreste  
Vndur holtys so hare at an huntynge. 710  
Such huntynge in holtis oght not be hid.  
Thurgh a forest as y fore  
Wiþ stif knyghtis and store.  
In þe tyme of Arthur  
This aunteour bytyd. 715

Explicit

(2015.7.7 受稿, 2015.8.17 受理)

—Abstract—

This is meant to be the first part of an edition of the fifteenth-century Middle English alliterative poem, *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn* preserved in London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 491. This includes an edited text of the poem and an introduction to the text in which textual features are discussed briefly.