Companion to Medieval English Literature

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Some themes, motifs and conventions

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and others

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Introduction

This book consists of slightly over 100 entries on some of the more important forms and conventions of Old and Middle English literature, especially as they are encountered in college classes and seminars. It is a "Guide," "Companion" or "Handbook" that aims to provide in alphabetical order a short commentary on each item. It is devoted largely to fact and received opinion, rather than to individualistic interpretation. In addition, the entries try to list the recurrences of a given *topos* in the literature as fully as is consistent with good scholarship and the size of the book. With most entries there is also be a very brief bibliography of scholarly work — generally no more than two or three to any one entry.

Ernst Curtius's now classic study, **European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages**, became a landmark in medieval studies because it demonstrated forcefully and persuasively the importance of an understanding of literary convention for the literature with which it deals. As the title of his work indicates, Curtius dealt preponderantly with Latin and the vernaculars of continental Europe, and only incidentally with English literature. This *Companion* is not intended as a competition with the international and monumental scholarship of Curtius, but rather as a modest supplement. It concentrates on English without, we hope, being parochial, for it is evident that many of the themes or conventions treated here are borrowed from Latin and from Continental vernaculars. The focus, however, is English.

Length and Comprehensiveness of Treatment

The web version of the **Companion** or **Handbook** is intended as a pre-print run. In print version the Companion will be small enough to be owned by students and scholars, and to be leafed through or referred to at leisure, not a heavy tome or multi-volume treatment to be consulted only in the library. At least two large collections have been published in recent years: one is a Lexikon of the Middle Ages in German from Artemis Verlag that involves all aspects of medieval life, but also features sections on Old and Middle English that are heavily weighted towards individual works and authors, and categories such as "Monitory Works" -- matters we do not deal with. There is also now the large multi-volume **Dictionary of the Middle Ages**, in English, again planned in quite a different way, and not directed exclusively toward literary interests. These volumes have much longer entries on some of the items in this book but nothing at all on most. This is largly true also of the one-volume **Medieval England: An Encyclopedia** (Garland, 1998).

The length of an entry in this Handbook is not the measure of its importance. The **Ubi Sunt** motif is perhaps of no more importance than, say, **Aubade** or **Boast** or **Kenning**. But it seemed meaningless without examples, some of which cannot easily be shortened. A small anthology with translations seemed in order, even though this makes this entry a good deal longer than most others. Similarly an entry like **Beginnings and Endings** deserves a treatment of article, chapter or book length. We have had to settle for something more like a list of ways of beginning and ending medieval poems, not a treatment of the rhetorical problems.

We hope we have found a median between the meaninglessly brief and the dauntingly long entry.

Criteria for Inclusion

There are no entries for authors, individual works, or **most** characters, or for categories like Devotional Writings, Satire, Lyric. Such information would have made this book inordinately long, and in any case is readily available elsewhere in Lacy's one-volume **Arthurian Encyclopedia,** or his shorter **Handbook**; Moorman's small **Arthurian Dictionary**, Spence's **Dictionary**, or a multi-volume publication like Wells's **Manual** (old or new) and other works of that sort. We have, however, decided to include a few of the major characters who occur in the literature and who can be said to owe much of their presentation to *convention*:

1. classical figures like Aristotle, Alexander and Virgil about whom medieval literary legends were common, stories that portray them very differently from the way we usually think of them.
2. biblical figures like Cain, Herod, or Pilate about whom various legends were current in the Middle Ages that are no longer well-known.

The aim has been to omit purely folkloristic motifs, though this is sometimes a difficult choice. The preferred guide in such cases has been pedagogical experience. There is not much problem about deciding to exclude whole entries for Youth, Reared in forest; Fidelity, tests of; Scullion, aristocratic Hero serves as; Hero, Magnanimity of, — entries of the kind one finds in the Motif Indexes of Stith Thompson, Aarne, and Bordman, although references to these occur in some individual entries on other topics. The Fair Unknown, for example, is sometimes an aristocratic hero who serves as a scullion, and Perceval is certainly a youth raised in a forest; such conventional narrative motifs do not have full entries but may be mentioned in passing in the course of a separate item about something else. But a topic such as *Rash Promise* seems to deserve a full entry, for, while it is common in folklore, it figures frequently enough in literature to warrant inclusion in the more general category of literary convention. We have, we hope, managed to abide by our own criterion, though we realize that we have not tried to provide a rigorous definition of it. Possibly a fully comprehensive treatment of medieval literary convention would include some, perhaps many, entries of this kind. For the type of work we contemplate it seems most reasonable to exclude them as separate entries, though, as we have said, some of them may figure in other entries. We hope that informed criticism of the book would help to settle this matter.

We have also decided to omit most references to theological doctrine. First, because Handbooks of Christian Theology are readily available; secondly, the sometimes subtle and arcane distinctions in matters of divinity involved are best left to these and to large Dictionnaires and Lexikons which have space for experts to deal thoroughly with such matters.

Indeed the religious conventions that occur with some frequency in medieval English literature are often less a matter of theological dogma than of pious popular belief, and derive either from apocryphal writings or from pious speculation and elaboration on genuine biblical texts. The *Harrowing of Hell*, for example, on which there is an entry here , was a very popular theme in medieval literature and iconography; but has no basis in the New Testament**.** Legends of *Cain*, the *Earthly Paradise, Judas, Pilate*, which are also treated here, have fragile bases in scripture. Like stories of *Joseph of Arimathea* and the *Grail*, they are really built on pious, even superstitious, belief, though the writers who propagated the stories were not necessarily ignorant people. These motifs are here because they recur with some frequency in the literature of medieval England, and it is helpful to have a short reference guide to them.

Similarly, notions that surfaced in the *Dance of Death*, *Memento Mori,* and *Contemptus Mundi*, though they were certainly congenial to the ascetic aspect of Christianity, are essentially reminders of mortality in the interests of morality -- not an exclusively Christian concern. Such notions were not really strangers to the pagan Roman world. Thus the purely religious motifs left on our list are few: *Felix Culpa* (The Fortunate Fall), *Pater Noster* (Our Father), and a few others.

This book is meant as a first attempt. If enough people find it useful, reasonable criticism of current entries and sensible suggestions for other entries could be considered for a second edition, which might be a continuous affair on the web.

All unsigned entries are by Michael Murphy; the others are signed by their named writers.

The brief bibliographical references at the end of many entries are expanded to full bibliographical information at the end of the Companion.

An asterisk * in an article means that there is a separate entry on the asterisked topic.

Michael Murphy

Table of abbreviations:

ME = Middle English
OE = Old English;
MED = Middle English Dictionary
OED = Oxford English Dictionary
MS = manuscript; MSS =.manuscripts
s.v. = sub verbo, i.e. see under that word (in a dictionary)
C = Century, as in 14C = 14th century
c. = circa = around: c. 1185 = around the year 1185
ff. = following, as in 23 ff = page 23 and following, or line 23 and following.
* = see the separate entry on that topic

ALEXANDER
ALLEGORY
ALLITERATION
ALLITERATIVE REVIVAL
ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE
ARISTOTLE
ARMING THE HERO
AUBE / AUBADE / ALBA
AUREATE LANGUAGE
AVALON

BALLAD
BEAST FABLE / EPIC
BEASTS OF BATTLE
BEGGING POEM
BEGINNINGS / ENDINGS
BESTIARY
BOAST
BOB AND WHEEL
BRETON HOPE
BRETON LAY
BRITAIN, MATTER OF
BRITTANY
BRUTUS / BRUT

CAEDMON
CAIN
CATALOGUE
COKAYNE
COMITATUS
COMPLAINT (PLANCTUS)
CONTEMPTUS MUNDI
COURTLY LOVE
CYCLE PLAYS (See Mystery Plays)

DANCE OF DEATH (Danse Macabre).
DEADLY SINS (See SEVEN)
DEBATE / DIALOGUE
DE CASIBUS
DEMANDE D'AMOUR
DOUZEPERS or DOUSEPERIS
(TWELVE PEERS)
DRAGON
DREAM VISION POEMS

EARTHLY PARADISE
ENDINGS (See Beginnings)
ENGLAND, MATTER OF
ENVOY / ENVOI
EXEMPLUM

FABLIAU
FAIR UNKNOWN
FEASTS AND FASTS
FELIX CULPA
FLYTING
FORTUNE (See Wheel of)
FOUR DAUGHTERS OF GOD
FOX (See REYNARD)
FRANCE, MATTER OF

GANELON
GARDENS
GENTILESSE
GLASTONBURY
GOLDEN LEGEND

GO, LITTLE BOOK
GRAIL
GREECE & ROME, MATTER OF

HARROWING OF HELL
HERMIT
HEROD
HOLIDAYS (See Feasts & Fasts)
HORSES
HORTUS CONCLUSUS (See Gardens)
HUMILITY FORMULA
HUMORS, FOUR

INCREMENTAL REPETITION

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA
JOSEPH, Husband of the
Virgin Mary
JUDAS ISCARIOT

KENNING

LAI (See Breton Lay)
LAMENT (See Planctus)
LIBERAL ARTS
LOVERS PAINS

MACARONIC VERSE
MAHOMET
MARRIAGE GROUP
MATTERS, THREE (See also Britain,
England, France, Greece.)
MEMENTO MORI (See Dance of
Death)

MIRACLE PLAY (See Mystery Play)
MODESTY (See Humility)
MORALITY PLAYS
MYSTERY / MIRACLE PLAYS

NINE WORTHIES
NORTH

ORAL FORMULAIC DICTION

PATER NOSTER
PHYSIOLOGUS (See Bestiary)
PILATE
PLANCTUS
PSYCHOMACHIA

QUADRIVIUM (See Liberal Arts)
QUEM QUAERITIS
QUID INIELDUS cum Christo

RASH PROMISE

RE(Y)NARD THE FOX
RHYME ROYAL
ROMANCE
ROUND TABLE
RUNES

SCOP
SCOTTISH CHAUCERIANS
SENESCHAL
SENEX AMANS
SEVEN DEADLY SINS
SIEGE PERILOUS
SISTER'S SON
STANZA LINKING
STEWARD (See Seneschal)
SWORD

TRIVIUM see Liberal Arts
TROY (See Greece & Rome, Matter of)
TYPOLOGY

UBI SUNT Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt

VICES & VIRTUES see Psychomachia
VIRGIL
VOW

WHEEL OF FORTUNE
WORTHIES (See Nine Worthies)
WYRD

ALEXANDER

During the Middle Ages the name of Alexander the Great was at least as familiar as the names of the most popular saints. Stories about him, most of them more legendary than historical, circulated widely in Europe and the Near East. In these tales his birth and parentage, like those of many another hero, were presented as unusual and mysterious; and astonishing youthful feats further presaged his future greatness. His father, for example, was not Philip of Macedon, but an Egyptian magician-king who seduced Philip's wife by a ruse, and the future conqueror's birth was accompanied by prodigious phenomena. As a youth he tamed the ferocious horse Bucephalus to prove himself the rightful successor of Philip. Some of the incidents in the romantic legends approach those of science fiction: his journey to the ocean floor in a submarine, and his ascent into the skies on the back of a griffin. (The latter proved especially popular with medieval illustrators).

Alexander's popularity was already established in England during the OE period. There were versions in both Latin and OE of a spurious letter from Alexander to Aristotle, now known as *The Wonders of the East*, which purported to describe his campaigns and adventures in India. In the later medieval period, romances with Alexander as the hero were very numerous in English and other vernaculars. The English ones include *Alisaundre*, *Alexander and Dindimus*, *Buik of Alexander*. Two of the better ones *Kyng Alisaunder* and the *Wars of Alexander* were both printed by Caxton and have had recent editions. Also, a book of counsel, the *Secreta Secretorum*, allegedly written by Aristotle at Alexander's request, enjoyed widespread popularity in both Latin and vernacular versions. This inspired other manuals of instruction for rulers such as Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*.

While Alexander was widely admired, especially for this generosity, valor and magnanimity, he was equally widely criticized for wanton war making and overweening pride. He was one of the Nine Worthies ; * but he was also portrayed as the deserving victim of Lady Fortune and her Wheel (See Wheel of Fortune *) . The romancers tend to glorify him; but Orosius, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Lydgate, and Gower are among his most vigorous critics.

Two major medieval sources for the Alexander legend were Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale*, Bk. 5, and Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*, Bk. 3, chaps. 27-30.

D. Childress

Cary ; Matthews; Turville-Petre: Anthology.

ALLEGORY

Allegory means in Greek to speak otherwise, in Latin *alieniloquium*. Dante, in the tradition of early Christian biblical commentators, said allegory was polysemous, referring in particular to the four kinds of meaning he felt allegory had: literal, metaphorical /allegorical, moral and anagogical. So allegory means a narrative which says something other than its surface or obvious meaning. It needs to be interpreted. It is a kind of extended metaphor. Typology * which sees in an Old Testament event or person a foreshadowing of the New, is a kind of allegory.

Late-Roman practice had tended to see the pagan gods as personifications of human values rather than as actual beings: Cronos swallowing his children, for example, was explained away metaphorically. The *Psychomachia** of Prudentius, a Christian poet of the late Roman period (late 3C / early 4C), is the first extended Christian allegory that we know of. In it the personified virtues do battle with their opposite vices, and prevail. It allegorizes in an openly Christian way the struggle within the human soul, and perhaps within the crumbling Roman Empire, between right and wrong. Other influential allegorical writings of this period were Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (5C) cited notably in Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls;* and Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (early 5C*)*, a marriage of intellect and love of letters, a book that initiated the idea of the seven liberal arts .*

The 12C saw heavy allegorizations of Ovid. The French *Roman de la Rose,* perhaps the most immensely influential of secular medieval works, an work by Guillaume de Lorris was the first extended allegory of love in the form of a dream vision and in a vernacular language. This was finished by Jean de Meung in a totally different tone, both more learned and more coarse than Guillaume's vision, and influenced by the independent Latin allegories of Bernard Sylvestris and Alain de Lille. Chaucer was very influenced by the *Roman* and an unfinished translation has been attributed to him . The *Roman* was as readily alluded to in the vernacular literary world as Virgil and Ovid, and was a cornucopia from which later poets borrowed freely.

The greatest and most profoundly Christian medieval allegory is Dante's *The Divine Comedy***,** which includes elements of previous epics and allegories, including dream vision and a visit to the underworld. In medieval English the two outstanding allegories are *Piers Plowman* in which Piers a ploughman sets out on a pilgrimage to find DoWell, DoBet and DoBest and comes across Lady Lucre, Glutton and a host of such others. *Pearl,* a complaint * poem, is a partial allegory where the pearl represents the narrator’s lost child. Later notable examples in English are Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, all written in the interests of Christian doctrine.

J. Clawson

Barney; Quilligan.

ALLITERATION

Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound at the beginning of several words in a sentence or line :

Landscape-lover, lord of language ...
Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd. (**To Virgil**)

Alliteration, used here by Tennyson in his tribute to Virgil, and in our own time by presidential speech writers and journalists for special effects, is fundamental to the line of all Old English verse and to some very important Middle English verse. (See Alliterative Revival *). Alliteration is what holds the two half-lines of the poetic line together in Old English.

waes gehwaeðer oðrum
***L**ifigende **l**að. **L**icsar gebad*
***A**tol **a**glaeca. Him on **ea**xla wearð*
***S**yndolh **S**weotol. **S**eonowe onsprungon,*
***B**urston **b**anlocan. **B**eowulfe wearð*
***G**uðhreð **g**yfeðe. Scolde **G**rendel ðonan*
***F**eorhseoc **f**leon under **f**enhleoðu ...*
(**Beowulf**, 814-820)

Was each to the other
loathsome while living. Body-pain endured
the dreadful monster: on his shoulder appeared
a wound enormous. Sinews sprung apart,
bonelocks burst. To Beowulf was
battle-victory given. Grendel had thence
to flee lifesick under his fencovering. *(Literal translation)*

The rule is that two stressed syllables in the first half-line in Old English alliterate with the first stressed syllable in the second half line. It is this alliteration that holds the line together even when the syntax demands the period in mid line that the modern editor supplies. In the 19C Edward Sievers figured out that there were five basic types of alliterating half- line in OE, and his scansions, easily consulted in most anthologies of OE poetry, are still generally held to be valid. (See, e.g., Bright or Pope). Any vowel alliterates with any other vowel. Each of the combinations 'sp', 'sc', 'st' alliterates only with itself. There is no rhyme.

A somewhat looser alliteration is also very prominent in some Old English prose, particularly in the writing of Aelfric :
Of God : *He hylt mid his mihte heofonas ond eorðan and ealle gesceafa buton geswince*
He holds with his might the heavens and earth and all creation without effort

Of St Cuthbert: *[he] sang his gebedu, on saelicre yðe standende oð ðone swyran*
he sang his prayers, in the sea-like wave standing up to his neck

And here is Wulfstan on the state England c. 1000 a.d. :

ac waes here and hungor, bryne and blodgyte on gewelhwylcum ende, oft and gelome;
but there was invasion & hunger, burning and bloodletting in every corner, oft and again

and us stalu and cwalu, stric ond steorfa, orfcwealm and uncoðu, hol and hete, ...
& to us there was theft & killing, strife and plague, cattle pest and disease, slander and hate

This feature has, as we remarked, continued in the prose of modern times, particularly in speeches, which are in many ways like the homilies of Aelfric and Wulfstan. It is clearly natural to the Germanic part of our language. Alliteration, surviving the Norman Conquest which brought the Latinate and Romance habit of riming in verse, burst out in the Middle English of the 14C in what we think of as the Alliterative Revival * . But alliteration has never again become the organizing feature of our verse since Chaucer ensured the conquest by the continental forms: counted syllables and rhymed lines, which were not features of Germanic verse.

Cassidy and Ringler; Pope.

ALLITERATIVE REVIVAL

A term applied to the flowering of alliterative verse in the West and Northwest Midlands of England in the later fourteenth century, roughly contemporary with Chaucer who, however, preferred accentual and rhymed verse. This flowering is called a revival because the standard form of verse in Anglo-Saxon times was the alliterative line, where two words in the first half of the line generally alliterated with one in the second half. With the Norman Conquest, however, and the consequent strengthening of the continental influence in England, that aspect of English verse almost disappeared. At least, little or no post- Conquest OE verse has survived in MS. It is surmised that the indigenous verse, much of which was transmitted orally anyway, could not have entirely disappeared, but probably survived among the common people and even in the homes of the gentry in those parts of the country more remote from London and continental influences, such as the West and Northwest Midlands. The "revival" of the native tradition in such a rich outpouring of verse in the fourteenth century is generally held to be a proof of this.

This view is disputed by Turville-Petre who proposes that "the fourteenth-century poets did not inherit a tradition of 'correct' verse miraculously preserved, but instead they consciously --and by gradual stages--remodeled a written tradition of alliterative composition that led back only by rather tortuous routes to Old English verse" (p.17).

The verse form of the later period is much changed from the strict alliterative patterning of "classic" OE poetry such as that found in *Beowulf.* Some of the later poems, moreover, are divided into "stanzas": four lines each in *Purity* and *Patience*, twelve lines each in *Pearl* and of varying length in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

In addition there is rhyme that marks the end of each stanza in this last poem,

....

*Thus in **p**eril and **p**ain and **p**lights full hard*	
*By **c**ountry **c**ares this knight till **C**hristmas eve*	rides
Alone	
The knight well that tide	time
*To **M**ary made his **m**oan*	Virgin Mary
*That she him **r**ede to **r**ide*	would guide
*And **w**isse him to some **w**one*	direct him ... dwelling

Pearl is rhymed throughout as well as having a very elaborate Stanza Linking * pattern. *The Destruction of Troy* and *Piers Plowman* are more like Old English verse in that the line, not the stanza or quatrain, is the largest regular formal pattern, though the versification is not the

“classic” OE form.. The subject matter of the poems of the Alliterative Revival ranges through a variety of genres we can categorize loosely: romance (*Sir Gawain & the Green Knight*), romance-epic (Alliterative *Morte Arthure*), moral teaching (*Patience, Purity),* allegory, complaint , encyclopedic social comment and religious exhortation (*Piers Plowman*), versified "history" (*Wars of Alexander Destruction of Troy*).
Among the other alliterative poems not mentioned so far are the Debate * poems : *The Parlement of the Three Ages*, and *Wynnoure and Wastoure*.

Turville-Petre

ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is not a single chronicle, but a number of different related annals, i.e. entries in a book recording the events of every year. There are seven surviving MSS that can be called Anglo-Saxon chronicles. Some clearly derive from an earlier chronicle which was copied, and then the copies dispersed to be continued in different places. This similarity is especially noticeable in the entries down to the year 891 in the reign of King Alfred who is often associated with inaugurating or revivifying it.

The earliest entry in any chronicle is for the year 60 B.C. and the latest — in the Peterborough Chronicle — is 1154 A.D.. Even though the recording of events of early centuries occurred long after, the chronicle-writing itself does extend over about three hundred years, from 9C to 12C, and thus displays the English language from Early West Saxon to Early Middle English. Hence it is of considerable interest to linguists. It is of equal interest to historians, for it constitutes, with Bede's *History,* the major source of information on the events of the Anglo Saxon period. It is of less interest to literary critics or literary historians because the chronicle or annals form is so limited, frequently not extending beyond a few lines for a given entry, and is, over time, the product of a great many people. Occasionally, however, a personality does break through the restrictions of the form, and an extended piece of narrative of some force is the result. Perhaps the most famous among the earlier ones is the annal for the year 755, reproduced in most anthologies of Old English, a rousing story of lust, political vengeance, violence, and fierce loyalty.

Many of the most stirring entries involve the events of the reign of King Alfred of Wessex (871-900), a reign filled from the beginning with the need to resist the Viking invasions.

Chronicle entries for some of these years include fairly detailed accounts of campaigns, including a daring and successful attempt to take on the Vikings in their own element, the sea (v. year 896). Astonishingly under the year 937 in four of the chronicle MSS appears not the usual brief prose entry as in the other three, but the whole poem we now know as the *Battle of Brunanburh,* a record of a victory over the Vikings won by Alfred's grandsons. For the end of all the resistance to the Vikings see the entry for the truly dreadful years of 1013 and 1014 when English resistance crumbled, tried to recover one last time, and finally collapsed under the savagery of the Vikings Swein and Cnut. The entry for 1087 in Peterborough is exceptionally long, and has an unusually edged tone in its account of the sins and virtues of William the Conqueror who went to Normandy in that year where "sharp death, which spares neither rich man nor poor, seized him. ... He who had been king and lord of many lands now had no more land than seven feet. And he who had been clothed with gold and with gems lay covered with mold." The entry for the year 1137 in the reign of Stephen records with sad bitterness the atrocities committed throughout the land by a baronage totally out of control. The last entry, for 1154, records the unlamented death of Stephen.

The language of these later entries is generally characterized as early Middle English.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle remains one of the two or three preeminent philosophers of the Western world. His works became widely known in the universities of Europe only about the middle of the 13C through Latin translations from Greek and from Arabic , especially after St. Albert the Great and his even greater pupil St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) had applied Aristotelian concepts to science and to Christian theology. Aristotle was for Dante the "master of them that know." Chaucer's Clerk wishes he could own

> *Twenty bookes clad in black or red*
> *Of Aristotle and his philosophy*

It is just because of his reputation for great wisdom that he acquired a quite different reputation in popular circles in the Middle Ages: as a "senex amans" * , an old man seized by love or sexual desire. This story seems to begin with Henri D'Andeli's French *Lai d'Aristote* or Jacques de Vitry's Latin version in *Sermones Vulgares*, both of the mid 13C. But from then to at least the 16C, one incident is frequently narrated, adverted to, and illustrated. It relates how Aristotle warned his pupil Alexander that he was too much in the toils of his wife (or mistress) and had become uxorious; he should get back to serious political and martial pursuits. Angry, the woman (variously named) determined to show her feminine power and humiliate Aristotle at the same time. As the old philosopher was sitting studying at his usual window, she came by, clothed only in a seductive smile and a revealing negligee. Smitten, the old man proposed a sexual encounter to which she agreed on condition. The bargain was struck for a later assignation. Forewarned by the confident seductress, Alexander and the rest of the court watched from hiding the whole proceeding as Aristotle later submitted to the condition that she had imposed: she bridled, saddled , mounted him, and rode him across the garden, literally making an ass of him.

The moral of the story, drawn by fast-recovering Aristotle himself, is this: even old men who are great philosophers can be turned into sots and thralls of lust. Or, as Joyce's Stephen Dedalus put it: "Even the allwisest Stagyrite was bitted, bridled and mounted by a light of love." (**Ulysses,** *Circe*: 15: 11-12). The name of the woman varies in various versions of the story: Phyllis, Candacis, Silarin, Persones, Campaspe, Amor, Regina, anonymous. (See Springer, n. 17).

A very similar story is told about Virgil, * the great poet (and magician). Indeed, in one French fabliau, Aristotle is the one in the predicament usually reserved for Virgil. Artists took delight in depicting both situations well into Renaissance times.

A copy of Hans Baldung Grien’s rendering of the Aristotle /Phyllis scene can be found on the web at

http://www.arscomica.com/aristotle.html

Aristotle and Virgil were examples from the classical world, of the power of women over men , as the oft-cited Adam, Samson, David, and Solomon were from the biblical world. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the hero mentions all these biblical names in his outburst after he realizes that he has been tricked by Sir Bercilak's wife (2412 ff). John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* brings together the classical and biblical.

And there me thought I might see	
The king David with Bersabee,	Bathsheba
And Solomon was noght without	
Passende an hundred in a rout	Surpassing
Of wives and of concubines	
With Dalida, Samson I knew	Delilah

I saw there Aristotle also
Whom that the queen of Greec• so
Hath bridled that in thilk• time that time
She made him such a syllogime syllogism
That he forgot all his logique.
There was no art of his practique
Through which it might• be excluded
That he ne was fully concluded
To love, and did his obeisance. submission
And eke Virgil of acquaintance ....
Bk 8, 689 ff

A convenient illustration is in Kolve, 248, a diptych ivory: Aristotle teaching Alexander, and Phillis riding Aristotle.. For brief comment and iconography see his p. 247 and n. 50.

Mâle; Springer; Sarton; Kolve, *Chaucer*.

ARMING THE HERO

Narrative passages that describe the preparation of the warrior for battle were already conventional in Homer. There are a number of such elaborate descriptions in the *Iliad* (Books 3, 11, 16, 19). The arms, especially the shield, given to Aeneas by his mother Venus are similarly described in the *Aeneid* (Book 8).

The convention continues in medieval literatures:
Beowulf, 1441 ff; Geoffrey of Monmouth's **History of the Kings of Britain** (a.d. 1130's), the arming of Arthur at Badon; Chretien's *Eric and Enide* (late 12C); another full-scale description of the arming of Arthur in *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, (ll. 900 ff) and, perhaps best known of all, the arming of Gawain in *Sir Gawain & Green Knight* (II, 4-7 and IV, 1-2).

In the latter the elaborate explanation of the significance of the pentangle (II, 6-7) illustrates the degree to which the ritual of preparing a warrior for battle had become Christianized. St. Paul had urged the Christian man to "put on the armor of God", which included the breastplate of justice, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit (Ephesians VI).

Ramon Lull (13 C) and later writers of chivalric manuals developed this Pauline metaphor into an elaborate system where each piece of the knight's equipment signified some virtue. The manual writers are generally concerned, however, with the ceremonies of arming a new, young knight. After the 13C these ceremonies became highly elaborate and sacralized, a long way removed from the simple ceremony mentioned by Tacitus in *Germania* XIII. The knight-candidate, for example, took a ritual bath, was ceremoniously dressed, and kept vigil in the church where he was later belted and spurred in a religious rite.

The arming trope is persistent enough in the English romances to be parodied by Chaucer in *Sir Thopas*, where he burlesques the use of the *topos* in such romances as *Libaeus Desconus*, *Guy of Warwick*, and *Bevis of Hamton.* It can still be found at some length, again for comic purpose, in a movie like "Cat Ballou," and briefly but not comically in "Patton."

Bryan and Dempster; Ackerman; D. Brewer, "Arming".

AUBE / AUBADE / ALBA (French and Provencal for **dawn**; in German **tagelied**).

The *aube*, a dawn song or lament, was a highly stylized minor lyric genre cultivated in Europe from the 12C to the 15C, especially in Germany. The general situation in such poems is this: a knight has spent a night of lovemaking with a lady who is not his wife. The dawn, whose arrival is announced by the Watchman (often a dependent or friend of the knight), interrupts their pleasure or the knight's post-coital sleep. The lovers (more often the lady alone) rebuke dawn and Watchman alike. They are, however, obliged to yield to reality, and they part, often exchanging blessings and promises of fidelity.

The *aube* is not a common form in ME, though there is some evidence that there was a popular English tradition of dawn meetings or partings, and Hatto has shown clearly that songs of such meetings or partings are universal. But the only medieval English author who exhibits the form fully is Chaucer, who has a long, elaborate and passionate *aube / alba* in *Troilus* III, 1415-70, and a briefer one in III, 1695-1712. He also uses the tradition for comic purposes in the *Reeves Tale*, A 4236-47. See also Gower's version of Ovid's *Amores* I, 13, in *Confessio Amantis*, IV, 3188-3295. The famous parting scene in *Romeo and Juliet* III, v, 1-64, and Donne's "Busy Old Fool" belong to the *alba* tradition, though they probably owe more to Ovid than to any medieval tradition, popular or aristocratic. Ovid's lover says to Aurora, goddess of dawn:

But if you held in your arms the form of the mortal you wanted

Then you would cry: "Run slowly, slowly, horses of night."

Marlowe's Faustus recalls the second line of this in his last despairing speech whose irony becomes even more bitter for the reader who knows the dawn song from which it comes. For such readers Philip Larkin's modern poem "Aubade" gives a different additional irony to the word.

Hatto; Kaske; Saville.

AUREATE LANGUAGE

"Aureate" means literally "gilded". Applied to poetry it means a conscious effort to produce an effect by the use of collocations of words striking for their unusualness and splendor. They are generally florid, learned, latinate, polysyllabic, though what exactly constitutes an "aureate" word in English will be in dispute among readers and scholars. Still there is little doubt about what is aureate when such words are used heavily in a short space. A stanza from William Dunbar's poem *Ane Ballat of Our Lady* in praise of the Virgin Mary will illustrate. (Spelling of original lightly modernized):

Hail, stern supern, hail in etern	Hail heavenly star, hail for ever
In Godis sight to shine;	In God's sight to shine;
Lucern in derne for to discern	Lantern in the dark to see (show ?)
Be glory and grace divine;	By glory and grace divine;
Hodiern, modern, sempitern	Today, now and forever
Angelicall regine:	Angelical queen:
Our tern infern for to dispern	Our infernal gloom to disperse
Help, royalest rosine.	Help, most royal rose.
Ave Maria, gracia plena.	Hail Mary, full of grace.
Hale, fresh flower feminine.	Hail, fresh flower feminine.
Yerne us gubern, virgin matern,	Earnestly guide us, virgin mother,
Of ruth both root and ryne.	Root and bark of mercy (*ruth*)

The poem goes on in this fashion for 84 lines, a display of linguistic virtuosity as striking as his very different _flytings* which,_ by contrast, use vernacular words, often coarse, in a similar controlled torrent, but for abuse not praise. The other major Scottish poets of the late Middle Ages, Robert Henryson and Gavin Douglas, were also occasional and distinguished practitioners of aureate poetry.

They were all better poets than the man who probably influenced them most in the practice of enriching the language, the Englishman Lydgate, a self-pronounced disciple of Chaucer, the master they all admired for the "aureate colours of rhetoric" with which he "enlumined" our "rude language". Lydgate assiduously practiced "enameling" and "enlumining" the language in poems like *Balade at the reverence of Our Lady* or *Ave, Jesse virgula,* where the desire is clearly to load every rift with ore of a purely lexical kind. The poetic garment becomes stiff with gold thread and verbal gems. Though most of Lydgate's poetry is not of high quality, there are large quantities of it, and one scholar has credited him with introducing over 800 new words to the English vocabulary. John Metham, a minor poet of the generation after Lydgate, accurately (though not altogether critically) described the effect of some of Lydgate's efforts:

> *His books endited with terms of rhetoric*
> *And half changed Latin, with conceits fantastic*

English-speaking authors in the late Middle Ages (and indeed in the early Renaissance) seemed inordinately conscious of the "rudeness" of their native tongue, especially when compared with Latin. Hence the adulation of Chaucer by his contemporaries and immediate successors as the flower of *rhetoricians* who helped to elevate the status of English as a language fit for high purposes. In *The Golden Targe*, for example, Dunbar refers to "reverend Chaucere, rose of rethoris all / As in our tonge ane flour imperiall". And credits “moral Gower and Lydgate laureate” for having

> *fair o’ergilt our speech that imperfite*
> *Stood ere your golden pens shope to write* (started to)
> *This isle was bare and desolate*
> *Of rhetoric or lusty fresh endite* (writing)

As late as the end of the 16C many people felt that English needed enriching; others felt that many of the enriching neologisms were nothing more than "inkhorn terms," i.e. words to be found only in an inkbottle. Shakespeare 's Holofernes in *Loves Labors Lost* and Jonson's Crispinus in *The Poetaster* mock the aureating inkhornists.

Though aureation is particularly noticeable in poems to Our Lady the Virgin Mary (see Saupe), Dunbar extended the aureation to his secular verse. *The Golden Targe* is a good example of a secular poem in the aureate style but in which the aureation extends to more than the vocabulary Here "subject, style and aesthetic theory all coalesce" (Denton Fox, ***ELH*** 26,1959, 333.)

Saupe

AVALON

The fabulous island first mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth, where Arthur's sword Caliburn was forged, and where Arthur was taken after his final battle, "for the healing of his wounds" (*Historia*, IX, 4 XII, 2). Geoffrey elsewhere describes this "isle of apples" ruled by Morgan le Fay who has the power to heal Arthur's wounds ("Vita Merlini'. The relevant part is translated in ***ALMA***). Avalon was equated with Glastonbury * by Giraldus Cambrensis (1146-1220) and by Ralph of Coggeshall (1187-1224) who both believed in the "discovery" of Arthur's grave at the abbey of Glastonbury about 1190, complete with Latin inscription found in it: *Hic jacet inclitus rex Arturius in insula Avallonis sepultus*--"Here lies buried the famous King Arthur in the island of Avalon." The version of this given in Malory (for the veracity of which he does not vouch) is *Hic jacet Arturus, rex quondam rexque futurus*--"Here lies Arthur who was once king and will be again". Or, in T.H. White's rendering of the last part "the once and future king." Both of these embody succinctly the Breton Hope * that Arthur will one day return.

Continental writers sometimes equated Avalon with Sicily, or a place near the Red Sea, in the Far East or India. Others put it in some subterranean place.

ALMA, pp. 64 ff, 92; Chambers.

BALLAD

A short rhymed narrative poem in stanza form, which was probably originally sung. The form is widely diffused all over Europe.

The ballad wastes little time on introductions or conclusions but tends to start "in medias res" or in "the fifth act", and to move swiftly to a denouement.

The king sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blood red wine:
"Oh where will I get a good sailor
To sail this ship of mine?"

This opening of *Sir Patrick Spens* illustrates the typical stanza form and a fairly typical opening to a ballad. The form is generally written as a quatrain with rimes for 2nd and 4th lines, which also have 3 stresses; lines 1 and 3 have four stresses. This quatrain could also be written out as a long couplet.

As for the opening **matter**: Which king is it? Why is he in Dunfermline, and why does he need a ship's captain? And what has his business to do with drinking wine? Are the captain and the king old drinking partners? Is that why the ship goes down? "Le Bateau Ivre"? Is the eldern knight who suggests his name an enemy of Sir Patrick, commending him to a half-drunk king in order to destroy him?

Another opening:

There was a wife at Ussher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she.
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them oe'r the sea.

Was she a widow? Why is her wealth mentioned? Why did she send the three sons o'er the sea? If one needs authorial answers to these questions one probably does not enjoy ballads. First of all, they do not have **an** author, and they allow, if they do not invite, endless speculation of the kind shown by our questions. They deal suddenly, briefly and impersonally with an incident, generally just one: violent, erotic, preternatural, tragic, heroic -- one or all of these. They are sometimes lurid, occasionally comic, rarely religious.

Having come to the point very quickly, the ballad often moves from scene to scene rapidly without connectives, movie-fashion, expecting the audience to follow. Sometimes the opposite occurs: there is a very deliberate slow build-up of tension in ballads that have had (for this reason?) a particular appeal to modern taste, like *Edward* and *Lord Randall*, which proceed by what is called "incremental repetition": a little information is added with each repetition. *The Maid Freed from the Gallows* is another well-known ballad that proceeds by incremental repetition. All three are composed totally of dialogue.

Tam Lin is an exceptionally long ballad, with 42 stanzas. *Chevy Chase* with 64 is almost romance length.

The form does not vary much and the syntax is always fairly simple: co-ordinate clauses rather than subordinate clauses except perhaps for the frequent "When ....". Hyperbole is common, but its opposite, understatement is not unusual.

Rarely is the language striking in a "poetic" sense; it does not strive for individuality and "creativity" of metaphor or simile because the matter and the manner are traditional and communal; not communal in the sense that a ballad was composed by a committee of the whole, but in the sense that excessive individuality, striking "creative" change by the narrator would be discouraged by an audience. The power comes from the strong story line, the steady rhythm, the speed, the frequent and pared down dialogue which provides the most dramatic form of narrative. The narrator does not interject a personal point of view.

The ballads as we have them seem to have flourished in the later middle ages and even more in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, but there is little actual proof that they were around in medieval times. This absence of proof is perhaps not surprising since the ballad was essentially a folk medium, transmitted by song and word of mouth rather than by writing; it was the property of each transmitter, who could change it as far as the community needed or would allow.

It was inevitable that ballads should evolve and change to reflect the interests of the folk at any given time rather than a distant past. American forms of originally British ballads show how stories or words get adapted to a new time or environment. In Virginia, for example, Lord Randall becomes John Randolph; Sir John Graeme becomes Jimmy Green in *Barbara Allen*. Lady Margaret of *Fair Margaret and Sweet William* is also made to join the proletariat and becomes Lydia Margaret or Lily Margaret. The N. Carolina version of *The Wife of Ussher's Well* illustrates some other typical cis-atlantic sea changes. As with many others, the supernatural elements in this ballad are rationalized to suit a community with changed beliefs; the powerful supernatural incident is turned into a dream. The place name Ussher's Well, no longer known in N. Carolina, is dropped, the sons are "babes", and the ballad does, unfortunately, try to answer some questions mentioned above: Why did she send her sons away?

She sent them away to some northern land
For to learn their grammaree

How did they die?

a sickness came to that land,
And swept those babes away

Since by definition any version of a ballad is an authentic one, any change is legitimate, and is not a "corruption". As these quotations show, however, that does not, mean that it is an improvement.

Child; Bronson.

BEAST FABLE / BEAST EPIC

The beast fable, a genre that goes back to Aesop, is a story involving talking animals who portray human vices, virtues, weaknesses, etc. The form was used mostly to satirize or to point a moral. It is still widely used in cartoon form, though mostly with the intention of entertaining.

When the fable grew into a series of tales about the same character or set of characters, the Beast Epic was the result. The most popular medieval Beast Epic was the *Roman de Renard* which featured Reynard the Fox* . It had extensive versions in French, Flemish and German. Although some of the stories were clearly known in England, there was no English version until Caxton's translation, published in 1481. The story of the cock and the fox, an incident in a branch of the *Roman*, had its most brilliant narration , of course, in Chaucer's *Nuns Priests Tale*. Henryson's *Moral Fables* provide another memorable series of animal fables, in his case derived from Aesop via French & Latin. He adds a *moralitas* to each fable, but some of the fables are more satiric than monitory, and one of the last angrily reminds crooked lawyers and oppressive landowners of the hell and damnation that awaits human wolves without pity for the poor.

See also Bestiary.

BEASTS OF BATTLE

A theme that recurs with some frequency in Anglo Saxon poetry--at least 13 times in 9 different poems. It features the raven, the eagle and the wolf, either hovering or lurking sinisterly before the battle, assured of a good meal on the men fated to die, or else eagerly ripping the corpses after the slaughter. Though all three do not appear in every instance, no others are ever mentioned, and the grouping is almost formulaic in battle scenes. Apparently they also appear in early Welsh poetry, but always after the battle and never in groups. The passage from the *Battle of Brunanburh* is typical of the Anglo-Saxon convention:

Letan him behindan hrae bryttian
saluwigpadan þone sweartan hraefn
hyrnednebban ond þone haesewapadan
earn aeftir hwit, aeses brucan
graedigne guðhafoc and þaet graege deor
wulf on wealde. (60-65)

They left behind them to enjoy the corpses the black-feathered, sharp-beaked raven, that greedy warhawk, the white-tailed, darkbodied eagle, and the greycoated wolf of the forest.

The theme occurs also in the following poems: *Beowulf*, 3024-7. *Elene*, 27-30, 52-3, 110-114. *Exodus*, 162-7. *Finnsburgh*, 5-7, 34-5. *Genesis A*, 1983-5. *Judith*, 204-12, 294-6. *Maldon*, 106-7.

Magoun; Bonjour.

BEGGING POEM

A minor genre where the poet asks for money or promotion to alleviate his poverty. Medieval poets could not hope to make a living from selling their work but, like Chaucer and Lydgate, relied on a salary from a regular job or on patrons, or both. Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse* is a witty begging poem in which he parodies the conventional phrases of the lover's complaint* to portray the distress of poverty rather than the pangs of despised love:

You be my life, you be mine heart•’s steer (rudder)
Queen of comfort and of good company

The poem, directed to Henry IV, seems to have had the desired effect, for Chaucer's pension was renewed. There is no information about the effect of that other fine English begging poem, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, in which the author pleads his case for ecclesiastical preferment with a unique comic charm.

There are begging poems in Latin by the Archpoet of Cologne (fl. 1160), in French by Chaucer's contemporaries Froissart, Deschamps and Machaut, and in English by Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Dunbar. The last named wrote at least 15 poems of "petition", some of them a great deal less tactful than Chaucer's elegant complaint.

Hammond, pp. 66-68, 149,174 (for Hoccleve and Lydgate); F. Robinson, p. 865 for the French poems ; **Riverside**, 1088. Brown-Robbins, p.768, and Supplement s.v. "money".

BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

This entry will not attempt to provide critical theory for the rhetorical devices used by medieval poets to begin and end their work; nor does it pretend to be anything like exhaustive.. It will merely set out, for easy reference, some of the most common conventions for such beginnings and endings in Old and Middle English.

BEGINNINGS--Old English 1. In OE the most common formula for beginning a poem , or major section of a poem, is the *Gefraegn* formula: *ic gefraegn, we gefrunon = I / We have heard*. This formula, according to Klaeber, points to a preliterary stage of poetry "when the poems lived on the lips of the singers and oral transmission was the only possible source of information." Such formulas are used "to introduce poems or sections of poems (*Beowulf* 1, 837, 2694, 2752); to point out some sort of progress in the narrative (*Beowulf* 74, 433, 766, 2172, 2480, 2484, 2773); to call attention to the greatness of a person, object or action (*Beowulf* 38, 70, 575, 582, 1027, 1196-7, 1965, 2685, 2837)." (Klaeber, xlvi - xlvii and ci).
See also the openings of *Exodus, Andreas, Juliana, Daniel*.

BEGINNINGS--Middle English In Middle English there are a number of both verbal and thematic formulas and structural conventions:

Verbal Formula

a. A sizeable number of narratives begin with the word *Whilom* = Once upon a time. See e.g the opening of Chaucer's *Knights Tale*: “***Whilom***, as olde stories tellen us ...”, and the *Pardoners Tale* proper: “In Flanders ***whilom*** was a company ...”. Others often begin with the word "Lordings" or "Listeneth, lordings" which means something like "Listen, ladies and gentlemen", as in the *Pardoner’s Prologue* that precedes his tale: “Lordings,” quod he, “in churches when I preach ...”. Many begin with "When", like the famous opening line of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: "Whan that April with his shoures soote". (See Robbins, s.vv.).

b. Many verse romances begin with an Invocation to God or the Virgin Mary for help to the narrator to tell his tale.(See Humility Formula). This presumably is a medieval version of the classical call to the muses. (Of course, the body of the narrative might begin with *When*, *Whilom*, or *Lordings).*

> *Now great glorious God through grace of Himself*
> *And the precious prayer of his pris mother*
> *Shield us from shamesdeeds and sinful works ....*
> *And wisse me to warp out some word at this time*
> *That neither void be nor vain.....* (*Allit Morte A*, 1-10)

A call for silence and attentive listening often accompanies the Invocation:

> *Hearken me hendely and hold you still*
> *And I shall tell you a tale ....* (*Allit MA* , 14-15)

c. The Pastourelle often begins with some version of the phrase "As I went out this ender day."

Thematic Beginnings:

*1. Brutus-Brut Legend * / Troy Legend ** : Several works begin with a reference to the beginning of Britain by the eponymous Brutus, grandson or great grandson of Aeneas: Wace’s *Roman de Brut* and its English derivative La3amon’s *Brut; Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; Winner and Waster. (*See Silverman,1965).

2. Dream Vision * : A number of poems, some of them well-known, begin with the narrator falling asleep; the poem is the account of his dream: *Piers Plowman,* by Langland; three of Chaucer's poems: *Parliament of Fowls, Book of the Duchess, House of Fame.* In his *Legend of Good Women* it takes him about 100 lines before he falls asleep. (And see #4).

3. Chaucer is fond of deriving the inspiration for his dreams and poems from his reading. See his *Legend of Good Women; Book of the Duchess; Parliament of Fowls.*

4. Spring/Summer opening (Reverdie):: *The Canterbury Tales*; Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* a deliberate imitation of the *CT.* Henryson's *Testament* does a variation of the Spring opening where his "Lent" does not brings the sweeth breath of Zephyrus; instead the "blasts bitterly / From Pole arctic come whistiling." *Piers Plowman,* a dream vision, begins "in a summer season when soft was the sun." which is echoed by *Winner and Waster* whose narrator, after a prologue, also lies down by a stream "By a bank of a burn , bright was the sun." *Parlement of Three Ages* begins "In the month of May when mirths been fele (many) /And the season of summer when soft be the weathers."
(See the helpful note to opening lines of the *CT* in Riverside Chaucer).

5. Humility Formula * See separate entry.

ENDINGS --Old English

It is hard to generalize about the endings of Old English poems since a sizeable number of them are fragments.

ENDINGS -- Middle English

a. As ME Romances often begin with an Invocation, they frequently end with a similar Benediction, wishing a blessing on the narrator or the audience or both.
b. Some poems end as they began: *Avowing of Arthur; Pearl; Sir Gawain & the Green Knight; Parliament of the Three Ages, Quatrefoil of Love, Patience, Sir Octavian.*
c. Request for Correction: *Troilus and Criseyde* 1856 ff., possibly in imitation of Boccaccio at end of *Genealogy of the Gods*. But see Humility Formula entry.
d. Retraction or Palinode. The most famous Retraction is, of course, that which appears

at the end of the *Parsons Tale* in the Canterbury Tales. The end of *Troilus and Criseyde* is similar.
e. Brut Legend-- *Alliterative Morte Arthure, Sir Gawain & Green Knight. (*See Thematic Beginnings)

Bartlett

BESTIARY
The beast fable is moralized narrative; the bestiary is moralized "science". All the world declares the work of God's hands. The natural world is a kind of Bible in which God's truth can be read through the infinite variety of His creation. Hence, the medieval interest in beasts, domestic and exotic, was often not what we would think of as natural history or science, but a natural curiosity and love of marvels mixed with the need to justify this curiosity or use it for the greater glory of God. It is hard to know just how much the writers and readers of bestiaries believed in what they wrote, for it was often very strange, and was sometimes demonstrably wrong. But perhaps it did not occur to them to question the "truth" of the science; it was the truth of the moral that mattered. Readers of Lives of the Saints may not have believed wholeheartedly all the unlikely stories to be found in those collections. But one could still be edified by the story of the (literally) incredible courage of the martyrs, and be encouraged to put up with one's own lesser sufferings in the name of God. The details of the habits of animals in the bestiary may lend themselves somewhat more to credibility than some of the sufferings of martyrs, for, while we know what men were like in all ages, we do not know what all animals are like in all countries, and some of them are strange enough in truth. The swallows do come back to Capistrano; it is not a pious fable.

In OE there are some bestiary poems taken from the Latin *Physiologus,* a bestiary widely popular throughout the early medieval western world. The OE poems are on the Panther, the Whale and the Partridge. They are, of course, moralized.

Here is a typical Bestiary entry from a late medieval bestiary:

> *The Pelican is a bird that lives in the solitude of the River Nile in Egypt from which it gets its name, the Greek name for Egypt being 'Canopos'. The Pelican is devoted to its children, but when these grow up, they flap*

> *their wings in their parents' face. But the parents strike back and kill them. After three days the mother pierces her breast and side, and lies across her young, pouring out her blood over them, which revives them. Similarly Our Lord Jesus Christ, the creator of all things, makes us from nothing, but we strike him in the face by regarding created things rather than their creator. That is why he mounted the cross and had his side pierced from which flowed blood and water to save us from death and to give us eternal life.*

For an illustrated and translated bestiary see the fine web page
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/8v.hti

See also **Beast Fables**

White, T H

BOAST (OE noun: *gilp* ; verb: *gilpan*; ME nouns: *bost, 3elp*; ME verbs: *bosten, 3elpen*).

The boast generally refers to actions or achievements in the **past** or to **present** proficiencies
such as strength or knowledge. The vow* refers to the **future**. The terms **vow** and **boast** are sometimes used interchangeably in casual commentary, partly because the vow, as recorded in the literature can be extremely boastful.

Like the vow,* the boast represents something that was at first more than a mere convention.
On the one hand, a warrior's recitation of his past achievements established his credentials for
a given task. On the other hand, it served to remind him that he had something to live up to.

Similarly boasts about noble ancestry such as those in *The Battle of Maldon* 216-223, or in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* , 1691 ff and 2595 ff., serve to remind everyone of the warriors' obligation to emulate the deeds of those ancestors of whom they are proud. Boasting about ancestry is, however, rebuked by the more sober authors of less heroic or chivalric literature. Boethius, Dante, and Chaucer, for example, take the more thoughtful and Christian point of view that a man's ancestry adds nothing to his worth, and that it is idle to boast of something for which one is not responsible.

Murphy, *Vows, Boasts*

BOB and WHEEL

This metrical device is best defined by a couple of illustrations, taken here from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The first two (dotted) lines and the one immediately following represent an indeterminate number of long lines of alliterative verse. The very short line of generally no more than two words is the bob, and the short rhymed and alliterating quatrain is the wheel:

> ....
> ....
> *Blithe brought was them drink, and they to bed yeden* went
> *with light*
> *Sir Gawain lies and sleeps*
> *Full still and soft all night.*
> *The lord that his crafts keeps* his promises
> *Full early he was dight.* *(1684-9)* was dressed

> ....
> ....
> *But he defended him so fair that no fault seemed,*
> *Ne none evil on neither half, neither they wisten* they experienced
>
> *but bliss*
> *They laughed and layked long.* played, flirted ?
> *At last she gan him kiss*
> *Her leave fair gan she fong* take
> *And went her way y-wis.* *(1552-8)* indeed

The device, frequent, as here, at the end of sections of otherwise unrhymed alliterative verse, is also called “tail rhyme” and there is a whole category of Tail Rhyme Romances written in this way . Unlike *SGGK*, many of them are of poor quality ; the metrical demands of the bob and wheel often take precedence over sense, and the result is sometimes difficult to translate, even in *SGGK.* Chaucer famously parodied the trope in *Sir Thopas* where the relentless jog trot rhythm and cliched or meaningless bobs draw from Harry

Baily the withering critical comment: this “drasty riming is not worth a turd.”

BRETON HOPE

A legend of the continental and insular Britons that Arthur was not dead, but would return when his wounds had been healed in Avalon .* The legend was current well before Geoffrey of Monmouth, but began its literary career in his *Historia*, Bk. XI, and his *Vita Merlini* in both of which he hinted strongly that Arthur's wounds could be healed. Repeated with reservations by Wace in his *Roman de Brut*, with enthusiasm and additions in La3amon’s version of Wace, the "Hope" was derided by William of Newburgh (c. 1197) and about the same time by Giraldus Cambrensis who pointed to the "discovery" of Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury * in his own day. The legend was widely known in continental Europe, and, belief in it seems to have persisted in England into the 19C., perhaps because it was mentioned though not endorsed at the end of Malory’s *Morte Darthur,* or because Tennyson mentions it at the end of the *Passing of Arthur* section of the *Idylls (lines* 191-2, 425-432,449-51) . Indeed, according to Leslie Alcock, who has researched the possible site of Camelot at Cadbury, the Breton Hope was far from dead in 20C England.

BRETON LAY

Breton Lays are short stories in verse believed to derive from Celtic sources in Brittany similar to those which influenced the longer Arthurian romances.* Both combine the themes of ennobled love with a sense of adventure. The stories also often incorporate supernatural elements associated with Celtic legend. Unlike many romances, however, *lais* are typically short narratives which contain little superfluous detail that does not contribute to a single plot. The typical lay does not have digressions or subplots; rather it relies on a direct vivid telling of the story. *Lais* were traditionally sung to a musical accompaniment in an oral tradition kept active by Breton performers in the courts of France and Norman England.

In the twelfth century, Marie de France, a Norman poet writing in French in England, wrote a collection of *lais* which she attributed to Breton sources. In her collection the lay often presents a dilemma which tests the lovers’ fidelity to each other, the whole enhanced by magical fairy-tale devices. The adulterous element is a common motif in these narratives, sometimes presented as a dilemma of “old husband versus young lover.” (See *Senex Amans*).

The Breton Lay was imitated by English authors although these vernacular narratives never developed into a substantial body of literature apart from romance. Aside from the twelve lays of Marie de France there are twenty-two in French, but only nine extant in English. Probably the earliest Breton Lay in Anglo-Norman is Robert Biket's *Lai du Cor,* (The Lay of the Horn) (c. 1150). The English examples, appearing mainly in the fourteenth century, are: *Sir Landeval, Chestre's Sir Launfal, Lay le Freine, Sir Orfeo, Sir Degaré, Sir Gowther, The Erle of Tolous, Emare,* and Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale.*

The Franklin's Tale, which Chaucer's he calls a Breton lay, has no known predecessor among the Breton Lays; and it is commonly held that he got the story from Boccaccio's *Filocolo,* but he clearly knew the Breton genre:

> *These olde gentle Bretons in their days*
> *Of diverse aventur•s maden lays,*
> *Rhym•d in their first• Breton tongue;*
> *Which lay• s with their instruments they sung,*
> *Or els• readen them for their pleasance,*
> Prologue to *Franklin's Tale*

There is now a convenient edition of Middle English Breton Lays by Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (See also entry for **Brittany**)

J. Clawson

BRITAIN, MATTER OF

Matiere de Bretagne was Jan Bodel's 12C term for the *lais* and romances dealing with (Great) Britain and Brittany (little Britain), especially the Arthurian romances. From the appearance in the 1230's of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin **History of the Kings of Britain**, and the French and English "chronicles" by Wace and La3amon that derived from it, the matter of Britain / Brittany grew to enormous proportions, producing some of the most celebrated imaginative literature of the Middle Ages in various languages. Distinguished practitioners in French poetry were Marie de France (see Breton Lay) and Chretien de Troyes; in prose the authors of the enormous French prose romances that came after Chretien's comparatively short tales; in German Hartmann von Ave's *Erec* and *Iwein*; Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzifal*; Gottfried von Strasbourg's *Tristan and Isolde* which takes place in the Celtic lands of Ireland, Cornwall and Brittany; in Welsh *The Mabinogion;* the English *Alliterative* and *Stanzaic Morte*; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and, at the end of the medieval period, *Morte D'Arthur,* Malory's great English version of the huge French prose romances.

D. Childress

BRITTANY

Brittany or "Little" Britain, or "Armorica" is the peninsular region of north-west France inhabited by the Bretons some of whose Celtic ancestors appear to have fled from Devon, Cornwall, and Wales when (Great) Britain, that is, the island of Britannia, was being pressured by Anglo-Saxon invaders in the fifth century.

The legends of Arthur of Britain, including that of the Round Table* according to Wace's *Roman de Brut*, were probably kept alive in the oral tradition the Bretons brought with them when they emigrated from Great Britain. The magical forest of Broceliande is also in Brittany though Wace found it less than magical. From Brittany the Arthurian legend probably spread to other parts of Europe, especially throughout the rest of France. The Breton Lays * of Marie de France, several of which deal with elements of the Matter of Britain * are thought to have originated with the Breton minstrels or "jongleurs". Arthur holds court in Brittany in Chretien's *Cliges* and in Wolfram's *Parzifal,* and Brittany figures prominently in the *Tristan* of Gottfried and of Thomas, especially at the end.

BRUTUS / BRUT

The eponymous founder of Britain, according to Nennius (c. 8C) and Geoffrey of Monmouth whose *History* (c.1135) greatly elaborated on Nennius. According to Nennius the Brutus from whom the island derived its name was alternatively (a) a Roman consul who conquered a Britain already inhabited by descendants of Aeneas's son (chaps. 7 & 10) (b) the son of Hisicon (Istio) and the brother of Romanus, the founder of the Latin race (chap 17) (c) the son of Hisicon, who is himself the great-great-grandson of Aeneas (chap 18) (d) the son of Ascanius, and so the grandson of Aeneas. He was expelled from Italy for accidental parricide, and eventually made his way to the island later named for him, Britain. (chap. 10).

It is this last version that Geoffrey developed and embroidered. Among other changes from Nennius, he made Brutus the great grandson of Aeneas and says the island was called Albion before it was renamed. Many English chronicles and romances after Geoffrey began with a version of the Brut story: among the earliest and best known are Wace's *Roman de Brut* (1155) and La3amon's *Brut* (1190-1200). Consequently, the "Brut" was sometimes used as a generic term for any chronicle beginning with this story. In the 14 C and 15C it was attached especially to a genre of chronicle in French, an English version of which was published by Caxton in 1480. The whole collection of such chronicles deriving ultimately from Geoffrey is referred to, rather quaintly, as "The Common Brut". The Brut legend was almost universally accepted in England until the end of the 16C, and even had its defenders in the 18 C.

T.D. Kendrick.

CAEDMON

The first English poet known by name. Our knowledge of him comes from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (Book 4, Chap. 24) which recounts the story of this simple cowherd. Unable to join in the festivities with his fellows because of his inability to sing, he received the gift of poetry in his sleep from a divine messenger. The nine-line song that he promptly composed under this inspiration is reproduced in most anthologies of Old English.

After he joined the monastic life he composed many more songs, Bede says, all of them pious and most of them based on the Scriptures that the literate read or recited to him. Hence the poems in the Junius MSS, especially *Genesis* and *Exodus* and *Christ and Satan* were referred to by scholars as "Caedmonian". It is not now believed that Caedmon composed all of the poems once attributed to him. Indeed there is some doubt if he was a real person, since similar stories of a simple illiterate receiving the gift of poetry in an equally striking way appear in different cultures.

CAIN` (Caym, Kaym)

Rabbinical and early Christian commentators on the biblical story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4) provided many of the non-biblical details of the medieval legend of Cain, parts of which appear in English as early as the OE *Genesis* and *Beowulf*.

There are Cain plays in the ME Chester, Hegge, Towneley and York cycles. Other references, brief and lengthy, to Cain and his kin are ubiquitous in medieval English writing. Cain, the sinner and outlaw, rather than Abel, the "type" of Christ (see *Typology*) is, almost inevitably, the figure who captures the attention and imagination of secular and religious writer alike.

The following are the chief features of the legend as they appear in medieval English writing. (References are very selective):

1. For the murder of his brother Abel, Cain was condemned by God to a lifetime of wandering, in exile from the company of men, and living often among beasts: OE *Genesis*, 1013-35; *Beowulf*, 104 ff and 1258 ff; the York *Sacrificium*, 86ff; the Chester *Creation*. Cain was also, however, the founder of the first city (Gen. IV, 7) regarded by St. Augustine as the type of the Earthly City. (*City of God*, Bk.15).

2. The giants and monsters of the earth were "Cain's kin", the result of a union between the "daughters of men", presumed to be Cainite women, and "the sons of God" (Gen. 4 & 6). Though the biblical Genesis and the *Beowulf* poet (1087-93) both say that all these giants were destroyed by the Flood, this does not seem to have affected the association of Cain with later giants in medieval legend: OE *Genesis*, 1245 ff; *Beowulf*, 104, 114, 1087-93, 1258 ff; *Ywain and Gawain*, 243 ff; *Paradise Lost*, XI, 573 ff, esp. 642 and 687-8.

3. Presumably by extension of (2) the morally "deformed" were also Cain's kin: *Piers Plowman A*, 135-172, *Havelok*, 2044-46. Wycliffe rings the changes on the term "Cain's castles" to indicate friaries: (See, e.g. Index to his *English Works*). According to their enemies, the initials of the names of the four orders of friars spelled CAIM or KAIM (Carmelites, Augustinians, Jacobins i.e. Dominicans, Minorites i.e. Franciscans). See **MED.**
Saracens in French Chansons de Geste have Cain for their ancestor.

4. The principal sins associated with Cain are envy, anger, false tithing, despair and, of course, manslaughter.

5. Cain murdered Abel with the jawbone (of an ass): Towneley *Mactacio*, 323-4; *Cursor Mundi*, 11073-4; Hegge *Cain and Abel*, 149; *Hamlet*, V, I, 85. Many early illustrations, however, show the murder weapon as a rock or a club.

6. The "mark of Cain" was a trembling of the head or body, or sometimes a horn on the head: *Prose Adam and Eve* in Horstmann's *Legenden* (1878), p. 224; the Cornish *Creation*.

7. The murder of Abel took place near Damascus: *I Henry VI*, I, iii, 39-40.

8. Cain shares with Judas * the reputation of having a red or yellow beard: *Merry Wives of Windsor*, I, iv, 23.

9. Cain was begotten at a time of the year when copulation was forbidden: *Piers Plowman* B, IX, 120 .

10. Satan was Cain's father.

For web images see: http://www.kfki.hu/~arthp/art/g/ghiberti/paradiso/3kilabel.jpg
or
http://clipart.christiansunite.com/Bible_Characters_Clipart/Cain_and_Abel_Clipart/

Emerson; Peltolta; Patterson.

CATALOGUE

The literary catalogue is a rhetorical device as old as Homer and as modern as Joyce or Fitzgerald. One of the most famous of such lists is the catalogue of ships in the *Iliad*. The lists of Gatsby's guests in *The Great Gatsby*, and the recurring catalogues in Joyce's *Ulysses* are familiar to modern readers. Indeed a catalogue of catalogues in English literature from earliest times would be very lengthy. W.H. Auden even makes an appreciation of such lists one of the four indispensable qualifications for the critic of poetry.

Used as a mere conventional device of amplification the trope can be a trial for the reader; skillfully employed it can produce true poetry of the kind familiar from the resounding catalogues in Shakespeare and Milton.

Nicholas Howe makes a distinction between the list and the catalogue, a distinction he finds useful in his extensive treatment of catalogue poems in Old English, and he treats only poems that **are** catalogues rather than **have** catalogues, including *Menologium, Fates of the Apostles, Gifts of Men, Fortunes of Men, Precepts* and *Maxims I & II; Widsið* and *Deor*.

The catalogue, by which we mean mostly a list, was very frequently used in later medieval literature, especially within longer poems, and Chaucer was as fond of it as any. His work will be cited here as the primary example, partly because he is best known, partly because his use of the technique illustrates most of the stages between the drily conventional and the splendidly successful. He has, for example, lists of trees, birds, authors, and --- something he was especially fond of — martyrs or traitors to love. His lists of trees in *Parliament of Fowls* (176 ff) and the *Knights Tale* (A 2921-3), derived probably from the *Roman de la Rose* and ultimately from the classics, hardly rise above dutiful imitation. The same can be said for his lists of animals and birds in *Parliament* (182 ff and 344 ff).

His lists of unlucky or unfaithful lovers in the Man of Law's Introduction (B1, 61 ff), the *House of Fame* (397 ff), and *Parliament* (283-292) are also conventional enough, but the list in the ballade in the *Legend of Good Women* has real charm. The *LGW* itself is, of course, an extended version of the catalogue topos, in the tradition of Ovid's *Heroides* and Boccaccio's *De Claribus Mulieribus*. The list of faithful wives and chaste maidens in Dorigen's complaint in the *Franklins Tale* (F 1379 ff) is so diffuse as to lead one to believe that, in the context, Chaucer is using it with slyly comic intent. Openly comic and very skillful is Jankyn's list of wicked wives and their victims in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* (D. 715 ff).

But Chaucer also pokes fun at himself and the trope in *Sir Thomas*. As L.H. Loomis puts it: "*Sir Thopas*, a whimsical *mea culpa*, parodies the convention with no fewer than seven lists -- of physical attributes, of pastimes, of spices , birds, food, arms, and heroes of romance." (**S&A**, p.550). The particularly wooden use of the convention that he was burlesquing is well illustrated in *The Squire of Low Degree* with its recurring catalogues of birds, trees, heroes, wines and even bedroom furnishings. Chaucer's catalogue of Chanticleer's physical beauties in the *Nun's Priest's Tale* may also be making fun of the catalogue of head-to-foot features of beautiful female body as illustrated by the rhetorician Geoffrey de Vinsauf in *Poetria Nova*.

Hoffman; Curtius; Index s.v. "Catalogues"; Robinson, Riverside: notes to *Parlement;* Howe; Gass**.**

COKAYNE (COCKAIGNE)

A land of plenty , delight and total laziness. The name occurs in a medieval doggerel poem which shows a land inhabited by monks and nuns who make merry with each other sexually, where the monastery fabric is made of pies, sugar cakes and puddings, birds drop from the air already cooked, water is used only for landscape gardening and washing, the rivers flow with milk and honey, oil and wine. To get there one has to wade in hog's dung up to the neck for seven years.

The poem is both a coarse satire on the monastic life and a crude parody of the Earthly Paradise.* The modern American hobo song *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* provides an amusing and instructive parallel and a confirmation of the inadequacy of our human imagination when it comes to dealing with heaven or Elysium.

Robbins; translations in the Norton and Oxford anthologies of English Literature; Pleij.

COMITATUS

The Latin word used by Tacitus and retained by scholars to refer to the special band of retainers gathered around a chief in early Germanic society, and to the mutual bond between chief and retainer. Tacitus describes the institution succinctly: "Lads attach themselves to men of mature strength and of long approved valor....These followers vie with each other as to who shall rank first with his chief, the chiefs as to who shall have the most numerous and the bravest followers. It is an honor as well as a source of strength to be thus always surrounded by a large body of picked youths.... When they go into battle, it is a disgrace for the chief to be surpassed in valor, a disgrace for his followers not to equal the valor of the chief. And it is an infamy and a reproach for life to have survived the chief, and return from the field. To defend, to protect him, to ascribe one's own brave deeds to his renown, is the height of loyalty. The chief fights for victory, his vassals for their chief.... Men look to the liberality of their chief for their warhorse and their bloodstained and victorious lance." (*Germania,* 13-14. Church and Brodribb translation). However, there have been legitimate questions about the propriety of using the authority of Tacitus for actions and attitudes that belong to people and places far distant in time and place from his Germania, and doubts of the accuracy of his statements about that place and its customs.

Until recently *The Battle of Maldon* (especially 185 to end) was generally felt to be the locus classicus in OE literature illustrating the accuracy of Tacitus's account and the longevity of the heroic Germanic ideal. This presumably applies even if, as some critics contend, the account of the battle is largely fictional rather than historical. However, Rosemary Woolf asserts forcefully that the "obligation" to die with one's lord in a battle encounter is unknown in OE writing before *Maldon*. Beowulf, for example, survives the battle in which Hygelac dies, and Wiglaf survives Beowulf with honor. Woolf surmises that the author of *Maldon* may have got the idea from the Old Icelandic *Bjarkamal* — many Vikings had settled in England by 991 — or from reading Tacitus. Others object that **Bjarkamal** may be from the 12C or that Livy's account of Horatius at the bridge is a possible classical source. This "obligation" is not at all the same as the well-attested obligation to be loyal to and avenge one's lord, even if this involved certain death. This feature is familiar from the Finn, Heathobard, and Wiglaf episodes of *Beowulf* and in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 755.

As late as the 15C *Alliterative Morte,* the king specifically says he is going to face the monster alone,

> *And the king keenly commanded his knights*
> *For to bide with their blonks and boun no further* horses & go
> *"For I will seek this saint by myself [al]one..."* saint = giant (a joke)
> 935-7

Nevertheless, Sir Kay shows considerable trepidation about their honor when the king has been wounded by the giant:

> *Then Sir Kayous the keen unto the king starts*
> *Said: "Alas we are lorn. My lord is confounded*
> *Overfallen with a fiend. Us is foul happened* by a devil
> *We mun be forfeited in faith and flemed forever."* & banished
> 1152-5

The king has not been killed, as Kay feared, and their reputations do not suffer.

The importance of the concept of mutual loyalty between lord and comitatus is pointed up by the frequency of terms for both in OE poetry. Retainers are *gesiþ(as), rinc(as), ðegn(as), (ge)dryht, ðeod; duguþ, werod, haeleþ, etc.* (Many more terms are listed in Klaeber's *Beowulf*, p. 270.). The lord is called *dryhten (*head of the *dryht); þeoden (*head of the *ðeod), beaggyfa (*ring giver*), eorla hleo (*head or covering of warriors*), helm maþþumgyfa (*helmet/chief of treasure-givers*)*, etc. Moreover, the vocabulary and some of the concepts of this heroic ideal are retained by AS Christian poets. In *Genesis B*, for example, Satan is the rebellious member of God's *comitatus*, who establishes a *comitatus* of his own. In *Andreas* the apostles are referred to as *haeleþ, þegnas, rincas*, etc., just as if they were Germanic warriors. God is *weroda dryhten, duguþa wealdend, (*ruler/leader of an army, lord of hosts*), aeþelinga helm* (helmet/head of nobles) like a king or chief.

The difficult situation of a man cut off, for whatever reason, from his lord and *comitatus* is a favorite theme with OE poets. See, for example, the laments of the scop* in *Deor*, and of the narrator of *The Wanderer*, and the fate predicted by Wiglaf for the members of Beowulf's *comitatus* who deserted him in his hour of need (*Beowulf*, 2884-2891). The terms for such men are also numerous: *wineleas (f*riendless*)*, *wraecca* (wretch, outcast*)*, *angenga* (alone-goer,solitary*) freondleas (f*riendless*)*, *ealdorleas* (which means both lordless and lifeless).

D. Whitelock, chap. 2; Cherniss, chaps. 2, 3, 5; Woolf, " Obligation”.

COMPLAINT (*PLANCTUS)*

A widespread mode in both secular and religious varieties, both with music and without. The complaint of Christ (Planctus Christi), especially popular from the 12C onwards, is often based on the "Improperia" (Reproaches) of the Good Friday service, in which Christ laments the ingratitude of mankind: "My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I grieved thee? Answer me. Because I brought thee out of the land of Egypt, thou hast prepared a cross for thy savior" etc. This *planctus* is dramatized in the crucifixion plays of the cycles, notably those of Wakefield and York, and is also well represented in lyric form. A well-known English lyric *planctus* of this kind is the *Quia Amore Langueo*, a powerful if flawed poem, combining elements of the "Improperia" and the *Song of Songs*, and in which Christ, the Hound of Heaven, pursues his beloved or spouse (the erring sinner) who seeks to flee Him.

Some of the earliest complaints are uttered not by Christ but by His mother as she stands at the foot of the cross watching her Son die. These are the *Planctus Mariae*, many of which are in Latin, and which occur in both lyric and dramatic form, in monologue and dialogue. Once again, an English dramatization can be found in the Wakefield (Towneley) crucifixion play. The English lyric versions are very numerous. There are other complaints by Mary where in Christ's infancy she laments his future fate which she already knows. (See Taylor, p. 612, note.)

The secular Complaint includes the lover's lament of unrequited or betrayed love or the lament for the death of a beloved or of a ruler (parodied by Chaucer in the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*) or even laments for one’s colleagues as in Dunbar’s *Lament for the Makars*. There are also complaints about poverty, the fear of unemployment (see Scop*) or lack of promotion (see *Begging Poem* *); and there is the ever present Complaint Against the Times. The lover's complaint hardly needs illustration, and ranges from the anonymous simple lyric to Chaucer's sophisticated verses *To His Lady* and *Complaint Unto Pity*. Two financial complaints of very different kinds are *The Owl and the Nightingale* and Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse*. The Complaint Against the Times can be represented again in Chaucer's minor poetry in *Lak of Stedfastness* as well as in Alain de Lille's *De Planctu Naturae* which so deeply influenced the satirist Jean de Meung and, of course, Chaucer himself.

Taylor; Karl Young, especially chap 16; Brown-Robbins, svv "BVM, Laments of," "Appeal", "Complaint".

CONTEMPTUS MUNDI (Contempt of the World)
A pervasive medieval attitude based on the notion that this world is not only temporary, but that its goods and pleasures are seductive, leading the soul away from God, its true good both here and hereafter. The *Consolations* of Boethius simply strengthened, from a philosophical point of view, the theological attitude on the subject expressed by the early Fathers, especially Augustine and Jerome.

Commentary on the Contemptus Mundi nearly always involved a gloss on the sentences in I John 2: 15-17: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world....For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life. And the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth forever." A classic commentary is to be found in Augustine's *Confessions* (especially IV, 6-10 and X, 30-40), one of the first and probably the most influential in a long line of what became a whole genre of writing. But perhaps the central medieval statement of the idea was in Pope Innocent III's *De Contemptu Mundi* (c. 1200), more accurately called *De Miseria Humanae Conditionis*, which Chaucer says that he translated in a version now lost.

Contemptus Mundi meant at least detachment from all the goods of this world, an active spiritual effort not to put one's trust in princes or in riches or in pleasure of any kind. Its more ascetic application, as in Innocent and many of those who followed him, involved an active rejection of the world's goods both physical and intellectual. This ascetic aspect was represented at its best by St. Francis of Assisi and his love of Lady Poverty, but it had in it more than a little Manicheanism and anti intellectualism, elements already present in the passages mentioned above from Augustine who distrusted his own pleasure even in color and music.

COURTLY LOVE

Courtly love is a much-disputed term that refers to a philosophy or religion of love popularized by the medieval French troubadours. The term, however, was not coined until the nineteenth century by the French critic Gaston Paris for a literary fusion of chivalry and love, two prominent themes in medieval literature patronized by aristocrats, resulting in a literary convention which has had a long history. Whether or not it was ever an actual code of behavior has been hotly disputed, as such behavior would certainly have often come in conflict with other important social conventions and religious convictions. The code held that love of a man for a woman was not a brief madness, as the ancients inclined to think, but an *ennobling* passion that gave a man grace and every other worthwhile virtue, and even increased his military prowess. However, the male blessed or stricken by Love, eats and sleeps very little and his obsession sometimes leads to temporary madness. So the ancients were not altogether wrong. (See *Lovers Pains* *).

Love strikes where He wills (He is a god). But since aristocrats did not marry for Love but as family or national politics dictated, it followed that the passion of love was sometimes adulterous. According to Andreas Capellanus it was necessarily so: real love and marriage are incompatible. Partly as a result, love that ceases to be secret ceases to be.

As a literary convention, the concept of “courtly love” had wide-ranging influence on the themes of narrative and lyric poetry in medieval literature. In his study of the literary expression of the convention, **The Allegory of Love**, (now much disputed), C. S. Lewis stated that medieval poets writing in the courtly tradition, consciously attempted to displace medieval Christianity’s judgement of passionate human love as directly associated with the Fall, and replace it with a religion of love that set itself up in opposition to Church teaching. But at least one other scholar finds the literature of courtly love expressing only secular versions of religious teaching:

> *The ideal of reasonable love for a woman based in a love of virtue is a Christian extension of the classical ideal of friendship which owes its inspiration in part to the* ***De Amicitia*** *of Cicero and in part to Christian*

charity

(D.W. Robertson, **Preface**, 457).

Provençal troubadours popularized the particular sentiment of love called *fin' amors*, which we refer to as courtly love. The *fin'amors* sentiment of the lyrics and narratives flourished in the sophisticated courts in the north, especially at Poitiers in France where Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter Marie de Champagne resided in the late twelfth century. It was with the patronage of Marie de Champagne that Andreas Capellanus wrote *De Amore* -- *The Art of Courtly Love* (c. 1185), a document which purports to codify for the aristocracy (and literary posterity) the precepts of this "honorable" style of amorous behavior.

Extracts from a translation of *De Amore*, including the famous Commandments of Love, can be found on the web at

http://icg.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/authors/andreas/de_amore.html

Marie was also the literary patron of Chrétien de Troyes whose Arthurian romances dealt in a central way with love, notably in the portrayal of adulterous love in Chrétien's *Lancelot* (2nd half of 12C). These literary vehicles for the courtly literary tradition were immensely influential because they joined the sentiment of *fin'amors* with epic spirit of adventure. Two of the great legends of the Middle Ages have at their core the matter of adulterous love:(1) the Lancelot and Guinevere story beginning with Chretien's *Lancelot: the Knight of the Cart* and culminating in

Malory's *Morte Darthur*; and (2) the Tristan and Isolde story especially as contained in the version by Gottfried von Strasbourg (c. 1210).

In the older heroic ideal the individual man exerted himself, generally in a military fashion, for the good of the tribe or nation, and not primarily for his own satisfaction and certainly not for his love of a woman. The new set of set of values focused on the hero beset with the problems of love without altogether abandoning concern with military prowess. This literature reflected a new set of social values clearly influenced by women; in this courtly love ethic the female beloved was placed above the lover in a position analogous to the feudal relationship between lord and vassal

Works such as Guillaume de Lorris's part of the *Roman de la Rose* (c. 1235 °) adapted the theme of courtly love to allegory*, a genre which had traditionally been didactic and religious. The *Roman*, the first part by Guillaume, the larger part by Jean de Meung, enjoyed a large readership and became one of the primary texts from which the literary treatment of the themes and motifs of courtly literature was passed to other vernaculars through translation, including a large fragment attributed to Chaucer (*Romaunt of the Rose*). His own great poem *Troilus and Criseyde* is his contribution to the courtly romance tradition. An “anti-courtly love” treatment of that theme is displayed in Henryson’s sequel, *The Testament of Cresseid (*late 1400’s*).*

Again, at the very end of the Middle Ages (c. 1470) comes Malory’s *Morte D’Arthur*, the most famous English rendition of the whole Arthurian story, incorporating the love of Lancelot and Guinevere derived from French Romances and the English *Stanzaic Morte*. Malory makes it very clear that it is the adulterous love between Lancelot and Guinevere that causes the breakup of the fellowhip of the Round Table, which is to him the great tragedy.

J. Clawson

CYCLE PLAYS (See Mystery Plays)

DANCE OF DEATH (DANSE MACABRE).

The literature and art of the later Middle Ages, particularly in the 15C, were more than ordinarily obsessed with the subject of death. No doubt, the recurrent outbreaks of bubonic plague, especially the memory of the Black Death of the 1340's, had much to do with the deep concern about sudden and final dissolution. The Dance of Death is one powerful and unforgettable expression of this haunting fear.

About 1424 the cloisters of the Church of the Innocents in Paris were covered with a series of illustrations depicting the Coming of Death to a representative selection of medieval people. Death, a skeleton or mummy, was seen leading away pope, emperor, lady, merchant, peasant, etc. The pictures were accompanied by verses later translated into English by John Lydgate in whose poem the following characters have a sort of dialogue with Death: squire, abbott, merchant, good monk (a Carthusian), man of law, bad monk, juror, minstrel, magician, parson, laborer, child, hermit. Lydgate thought of “Machabre” as a person, a “doctor” who draws a moral at the end.

Thereafter, similar series of pictures, with or without verses, were painted on the walls of English and European churches and convents, including the wall of the north cloister of the old St. Paul's church in London where the painting was known as the Dance of Paul's. After the advent of printing, the Dance appeared in many woodblock illustrations, most strikingly in the 16C work of Holbein, who died of the plague in 1543.

Holbein’s illustrations can be seen on the Web at:
http://www.godecookery.com/macabre/holdod/holdod.htm

The lifted leg of the *Mors* and the grin on its face express eagerness and glee in dragging the victim off; by contrast, in many paintings the understandable reluctance of the living is shown in their almost complete lack of movement. The original artist probably meant to suggest no more than the coming of death to each individual, but since he had to reproduce Death in each panel that showed a different type in society, the end result was a series of pairs that, together with the leer and half-leap of the skeleton, suggested a grotesque dance. Lygate’s Death refers regularly to his “dance.” The irony of pairing the prancing Death with the almost immobile living is, if obvious, nevertheless potent, and some later 15C versions of the Dance do show men and women actually dancing together, with Death in attendance ready to strike, or living people dancing with skeletons to the music of drums or pipes.

A related pictorial theme is that of the Three Dead and the Three Living (Trois Morts et Trois Vifs) in which three young and generally fashionable people come face to face with three dead ones whose message is: “Such as we are shall you be.” See e.g. Henryson’s *Thre Deid Pollis* (Three Deathsheads).

Another literary version of the theme occurs in the Vado Mori poems, some as early as the 13 C. Here each stanza begins (and sometimes ends) with the phrase *vado mori* (I go to die). The first stanza of an English rendering goes as follows (spelling somewhat modernized):

I wend to death -- knight stith in stour	I go to death, a knight strong in battle.
Through fight in field I won the flower;	Through fight in field I won the prize
No fights me taught the death to quelle;	No fights taught me to conquer Death.
I wend to death, sooth I you tell.	I go to Death, the truth I tell

(**Index**, 1387)

The *Timor Mortis* (Fear of Death) poems of Dunbar and Lydgate, and a host of others, perpetuate the theme in their own way.

The *Dance* and the *Vado Mori* have obvious if limited, dramatic or mimetic possibilities, and there is evidence that both were performed in church or elsewhere. The play of *Everyman*, however, while it does not fit neatly into either category, takes the idea to full dramatic power.

Early spellings and rhymes, both English and French, make it clear that "macabre" was pronounced "macabray".

A full if not exhaustive list of examples of the Dance of Death and artistic versions of the Trois Morts et Trois Vifs can be found at

http://www.geocities.com/ppollefeys/dance.htm___

Hammond; Kurtz, Pearsall: Anthology.

DAWN SONG See **Aube**

DEADLY SINS (See SEVEN)

DEBATE, DIALOGUE

A literary form probably as old as literature itself: examples can be found from ancient Egypt and India, in Greek and Latin, and even in the Bible (Job).

The DEBATE / DIALOGUE was especially popular in the later Middle Ages, in many languages and in many kinds of verse that we often classify in other genres. It is possible, for example, to see the Flyting * as a form of debate . It is certainly a verbal exchange between two personages, real or imaginary, but openly hostile. The verbal conflicts between the Pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*; the exchanges between the narrator and his daughter in *Pearl* or the many conversations in *Piers Plowman* might also be thought of as debates. But the term is generally reserved for whole poems or discrete sections of poems which are formally set up as debates or dialogues.

These were particularly commonly in medieval Latin and French, and deal with many topics sacred and profane, profound and frivolous. The most influential dialogue / debate for the Middle ages was probably Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy*, a dialogue between

Boethius and Lady Philosophy that dealt with the most basic of difficulties: the problem of evil that overcomes even good men. There are debates between God and man, soul and body (particularly common), between old and young, female lover and male lover, Christ and Mary, vices and virtues, water and wine, and so on.

The best-known examples in Middle English are probably *The Owl and the Nightingale; The Parliament of the Three Ages* (Youth, Middle Age, Old Age), *Winner and Waster* (the thrifty and the extravagant), and the debate among the birds at the end of the *Parliament of Fowls* (the "seed fowl, the worm-fowl, the water fowl, and the fowls of ravine"). In two of these poems the protagonists are birds and there are a number of other such avian debates. It is to be noticed also that the debate in *Parliament of Fowls* can be classified as a Demande D'Amour * ; the *Owl and Nightingale* is a Begging Poem * as well as a debate; *Winner and Waster* is a Complaint * and also a Dream Vision as is the *Parliament of Three Ages.*

In some debates there is a judge or referee of sorts (*Owl & N.; Parliament of Fowls*); in others, it is for the reader to decide.

Utley; Conlee.

DE CASIBUS ILLUSTRIUM VIRORUM (The Fall of Great Men)

A theme popular in the MA and later, and intimately related to the Wheel of Fortune, * Ubi Sunt* and similar notions. In fact, it might be said that all of these are aspects of the Contemptus Mundi * attitude . *De Casibus Illustrium Virorum* is the title of a book by Boccaccio, a collection of tales largely devoted to the fall of men in high place from power or virtue. Boccaccio's book was written to demonstrate to princes the virtues of moderation and humility by pointing out the results of excessive pride and ambition in other princes who fell from power or grace. The idea is, of course, older than Boccaccio; the most obvious predecessors were Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy,* and the *Romance of the Rose*, especially ll. 5921-6900.

In medieval English the literary progeny of these earlier works are Chaucer's *Monk's Tale,* which equates the fall of great men with tragedy, and Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. The latter, rather more polite than its indirect source (Boccaccio) was written at the command of Duke Humphrey, who could, it appears, have benefitted from its lessons.

DEMANDE D'AMOUR

A question of the conundrum variety about a problem of love. According to Andreas Capellanus such questions were propounded on occasion to a "court" of ladies at Poitiers, headed by Marie, Countess of Champagne and her mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine. At any rate , this game found its way into literature. A series of thirteen such puzzling questions can be found, for example, in Boccaccio's *Filocolo,* where Fiammetta is the "judge".

In ME the best examples are probably in Chaucer. At the end of Part I of the *Knight's Tale* the narrator asks his audience: "Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon?" One is in prison but can see Emily every day through the bars; the other is free but cannot see or speak to her. In the *Wife of Bath's Tale* the *demandes* are put to the young knight in the tale: first he is asked what women most desire, then, at the end of the tale the old hag asks him if he will have her foul, old and faithful, or young, fair and doubtful. At the end of the *Franklin's Tale* the narrator asks his audience who was the most generous character in his story: the knight who insisted that his wife fulfill her rash promise at whatever cost, the squire who excused her from that promise, or the magician who excused the squire from payment for his services? In Boccaccio's version of this tale in the *Filocolo* Fiammetta decides that the husband is the most generous.

Dunbar's alliterative poem *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* (The Treatise of the Two Married Women and the Widow) seems to mock the tradition: a question by a widow to two wives about their marriages leads to three remarkably coarse disquisitions on married love from the female viewpoint. The poem ends with this *demande* (the spelling of the Middle Scots has been modernized):

> *Of these three wanton wives that I have written here*
> *Which would you waill to your wife if you should wed one?* (choose)

The phrase *demande d'amour* is occasionally applied to the interior monologue of a lover in romance, where he or she inwardly debates the likelihood of a return of love by the beloved.

Amy Kelly; Parry.

DOUZEPERS or DOUSEPERIS (TWELVE PEERS)

The word is from the French phrase "Les douze pers," the twelve peers of Charlemagne's household, the best and bravest in his kingdom. The names of the members of this select group vary considerably in different sources, and there are at least twenty. The invariable ones seem to be Roland (Orlando), Oliver, Ogier the Dane, and Ganelon* who was the traitor. Others are Otuel, Ferumbras, or Fierabras, and Nayme(s) of Bavaria. The term occurs in ME even in the singular and applied to other knights of renown, mostly nameless. In the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, for example, it is used fairly frequently to refer to Arthur's knights and others as a convenient alliterating element in the phrase "dukes and douzepers."

DRAGON (L. *draco*, OE *draca*, hence early ME "fire drake")
Dragons are known in many cultures widely separated in time and space, but especially in the East, where they are sometimes venerated. In the West, by contrast, they seem to be always objects of terror. The term "dragon" is used in the English bible and in Western literatures to indicate various kinds of vaguely designated monster: in the Book of Daniel, for example, and in the legends of Greece, particularly those of Hercules and the Hydra, Perseus and Jason, where they serve, as in medieval literature, to give opportunity to heroes to show their mettle. There is also, of course, the biblical dragon of the *Apocalypse (Revelations)*, chap 12, which has many heads, like the Hydra, and is called "the serpent". It belches forth a flood of water (vv. 15-16) rather than fire to kill the woman. It is, of course, a symbol of moral depravity, and figures as such as late as Spenser and Milton.

The most notable of the few dragons in Medieval English literature is unquestionably the dragon in *Beowulf* which like the other great dragon of northern myth, Fafnir, guards a treasure rather than capturing or devouring maidens like some of the dragons in oriental or Mediterranean legend.

D*raca sceal on hlaewe*	*It is the nature of the dragon to sit in a barrow*
Frod, fraetwum wlanc	*Old and glorying in its treasures.*

(Maxims II, l.26)

Beowulf's dragon also spouts fire, like some other northern dragons. It has been suggested -- by Baring-Gould, for example -- that the flame-throwing quality of the dragon is really the expression of a memory of some appalling invasion that involved fiery devastation, a notion interestingly developed in a modern novel, *Eaters of Darkness.* A dragon figures in

Arthur’s dream in the *Alliterative Morte*, and couple of dragons lurk under a castle in Snowdonia in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain*.

The dragon-slayer of medieval story was sometimes the heroic or chivalric warrior like Beowulf or Tristan, Sir Guy of Warwick or Bevis, but was sometimes (in hagiographical stories) saintly or even female rather than secular and manly. St. George, perhaps the most famous of dragon-slayers, manages to combine the holy and the heroic, like his later literary incarnation, Redcross, in *The Faerie Queene*. Holy maidens like St. Martha and St. Margaret make do with sanctity alone.

While the term "dragon" covers a wide variety of monsters whose shape is never exactly specified, in general and from early times dragons were depicted as having elongated, rather serpentine bodies (OE *wyrm*, worm) often with scales, wings, talons, horns, and forked tongue. In a wall painting in one English church such a dragon takes the place of the usual serpent as the tempter of Eve.

Klaeber, pp.xxi - xxiii and 208-215

DREAM VISION POEMS

There was a good deal of interest in dream theory in the Middle Ages, and considerable difference of opinion about the origin and relevance of dreams: some held that dreams were generally inconsequential, others that they were often of considerable significance. Those of the "significant" school had biblical support from both testaments e.g. Pharaoh's dream of the fat cows and lean cows and Joseph's interpretation (Gen. 41) and many others in the O.T.; and in the NT e.g. the other Joseph's dreams that assured him that Mary his wife was pregnant with Christ through divine intervention (Matt. 1:20, 2:13-20). They also had Macrobius's famous *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* which distinguished between 5 different kinds of dream, 3 of them significant ("visio, somnium, and oraculum") and 2 insignificant ("insomnium" and " visum" or "phantasma"). The first 3 were felt to be prophetic in one way or another by Macrobius; the other 2 either simply carried on the worries or desires of the day, or were formed of disconnected and fragmentary images (phantasma) supposedly the result of indigestion. These last two, of least interest to the philosopher, might be of more interest to the psychologist and poet.

Chaucer has several dream vision poems, in most of which he has some discussion of dream theory: *The Book of the Duchess (*which mentions both Macrobius and the OT Joseph, 280-4*), The House of Fame, The Legend of Good Women, The Parliament of Fowls, e*specially the opening of *House of Fame* on the causes and significance of dreams. The argument of Chanticleer with Pertelote about the value of his dream in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* illustrates the common medieval disagreements.

Though Chaucer seems to have known Macrobius, he was also part of a poetic dream vision tradition and did not require direct knowledge of Macrobius or dream theory in order to write dream poems. The most influential sources of this tradition for medieval poets were Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and the *Romance of the Rose,* a French poem of the early 13 cent. Chaucer had translated both of these in whole or in part. The *Romance* set the tradition for a host of French poems dealing mostly with erotic love, notably by Machaut and Froissart. It may also have influenced English poems as different as Langland's *Piers Plowman* and the anonymous *Pearl*, although there is possibly a native English alliterative dream tradition that dated back to the OE *Dream of the Rood. Winner and Waster* and *The Parlement of the Three Ages*, which are both Dream Visions and Debates,* may be indebted to both traditions.

In the dream poems the narrator tells us that he fell asleep, frequently outdoors as a rule, and dreamed the substance of his poem. Often he does not figure in this dream himself, but is merely a spectator of the scenes he describes, but notably in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, and *House of Fame*, and Langland's *Piers Plowman* the dreamer is a very active, and sometimes deliberately comic protagonist. In the *Pearl* he is a deeply hurt man who needs to be talked and persuaded out of his grief in a debate that is also indebted to Boethius’s *Consolation*.

Winny; Windeatt.

EARTHLY PARADISE

This myth is universal and timeless, and ranges in its western manifestations from the Garden of Eden to *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*. For Western vernacular literature the sources lie mainly in the Bible and in the Greek and Roman classics. Genesis provides a picture of a fruitful Eden irrigated by four rivers one of which flows through a land rich in gold and precious stones. But there are far more lush descriptions of paradisal places and ideal landscapes in Homer and Hesiod, in Virgil's pastoral poetry and Claudian's epithalamia. Early Christian theologians and poets borrowed from such classical sources to flesh out the rather sparse descriptions of Eden in Genesis. Some of them clearly believed in the continued existence of an Earthly Paradise, and there was a good deal of speculation about its geographical location.

By the time of Tertullian (died 220 A.D.) the features of the EP were rather well set, and the medieval tradition adds little. In the EP trees, flowers and fruit abound perpetually, the air is always warm and fragrant, fountains plash and murmuring streams flow pleasantly through the land, sometimes over beds of precious stones. There is no pain, disease or want, neither anger nor war, no night, no death. To these features, equally appropriate to Elysium or Paradise, Christian writers added the four rivers mentioned in Genesis the first three of which were often associated with the Nile, the Ganges and the Tigris. Also added were the Trees of Life and of Knowledge from *Genesis*, and often jeweled walls and palaces similar to those in the Apocalypse (Revelations). The O.T. figures, Enoch and Elijah, who had not tasted death, were permanent residents.

For medieval writers the EP is always in the East, at the other side of a huge ocean or desert, frequently at the top of a mountain, and guarded by a wall of flame. It is somewhere beyond the land of Prester John, according to Mandeville's *Travels*, and medieval maps often show its location somewhere in or near India or China. The EP tradition helped to form the secular love gardens of medieval poetry which, in turn, influenced the form of the enchanted false paradises and blissful bowers of the Renaissance.

Descriptions of the EP are many, though most of the full portrayals do not occur in the more "literary" works of the period. The OE ***Phoenix***, however, provides a rather full description along typical lines. Here is a small extract:

Ne maeg ðaer	*ren ne snaw*	Nor may there rain , nor snow
ne forstes fnæst	*ne fyres blæst*	Nor the bite of frost, nor fire's blast
ne haegles hryre,	*ne hrymes dryre*	Nor fall of hail, nor descent of rime (frost)
ne sunnan hætu	*ne sincaldu*	Nor heat of the sun, nor constant cold
ne wearm weder	*ne winterscur*	Nor torrid weather, nor winter shower
wihte gewyrdan		Molest one

For ME see *Mandeville's Travels*, (which also includes a false paradise), and *The Land of Cokayne* whose coarse parody testifies to the familiarity of the legend (see *Cokayne* *).

See also Dante's *Purgatorio*, 28 and the *Romance of the Rose* 19,975 ff. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IV is indebted to the classical and EP traditions.

See also entry *Gardens*

Patch, *Other World*; Giammatti; Stith Thompson F111, F. 756.2.

ENDINGS (See BEGINNINGS)

ENGLAND, THE MATTER OF

The Matter of England refers to a group of medieval romances which take as their subject matter the legendary folk-heroes of pre-Conquest England. Some of these are directly derived, ironically, from French originals, all of them composed before the year 1300, and most written before those romances in Middle English dealing with either the Matter of Britain (v. *Britain*) or the Matter of France (v. *France*).

The earliest Matter of England romance, *King Horn* (c. 1250), is a much shortened version of an Anglo-Norman poem (c. 1170) and tells the story of a prince who is forced from his country by invaders, but returns to claim his throne and possessions, a version of the “exile and return” type of folktale which is a prominent motif among the Matter of England poems.

The concentrated narrative style of the English version with its abrupt narrative shifts and sparse detail, invites comparison to the Breton Lays * and to ballads.* Indeed, a ballad version of Horn and Rymenhild is found in Francis Child’s late nineteenth-century collection: *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads.*

Havelok the Dane employs the same type of “exile and return” motif as *King Horn*: the young Prince Havelok escapes death in Denmark at the hands of Godard, his father’s trusted councilor, who arranges with the fisherman Grim to have the child drowned so that he can rule the country himself. Grim recognizes Havelok as royalty and escapes to England with his family and the young prince, who lives as a working man. There the English princess Goldborough, who has suffered an ordeal similar to that of Havelok, is forced to marry the “working man”. Eventually Havelok returns to Denmark and regains his kingdom and retakes England for Goldborough. They live happily ever after.

Havelok is a version of earlier narratives: the *Estoire des engles* (c. 1150) by Geoffry Gaimar and *Lai d'havelok* in Old French. There is nothing courtly about the English *Havelok the Dane*; in fact it reflects its popular folk influence quite noticeably in the opening address to "goodmen, wives and maidens" and in the minstrel's request for a cup of good ale. The heroes are Grim the fisherman and his hardworking sons and other men of low rank with popular and simple names. The names of the kind of fish they catch are mentioned as if the audience would be familiar with them. Similarly designed for a popular audience are the recitation of the kinds of games enjoyed by people at the fair ; the vivid description of Havelok looking for a job as a cook's assistant; the frank enjoyment of the details of the brutal punishment meted out to aristocratic villains, and the fact that the royal hero remembers all his plebeian helpers generously at the end.

Along with the English heroes Horn, Havelok, and the heroes of *Sir Bevis of Hampton* and *Guy of Warwick* are a number of anti-establishment heroes of the Robin Hood kind. *Athelston* and *Gamelyn* are two romances which depict resistance to absolutism and oppressive authority. Gamelyn is declared an outlaw by a sheriff and flees to the forest to escape, and hence this story is numbered among the "romances of the greenwood," -- like Sherwood Forest.

Whether in short rhymed couplets or long alliterative rhymed couplets or in tail-rhyme stanzas, the verse in many of these romances ranges from undistinguished to bad.

J. Clawson

ENVOY/ENVOI A stanza that ends a ballade. It is generally addressed to a prince or other patron, and repeats the refrain from the poem proper.

Envoys of the French and more usual kind can be found in Chaucer's Ballades: "Womanly Noblesse: A Balade that Chaucer Made," "Fortune", "Truth: Balade de Bon Conseyl," "Lak of Stedfastnesse" which has an envoy to King Richard, and "Complaint to his Purse."
The pieces entitled :"L'Envoy a Scogan" and "L'Envoy a Bukton" are not envoys in the regular sense. They are whole poems, with their own envoy, and are more properly verse epistles.

EXEMPLUM

The *exemplum* (pl. *exempla*) is literally an "example", a story told to illustrate a point. It was, and remains, a favorite device of preachers and other teachers, for as Chaucer's Pardoner said: “Lewed people loven tales old” (Simple people love old stories). Astute public speaker that he was, he knew that illustrative anecdotes lingered in the minds of his hearers more readily than dry exhortation. His own tale is largely a long *exemplum* to illustrate the text *Radix malorum est cupiditas*--“Greed is the root of all evil.” Even the more sermonical part of the tale is dotted with shorter *exempla*. The *Nuns Priests Tale,* another Chaucerian rhetorical tour de force is, at its simplest level, an extended *exemplum* (as the Priest himself says) about recklessness, negligence and trust in flattery. Chanticleer's talk to his wife is filled with brief *exempla*.

Chaucer cleverly puts both of these tales in the mouths of professional preachers, for the use of *exempla* in preaching had a long and venerable tradition. It has rightly been pointed out,
for example, that the parables of Christ are excellent *exempla*, and among the early Fathers of the Church Gregory the Great had employed such stories in his sermons and Dialogues.

But the great age of the *exemplum* was the period from the 13 C to the 15 C. The new orders of preaching friars used the exemplum extensively and successfully as a means of reaching congregations of unlettered people. The friars drew their narratives from personal experience, from the great fund of biblical and classical narrative, from the lives of the saints and the legends of the Virgin Mary, and from the large body of popular fable. The preachers' use of tales in their sermons increased the desire for collections of such stories, and the collections in turn satisfied the preachers' need for varied material. Anthologies of *exempla* designed especially for preachers were produced, often organized by topics. And though Lives of the Saints were nothing new, Jacobus de Voragine's 13C *Legenda Aurea (Golden Legend)**
was one of the great medieval storehouses of tales about Christ and His saints. John Bromyard’s *Summa Praedicantium* is a collection intended directly for the use of preachers. The *Gesta Romanorum,* which has very little to do with the Romans, is the great collection of moralized secular tales from the period.

Unfortunately, some preachers brought a sensible preaching practice into disrepute by narrating tales which were patently absurd or even offensively ribald. Both orthodox Church Councils and reformers like Wycliffe vigorously condemned such preachers as purveyors of scandalous tales rather than expounders of God's word. One can understand therefore, why the "gentils" of the Canterbury pilgrimage immediately suspected that the sinister-looking Pardoner was going to tell one of the more offensive of such stories. Chaucer's dramatic skill is shown at its most adroit when he has that sleazy man disappoint their expectations so splendidly.

Jacobus de Voragine*; Gesta Romanorum*; Jones and Keller; Scanlon.

FABLIAU

A "fabliau" is a short merry tale, generally about people in absurd and amusing circumstances, often naughty sexual predicaments. The stories often involve a man, his unfaithful wife and a cleric who is the wife's lover. They are frequently crude and scatological, but never pornographic or perverted.

Such tales were very popular in France (hence the French term "fabliau", pl "fabliaux"), and in Italy (many of the tales in Boccaccio's *Decameron* are fabliaux). But very few survive in England, *Dame Sirith* being one of the few acknowledged fabliaux outside of Chaucer. At least some of those in Furrow’s collection of 15C comic tales would qualify also. A reading of some of the French stories in a translation like that by R. Hellman and R. O'Gorman, will demonstrate that Chaucer has raised this kind of yarn-telling to an art that most of these French stories do not attain or even aspire to. His characters have local habitations, names (often pretty distinctive names like Damian, Absalom), personalities (they talk in quite distinctive ways, like the students with northern accents in *The Reeve's Tale*), and quite elaborate plots. In most simple fabliaux names rarely matter and the plot goes thus: "There was this man who lived with his wife in a town, and there was this priest ..." Characters are indistinguishable from each other shortly after one has read a few fabliaux. By contrast the characters in *The Miller's Tale* : Absalom, Alison, John and Nicholas, are very memorable , and the plot is deliciously intricate and drawn out to an absurd and unnecessary complexity which is part of the joke. In fact, *The Miller's Tale* is one of the great short stories in the English language.

The *Miller's Tale*, like the tale of the Knight which precedes it, is about two young fellows who are after the same girl. But there is no exotic locale here and no aristocratic milieu; that kind of thing is for Romance, as in the Knight's tale. In the fabliau we have a small English university town, where students lodge in the houses of townspeople. The girl in question is no reluctant damsel, but the young, pretty and discontented wife of the old carpenter in whose house Nicholas the student or "clerk" lodges. The love talking is more country than courtly, the only battle is an uproarious exchange of hot air and hot plowshare, and the cheeks kissed are not on the face. The Miller's Tale provokes another great Chaucerian fabliau, the Reeve's Tale, where a miller is the butt of the same kind of humor.

Chaucer himself realized that some people of his own day might take exception to the "frank" treatment of adulterous sex in the fabliaux, so he invites readers of delicate sensibility who do not "list (wish) to hear" ribald tales, to "turn over the leaf and choose another tale" of a different kind, for he does have some pious and moral tales. Another little excuse and warning: it is only a joke, he says, and one "should not make earnest of game," a warning often neglected by solemn critics. At the end of *The Miller's Tale* Chaucer tells us that the audience of pilgrims laughed heartily; this includes the "gentils" and the clerics, implying that his apology was not really necessary!

Chaucer's other fabliaux are the tales of the Cook (unfinished), Merchant, Shipman, Manciple and Summoner (and some would add the Friar), though many of these would fit in other categories as well. They range from the rollicking farce of the tales of the Miller and Reeve through the cool smoothness of paid and arranged adultery in the Shipman's tale, to the distinct unpleasantness of the powerful Tale of the Merchant which has a plot somewhat like that of the Miller, but with a totally different tone.

A good deal of ink has been spilled from the time of Bedier onwards (1890) about the authorship and audience of the fabliaux. Rather like the ballads, the French fabliaux were generally anonymous and rather impersonal in tone, and their topic often love (or lust) and revenge, but never in a tragic way, always comic. Bedier felt (with reservations) that the source and audience of the fabliaux was "bourgeois"; Nykrog (1957) set out to show that they were often courtly in origin and that they ridiculed the lower classes, lay and clerical alike. There is every reason to believe that all classes enjoyed them.

The fabliaux were something of an embarrassment to Anglo-Saxon critics of the late 19C and early 20C like Root and Tatlock (and apparently still are to some more puritanical and literal-minded among newer feminist critics). Tatlock's prose translation of the Miller's Tale in the *Canterbury Tales*, for example, is so bowdlerized that is is partly unintelligible. In the last fifty years, however, many of the fabliaux have reached a position of high regard.

Hellman & O'Gorman; Furrow; Bedier; Nykrog.

FAIR UNKNOWN

A motif common in medieval literature and central to some romances in various languages. A 12C French romance, referred to variously as *Le Bel Inconnu, Li Biaus Descouneus, Ginglain,* has as its hero Gawain's bastard son, Ginglain, who comes to Arthur's court knowing his parentage but concealing it in order to prove his worth independent of his father. *Lybeaus Desconus* is a 14C English version of the same romance.Chretien's *Perceval* and *Havelok the Dane* have, in their very different ways, many elements of the Fair Unknown theme, as has *Ipomedon*.

In English the fullest treatment of the theme, and probably the most familiar, is the "Tale of Gareth" in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. (See also the stories of "La Cote Mal Taile" and "Alexander the Orphan" in Malory). Gareth, a younger brother of Gawain, comes to Arthur's court concealing his lineage, is humiliated by Kay, who calls him "Beaumains" and puts him to work in the kitchen. Gareth begs from the king the adventure of helping a lady in distress, endures her ridicule and contemptuous words, and finally proves himself a true noble knight, has his lineage proclaimed by his mother, who has come to court, and marries his true love, the lady he has rescued.

Depending on the point of view, these stories can be looked upon as demonstrations of the aristocratic prejudice that birth will out; that a nobleman will act as a noble man and that his conduct will proclaim his "gentillesse" through all disguises and humiliations; or they can be seen simply as versions of *bildungsroman* where the hero grows to maturity and finds his real identity by exertion and endurance, rather than by mere inheritance.

FEASTS AND FASTS

The following are by no means all the feasts and fasts of the Christian year, but they are the chief ones. Those that do not have a date in this *alphabetical* list are **moveable** feasts or fasts, i.e. the dates change from year to year. Some further information follows this first list.

Advent,
All Hallows (Nov.1)
All Souls (Nov. 2)
Annunciation (Mar 25)
Ascension
Ash Wednesday

Assumption (Aug. 15)
Candlemas (Feb. 2)
Christmas (Dec. 25)
Childermas (Dec. 28)
Circumcision (Jan. 1)
Corpus Christi
Easter
Epiphany or Twelfth Night (Jan. 6)
Good Friday
Lammas (Aug. 1)
Lady Day (Mar.25 or Aug. 15)
Lent
Martinmas (Nov. 11)
Maundy Thursday
Michaelmas (Sep. 29)
New Years Day (Jan. 1 or Mar. 25)
Pentecost
Valentine's Day (Feb. 14),
Whitsun (see Pentecost).

FIXED. (In order of the *calendar* year).

January 1: Feast of the *Circumcision* of Christ. New Year’s Day according to one common reckoning in the Middle Ages (For another see March 25th).

January 6: *Epiphany*, celebrating the visit of the Three Wise Men from the East to the infant Christ. *Twelfth Night* (after Christmas).

February 2: *Candlemas.* Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary after the birth of Christ, and of the presentation of Christ in the temple. Candles were blessed in church.

February l4. *St Valentine's Day*. From the 14C. in England and France known as the day on which birds and people chose their lovers.

March 25: *Lady Day*. Feast of the Annunciation when the Angel announced to the Virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of Christ, who was conceived on this day. First day of the year by a reckoning that remained common until the 18C. A rent or quarter day.

August 1. *Lammas* (OE *hlaf-maesse* = loaf mass). A harvest festival at which loaves baked from the earliest reaped corn were blessed in church. Popular etymology derives the term incorrectly from "lamb mass."

August 15. Feast of the *Assumption* of the Virgin Mary into heaven. Like March 25, often referred to as Lady Day.

September 29. *Michaelmas*.(pronounced Micklemas) Feast of St. Michael the Archangel. A rent or Quarter Day.

November 1. *All Hallows* (All Saints). A Round Table day * .
November 2. *All Souls*. A day to remember and pray for the souls of the dead.
November 11. *Martinmas*. Feast of St. Martin. A rent day.
December 25. *Christmas*. Birthday of Jesus. Old Norse name is Yule. Round Table Day.
December 28. *Childermas*. The slaughter of the Holy Innocents by King Herod in an attempt to kill Christ.

MOVEABLE Fasts and Feasts: (In order of the *liturgical* year).

Advent: The beginning of the liturgical year. A period of about four weeks immediately preceding Christmas to prepare for the birth of Christ. Fasting was prescribed for several days in each week.

Lent: The penitential season of 40 days (excluding Sundays) preceding Easter. Fasting and abstention from meat and eggs was prescribed for every day except Sunday. The season began with Ash Wednesday and ended with Easter.

Ash Wednesday: The first day of Lent. So called because ashes were and are distributed in church on that day to remind the faithful of their mortality and of the need for penance with these words: *Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulvere reverteris:* Remember, man, that thou art dust and into dust thou shalt return..

Maundy Thursday: The day before Good Friday. Day to commemorate the Last Supper at which Christ instituted the Eucharist. "Maundy" derives from "mandatum" = commandment, the first word in the ceremony of the washing of the feet on that day: *Mandatum novum do vobis*: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another."

Good Friday: Commemoration of Christ's death by crucifixion. "Good" because Christ's sacrifice earned the world's salvation.

Easter: (OE "Eastre" or "Eostre", a heathen goddess whose festival was celebrated at the Spring equinox). The Christian festival celebrating the Resurrection of Christ kept the pagan name but changed the significance . A Round Table Day.

Ascension: The Thursday forty days after Easter, commemorating the ascent of Christ from earth to heaven after his brief sojourn on earth immediately following his death and resurrection.

Pentecost: Also called Whit Sunday. Ten days after the Ascension. Commemorates the coming of the Holy Ghost to the apostles in "tongues of fire" to sustain their spiritual strength. Considered to be the founding day of the Church. "Whitsunday" = White Sunday , so called from the white robes worn on that day by the newly baptized in the early days of English Christianity. A Round Table Day when King Arthur wore his crown and entertained his knights.

Corpus Christi (Body of Christ): Second Thursday after Pentecost. A feast established in the 13C to commemorate the institution of the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday (see above). The most common aspects of the feast in England were the procession of the blessed Sacrament in which all the faithful took part and the staging of the Mystery or Miracle
Plays. * Hence the name Corpus Christi is sometimes applied to the play cycles.

FELIX CULPA (Happy Fault)

A phrase expressing the paradoxical notion that the sin of Adam was indeed a fortunate fate since it caused God Himself to come to earth to redeem man. The thought and the phrase are still embodied in the *Exultet* of the liturgy for the Easter vigil. "O truly needful sin of Adam which was blotted out by the death of Christ. Oh happy fault which merited so great a Redeemer!" Though the idea could be found in the writings of Ambrose and Gregory the Great, and though the phrase has been in the liturgy since about the 7 C, it did alarm less daring spirits at times, and was deleted from some western liturgical texts.

The idea was pervasive, and specific reference to it can be found in (a) *Piers Plowman*, B, V, 489 (b) the ME lyric *Adam Lay Ybounden*--with a Marian variation (Carleton Brown XV, no 83. (c) *Paradise Lost*, XII, 469-478. (d) James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake,* passim with many variations.

Lovejoy; Hughes

FLYTING

A form of vituperative verse that flourished in the medieval period and, especially in Scotland, into the early Renaissance. It is essentially a "debate" * between two pretty evenly matched opponents, in which insult, invective and imprecation take the place of reasoning. In the Scottish versions each contestant aims to bury his opponent under a mountain of abuse which abounds with scatology, accusations of shameful parentage, and descriptions of the opponent's gargoyle physique. The verse, often heavily alliterative, can have great vigor, and draws on the full verbal inventiveness of the participants. The custom seems to have been as much an exercise or game for the amusement of the audience and the participants as anything else.

Different kinds of verbal conflicts are often referred to as "flytings": the battle taunts in the *Battle of Maldon*, for example. Similar confrontations take place in La3amon’s *Brut* and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (passim); the Unferth-Beowulf exchange in *Beowulf,* and even the rather static debate in the *Parlement of the Three Ages*. Skelton's "Mannerly Margery" has been called an amorous flyting. Of the later flytings — some so entitled — the better known are: "The Flyting between Dunbar and Kennedy" (c. 1500-05)by Dunbar. "The Flyting of Skelton against Garnesche" (c. 1514) by Skelton? "Sir David Lyndesay's Reply to King James V" (c. 1536) by Lyndsay? "The Flyting between Montgomery and Polwart" (c. 1582) of doubtful authorship.

It seems to have been a lively pastime among Icelanders, where the opponents were sometimes a man and a woman, and the insults heavily sexual and scatological. The insulting match between Prince Hal and Falstaff in *Henry IV*, Pt.II: 1,iv, 266 ff and 489 ff is a kind of flyting. So are the matches of wit in *Bussy Dambois* III, 2 and *Revenge of B. D* .I, 1 , *The White Devil* III, 2.

Boswell records for 1780 a kind of flyting on the river Thames which, he says, Johnson won. Compare also the game played by black youths today sometimes referred to as "the dozens".

Wittig; Bawcutt; Brown-Robbins, **Index** & Supplement, 456.5 and 474.5. M.C. Bradbrook, p.118-119.

FORTUNE (See WHEEL of Fortune)

THE FOUR DAUGHTERS OF GOD (The Parliament in Heaven, The Debate or Reconciliation of the Heavenly Virtues or Graces).

The Daughters or Graces are Truth, Justice, Mercy, Peace. The allegory, dating from the XI C, is based on the words of Ps. 85. "Mercy and truth are met together justice and peace have kissed." It has many variations, but in general, it consists of a debate between these four attributes of God — sometimes conducted in His presence in Heaven — about the wisdom of creating man or (after the Fall) about the propriety of strict justice or mercy for erring mankind. Justice and Truth appear for the prosecution, Mercy for the defense. Peace presides over their reconciliation when Mercy prevails, as she invariably does. In most English examples the scene is set at some point well after the Creation: for example
(a). just before the Annunciation *(Ludus Coventriae* and, apparently most other literary and iconographical occurrences)
(b) immediately after the death of Christ *Piers Plowman*)
(c). after the death of man *(Castle of Perseverance*).

In a variant of the Parliament, known as *Processus Belial* (The Devil's Lawsuit) the chief protagonists are the Virgin Mary and the Devil. Belial summons Justice and Truth to his aid, Our Lady calls on Mercy and Peace.

The Virtues are almost invariably female except in *Mankind* where Mercy and Truth are male. The colors of their clothes are specified in the map to the *Castle of Perseverance*: Mercy wears white, Justice red, Truth "sad green", and Peace black. According to Chew, artistic representations offer no analogy to these colors, and he feels that "the conventions were not clearly established."

Other iconographic conventions do not seem to have been established either, but Justice is generally represented with scales or a sword, Peace with a palm, inverted torch or truncated sword. Truth may have a carpenter's square or tables of the law, and Mercy a box of ointment. As often as not, however, Mercy and Truth have no pictorial attributes.

The allegory persisted into the Stuart period, and references to it can be found in Milton's *Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow, and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between
Throned, in celestial sheen (141-5)

There are strong echoes also in *Paradise Lost*, III, 132-4, and in the court scene of *The Merchant of Venice*.

The Debate occurs in the following works in ME: *Cursor Mundi*, 9517 ff; *Gesta Romanorum* No. 55; R. Grosseteste, *The Castel of Love*, 275 ff; *The Court of Sapience*, Bk. I; *Piers Plowman* B text, XVIII, C text, XXI; *Castle of Perseverance*, 3130 ff; *Mankind* 832 ff ; Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*.

Traver; Chew; Sajavaara.

FOX (See RE(Y)NARD)

FRANCE, MATTER OF

The Matter of France refers to medieval romances * whose subject matter drew from the Old French epic poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries known as *chansons de geste*. These chansons were narratives in verse that celebrated the heroic deeds of Charlemagne and his vassals fighting as Christian warriors against the Muslims of Spain.

The earliest surviving *chanson de geste* and the most imitated, *La Chanson de Roland*, was composed in the eleventh century, and relates the story of Count Roland who led a part of Charlemagne's crusading army through a mountain pass in the Pyrenees where they were attacked and massacred at Roncevaux (or Roncevalles). Based on an historic incident which occurred in 768, the poem refers to the attackers as Saracens when in fact they were probably Basques.

The major characters in the *Chanson de Roland* are Roland and his friend Oliver; Bishop Turpin, Charlemagne's chief advisor; and Roland's stepfather Ganelon* whose betrayal of Roland earned him a reputation as an archetypal traitor like Judas. As nationalistic epic the poems express the ideals of loyalty as well as devotion to God, country, and the feudal leader, Charlemagne. English narratives did not begin to reflect the Matter of France until the fourteenth century from which there is only one fragmentary version of *The Song of Roland* extant.

Understandably there are few English poems which deal with the Matter of France. *The*

Sowdone of Babylone (c.1400-50) is a composite poem with parts from several separate Anglo-Norman poems; some of the linking passages are borrowed from P*iers Plowman*, and it also contains a Saracen prayer for victory directed to Mars borrowed from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* (Barron, 100). In the English *Sir Ferumbras* the story begun in *The Sowdone of Babylone* is elaborated. Ferumbras is a giant knight who does battle with Oliver, one of Charlemagne's knights, and subsequently becomes a Christian after losing to Oliver in a fight. There are also the romances in the Otuel group: *Roland and Vernagu, The Sege of Melayne (Milan), Otuel, Duke Rowland and Sir Otuell of Spayne*, and *Otuel and Roland*. These romances deal with the circumstances begun when Roland kills the Saracen giant Vernagu and is challenged by Vernagu's nephew Otuel.

The *Sege of Melayne* tells a story which does not occur in any French poems about Charlemagne, and may have originated in England. This tale is a type of "homiletic" romance which employs as a story element God's direct intervention, usually in the form of miracles, in order to chastise and later save the heroes . Charlemagne's advisor, archbishop Turpin, plays a large role in this story, and many critics have extolled his characterization as one of the more notable ones in Middle English.

In the fifteenth century the Matter of France all but disappears from English romance except for prose versions and one notable romance written in Middle Scots called *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear* (Ralph the Collier). In this story, of which no French original exists, Rauf puts Charlemagne up for the night and treats him as an equal. Late in the fifteenth century Caxton produced versions of the three major cycles of the *chanson de geste: Charles the Grete, Foure Sonnes of Aymon* (from the *barons revoltés* cycle), an the *Siege of Jerusalem.* From these prose redactions the Matter of France was later transmitted to an expanding Elizabethan reading public with whom these tales were quite popular.

J. Clawson

GANELON

This name, like that of Judas, became a byword for treachery. (See, e.g., *Nuns Priests Tale*, l. 461). Ganelon is the villain of the *Song of Roland (see Matter of France).* He was the husband of Charlemagne's sister, and stepfather to Roland. Out of hatred for his stepson he conspired with the Saracens of Spain, and caused the destruction of the whole of Charlemagne's rearguard, including Roland and Oliver, at Roncevalles.

GARDENS

The garden setting is an important motif in medieval literature, and its details derive from both the classical *locus amoenus*, described by Virgil, Ovid and other classical poets, and from the gardens of the Bible, especially the Garden of Eden and the *hortus conclusus*, the "garden enclosed" of the *Song of Songs*. In medieval art and literature these two garden traditions converged to form complex and prominent images with both sacred and profane elements: gardens were associated with both secular Courtly Love, and with spiritual devotion, especially to the Virgin.

In classical culture Venus was the goddess of gardens as well as goddess of love associated with the Greek Aphrodite, just as Priapus was god of gardens and of male lust. Classical literary descriptions of gardens evoke an ideal physical world through sensuous descriptions of a pleasance, or *locus amoenus*, typically a shady retreat near bubbling streams and green meadows. In medieval literature, the garden, and especially the *locus amoenus*, often occurs in conjunction with a dream vision * , as in the French *Roman de la Rose*, Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, or the poem *Pearl*. A partial translation of the first of these, *The Romaunt of the Rose*, is attributed to Chaucer, and the *hortus conclusus* is central to the themes of sex and/or temptation in the *Merchant's Tale*, the *Franklin's Tale*, and the *Shipman's Tale*, and even in the *Knight's Tale*

While Classical literature contributed much to the medieval portrayals of the natural world, it was the biblical images of Eden which preoccupied the literary as well as religious imagination. Not only was this garden the place where The Fall occurred ; it was where an Earthly Paradise * might still be. The idea that Paradise actually existed somewhere on earth was a common idea into the Renaissance; even Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Bk. IV) locates Paradise as an enclosed garden in Assyria (IV:285). Since the original sin of the Fall was sometimes thought to be sexual, the *locus amoenus*, like the garden of Eden, can be at the same time both a pleasant place and a dangerous place.

The *hortus conclusus*, the enclosed garden of the *Song of Songs*, equating the garden with the beloved, was another powerful image: "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (4:12). The *Song* is a biblical lyrical effusion on love which one aspect of the medieval mind insisted was a spiritual allegory, the other part as a hymn to erotic human love. For one the enclosed garden was the Virgin Mother of God; for the other it was the *paradis d'amour* of secular Love.

J. Clawson

Pearsall and Salter; Macdougall

GENTILESSE

Gentilesse is the quality of being "gentil" -- which can mean at least two things in medieval English literature. The aristocratic notion of gentility is that it is a matter of "gentle" birth, the *gens* or family to which one belongs, hence the genes one has from "gentle" parents. So a gentleman is one born into such a family who ideally behaves himself according to an exacting code of bravery, generosity, magnanimity and good manners generally. This is the sense in which Chaucer's Squire uses it, and his father, the Knight, is the epitome of this idea of "gentilesse": *He was a very parfit* ***gentil*** *knight*. May, the woman in *The Merchants Tale,* insists: "I am a gentil woman and no wench". The Manciple makes the sardonic contrast of terms for an erring gentle-woman and a working girl:

There is no differenc•, truly,
Betwixt a wife that is of high degree, high rank
If of her body she dishonest be, unfaithful
And a poor wench, other than this --
If it so be they work• both amiss – If they both do wrong
But that the gentle in estate above, gentlewoman, of high rank
She shall be cleped his "lady", as in love; be called
And for that other is a poor woman,
She shall be cleped his "wench" or his "lemman",
And, God it wot, mine own• dear• brother. God knows
Men lay that one as low as lies that other.

The aristocratic view holds that *gentilesse* will out eventually, no matter what the disguise. Hence the stories of *Fair Unknown* * of the kind illustrated in Malory's account of *Sir Gareth,* and in accounts of Sir Perceval whose *gentilesse* eventually triumphs over his rustic upbringing.

A *gentil* also uses "fair speech" and not "churl's terms" of the kind for which Chaucer professes to apologize in the fabliaux. He illustrates the differences in gentil and non-gentil speech even in the birds of *The Parliament of Fowls.*

The other view of *gentilesse* is the more democratic one also expressed Chaucer, and by

Dante, Gower and some of their predecessors — that nobility is not a matter of birth, but of behavior, an idea worked out in Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* and the subject matter of the beauteous hag's pillow sermon in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, as well as in Chaucer's poem *Gentilesse*. Gower seems to have been appalled when this point of view, expressed in his *Confessio Amantis*, IV, 2222 ff., was shared by the peasants in the Revolt of 1381 with vigor and political conviction. Their chanted rhetorical question was : *When Adam delved and Eva span / Who was then the gentleman?*" The obvious answer frightened him badly.

The adjective *gentil* seems to have had a wide set of meanings which included more than the qualities mentioned above. Harry Bailey, the Host in *The Canterbury Tales*, uses the word to apply to rogues and wretches like the Pardoner, the Summoner, and the Shipman, and Chaucer himself used it to describe Harry Bailey's inn, that "gentil hostelry". In these uses, however, there may lurk touches of irony difficult for us to detect at this distance in time.

GLASTONBURY
A monastery in Somersetshire, England associated with Arthur and with Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Christ and the first Keeper of the Holy Grail. (See *Grail*).

About the year 1190 the graves of Arthur and Guinevere were "discovered" at the abbey together with a lead cross on which were carved the words *Hic jacet sepulturus inclitus rex arturus in insula avalonia:* "Here lies buried the famous king Arthur in the island of Avalon." It has been suggested that the claim that Glastonbury was Avalon * which held the bones of Arthur was a late but ingenious monastic invention designed to attract tourists and contributions to the abbey's rebuilding fund. Certainly, the historian-monk William of Malmesbury who had stayed at Glastonbury between 1125 and 1140 and wrote a history of the monastery, makes no mention of a tradition connecting Arthur with Glastonbury. In fact he says that "the tomb of Arthur is nowhere to be seen" although contemporary Britons (Bretons, Welsh, Cornish), he says, still tell wild stories about him . By the 14 C the connection of Arthur with Glastonbury was well established: in the three English versions of the death of Arthur -- the Stanzaic, the Alliterative, and Malory's -- the hero's tomb is at Glastonbury.

The other major legend associated with Glastonbury is that Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Christ, brought the Holy Grail* to Britain and established the first British Christian community as Glastonbury. William of Malmesbury did not know of this tradition either. It seems to be the invention of French romance writers of the early 13 C. In the late 14 C *Historia* of John of Glastonbury the two legends become meshed: Arthur is the direct descendant of Joseph. The monastery, however, never claimed that Joseph had brought the Grail there.

GOLDEN LEGEND

This *Companion / Handbook* makes frequent reference to the **Golden Legend**, and so it seems appropriate to make an exception to our rule not to comment on individual books. The **Golden Legend** was a collection of Saint's Lives put together in the 13th C by Jacobus de Voragine, an Italian bishop. Hagiography (Lives of the Saints) was a much older tradition than Jacobus, as a look at Aelfric's Lives of the Saints in Old English will show, but deVoragine's Latin collection was enormously popular, and was translated into most of the vernaculars of Europe. It was one of the early books printed by Caxton and became a best seller quite quickly.

A legend literally means something to be read. Hence the Golden Legend might be titled the Golden Reader. It was meant to be read privately or aloud to a group or by preachers who, having read it, would have something to say about any given saint on the feast of that saint or on the major festivals of the Church. It had a Life for just about every day of the ecclesiastical year, including feasts of Christ and the Virgin Mary. So when the Miller in the **CT** says he is going to tell a "legend and a life" of a carpenter, he is making impish reference to these pious tales.

The **Golden Legend** was a totally uncritical compilation of stories that abounded in unbelievably perfect people, implausible miracles, unlikely coincidences, instantaneous conversions, invincible virgins, indomitable martyrs who endured unspeakable sufferings. This kind of credulous hagiography gave the book a rather bad name with some more critical

medieval Christians, and it became a real embarrassment to more scholarly people like Erasmus in the Renaissance.

To art historians like Emile Mâle it has proved very useful in understanding much of the art of the Middle Ages. For us it is also a very useful guide to the kind of story that was presented for medieval people's edification, an indication of one kind of hero and heroine they were encouraged to admire and, if possible, imitate.

Imitation would often have been a distant ideal, for this kind of hagiography has a very offhand attitude to death and to the sometimes excruciating tortures of the martyrs. This possibly reflects the brutality of much medieval life. At any rate, it is a feature exhibited in Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* and *Second Nun's Tale,* a fact that has led some critics (probably mistakenly) to take it as an indication of the Prioress's character rather than a feature of the saint's life genre. For some reason the Second Nun is not charged in the same way for the casual way her heroine, Cecilia, threatens her husband with death if he touches her on their wedding night, and goads him into martyrdom. This story also treats us to the grotesque scene where the executioner has not managed to behead the heroine herself in the allotted three strokes so that she goes on preaching with her head half off , and has the presence of mind to make a will. Still, the details of her death are not as racking as the accounts of the martyrdom of , say, St Catherine in the **Legend**. These are the kinds of unbelievably good women that clerks admire, the Wife of Bath says sardonically.

But the Wife might have admired the touch of belligerence sometimes evident in the courage of these victims. Cecilia is quite truculent, and St James the Dismembered has some pugnacious taunt for his persecutors after each limb is severed from his body, a process that takes an astonishingly long time before death finally silences him.

To modern readers one of the oddest features of the **Legend** is its liking for fanciful etymologies, the kind of unscientific speculation about name origins that was meant as a source of edification rather than of onomastic accuracy. This practice does not pretend to be more than a preacher's licence in extracting from all features of the story whatever edification they might yield, but it gives insight into the kind of speculation that some medieval minds enjoyed. For example, in the Second Nun's Tale again, when the lyrical introductory prayer to the Virgin is finished, Chaucer gives us four elaborate stanzas of folk etymologizing of Cecilia's name derived from the **Legend**.

GO, LITTLE BOOK

A formula for ending a work that was common in the later Middle Ages. The formula partakes of both the HUMILITY * topos and the ENDING convention (see Beginnings and Endings*). The most familiar example in medieval English literature is probably the ending of *Troilus and Criseyde* (V, 1786 ff):

> *Go, little book, go little my tragedy*

There God thy maker yet, ere that he die, he = author
So send• might to make in some comedy strength to
But, little book, no making thou n'envy no poetry (of others)
But subject be to all• poesy
And kiss the steps where as thou seest pace
Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, and Stace.

A version of the formula is found at the end of *The Flour and the Leaf,* a genuinely "little book" of fewer than 600 lines, but also at the end of Lydgate's *Troy Book* and *The Fall of Princes,* neither of them "little". See also the *Kingis Quair* attributed to James I of Scotland, Skelton's *Garland of Laurel*;" *The Court of Love* and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci (in* Skeat*, v.7)*; Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure* where he prays to be saved from "wrong impression" (i.e. bad printing); Dunbar's *Golden Targe*.
Holtzknecht and the B-R *Index* cite many other examples of the formula at the end of medieval English poems. Since most of these citations are roughly contemporary with or later than Chaucer, it is possible that he was responsible for the vogue in England, though he himself may have got it from Boccaccio , who, in turn may have been indebted to Horace, Catullus, or, even more likely, Ovid.

Brown-Robbins, **Index**, 926-932 and **Supplement** 927.5; 928.5; Holtzknecht;
R. Tatlock; for uses from Ovid onwards. Schoeck *(*includes modern instances up to Pound*)*; Pearsall, *The Flour and the Leaf*, esp. note to l.591-5.)

GRAIL

The Grail appeared for the first time as "graal" in Chretien de Troyes' poem *Perceval or Le Conte del Graal*.(late 12C). There it was a dish carried by a maiden in a quasi-ecclesiastical procession at a feast. Perceval fails to ask who is fed with the "graal" and hence is responsible for failing to bring relief to the Waste Land. In the procession there is also a child carrying a bleeding lance. We learn later that the Fisher King, who is somehow wounded between the thighs (by a lance?) is fed with a single wafer that is in the dish.

Shortly after Chretien's unfinished *Perceval* Robert de Boron picked up on the religious coloring of Chretien's "graal" and turned the graal into the actual chalice of the last supper in which Joseph of Arimathea *, a disciple, had caught the blood of the Crucified Christ, and he changed the bloody lance into that which had pierced Christ's side at the Crucifixion . The graal had now become the *Holy* Grail, and even folkloristic elements like the association of the graal or grail with food and feasts supplied by a cornucopia evidently became associated with the Last Supper and the Eucharistic Sacrament, the Bread of Heaven, as it was earlier associated with the banquet in Chretien. Later the Grail was supposedly taken by Joseph of Arimathea, the Grail keeper, to Glastonbury * in Britain, though the monastery there never claimed this. In Wolfram's German *Parzifal* the grail is a kind of precious stone whose presence produces magnificent food.

After Perceval's failure at the Grail Castle he continually seeks the Grail and in the post-Chretien versions other knights of the Round Table do so also, and one of the large French romances devoted to their adventures is called the *Queste del Saint Graal*, used by Malory for his *Morte D'Arthur*. In both romances, the Grail is "achieved" in some mysterious way by Perceval, Bors and Galahad. In some accounts the mysterious wound of the Keeper of the Grail is healed and concomitantly the Waste Land is restored. By one account the Grail was taken up into heaven at this point, but that has not prevented any number of modern authors especially since Tennyson from featuring it in their fiction.

GREECE AND ROME, MATTER OF (Also Matter of ANTIQUITY)

Classical antiquity provided a treasure trove of story for medieval romancers to refurbish in chivalric terms. The Alexander legend, the Trojan War, the legendary history of Thebes, the **Aeneid**, and the legend of Orpheus's trip to the underworld are all represented in the small group of English romances on classical themes.

ALEXANDER See separate entry

ORPHEUS The story was well known in medieval times from the versions in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, X and from Virgil's *Georgics* IV. King Alfred's 9C rendering of Boethius into Old English has a version of the story, heavily moralized. The Middle English author of the *Sir Orfeo* has turned the legend into a fairytale about a king of England whose capital was Winchester, and has provided it with a happy ending.

TROY The ME Troy romances are based primarily on the *Roman de Troie*, written in Anglo-Norman French in the mid 12C by Benoit de Sainte-Maure, and on a Latin prose abridgement of it, the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* written in 1287 by Guido delle Colonne. Benoit's romance draws its historical information from the alleged eye-witness accounts of two men who purportedly fought in the Trojan war: Dictys Cretensis, a Greek, and Dares Phrygius, a Trojan. Their works were "discovered" and translated into Latin in the early middle ages. Homer's *Iliad*, known mainly in a Latin summary, exerted little direct influence on the medieval Troy legend. In fact, Benoit disparages it for glorifying the Greek heroes. Since western Europeans liked to claim descent from Trojan heroes, Benoit prefers Dares's account and uses Dictys mainly to supplement it.

The story is told in chronological order, beginning with the voyage of Jason to capture the Golden Fleece and concluding with the return of the Greek warriors and the death of Ulysses, yet it is the Trojan heroes, especially Hector and Troilus, who are singled out for the highest praise. Benoit added a series of love stories, among them that of Troilus and Briseida, later to become Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde.

The earliest of the English Troy romances, *The Seege of Troye*, interpolates material from the classical tradition, fanciful legends not found in Benoit's matter-of-fact sources. The dream of Hecuba, the youth and judgement of Paris, the youth of Achilles----survive in truncated form, enhancing the romance qualities of the poem. But the English romancer is not interested in Benoit's long love monologues and descriptions, and instead relates his story in quick, vivid scenes, compressing it from the voyage of the Argonauts to the Fall of Troy into 1000 tetrameter couplets. The later English Troy romances in verse are based on Guido, and include the alliterative *The Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy* (c. 1350-1400), the *Laud Troy Book* (c.1400), and Lydgate's *Troy Book* (1412-1420). All of the metrical versions handle their sources quite freely.

William Caxton's prose Troy romances, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (1476) and *The History of Jason (*1477) are both close translations of 15 C French prose romances.

THEBES The legendary history of Thebes, including the story of Oedipus and the war between his sons, and its destruction by Theseus, is the subject of only one English poem, Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* (1420-22) derived from French sources and Statius's *Thebaid,* Lydgate stresses

the moral and political significance of the story, and turns the romance into a moving condemnation of war.

AENEAS Caxton's *Eneydos* (1490) is not a direct translation of Virgil but a conflation of

French sources, a romanticized *Aeneid*.

D. Childress

Young, A.M.

HARROWING OF HELL (OE *hergian*: to harry, plunder)

A pervasive motif in the homilies, poetry, drama and art of the Middle Ages. It deals with the descent of Christ into "hell" or limbo between his death and his resurrection, in order to release the souls of the Old Testament saints and prophets, who could not go to heaven until Christ's redeeming death had actually taken place. The tradition is based on an early apocryphal Latin account, the *Descensus ad Inferos* (Descent into Hell), which was frequently combined with the *Acta Pilati* (Acts of Pilate), largely an account of Christ's trial before Pilate. The combined version was referred to as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. In the OE and ME versions the tale of the Harrowing is related by two men who have been released from limbo with the others, but who have returned to earth briefly to tell the story which goes like this:

After Christ's death, Hell is suddenly filled with great light. The devils argue about whether or not to admit Christ, but "the lord of hosts" thunders the words of the 24th (25th) Psalm:

> *"Be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors and the king of glory shall come in."*
> *"Who is this king of glory?"* asks the Devil.
> *"The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."*

Christ smashes down the gates of Hell, defeats Satan in a verbal duel, and triumphantly leads out Adam and Eve, Isaiah, David, John the Baptist, and others. Christ, or the archangel Michael, leads the procession of souls into heaven, where they meet the repentant thief, as well as Enoch and Elijah, who have not yet tasted death. The two latter are also generally met with in the Earthly Paradise * .

The story of the Harrowing was well known even in A-S times. There is an OE version of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* in prose, and there are verse accounts in *Christ and Satan* and *Descent to Hell* in the Exeter Book. The event is referred to more briefly in *Christ* and in *Elene*. In ME the *Gospel* exists in at least four poetic and ten prose MSS. The Harrowing is also depicted in full plays and scenes in all the major mystery cycles; in the *Cursor Mundi,* and in the *Legenda Aurea* ("Resurrection"). There is a memorable version in *Piers Plowman, B,* XVIII where it takes place in the course of the debate between the Four

Daughters of God .* Here the Harrowing triumphantly illustrates that in Christ's redeeming act "Mercy and Truth are met together. Justice and Peace have kissed." (Ps. 85)

Another memorable version is Dunbar's fine poem beginning:

Done is the battle on the Dragon black.
Our champion Christ confounded has his force;
The gates of hell are broken with a crack,
The sign triumphal raised is of the cross,
The devils tremble with hideous voice.
Christ with his blood our ransom does endorce.
Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro

For images see the web at
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/9941/Hell.jpg
or
http://ibs001.colo.firstnet.net.uk/britishlibrary/controller/subjectidsearch?id=10619&idx=1&start=4

Crawford; Hulme

HERMIT

The hermit figures prominently as a genuine person in some of the earliest writing in England. In Bede's *History*, for example, about five chapters are devoted to Cuthbert, a hermit. St. Guthlac inspired a Latin life and two Anglo-Saxon poems. And there were numerous others.

The hermit's cell was sometimes attached to a church or monastery in reality, but the hermit of literature nearly always lived far away from the ways of man in a quiet or even desolate spot: "Under a wood and a great cliff on the other side and a faire water runninge under it." Malory's description of the site of the hermitage of Sir Baudewyn of Bretagne incorporates three features of the typical hermitage of literature, which appear in most such descriptions.

The clear water seems to be invariable.

> *At times the race of birds, driven by hunger flew to his hands where they found food ready and honored him with fervent voices....there eager travelers found help, ease of heart ... the holy man healed every man both body and soul.*

(***Guthlac*** *B).*

This also settled several other features of the hermit character: 1) Dispenser of hospitality 2) Healer of wounded knights 3) A man with special powers over animals, who are his friends 4) Father confessor and counselor and explainer of dreams, visions and other happenings.

The hermit is frequently met with in the romances of chivalry from the time of Chretien onwards, where he serves some or all of the above functions, especially towards knights errant. It is not uncommon in the tales for such knights to end their days as hermits also: Bedivere, Lancelot, Guy of Warwick, among others. Malory, indeed, makes an odd remark about Sir Baudewyn of Bretagne, the hermit who receives and heals Lancelot: "For there were none hermits in those days but that they had been men of worship and of prowess, and the hermits held great household and refreshed people that were in distress." Obviously, the ideal of what constituted the hermetical life varied widely. Malory appears to be referring nostalgically to a period, real or imaginary, when only the chivalrous took up a life which in his own day had frequently degenerated into a sordid excuse for laziness, earlier so eloquently denounced in Langland's *Piers Plowman*.

HEROD

"I would have such a fellow whipped of o'erdoing termagant. It out-herods Herod. Pray you avoid it." (*Hamlet* III, ii, 12-13). Hamlet's rebuke to ham actors shows how the medieval notion of Herod survived in Renaissance memory--as a silly ranter who would "tear a passion to tatters ... to split the ears of the groundlings." And such indeed he is in most of the medieval English plays in which he figures. His opening speeches in the Towneley *Offering of the Magi* and *Herod the Great,* for example, are typical of his ranting, tyrannical style. In the Coventry *Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors* Herod "rages in the pageant and in the street also" (stage direction post line 783). That a historically different Herod rants and rages and swears by Mahomet in *York* 31, which deals with the passion of Christ, not the nativity, indicates that medieval dramatists had small concern for chronological exactitude. The historical Herod of the Nativity period was known for his murderous rages. Josephus, the Jewish historian, mentions them, and the emperor Augustus was credited with the quip: "I had rather be Herod's pig than Herod's son." This aspect of Herod's character lost nothing in the long centuries of Christian commentary on biblical events. By the time of the mystery plays he was well established as a personification of

Anger and Pride, and thus a perfect foil for Christ, the Prince of Peace and the Lamb of God.
In one view Herod's opposition to God incarnate makes him not only mad but ridiculous. Hence the comic presentation in the plays. But there is another way of looking at a personification of two of the Seven Deadly Sins: incarnate Pride and Anger are punished even in this life. Hence *Cursor Mundi* (line 11817) shows Herod dying the most disgusting of deaths, a fearful combination of palsy, itch, leprosy, dropsy, etc. In the *Fall of Princes* he dies, body black and swollen, eaten by worms, and giving off a violent stench.

Iconographically Herod is sometimes represented with his legs crossed — a pose, according to Doob, typical of the enraged or mad.

R. Parker; P. Doob

HOLIDAYS (See Fasts and Feasts)

HORSES

The importance of the horse (Fr *cheval*) in medieval life can hardly be overstated. The knight was a "chevalier", a mounted warrior who was part of the "cavalry" in war, and practiced "chivalry" in both war and peace. It is said of Chaucer's Knight: *His hors were goode but* ***he*** *was not gay*. That is, his horses were in good shape, but he himself was not especially well dressed. A successful knight always took care of his horses first, for without them he was nothing. The king of England is reputed to have paid more in ransom for Sir Robert de Clinton's horse than for the young Geoffrey Chaucer captured in his one brush with soldiering.

For farmer and townsman alike the horse was an essential part of labor and transportation. It is not surprising, therefore, that then as now, horses were given names. Chaucer records the names of a couple of workhorses: Brok and Scot, as well as Bayard, once a rather famous animal, as a generic name for any horse.

Rather more numerous in the literature are the names of the horses of aristocratic breed that appear in the romances. Here are some of the more prominent:

Arundel:	Bevis of Hampton	Bucephalus:	Alexander
Gringalot:	Sir Gawain	Bayard:	Four Sons of Aymon
Grane:	Siegfried	Sleipnir:	Odin
Galathe:	Hector	Otuel:	Florys

HORTUS CONCLUSUS (See **GARDENS**)

HUMILITY (MODESTY) FORMULA

A declaration by an author of his inadequacy for the literary work he is beginning or has just finished. Curtius has shown that this convention goes back at least as far as Cicero, and has nothing specifically Christian about it. Most of his examples do not refer to purely literary work (pp. 83 ff and 407 ff). It was, however, a very widespread literary device in late antiquity and in the Middle Ages.

The traditional classical invocation to the Muses is such a formula at least on the surface. The poet calls upon a higher power to help him complete the task for which his own talents are inadequate, but there is in such introductions more than an implication that the poet's words are, in fact, divinely inspired, and that he is indeed a chosen medium for the divine or quasi divine .

In medieval times this kind of invocation takes two main forms in literary works. First there is the form openly derived from the classical mode and used by more learned authors like Dante (e.g. Inf. II, 7 and XXXII, 10; *Purg*. I, 8; XXII, 105; XXIX, 37; *Par*. II, 8, and XVIII. 82); Boccaccio *(Filocolo,* Bks 1 and 3); and Chaucer *(Troilus and Criseyde*, St. 2 and 3), this last showing a curious mixture of pagan and Christian. In more popular works the invocation to the muses is often replaced by a prayer to Christ or his mother, and hence is perhaps not properly regarded as part of a modesty topos. In the verse romances especially, these invocations often, though not always, bear the marks of oral delivery.

The modesty topos, with or without invocation to a higher power, can, of course, be transferred from author to fictive narrator as in the *Canterbury Tales*: Monk: "Have me excused of myn ignoraunce" (Monk's T. B2, 3180); Franklin: "Have me excused of my rude speche" (F. 718). Prioress: "O mooder mayde,... help me to telle it in thy reverence." (B2, 467ff).

There is often, either at the beginning or at the end of the work, a request for the general reader or a named reader, to correct the author's work. See, for example, the end of Chaucer’s *Troilus,* the end of Boccaccio's *Genealogia Deorum,* and Caxton's prologues and epilogues, passim. Sometimes there is an acknowledgement that what is good in the work is from God, what bad from the author (see end of *Genealogia,* and of Jean de Meung's *Testament*). The request for correction is, no doubt often merely conventional, but it can also be the result of practical or even painful experience. Chaucer's exasperated outburst at Adam Scriveyn in the little poem of that name is well known. Caxton's prefaces and epilogues speak knowingly about the weariness of body and spirit which leads to errors in writing, and of the "rudeness" of his Kentish English which is made even worse by the rustiness resulting from 30 years of living abroad. Caxton also writes of the need to correct his first edition of the *Canterbury Tales* for which a customer supplied a better text. Moreover, once a manuscript had left an author's hands, especially if it were in an incomplete form, there was little or no authorial control. Hence the authorial request for correction of rogue MSS might well be heartfelt rather than merely conventionally modest.

In addition to the instances mentioned above see “invocations” at the beginning of the Books in Chaucer's *House of Fame* (the first rather comical), *Anelida & Arcite*; the endings of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, *Fall of Princes* (Hammond, 186-7); and the opening of *The Court of Sapience.* See also the entry: *Go, Little Book.* *

Root; Hammond, 527-8 and 392 ff.

HUMORS, FOUR (Lat. *humor*--fluid, moisture).

Classical, medieval and Renaissance physiologists saw the human body as composed of four fluids or humors: yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm. Perfect physical health and intellectual excellence were seen as resulting from the presence of these four humors in proper balance and combination.

Medieval philosophers and physiologists, seeing man as a microcosm, corresponded each bodily humor to one of the four elements: fire, water, earth and air. Pain or illness was attributed to an imbalance in these bodily fluids, and an overabundance of any single humor was thought to give a person a particular personality, thus:

Fire corresponded to Yellow Bile which made one choleric, i.e. prone to anger.
Earth ,, ,, Black Bile ,, ,, melancholic, i.e. prone to sadness
Water ,, ,, Blood ,, ,, sanguine, i.e. cheerful
Air ,, ,, Phlegm ,, ,, phlegmatic, i.e. apathetic or stoic

As Antony says of Brutus in *Julius Caesar*

> *His life was gentle, and the elements*
> *So mixed in him that Nature might stand up*
> *And say to all the world "This was a man"*
> (V,v,73-75).

In Chaucer's General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* we learn this about the Franklin: "of his complexion he was sanguine" (l 335); of another pilgrim: "The Reeve was a slender choleric man" (l 589). The Reeve's choleric "humor" or "complexion" makes him cranky; the Franklin's sanguine humor makes him cheerful. Since a person's temperament was often visible in his face, the Franklin is probably being described as ruddy-faced.

In the Renaissance, playwrights like Ben Jonson wrote "comedies of humor" in which characters had personalities dominated by one particular trait. Hence their names: Epicoene, Sir Politic Would-be, Sir Epicure Mammon, Tribulation, Doll Common etc.

Even when the physiological theory of humors had long been abandoned, the word "humor" retained the meaning of "mood" or "personality", as it still does in the phrase “in a good or bad humor.”

The modern use of "humor"= amusement seems to have first appeared in the late 17th century, although the humors had been associated with laughter since ancient times when laughter was considered an appropriate cure for an imbalance of humors, and later on, characters in plays who exhibited “humorous" personalities were intended to be funny. Once the physiological meaning had evaporated, almost all that remained was the laughter.

R. Sternglantz

INCREMENTAL REPETITION

This is a trope in which one or more lines is repeated from stanza to stanza but with changes; something is added each time. It is particularly common in the ballad *. The well known ballads *Edward* and *Lord Randall* are good examples of incremental repetition.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

One of Christ's secret disciples who claimed Jesus's body after the crucifixion. His small biblical role was expanded by the apocryphal gospels. He was, for example, imprisoned, but was then released by the risen Christ. Somehow when the Grail * became associated with the cup of the Last Supper in medieval French romance, he became closely associated with it. He was said to have received it from Christ during his long imprisonment during which it sustained him. He took it with him to Britain on his release where he and his successors became the Keepers of the Grail at Castle Corbenic, though legend also had it that he founded the church at Glastonbury, * later a famous monastery where Arthur was reputedly buried.

JOSEPH, Husband of the Virgin Mary.

In Christian tradition and iconography Joseph was nearly always pictured as an old man. So he appears in some of the Miracle or Mystery Plays * as a *senex amans*,* that is as the pathetic or comic figure of an old man with a young wife who is sometimes unfaithful as a result. He has never heard of virgin birth, and has to be assured by a heavenly messenger that Mary's pregnancy is God's work and not the result of adultery; that she is the second *Eva* whose acceptance of the angelic *Ave* reversed the original sin of the first Eve. (The wordplay on *Ave / Eva* is a common medieval trope).

For this view of Joseph see *Ludus Coventriae*, "Joseph" and "The Trial of Joseph and Mary"; *Chester* 6; *York* 13; *Coventry*, "Shearman and Tailors"; *Towneley* 10 and 15. This tradition is based on the Apocryphal books of the New Testament, *Pseudo-Matthew* and *Protevangelium.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

The disciple who sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, betrayed Him with a kiss, and hanged himself in remorse. In the medieval view he is the incarnation of avarice, treachery, and the unforgivable sin of despair . The biblical story of Judas is familiar. (*Matt* 26:14-16, 47-50; 27:3-8; *Mark* 14:43-45; *Luke* 22:47-48). But from about the 12C another legend of Judas was current that related to his life before he met Jesus. It appears in the *Golden Legend*

(Pt. I, "St. Matthias") and first shows up in English in the late 13C *South English Legendary* (II, 692). This tale of Judas's birth and early life is strongly reminiscent of the stories of Moses and Oedipus. It goes thus:

Judas's pregnant mother dreamt that her unborn child would be monstrously evil, so when he was born he was set adrift in a basket. He was picked up on a distant shore by a queen who raised him as her own. Some time after finding Judas, however, she had a son herself. As Judas and the other boy grew up together it became known that Judas was not the queen's real son. "Burning with shame and jealousy", Judas killed the real heir and fled to Jerusalem where Pilate * took him up as a favorite. In a confrontation he killed his real father without knowing his identity, and Pilate gave the widow to Judas in marriage. Eventually Judas discovered he was married to his mother, resolved to do penance, and joined Jesus.

Even Jacob de Voragine, the author of the *Golden Legend,* is sceptical about this oedipal/mosaic tale, though the early part of the Pilate legend in the same book is similar in many ways (Pt. I, "The Passion of Our Lord").

There is also a legend that Judas had red hair or a red beard, a distinction he shares with Cain*. For this last feature see *OED,* s.v. "Judas", 4b. In medieval art he is often represented in a yellow robe. The tree upon which he hanged himself was an elder tree *(Piers Plowman,* C, II, 64). This is also mentioned in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost,* V, ii, 610 in a scene where Judas Iscariot and Judas Maccabeus, one of the Nine Worthies * are deliberately confused. In some versions the tree was an oak, the tree on which Absalom also had died, a parallel not lost on medieval artists. In others the tree bent its branches so that Judas could not hang himself, and his punishment was to be unable to die; he either roamed the earth something like the Wandering Jew, or he lived in eternal limbo, since no place would receive his body. In still another version he was run over by a wagon, swelled up and burst. A skin disease sometimes called "mesels" was also referred to as "mal de Judas."

The story of Judas is told in plays of the York, Wakefield, Chester and N-Town cycles. In one of the oldest English ballads, *Judas,* he betrays Jesus to get back the 30 pieces of silver stolen from him by his sister. In Dante's Hell he is in the ninth circle with other traitors. A legend that reappears in Matthew Arnold's poem "St Brendan" says that because Judas had once given his cloak to a leper, he was allowed out of hell for Christmas Day.

The Judas story is also found in an unfinished monologue at the end of the Towneley cycle, *The Hanging of Judas*. There is a *Dream of Judas's Mother Fulfilled* in the Roxburghe Ballads, and there seems to have been a resurgence of the legend in the popular chapbooks of the 18C.
Images depicting scenes from Judas's life (biblical scenes only) can be found on the web at:

http://www.textweek.com/art/judas.htm

Baum ; Braswell.

KENNING
A metaphoric trope of a kind common in Old Norse, Old Irish and Old English poetry. For example, O.E. *Godes condel beorht* (God's bright candle) = the sun. *Beadoleoma* (beam of battle) = sword *banhus* (bonehouse) = body; *fira modor* (mother of men) = earth *brimhengest*, *saemearh* (sea stallion, sea mare) = ship *hildewulf* (war wolf, battle wulf) = warrior.

The word "kenning" has also been used more loosely to describe other kinds of variation or periphrasis which do not involve metaphor: *leohta maest* (the greatest of lights) = the sun; *handweorc smiþa* (the handwork of smiths) = sword; *þeos wide gesceaft* (this wide creation) = the earth ; *flota* (floater) = ship; *helmberend* (helmetwearer) = warrior. Scholars who wish to confine the term "kenning" to the more strictly metaphorical expressions refer to this kind of periphrasis as "kent heiti" — both terms are borrowed from Old Norse.

The distinction to be drawn between the two expressions lies in the fact that the sun is *not* a candle, nor a ship a stallion, nor a warrior a wolf; but the sun *is* the greatest of lights, a ship is a floating thing, and a warrior does wear a helmet.

Some expressions, however, seem to straddle both categories. *ganotes baeþ* (gennet's bath) and *fisces baeþ* (fish's bath), for example, are expressions for the sea. While gannets do dip in the sea and fish are immersed in it, can it be called a bath for either?. *Homera laf* and *fela laf* (the leavings of hammers and files) are terms for the sword. While hammers and files were used in the making of swords, some imaginative leap is required to interpret the terms.

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van der Merwe Scholtz ; Brodeur.

LAI (See **BRETON LAI**)

LAMENT (See **PLANCTUS)**

LIBERAL ARTS

The seven liberal arts were the seven subjects that in theory constituted the curriculum in schools from classical times through much of the Middle Ages.

The Liberal Arts curriculum as defined by Martianus Capella (4C/early 5C a.d.) was divided into two parts: the Trivium, the three paths -- grammar, rhetoric and logic or dialectic; and the Quadrivium, the four paths of arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy (often called astrology).

Originally the Liberal Arts were supposed to be a necessary prelude to the study of philosophy, but in practice the quadrivium often got short shrift, with the emphasis and time largely concentrated on grammar and rhetoric. With the intellectual resurgence of the 12th century and the rise of the universities, the third member of the trivium, dialectic, became dominant in the study of both philosophy and theology. By the time of Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) the Liberal Arts were often nearly displaced by philosophy and theology in the universities, and constituted what was certainly regarded as a “lower” faculty.

The study of the liberal Arts necessarily involved reading in pagan authors and philosophers. Some of the early Fathers of the Church, like Jerome and Augustine, men steeped in the tradition of the classics who knew at first hand the seductive possibilities of this literarture, nevertheless argued that knowledge of grammar and rhetoric was essential for serious reading of the Holy Scriptures. Their arguments ensured that the pagan classics would be read throughout the MA without insuperable pressure from those who found such writings dangerous.

The seven liberal arts and the seven deadly Sins * and the Seven Virtues (3 theological and 4 Cardinal) could all be depicted in the same illustration as somehow related, as in Notre Dame MS B 42 Inferior, f 1r. (Unfortunately we are unable to reproduce this.)

Even the illustrator cannot quite see the connection: he has the 4 Cardinal virtues immediately above the 3 studies of the Trivium, and the 3 Theological virtues above the 4 studies of the Quadrivium. This illustration is especially interesting because below the Seven Arts it shows the 7 ancients who were felt to excel in each of the disciplines.

Justicia	*Fortitudo*	*Temperancia*	*Prudencia*	*Charitas*	*Spes*	*Fides*
Justice	Fortitude	Temperance	Prudence	Charity	Hope	Faith

Grammatica	*Logica*	*Retorica*		*Arithmetica*	*Geometria*	*Musica*	*Astrologia*
Whip & child	2 snakes	book		Arabic numbers	compass	guitar	quadrant
Priscian	Aristotle	Cicero	|	Pythagoras	Euclid	Tubalcain	Ptolemy

The most interesting is perhaps Musica who appears to be doing an uninhibited rendering on a lute, depicted above Tubalcain doing some kind of percussion with two hammers and an anvil, a nice conflation of Jubal (Tubal), "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ", and his brother, Tubalcain, "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron" (Gen. 4:21-22). This is the only biblical ancient.

Related or derived "arts" were *artes poetriae* treated by men like Matthew of Vendome and Geoffrey de Vinsauf in works directly derived from classical models. Other outgrowths of the Liberal Arts tradition were *ars dictaminis*, the skill of letter writing at various social levels, and the *ars praedicandi*, the proper ways to preach.
Other images of the Liberal Arts can be found on the web at :

http://www.uta.edu/english/TAR/officeweb/seven_liberal_arts.htm

LOVERS' PAINS

A phenomenon frequently depicted in medieval love poetry and romance, and showing the effects of unsatisfied love on the (usually male) victim. The convention undoubtedly had its origin in the poetry of Ovid, though the medieval version is a good deal less cynical than the Roman's. The affliction involves some or all of the following symptoms: lack of sleep and appetite, low spirits, moping, careless dressing, and a strong inclination to take to bed and pray for death. Here is Chaucer's description of the effects of unsatisfied (and undeclared) love on Arcite in the *Knights Tale*:

His sleep, his meat, his drink, is him bereft,	his food
That lean he waxed and dry as is a shaft,	So that he became
His eyen hollow, and grisly to behold,	
His hue fallow and pale as ashes cold,	
And solitary he was and ever alone,	
And wailing all the night, making his moan.	
And if he heard• song or instrument,	
Then would he weep, he might• not be stent ...	stopped
And in his gear for all the world he fared	behavior
Not only like the lover's malady	
Of Hereos, but rather like manie.	mania

The young male lovers in Chaucer's *Merchants Tale* and *Franklins Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde* (I, st.70, 76, 82) all take to bed in their distress. And Tristan and Lancelot have periods when they are stricken with love "manie" (i.e. mania), and go quite mad. The convention continues into the Renaissance: see, e.g., Rosalind in Shakespeare's ***AYLI***, III, ii, 390 ff., and Ophelia's reference to Hamlet's love madness (II, i, 77ff).

The alternating feelings of exaltation and despair of the lover became a commonplace of medieval poetry and commentary: “love is peace joined with hatred, faith with fraud, hope with fear, and fury mixed with reason, pleasant shipwreck, light heaviness, healthy sickness, satisfied hunger, glad sorrow, sweet evil ......" (Alanus de Insulis, *Complaint of Nature,* (Metre 5). A similar list of paradoxes and oxymorons can be found in *Romance of the Rose,* 4292 ff. and in Gower's *Vox Clamantis*, V, 2. The opening sections of both Gottfried's and Thomas's *Tristan,* describing the falling in love of Tristan's parents, use the convention with sympathy and with far less artificial rhetoric.

Chaucer's term "hereos" is apparently a confusion and conflation of the Greek "eros", love, and the Latin "heros", hero. Hereos is presumably the kind of great and passionate love which only a hero can experience.

MACARONIC VERSE

Macaronic Verse, freely defined, is poetry written partially in one language, partially in another. Some insist that to be called macaronic at least one language in such verse adopt some of the grammatical features of the other where the effect is frequently comical, and such poems were often used for comic or satiric purposes. But the term is also generally used for poetry where the two or more languages fit more loosely together. Many of the medieval lyrics mix Latin with English in a way that fits syntactically but is more in the nature of a refrain, in verse that is often quite serious, indeed pious, as in a hymn to Our Lady the Virgin Mary:

Of one that is so fair and bright	
Velut maris stella	Like a star of the sea
Brighter than the day•’s light	
Parens et puella	Mother & maiden
I cry to thee, thou see to me	
Lady, pray thy Son for me	
Tam pia	So holy
That I may come to thee	
Maria	

Both of the poems with the title *Quia amore langueo* (Because I languish with love) use those three words as a kind of refrain. Similarly and, perhaps most famously, Dunbar’s *Lament for the Makars* uses the recurring Latin line: *Timor mortis conturbat me (Fear of death troubles me).* It recurs at the end of each stanza in the poem a total of about 25 times.

In another poem for Our Lady we get a mixture of English and French:

Maiden mother mild	
Oiez cel oreyson	Hear this prayer
From shame thou me shield	
Et de ly mal felon	& from the bad fiend
For love of thy child	
Me menez de treson	Protect me from sin

Somewhat more complexly integrated in syntax is the poem called *Esto Memor Mortis* (Be thou mindful of death) in Carleton Brown’s **Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century** #135. In seven stanzas warning of the inevitability of death for all ranks, a thought that “ought to fell thy pride,” the author displays a little pardonable pride of his own, showing off by delivering his homily with some flair, rhyming both the English of one half line *and* the Latin of the other:

Since all that in this world has been *in rerum natura*	in the nature of things
Or in this wide world was seen *in humana cura*	in human care
All shall pass withouten ween *via mortis dura;*	through the hard way of death
God grant that manne’s soul be clean *penas non passura*.	not required to suffer
When thou least weens *veniet mors te superare*	shall come to overpower thee
Thus thy grave grieves *ergo mortis memorare*	remember thy death

> *Unde vir extolleris* thou shalt be worm's meat
> *Qui quamdiu vixeris,* thy sins wilt thou not lete ....

The introductory stanza to the Coventry Herod play put on by the Shearmen and Tailors is in a kind of corrupt quasi-official French, calling for silence and attention. The first line of the second stanza is Latin and the rest in English.

MAHOMET

Mahomet was practically unknown in Europe outside the Iberian peninsula before the 12 C. In 1122, after the beginning of the first crusade, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, established a center at his monastery for the translation and refutation of Muslim writings. The genuine information about Mahomet's life and doctrine made available by this scholarly work became quickly transformed, however, into garbled and abusive accounts, even in "learned" writings like those of the English chroniclers such as Matthew of Westminster and Roger Wendover. In these Mahomet is portrayed as a false prophet, a sensualist, a war monger, an epileptic, a fortune hunter, a drunk who died in a stupor at the top of a dunghill or in a puddle where he was mangled by pigs. The *Golden Legend* is somewhat more charitable. To Langland Mahomet represented the false prophet who had replaced Christ in the hearts of the corrupt and greedy clergy of the period. To Wycliffe also he seems to have been the symbol of the contemporary "false prophets" of the Church who led the people astray by preaching , in their own interests, only part of the true doctrine of Christ. It is significant in this regard that both these writers repeat the curious legend that Mahomet had been a Christian priest or even a cardinal embittered by his failure to become pope.

In popular legend as it appears in romances and mystery plays Mahomet is the god, patron saint, or even relative of various villains who pray to him or swear by him. In the mystery plays, for example, Herod, Pilate, Pharaoh, and Caesar are ranting paynims, who swear vigorously by *Mahoun* (variously spelled) in almost any play in which they figure. Sometimes *Mahoun* is coupled with other "gods" like Termagant or Magog. Significantly, the words *mahoun* and *maumet* (idol), and *maumetry* (idolatry) are in very early use in ME. *Mahomery*, *mamery* was a mosque. And this in spite of the fact that muslims do not venerate images, especially not in mosques. (See OED, s.vv. *mahomet, mahound, maumet).*

See also *Golden Legend*, Pt. 2, "St. Pelagius". Wycliffe; *Piers Plowman* B, III, 327 XV, 383ff, 480 ff; Lydgate, *Fall of Princes.*

Paull.

MARRIAGE GROUP

The term "marriage group" was first used by Eleanor Hammond in *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* (1908), p. 256 to characterize the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and the tales of the Franklin and Merchant. Her single sentence was elaborated by Kittredge in **MP** (1912) and in *Chaucer and His Poetry* (1915). He added the *Clerk's Tale* to the group, and since his time the term has been widely used, with some difference of opinion as the extent or even the existence of such a grouping.

M. Murphy 3

MATTERS, THE THREE

In the prologue to his *Chanson de Saisnes* Jean Bodel, a French writer of the late 12 C noted that the subject matter of romance came from three sources: France, Britain and "Rome the Great".

The Matter of France (see under *France* *) includes the epics about Charlemagne's paladins and other Frankish heroes. The Matter of Britain (See Britain*) concerns the Arthurian legend. The Matter of Rome, more frequently referred to now as the *Matter of Antiquity* or the *Matter of Greece and Rome* (See Greece & Rome *) deals with heroes from classical antiquity.

Modern literary historians have added the Matter of England (See England *) to refer to the romances about English and Germanic heroes (rather than British) such as Havelok, Bevis of Hamton, Guy of Warwick, Athelstan, and King Horn. Other romances less easily grouped according to subject matter are sometimes referred to as "non-cyclical romances." Criticism by Pearsall and Dieter Mehl points out the inadequacies of classifying the ME romances according to subject matter and has sought to establish more formal criteria (verse form, length) for subdividing the genre.

D. Childress

Pearsall, *"Development"* ; D. Mehl.

MEMENTO MORI (See DANCE OF DEATH)

MIRACLE PLAY See MYSTERY PLAY

MORALITY PLAY

A dramatized allegory in which the characters are abstractions: Mercy, Riches, Fellowship, Mankind, Knowledge, etc. The play is designed to teach a moral lesson in a direct way, not to tell a story, in contrast to the MIRACLE or MYSTERY plays * , which were designed to instruct in the faith by telling stories from the Bible in a dramatic and entertaining way, and in which any moral lesson was indirect. Hence there was some room in the Miracle play to develop character such as Cain, Mrs Noah, Mak, and some others. Since the characters in the Morality play were generally abstractions, there was less room for "psychology". Occasionally the inevitable dullness of some of this was livened up, in *Mankind* for example, by the presence of a Devil or Vice who was presented as more ridiculous than vicious — in short, a comic character, somewhat like the character Herod * in some of the MIRACLE plays: he was wicked but was also a fool.

Somewhat later than the Moralities (1520's and '30's) came Tudor Interludes, sometimes witty and naturalistic, sometimes heavily moralized.

Later, when drama no longer felt the need to justify itself to Faith or Morals, one still did get characters of some depth who incarnated if not a total abstraction, at least a person who was guided by a predominant passion (a "Humor"). Hence, Ben Jonson in his late 16th century comedy of humors could have characters like Doll Tearsheet, Sir Epicure Mammon, Volpone (Fox) etc. who would live up to their names as whore, self indulgent epicure, sly plotter, etc. Similarly in the later 17th century in the plays of the Restoration Comedy of Manners one could often guess the character of dramatis personae like Lady Wishfort, Horner, Witwould, Sir Fopling Flutter, and so on.

But this kind of skilfull mixture of didacticism, entertainment and social commentary was some distance away when *Everyman* (c. 1500), probably the best and most famous of English morality plays, was written. Other English medieval morality plays are *Mankind*; *Wisdom;* and *The Castle of Perseverance*.

MYSTERY / MIRACLE PLAY

Mystery plays, sometimes called miracle plays, seem to have become fairly common in England in the late 14th century. While mystery plays did deal with the mysteries of the Christian religion like the Incarnation and Crucifixion of Christ the God-Man, the name may have more to do with the fact that most of these plays were acted by members of trade guilds, and a trade was a "myster", or "mystery", restricted to a few. The plays did not dramatise spectacular miracles at all, and this is something of a misnomer.

The mystery plays were dramatized versions of biblical events going from the Creation to the Last Judgement, and hence were essentially about the history of God's relationship with man as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. There were, for example, plays about Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac, Noah. The same topics seem to be covered in most of the cyles with some variation. Rosemary Woolf is of the opinion that this was partly a matter of time restrictions (there was a limited number of topics that could be treated in say one day of Old Testament plays); and partly a matter of a tradition in plastic art which had chosen these topics to illustrate, which generally did not go past chapter 22 of Genesis.

New Testament plays tended to concentrate on the Nativity and Trial and Crucifixion of Christ, but there were a few other new Testament incidents also. The cycles finished with the Last Judgement, which was of course, outside of history.

The plays, all anonymous, survive in 4 major cycles, those of York, Chester, Wakefield, and Ludus Coventriae (also known as N. Town or Hegge plays) and there is evidence of plays in other cities. All the plays were short, and surviving cycles numbered between 24 and 48. They were all suppressed at the Reformation.

The plays were intended to edify by teaching the major features of bible history, but there were always cranks in the wings who complained that Christianity did not need play acting. One reason for the complaints probably was that to hold the interest of the audience some of the playwrights thought that they should also entertain as well as edify. Hence there were some comic characters like Mrs. Noah (the quintessential shrew who boxed her husband's ears), and Cain, who sometimes used bad language and even addressed God himself irreverently . Probably some of the little devils running in and out of Hell Mouth ad-libbed outrageously. In the Joseph * plays the husband of Mary, the mother of Christ, is made to act like a comic old cuckold. Herod * and Pilate * often ranted and raved and behaved like bullies, and deliberately, no doubt, bore a real resemblance to some of the tyrants that the audience had to deal with regularly, so it gave them an opportunity to jeer and hiss at what they could not remove. The deservedly famous *Second Shepherds' Play* uses a good deal of comedy as well as social complaint before leading up to a solemn adoration of Christ by the shepherds. The anti-play faction clearly triumphed at the Reformation.

Since the plays were often put on around the feasts of Corpus Christi or Whit Sunday (Pentecost) in the summer, they are often referred to as Corpus Christi plays or Whitsun plays. In some cases the plays were acted on one or more stages set up in one place such as the square in front of the church; in other cases they were put on at various points in town on moveable wagon-stages. The cycle could last for one day or several days.

Woolf, *English M. Plays*; Kolve, *Corpus Christi*; M. Stevens.

NINE WORTHIES

The conventional list of the famous nine warriors is as follows:

Pagans: Hector, Alexander, Julius Caesar
Jews: Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus
Christians: Arthur, Charlemagne, Godfrey of Boulogne.

This list and grouping has only slight variations. It was popularized by Jacques de Longuyon in *Voeux de Paon* (c.1310) which was englished in the *Buik of Alexander*, (IV, pp. 402 ff.), and this is the list mentioned by Caxton in his preface to *Morte Darthur*. On occasion a tenth worthy is introduced, e.g. Robert Bruce the king of Scotland, or Bertrand de Guesclin. In English versions Guy of Warwick may be substituted for Godfrey. The group in Shakespeare's burlesque is both incomplete and unconventional (*Loves Labours Lost*, V, i and ii).

The Worthies were frequently represented in the art and major literatures of Europe. One of the best examples in art is a tapestry of five of them now in the Cloisters in New York.. For the Arthur figue in these see the web at

http://www.legends.dm.net/kingarthur/index.html

The worhties were also sometimes featured in the semi-dramatic tableaux parodied by Shakespeare.

Many of their literary appearances were in connection with the *Ubi Sunt* theme * where they illustrated the transience of earthly glory. This is so in the two major ME examples, *The Parlement of the Three Ages* (in the speech of Elde), and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (3222-3455), as well as at the end of Stephen Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure*.

Norman Davis points out the existence of a Cambridge MS with a reference to Nine Unworthies:

Pagans:	Cain, Nero, Pilate
Jews:	Jeroboam, Ahab, Joram (Jehoram)
Christians:	Judas Iscariot, Julian the Apostate, Bernabo Visconti

Similarly, Eustache Deschamps (1346-1406) put together a list of female warriors whom he called Les Neuf Preuses (see his balades #93 and #403). These ladies also appear in major or minor roles in Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus*, though without any reference to Deschamp's kind of grouping, which did not become conventional:

Semiramis, Deiphile, Marsopie
Synoppe, Penthalisea, Tantha
Thamaris, Hypolita, Menalope

Other references in I. Gollancz, (appendices). Loomis, A. McMillan; Schroeder;.Davis

NORTH

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer ... for thou hast said ... I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation of the north" (Isaiah, XIV, 13-15).

Rabbinical and patristic commentary on these Bible verses would seem to be the chief source for the medieval and renaissance commonplace that North is the home of the devil and the place of evil in general. In the early medieval period there may also have been some vestigial association with the Hel of Old Norse tradition, which was situated both Northward and downward. As early as the OE *Genesis* (32-3, 275) and as late as Milton's *Paradise Lost* (V, 688-9, 755-66 and VI, 79 ff) Satan is shown massing his legions in the

North. In *Piers Plowman* Langland speculates on this association of Lucifer with the North (B Text, I, 117 and C Text, II, 111 ff). In Chaucer's *Friars Tale* (D 1413) the devil is from "far in the north country," and the medieval stage plan for the *Castle of Perseverance* shows the scaffold of Belial on the North side.

In medieval iconography North was also associated with synagogue or the Old Testament. Hence the statue of Synagogue was often to be found on the North side of the church door or on the North side of the church itself. She wore a blindfold or carried some symbol of lost power such as a broken staff or a tumbling crown.

For the southern medieval Englishman the North also often represented the home of yokels whose behavior and speech were the object of contemptuous amusement. This attitude can be seen in the late 12 C-early 13C poem *The Owl and the Nightingale* (l. 995 ff). For Chaucer's southern contemporaries much of the comedy in the *Reeves Tale* derived from the northern origin and accent of the two students in the story. Even the Parson declares himself a "southern man", and will have no truck with the "rum ram ruff" (i.e. the alliterative verse) associated mostly with the North of England in his day.

Other compass points do not seem to have had the same rich symbolic significance as North.

Hill ; M. Murphy 2, "North”

ORAL FORMULAIC DICTION

An aspect of poetry that is assumed to have been orally composed, that is, poetry which the reciter composed as he was reciting.

Poetry-making of this kind has been recorded in the twentieth century from South Slavic and African cultures. In the 1930’s two classical scholars, Milman Parry and his student Albert Lord, studied the poetry-making methods of the largely oral cultures of the former Yugoslavia in order to investigate methods of composing long, elaborate poems like the Homeric epics, products of a preliterate society. The scholars concluded that reciters narrated long poems not by memorizing these extended narratives, but by knowing the incidents that were traditionally associated with the story, incidents which could be varied in order, modified to satisfy a particular audience, or in some cases omitted to accommodate the time available. No one recitation of a poem would be precisely like any other even by the same reciter or composer, but in the hands or mouth of a first rate poet the product would be both original and traditional.

Long recitation was helped by formulaic phrasing in the correct metrical position, and changes could be rung on the formulas of the kind long familiar from Homeric poetry: *the wine-dark sea,* or *bright-eyed Athene,* and *rosy-fingered dawn*. Francis P. Magoun applied these findings to **Beowulf** in which such formulas had long been noticed. Indeed Klaeber, the great editor of the poem, had noted that "the very soul of OE poeical style, the device of variation may be studied to perfecton" in **Beowulf.** His edition comments on many such formulaic phrases, often heavily alliterative:
ord ond ecg, wor d ond weorc, grim ond graedig, wan under wolcnum / under heofonum, heard under helme, naes ða long to, etc. (pp. lxvi-ii).

The word *ge-licost* introducing a simile illustrates the mutation that could be worked to vary a familiar pattern:

flota famiheals	*fugle gelicost*	(218)	a ship foam-necked	most like a bird (fowl)
ligge gelicost	*leoht unfæger*	(727)	most like flame	a light unfair (ugly)
stiðra nægla gehwylc	*style gelicost*	(985)	each of the strong nails	most like steel
ðæt hit eal gemealt	*ise gelicost*	(1608)	(so) that it all melted	most like ice

The pattern of the half-line is alwys the same, and in 727 *gelicost* even becomes part of the alliterative pattern on ***-l-*** .

At least 3 times in **Beowulf** King Hrothgar is called *helm Scyldinga* (*helm* = helmet, hence protector of Scyldings); in some lines *helm* and *Hrothgar* alliterate. Hroðgar is also referred to regularly as *sunu Healfdenes* (son of Halfdane), emphasizing his ancestry. Similarly God can be referred to with a variable formula, alliterating or not: *wuldres Wealdend* (Lord of Glory); *ylde Wealdend* (of men); *sigora Waldend* (of victories).

It has been demonstrated, however, that poems like the OE *Phoenix*, which are known to be derived from Latin, also have many such formulas even though they are clearly "literary" and were almost certainly not orally composed, and of course **Beowulf** was written down by a literate scholar. This knowledge does not, nevertheless, discredit the oral formulaic thesis; it simply indicates that traditional modes of composing poetry persisted well after the arrival of literacy and even influenced literary modes

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Foley; Lord; Magoun.

PATER NOSTER (Our Father))
The prayer, more commonly known as the Lord's Prayer, which was taught by Christ to his disciples (Matt. VI, 9-16), and from apostolic times regarded as the most fundamentally important prayer for all Christians. It had and has a central place in the liturgy of the Mass, and the importance of teaching it to laymen was stressed by the Fathers, and by Church Councils.

A common modern version of the Pater Noster—based on 16C and 17C versions—is as follows. (The petitions have been numbered):

> *Our Father, who art in Heaven, 1. Hallowed be thy name 2. Thy kingdom come 3. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven 4. Give us this day our daily bread 5. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us 6. And lead us not into temptation 7. But deliver us from evil. Amen*

The seven petitions were regarded from patristic times as a compendium of the things which the Christian should pray for. To these petitions a good deal else in Christian doctrine could be and was related, frequently in parallel heptamerologies. St. Augustine associated the seven petitions with the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with seven of the eight Beatitudes. Later writers added the association with the Seven Deadly Sins, Seven Virtues, Seven Planets, Seven Works of Mercy, Seven Last Words from the Cross, etc. An attractive visual illustration of this practice can be seen in Bod Lib Ms Eng. poet. a 1, fol. 231v which we are unable to reproduce here.

There are about ten extant OE versions of the PN, in verse or prose, in translation, gloss or paraphrase. Middle English versions and expositions are also very common, though there seems to have been no authorized translation in English until 1541. One form of exposition for the layman was the Paternoster Play, of which there were versions at Lincoln, Beverly and York, which are no longer extant. The York play was performed as late as 1572, when the Protestant Archbishop Grindal confiscated the text..

Perhaps the most peculiar commentary on the PN is in OE: a poetic *Dialogue of Solomon and Saturn* combined with a prose piece in the same MS (ed. Menner, 1941). In the wildly fantastic prose the PN is personified as some kind of huge creature that fights the devil in various guises. In the poem Salomon instructs Saturn on the powers of the PN and of every letter and rune in it. The characters (given in both roman and runic) are personified as warriors who defeat the devil. Such character symbolism was known among the Greeks and Hebrews but the presence of the runes here suggest also the old pagan Germanic association of runes with magic. In fact the PN was used from earliest times as something of a magic formula in charms, medicine and

exorcism, and no doubt in day to day usage where piety and superstition are sometimes difficult to distinguish. (Cf "white paternoster" in the *Miller's Tale*, A.3485).

Aarts; M. Hussey ; for OE and ME versions of the PN see T. Wright and J. Halliwell; for ME commentary see Francis.

PHYSIOLOGUS (See BESTIARY)

PILATE

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judaea who condemned Jesus to death. There were two strains in the medieval legend of Pilate. One stemmed from the gospel accounts which showed Pilate's reluctance to condemn Jesus, a view reinforced by early apocryphal writing, which tended to exculpate Pilate or palliate his guilt. This first strain is well enough represented by works like the ME *Harrowing of Hell* * or the *Stanzaic Life of Christ*. The opposite is best shown perhaps in the Towneley cycle of plays where Pilate is generally presented in a bad light. In the York cycle he is shown now one way, now another. In most of the other plays where he appears he is treated without real rancor.

There are "good" and "bad" versions of Pilate's death also. In an early apocryphal account Pilate prays for forgiveness from God after his condemnation by the emperor for his execution of Christ. He is received into heaven. But in the *Golden Legend* (Pt.1, "Passion of Our Lord") he forestalls the shame of execution by suicide, and neither the Tiber nor the Rhone will receive his body. He is finally thrown into a chasm in Lausanne. Similar accounts are to be found in the *South English Legendary* (II, 697 ff), and in the section of the Cornish *Resurrection* called "The Death of Pilate". The early part of the Pilate story in the *Golden Legend* rather closely parallels the Judas * legend given in the same book, where Judas, in fact, becomes Pilate's favorite or steward. In the mystery plays, whether Pilate is treated as a villain or not, he generally rants like Herod * . Hence Chaucer's drunken Miller interrupts Harry Baily in "Pilate's voice" (A 3124).

Arnold Williams

PLANCTUS See COMPLAINT

PSYCHOMACHIA

The *Psychomachia* is an allegorical Latin poem by the fourth-century Christian poet Prudentius which places personified Virtues and Vices in an epic battle for the soul of the individual. Traditionally the poem has been noted for being the first sustained personification allegory. In the narrative, Faith leads the other Virtues in a series of victorious battles over the Vices; after the battle, the army of Virtues establishes a holy city with a temple dedicated to Wisdom. This poem marks the beginning of a rich tradition of Christian and moral allegory and of the kind of secular allegory best exemplified by the *Roman de la Rose*.

The *Psychomachia* was written during the time in Roman history when Christianity was displacing pagan religion, and it can be seen as a work reflecting the conflict between pagan and Christian ideals.. The *Psychomachia* personifies as warriors the three theological virtues — faith, hope, and charity; and the four cardinal virtues — prudence, justice, temperence, and fortitude, and does so much as pre-Christian Romans had deified personifications such as the goddess *Fortuna*, and had built temples to gods like *Fides* (Faith), *Concordia* (Harmony), *Mens* (Intellect) and *Salus* (Health). Tertullian, a Carthaginian Christian of the second century, described images of the Virtues doing battle with the Vices in the Roman arena, and Martianus Capella (died c. 440 a.d.), roughly contemporary with Prudentius (died c. 410), composed a lengthy allegory, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, which presents the seven liberal arts * as personified actors in a story relating how the learned maiden Philologia marries Mercury.

The influence on English literature of the *Psychomachia* begins with the Old English poem, *Juliana* by Cynewulf (late 8C), and that strange composition in verse and prose, *Solomon and Saturn*. Another important and influential medieval writer who employed

Psychomachia allegory was the poet-philosopher Alan of Lille whose Latin poem, *De planctu Naturae*, pits the Virtues, led by the lady Natura, against the forces of Evil. It is both a dream vision and a personification allegory, and a major source of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*.

J. Clawson

Katzenellenbogen**;** Francis**.**

QUADRIVIUM See LIBERAL ARTS

QUEM QUAERITIS

"Quem quaeritis ? " (Whom do you seek ?) are the first words of a part of the Easter service dating from the 10 C. The trope, based on the gospel accounts, is in dialogue form, and it is from this kernel, scholars generally feel, that the English medieval drama may have grown. An early form of this liturgical "playlet", with stage directions, is found in the *Regularis Concordia*, compiled at Winchester about 970:

> *While the third Lesson is being sung, four brothers are to dress in long white garments. One, playing the angel, sits in the part of the church that represents the tomb; [the others] acting like people looking for something.*

The "angel" sings out to the seekers:

> *Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, O Christicolae?*
> Whom seek ye in the tomb, O followers of Christ?

The seekers respond:

> *Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum, O caelicola.*
> Jesus of Nazareth, O heavenly one.

Angel: (Latin omitted).

> *He is not here. He is risen as he foretold. Go and announce that he has risen from the dead.*

Seekers:

Alleluia. The Lord has risen.

QUID INIELDUS CUM CHRISTO (What has Ingeld to do with Christ?)
The famous rhetorical question put by Alcuin to the Bishop of Lindisfarne in 797 when he heard that the monks were reading the old pagan heroic poems of Anglo-Saxon England. Alcuin was taking the ascetic point of view that the legends of pagan poets had no relevance to the Christian life. Certainly, says Alcuin, they have no place in the prescribed reading in the monastic refectory where it is proper to hear the lector not the harpist, the words of the fathers not the songs of pagans. The house is small, he says, and there is no room for both Ingeld and Christ.

Alcuin was deliberately echoing the words of Tertullian, one of the early Fathers of the Church: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?", or those of another early Father, St. Jerome: "What has Horace to do with the Psalms? Or Virgil with the Gospel or Cicero with the Apostle (Paul)?" Both Jerome and Tertullian were echoing the words of St Paul in 2 Cor. 6:15: "What concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

No separate poem with Ingeld as the protagonist survives, but in Saxo Grammaticus there is an account of a quarrel between the Danes and Ingeld, a prince of the Heaðobards, which is referred to also in *Beowulf* 2024 ff where there is an allusive reference to Ingeld at 2064; see also *Widsið* 45-49.

Klaeber, pp. xxxiv-v and 202-4.

RASH PROMISE
A folk-tale motif in which a king or someone in a position to grant a boon offers to grant it without reservation. One of the most familiar cases of such rash promise-making is that of the biblical King Herod Antipas who was so pleased with the dancing of Salome that he offered to grant her any wish, and was totally dismayed when she asked for the head of John the Baptist on a dish. (Mat. 14:1; Mk. 6:17). His kingly promise publicly given forced him to grant the wish against his better judgement.

The rash promise motif becomes a convenient story-telling convention when the story teller wants to move the plot in a particular direction without providing much motivation, and it provides a suspenseful incident in a tale which often, however, ends happily. There are numerous examples in Medieval literature. In the story of Tristan and Isolde King Mark at one point makes a rash promise to a visiting harper who promptly asks for Isolde as his reward, a situation which makes Mark look bad and gives Tristan the opportunity to show his valor in rescuing the Queen. In *Sir Orfeo* the King of the Underworld makes a similar promise to Orfeo the harper who thus rescues his wife. Dorigen, the heroine in Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale,* makes a promise to Aurelius which does not seem so rash at the moment when she agrees to give herself to him if he removes the dangerous rocks that surround the coast of Britanny--an impossible task, as she thinks. A similar situation occurs in Boccaccio's two versions of the same story in *Il Filocolo,* Bk. 4, and in *The Decameron*, X, 5. Arthur's promise to Kay's father to make Kay seneschal for life may be a kind of rash promise which accounts for why Arthur keeps him on in this high post when in most stories Kay is craven and obnoxiously ill-mannered. (See *Seneschal*).

An interesting variation occurs in the situation where the maker of the promise does not have much choice, but is generally confronted with some awful alternative or with none. In Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale* Griselda, a peasant girl, promises in a marriage ceremony to obey the Marquis Walter blindly and uncomplainingly no matter what he does. With even less freedom to refuse, the young knight in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* gives his promise to the old hag who later demands that he marry her, much against his inclinations. Both of these also have a happy outcome.

Stith Thompson, M 223

RE(Y)NARD THE FOX

The use of animals as characters in short moral tales or fables which often satirize a human counterpart is an ancient literary device. The oldest extant beast fables * are those of the Greek Aesop (6C B.C.) and the Indian tales of the **Panchatantra**.

The trickster character is to be found in all sorts of ancient fables and folklore in many cultures: Sanskrit, Hebrew and Native American folktales, among others. The fox is a favorite trickster character in European popular secular tales and in the *exempla* of preachers (see Exemplum *).

By the middle of the thirteenth century many tales about Renard were circulating and being sewn into the "beast epic" known as the *Roman de Renart*, and their popularity is evidenced by the many references to the Roman in the epic poems, romances and chronicles of the twelfth century. Altogether the French Renard stories consist of about twenty-six tales known as "branches". Since the appearance of the first of such Renard stories in the mid 12C in a Latin poem *Ysengimus*, a constant presence in Continental versions is the wolf Ysengrin, together with his wife Hersent. The trouvere Pierre de Saint Cloud was the first to write the animal stories in a vernacular language, and they centered on those three animal characters Renard , Ysengrin , and Hersent. The poems sometimes had a mock-heroic tone which parodied feudal social structure.

In addition to the French *Roman de Renart* there are also Dutch and German versions. The German *Reineke Fuchs*, written by Heinrich der Glîchezare about 1181, satirically attacked the Holy Roman Empire, contemporary church dogma and courtly civilization by showing clever scoundrels rewarded at the expense of honest subjects.

Branch II of the French *Roman* was probably one of Chaucer's sources for the most famous of English fox stories, his *Nun's Priest's Tale*. Together with Marie de France's fable *Del cok e del gupil* it provides most of the major elements of Chaucer's tale. The notable absenteee from Chaucer's version is Ysengrimus the wolf.

The Scottish Chaucerian * Robert Henryson included Renard stories in his collection of moral *Fables*. At the end of the Middle Ages the Renard stories appear in a translation by Caxton from the Flemish: *The Historye of Reynard the Foxe* (1481), and in the poem *The Fox and the Wolf,* which follows Branch IV of the *Roman de Renart*.

J. Clawson

See also BEAST FABLE

RHYME ROYAL

Rhyme Royal is a stanza of seven lines of iambic pentameter rhyming "ABABBCC." The form, sometimes referred to as the "Chaucerian" stanza, was employed by Chaucer in *The Parliament of Fowls, Troilus and Criysede,* and in some of the *Canterbury Tales (Clerk's Tale, Prioress's Tale).* The opening stanza of *The Parliament of Fowls* illustrates how successfully the rhyme scheme binds the stanza into a form which is both tight and ample enough to allow a natural or leisurely flow in the narration:

The life so short, the craft so long to learn,
Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquering, The effort
The dreadful joy, always that slit so yerne: slides so fast
All this mean I by Love, that my feeling
Astonyeth with his wonderful working
So sore, iwis, that when I on him think, So much, indeed
Not wot I well whe'er that I flete or sink. I don't know whether I float

Chaucer's use of the stanza is thought to have resulted from his study of the eight line ottava of Boccaccio's *Filostrato* and *Teseida*. In any case, Chaucer developed a stanza form which proved highly successful in poems ranging from the dream narration of *The Parliament of Fowls* through the mid-size *Clerk's Tale* to the very long romance *Troilus and Criseyde* which contains a total of over eleven hundred stanzas in five books.

The rhyme royal stanza was popular among poets who succeeded Chaucer, and the name has been thought to derive from its use in *The Kingis Quair*-- a fifteenth-century "Chaucerian" dream vision in Middle Scots traditionally attributed to King James I of Scotland. Robert Henryson, one of the Scottish Chaucerians * of the fifteenth century, used rhyme royal extensively, especially in his longer narrative works. *The Testament of Cresseid*, the *Fables*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice*, handled the form in the same versatile manner as Chaucer, in both serious and comic situations.

Shakespeare employed rhyme royal in *A Lover's Complaint* and in the *Rape of Lucrece*. Its popularity died out in the early seventeenth century after which only an occasional poem can be found -- Morris' *Earthly Paradise* and Masefield's *Dauber* are notable examples.

J. Clawson

Stevens

ROMANCE

Romance is a term that at first designated stories told in the vernacular languages derived from the Latin of ancient Rome, and still called Romance languages for that reason: Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Romanian. Later the term came to be applied to a particular kind of popular vernacular narrative: a story dealing with love and adventure, especially military adventure,-- or, in modern terms, stories of sex and violence, though the sex is always muted and the violence generally ritualized in tournament or rule-governed personal combat. At the end of the twelfth century in France the author Jean Bodel classified the French stories of this kind according to three broad subject **Matters** * : the matters of France, of Britain, and of Greece and Rome. Later scholars have added the Matter of England.*

Earlier stories important enough to get written down either in chronicles, or in poems celebrating great men, dealt almost solely with the noble deeds of heroes fighting for their king or their people, as in the French *chansons de geste* like the *Song of Roland* or in the English *Beowulf*. Roland's lady gets little thought and few lines; Beowulf's wife gets about the same space. These are essentially masculine epics full of martial deeds done for the country or tribe not just to glorify the individual, though there is plenty of that too. The heroes normally do not go to fight Saracens or dragons in order to impress ladies or for the sake of a dare. When they talk, the heroes tend to make speeches, rather than have conversations. We learn what they say and do, but not what they think. The inside of Beowulf's heart or head, for example, is an unknown territory.

By contrast, the Arthurian romances of the late twelfth century by Chrétien de Troyes are the quintessence of courtliness, incorporating marvelous adventure and amorous passion with some sense of the characters' internal lives -- what they thought and felt, as well as what they said and did. The "courtly epics" blend the older martial tale and chronicle conventions with the sophisticated and aristocratic courtly elements; women figure prominently and the narratives include elegant conversational speech and manners; the communal focus of the epic is displaced by a concern for the individual hero's secular and amatory affairs. At the outset of the tradition, Chretien de Troyes tells us that he produced his romance of Perceval or the Grail at the request or dictation of his lady, Marie de Champagne who also patronized Andreas Capellanus. (See *Courtly Love)*.

Chrétien's romances were widely translated into many vernacular languages; his unfinished *Perceval*, for example, furnished much of the material for Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, and provided the first view of that favorite of writers of historical romance ever since: the Grail.*

The proportions of love and war in romances varied widely. The love element in a "popular" matter of England romance like *Havelok the Dane*, for example, is cursory and is strictly related to marriage; the emphasis is on the adventures of the hero while he is temporarily a member of the working class. Similarly in the aristocratic *Alliterative Morte*

Arthure, amatory exploits get short shrift, and Lancelot has a small but strictly military role; he has no affair with Guinevere. On the other hand, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, which takes place during the Trojan War, has no more than passing references to that conflict; it is primarily a love-story. In perhaps the best-known love story of the middle ages, *Tristan and Isolde*, told primarily in French and German, martial strength gets less and less attention after the early stages where Tristan proves his prowess, until it is needed again near the end to give Tristan his fatal wound. The ending, of course, is quintessential romance.

At the very end of the tradition Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, probably the most famous of English romances, has a more equal balance of both love and fighting.

Romances range in length and medium from a briefly anonymous poem like *Havelok*, through the 2250 lines of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* and the very long prose narrative of *Morte D'Arthur* by Malory to the immense French narratives from which he derived and condensed his story; from the near doggerel of many of the English pieces in the collection by French and Hale, to the superb technical mastery of line, stanza and poem structure in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* which is an extended narrative with one hero and one adventure, contrasted with the "interlaced" and varied adventures of the many heroes in Malory. Some of the shorter romances have been classified as Breton Lais *. And some romances are essentially secularized saints' lives, the tales involving heroines such as Griselda or Constance, for example.

The number of Middle English romances, including the Tail Rhyme Romances that Chaucer parodies in *Sir Thopas*, is estimated rather than exact. Dieter Mehl lists about seventy published texts; another estimate puts them as high as 110.

J. Clawson

Crane; French & Hale; Mehl; Stevens

ROUND TABLE

This term signifies principally three things in medieval English literature:

1. The physical table used by King Arthur 2. Those special occasions when Arthur wore his crown and entertained his knights, especially at the principal festivals of Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and All Saints 3. Most commonly, the institution or

fellowship of Arthur

and his knights whose number varies in different stories: 50, 150, 250. La3amon suggests that they might have numbered as high as 1600.

The term is first used by the Anglo-Norman poet Wace in his *Roman de Brut* (c.1155). He says that Arthur designed the table so that no knight should seem to have precedence over any other. Wace also uses the term to signify the fellowship. La3amon's *Brut* (c.1190), an English poem derived from Wace, says that the table was designed for Arthur by a skillful Cornish carpenter to prevent violent quarrels about precedence. Other versions say that it was made by Merlin for Uther Pendragon, or that it belonged to Guinevere's father, and was sent as a gift to Arthur on his marriage. In the Grail romances the Round Table is sacralized: it was made by Merlin in imitation of the table of Joseph of Arimathea, the first Keeper of the Grail, whose table in turn had been made by divine command to represent the table of the Last Supper. One seat, representing that of Judas or Jesus, is left vacant, to be claimed only by the knight who is to achieve the Grail. This the the Siege Perilous * .

Throughout the Middle Ages festivities and jousts in imitation of those of the Arthurian romances were called Round Tables. Edward III even erected a building at Windsor called the Round Table where he held elaborate feasts. There is still a Round Table that hangs in the hall of Winchester castle which may have been made in the 13 C for just such a feast.

RUNES

The basic Germanic alphabet or "futhorc(k)" or “fuþarc(k)” numbered 24 symbols. It is called a fuþorc / fuþarc from the roman equivalent of the first six characters. (“Th” is represented by the runic sybol “þ”, thorn.)

Runes used in Northumbria in England added a few more, up to 33 characters, used for the following roman letters and digraphs and used about the year 800 a.d. The 4th symbol from the beginning is **o** rather than the **a** of Germanic:

f u þ o r c g w
h n i j ¥ p x s
t b e m l õ **œ d**

a æ y ea io k g q st

We are unable to reproduce the runic symbols here but they can be found on the web at

http://www.arild-hauge.com/eanglor.htm
or
http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/runes.html

The English version of the Germanic script had about the highest number of characters (33) though the futharc could have as few as 16. The angular letters were clearly designed to be carved rather than written, and the futharc never developed a cursive variant, an indication that its primary purpose was rarely really utilitarian communication. In fact runes nearly always remained associated with magic, divination, prayer, sacred or ritual inscriptions, etc. A few recent discoveries suggest they were also occasionally used for rather more homely messages. Traditionally the OE word *run* was thought to have meant "mystery", "secret". More recently it has been suggested that is meant “thought” or “truth”. The runes even have names, some of them familiar to students of Anglo-Saxon English: 'ash' for *æ;* `thorn' for *þ* = **th**; `wyn' for *p* (a thorn without the upper part of the stroke) = **w**.

The use of runes, strongly associated with pagan magic before the arrival of Christian missionaries, remained, nevertheless, well into Christian times, especially in Scandinavia. In OE there is a *Runic Poem,* and the very Christian poet Cynewulf used runes acrostically to spell his own name in his poetry. In the strange work *Solomon and Saturn* runes and their Roman equivalents in the Pater Noster (Our Father) * are intimately associated. Runes were also used in sword inscriptions to indicate either the name of the sword * or the owner or maker. See *Beowulf*, 1694-99 where, it has been suggested, the word *runstafas* may mean secret or mysterious language, perhaps the language of the giants who made the sword before the Flood.

Runes are prominently used in monumental inscriptions, most notably in the Ruthwell Cross on which is carved a fragment of the OE poem of devotion to the Cross of Christ, *The Dream of the Rood*.

Elliott, *Runes*; Page.

SCOP

The Anglo-Saxon scop was a professional oral poet who sang or chanted poetry before a king and members of the court. The scop's poetry eulogized the ruler or tribal chief and informed his audience about the deeds of the chief and accomplishments of other heroes of the tribe. In this manner at least some scops functioned as court historians or tribal priests who transmitted legendary and dynastic history to the audience. The scop's poetry was sometimes designed to instill a sense of martial resolve in his audience by telling of heroic deeds already done by those present or by their predecessors. In a pre-literate society he was the repository of stories which were an inciting force important for the survival and continuity of the tribe and its traditions.

The early Anglo-Saxon poems *Widsið* and *Deor* deal directly with the function of the scop, showing among other things, how dispensable he could be. *Widsið* is a poetic "autobiographical" account of the poet's travels through many lands and many courts. It gives the listener a sampling of this scop's stock- in- trade, demonstrating how adaptable he can be to a wide variety of audiences. The prologue announces his ability to "unlock his word-hoard" which consists mainly of a catalog of early heroic rulers, peoples and places. The poem mentions some seventy tribes and almost as many individual heroes many of whom are known to have existed in the third and fourth centuries, although he could not have known them all or been to all these places at these times:

> *I was with the Huns and with the glorious Goths, with the*
> *Swedes and with the Geats and with the South-Danes...*

The envoi contains a final self-promoting statement insisting on the perennial need of the ruler to have a scop who is paid to sing his praises:

> *South or North, scops always find one who knows good poetry, who is liberal in gifts, who wishes to exalt his glory before the warriors, to celebrate his prowess. Until light and life go out together he who has been praised (by a poet), has won the greatest glory on earth.*

Deor , another early Anglo-Saxon poem which sheds some light on the persona of the scop, is a complaint by a scop who has lost his position with his master to a rival, and who takes what comfort he can from comparing or contrasting his lot with the even greater disasters that overcame others, but eventually passed.

> *I will say this about myself, that once I was a scop of the*
> *Heodeningas.*
> *To my lord I was dear, and Deor was my name.*
> *For many years I had a good place, a generous lord, until*
> *Heorrenda, a man skilled in song, received the land that the*
> *protector of warriors had formerly given me.*
> *That passed away, so may this.*

Like the scop mentioned at the end of *Widsith* the scop in *Deor* must wander in search of patronage, and both poems lament this occupational hazard of losing one's job and seeking new employment. Just as the troubles of others have been diminished by the passage of time, Deor reminds himself in a refrain, *oaes ofereode, þisses swa maeg* : "That passed away, so may this".
It is interesting to see a similar lament in a much later medieval poem *Winner and Waster* (15C) whose narrator laments that any beardless boy who "can jangle as a jay, and japes can tell" is now able to displace a professional "maker" like the narrator whose only comfort is: "Work witness will bear who work can best.".

The scop appears several times in *Beowulf*, the first when Grendel overhears the feasting in Heorot:

> *The powerful demon who lived in darkness suffered terribly for a time*
> *because day after day he heard the loud rejoicing in the*
> *hall, the music of the harp, the poet's clear song.*

Later, a scop performs when the Geats arrive at the hall at Heorot to feast with the Danes. And after Beowulf has defeated Grendel, Hrothgar's scop gives an account of the Fight at Finnsburgh. How the scop performed his work is a subject for debate, but it does seem to have involved music both oral and instrumental.

The scop's position as a respected retainer of the court seems to have largely died out when monastic literacy became the medium of passing on knowledge, displacing the scop as repository and interpreter of ancient legend which itself began to take second place to

Christian story. Even the lines following those just quoted from *Beowulf* say that the substance of the poet's song that angered Grendel was the creation of the world; and in the famous story of Caedmon* as told in Bede's *History*, Caedmon is given the heavenly gift of poetry, but under the influence of the monks and nuns, he turns it at once into an instrument for praising his Lord rather than his lord, his God rather than his king. And the scop's entertainment function, such as it was, may early have been displaced by "gleemen" or minstrels whose only function was entertainment. This indeed may have been the problem of the scop of **Deor**.

Possibly there were also people with a poetic gift who were not professionals in the sense mentioned, but who used poetry for their own ends, like the skilled poets and rather unpleasant personalities Egil Skalagrimsson and Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue in the Icelandic sagas called after them. They were more likely to use their talent with skaldic verse to disparage their enemies than to praise anyone, though when cornered in England Egil did compose a praise poem in honor of the hated King of Norway. On another surprising occasion Egil, a grasping and brutal man from his earliest to his last days, composed a poem to assuage his grief at the death of his son.

Opland

J. Clawson

SCOTTISH CHAUCERIANS

The appellation "Scottish Chaucerians" has been a traditional and somewhat confusing designation for a group of 15th/16th-century Scottish poets, or "makars," whose body of work established Middle Scots as a prominent literary language, and excelled the poetry produced in England during the same period. The term has often implied that the Scots poets either directly imitated Chaucer, or were worth reading only where they copied him. And although some of their poetry was influenced by Chaucer and French models, the quality and character of their verse has a distinct "local" perspective as well as a rich vernacular sometimes especially effective in poetic "flyting" * , a game of trading poetic insults. On the other hand, the poetry of the makars is also known for its "aureate" language* , an ornamental, heavily latinized style.

Robert Henryson (1425-1503) is the first poet of this group whose work is substantial enough to compare to Chaucer's: (1) The *Fables*--thirteen tales derived from Aesop's classical fables, and from the satirical *Roman de Renart* * . Some of them satirize the corrupt members of the religious and civic establishment (2) *The Testament of Cresseid*--a sequel to Chaucer's *Troilus*; and (3) *Orpheus and Eurydice* -- based on the classical story as found in Boethius's *Consolations* (III, Poem xii). One of his most widely known short poems is the ballad of *Robene and Makyne* in the tradition of the Old French *pastourelle*, originally a short narrative relating an encounter between a knight and a shepherdess of which there are few examples in English.

The Testament of Cresseid is Henryson's direct link to Chaucer, being a harsh and powerful sequel to his *Troilus* in which Cresseid is punished for her unfaithfulness: she contracts leprosy--an affliction considered a venereal disease in Henryson's Scotland. This portrayal of Cresseid has often been blamed for worsening her reputation; however, it has been argued that it was Chaucer's sympathetic portrayal which was atypical.

The other major figure of this period is William Dunbar (1460-1522) who has been called "the last of the goliards" (Speirs, 63). His poetry demonstrates the greatest variety among the Scottish poets of the time, and is notable for working in two distinct styles: the one, artificial, aureate, serious, and in the Continental tradition; the other, comic Scottish vernacular. Dunbar was connected to the court of King James IV of Scotland, and his much anthologized poems, and *The Thrissil and the Rois* are sophisticated examples of the courtly allegory. His longest poem, *The Tretis of the Tua Wemen and the Wedo,* (The Treatise of the Two Married Women and the Widow) is an encounter between three drunken women whose lewd debate about husbands and marriage, overheard in a garden, provides comic contrast to their wealth and status. Written in unrhymed alliterative meter, it parodies two or three medieval literary conventions: courtly love, pastoral poetics, the *demande d'amour*. * Dunbar's best known short poem, *Lament for the Makars,* is a meditation on death in the *ubi sunt* tradition. * *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy* is a comic torrent of deliberately extravagant vernacular language. (See Flyting.)

A lesser figure, Bishop Gavin Douglas (1474-1522), is best known for his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* , not for Douglas's skill as a translator, but more for The Prologues attached to each Book which have been noted for their remarkable descriptions, unusual in medieval poetry, of the natural landscape, often made in "aureate" * language.

Among the poetry of fifteenth century Scotland, *The Kingis Quair* (The King's Book) is the one poem which is cited as the closest to some of Chaucer’s work in both time and character, although its attribution to King James I of Scotland (1395-1437) is now doubted by scholars. The poem presents a romantic courtship in an allegory typical of the courtly literature influenced by the *Roman de la Rose*. Composed in the seven-lined stanza which came to be called “rhyme royal” * as a result of its use in this poem, *The Kingis Quair* is reminiscent of Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowles* and *Book of the Duchess* in its use of the dream-vision, as well as its central garden * motif.

The final prominent figure to be considered among the makars is Sir David Lyndsay(1490-1557) who was enormously popular in Scotland for almost two centuries after his death. Modern literary critics have not, however, found his work equal to that of Dunbar, Henryson or Douglas, noting that it was Lindsay’s Protestant ecclesiastical politics which made him so popular. His Morality play, *Ane plesant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis in commendatioun of Vertew and vituperatioun of Vyce* , , has been called “political propaganda in dramatic verse form” which attempts to incite the reader towards “violent reformation” (Kinghorn, 38). It is the only lengthy dramatic work in middle Scots extant. Lindsay’s verse as a whole is without ornament, close to the vernacular of everyday speech, and occasionally, “coarse to the point of brutality” (Speirs, 81).

J. Clawson

SENESCHAL

"An official in the household of a sovereign or great noble, to whom the administration of justice and entire control of domestic arrangements were entrusted. In wider use: a steward, a major-domo" (OED). Though seneschals figure with some frequency in medieval romances, we do not often find them performing the functions mentioned in the OED definition. Almost invariably, seneschals are presented in a bad light: they are ill-mannered, inept, devious and even treacherous. Probably Chretien de Troyes's Sir Kay is the paradigm for most of the seneschals who figure in later romances, and in most other stories where Kay appears he is portrayed in this way.

In the earliest Welsh Arthurian material Kay appears as one of Arthur's most prominent comrades, on a level with Gawain and Bedivere. He is even endowed with supernatural qualities. In the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace and La3amon, and in the English romances derived from them (the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* and the early books of

Malory) Kay is still a great warrior who also holds the prestigious position of seneschal to Arthur.

Kay’s character underwent a noticeable degradation in Chretien's *Perceval* where he was depicted as a seneschal of rude manners and sharp tongue, whose martial ineptitude and discourteous speech make him a perfect foil for Gawain's valor and courtesy. In German versions he is treated even more roughly. Most of the English romancers inherited the Kay of Chretien and his European successors. In the English *Avowing of Arthur,* for example, he is a comic braggart, discourteous and inept, once more a fine contrast to Gawain. Kay appears in somewhat similar roles in *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle* and in *Golagros and Gawain*. In other ME romances where he appears more briefly he is still a "crabbed" knight. Malory's *Morte Darthur,* following a variety of sources, shows rather well the metamorphosis of Kay from the brave companion of Arthur in the first books, to the comic and malicious character of the later ones.

How could Arthur permit a character such as the rude, malicious, and sharp-tongued Kay to remain as high steward in a chivalric court? The author or authors of the Huth *Merlin* provide(s) one answer: Kay was raised as Arthur's half brother, and after the sword-in-the-stone episode, Arthur promised Kay's father that he would make Kay seneschal for life. This is an explanation that Malory picks up: "Never man shalle have that office but he, while he and I live." (See Rash Promise*). Another explanation of sorts for Kay’s crabbedness, found in the Merlin group (9495 ff), is that Kay was replaced at his mother's breast by Arthur, and raised by a rough-tongued nurse.

The crabbed Kay is, perhaps, a vestigial version of the court "taunter" such as we see in Unferth in *Beowulf* , an individual whose original function was to test out verbally would-be heroes or to taunt men into being heroes, willing or not. (See *Boast** and *Vow* *).

Several other suggestions have been made to account for this attitude to seneschals especially the violent change from Kay the valorous warrior to Kay the boor : 1. Seneschals had seriously abused political power in France. 2. Writers or other entertainers felt themselves slighted in the houses of the great by stewards, and their revenge was to present stewards as the villains of their stories 3. Authors wanted a foil for characters like Lancelot and Gawain. (See *Roman de la Rose,* Pt. 9, 66-71 of Robbins's trans., 2206-2212 of Chaucer's, where Gawain and Kay are contrasted).

In some writers, however, especially the later ones, the bad seneschal was probably no more than an inherited convention.

The good steward in *Sir Orpheo* is a notable exception to the rule. Sir Kay in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* is twice an exception: he is shown actually performing the tasks of a steward and he is portrayed as a valiant knight.

The following list of tales with bad stewards (taken in large degree from Bordman) illustrates how widespread was the convention of the wicked steward in medieval English romances:
Arthur and Merlin, 79 ff; *Amis and Amiloun,* 769 ff; 205 ff; *Bevis of Hamtoun,* 430ff; 837 ff; *Earl of Toulouse* 769 ff; *Generides* 22 ff; 939 ff; *Guy of Warwick,* 2962 ff; *Partenope of Blois* 4665; *Sir Triamour,* 13 ff; *Sir Tristrem,* 1492 ff; *Squire of Low Degree* 283 ff; 339 ff; *Tale of Beryn* 3055 ff; Gottfried's *Tristan* sections 12-14 and 19; *Ywain and Gawain,* 21630; *The Ballad of Sir Aldingar*.

SENEX AMANS (The Old Man or Woman in Love)
In the 18C Pope summed up in a couplet the amused, satiric attitude of all periods to the illusions of old men who marry young women:

> *No greater folly can be seen*
> *Than crooked eighty coupled with eighteen*

The theme goes back at least to Anacreon. In ME the most memorable treatments of the topic are probably Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* and *Merchant's Tale* -- comic or sardonic illustrations of the deserved punishment of men with a "hoar head and a green tail." A widespread medieval legend also shows Aristotle * in this role, quite literally making an ass of himself in his desire for the young wife or mistress of Alexander. Somewhat similarly the great Merlin surrenders to the wiles and beauty of Vivian (Nimian) in Malory's *Morte Darthur*. John Gower includes himself in a long list of besotted old lovers at the end of *Confessio Amantis*.

The cases of Aristotle and Merlin have considerable piquancy because in each case a man noted for his wisdom and knowledge is chosen to illustrate the power of sexual passion to humiliate even the least likely of victims.

In the mystery plays there are even mildly comic treatments of St. Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary, who is made to perceive himself mistakenly as an old cuckold when Mary becomes pregnant. (In Christian tradition and iconography Joseph was nearly always pictured as an old man). For this see *Ludus Coventriae,* "Joseph" and "The Trial of Joseph and Mary"; Chester 6; York 13; Coventry, "Shearman and Tailors"; Towneley 10 and 15. This tradition is based on the Apocryphal books of the New Testament, *Pseudo-Matthew* and *Protevangelium.*

There are, however, a couple of instances in medieval romance where the *senex* is treated with more sympathy. See, e.g., "The Tale of Maladas" in the *Seven Sages* and *Bevis of Hamtoun*.

The first three husbands of the Wife of Bath are, presumably, *senes amantes,* and at the time we meet her the Wife is herself at least an incipient *senex amans* with her colt's tooth for "husbands meek, young, and fresh abed." Dunbar’s poem *The Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* discusses the subject in very frank terms from the woman’s point of view.

Brown-Robbins *Index,* s. vv "Love, old men in"; *Index Supplement* s.v. "Jolly Forester".

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

The Seven Deadly Sins are more accurately known as the Seven Cardinal Sins or the Seven Capital Sins. The common modern list is as follows: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth, but some such list of seven or eight sins appears to go back to pre-Christian times. Cassian (c. 400 a.d.), one of the Egyptian Fathers of the Desert who came to Gaul, introduced this originally oriental idea into the West, and the Catholic Church made the concept familiar and important in the Middle Ages.

There are also seven major virtues in the Christian Church: the three Theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity; and the four cardinal virtues of Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance, and Justice, which are Ciceronian as much as Christian. But, since these two groups are really independent of the concept of Seven Deadly Sins, efforts to oppose the Seven Sins and the Seven Virtues in any neat pattern have never succeeded. The notions of the Seven

Deadly Sins and the Psychomachia * are also independent though often allied. (See also above Pater Noster *, seven petitions etc).

In English literature there are major references to and treatments of the sins beginning in OE with Aelfric's Pastoral for Wulfsige and his sermon for Mid Lent Sunday (Second Discourse) which mentions eight.

In early Middle English a major treatment is to be found in *The Ancrene Riwle* (c. 1225), pt. 4. This is also the first work in English where the sins are associated with animals, an old idea, though there was never any agreed series of associations of sins and beasts. (See Bloomfield's "Appendix"). In his French work *Mirour de l'omme* the English poet Gower has a procession of the Seven daughters of Sin on their way to their marriage with the World, riding on various animals like the boar, the ass, the dog, the wolf, and the goat. Each carries a bird on her finger or wrist. Several thousand lines are devoted to their vicious offspring. (I, 841ff). There is also a treatment in Manning's *Handling Sin* (c. 1303). Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* is a homily totally devoted to the topic of the Sins, and his contemporary Gower framed his long English poem *Confessio Amantis* on the Lover's confession of his seven deadly sins to the priest Genius. The confession scene of the Sins which appears in all three versions of *Piers Plowman* is probably "the greatest treatment of the cardinal sins in English literature. Its only possible rival is Spenser's great procession in the *Faerie Queene*" (Bloomfield).

Bloomfield; Wenzel

SIEGE PERILOUS (Seat of Danger)

The one seat at the Round Table that remained unoccupied, awaiting the arrival of the world's best knight who would be successful in the quest of the Holy Grail * and heal the Maimed King. Anyone else who sat on the Siege was destroyed. The concept of the Siege is absent from the earliest Arthurian chronicles written in England by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace and La3amon; it is an invention of the French romancers. Accounts of its origin differ:

1. Gerbert, one of the continuators of Chretien's *Conte del Graal,* says, without much originality, that the Siege was sent to Arthur by a fairy. Six knights who sat on it were swallowed up by the earth before Perceval successfully claimed it, at which point the unfortunate knights reappeared.

2. In other French Grail romances the origin is explained as follows: Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Christ, was given charge of the Grail, and by divine order built a table in memory of the table of the Last Supper. One seat was left vacant in memory of the seat of Judas (in some cases that of Jesus). A false disciple or one of the sons of Joseph dared to sit in the seat and was therefore swallowed up by the earth.
3. Merlin made the Round Table * and the Siege Perilous in memory of the two earlier tables and the seat of Judas or Jesus. The hero who successfuly claims the Siege is Perceval in two romances (the Gerbert continuation of Chretien's *Conte*, and the *Didot Perceval*). In the *Queste del Saint Graal* which was followed by Malory who, in turn, is Tennyson's source, the hero is Galahad. Malory, moreover, in line with his tendency to desacralize his sources, does not mention the earlier seats or tables.

For a 19th century illustration see the web at :
http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/images/bkasp.htm

SISTER'S SON
The strong bond between a man and his sister's son, while not peculiar to medieval Western Europe, is very noticeable in the literature of that period and place, especially in Germanic literature. The sacredness of the sisterson relationship among the Germanic tribes was early pointed out by Tacitus: "Sister's sons are held in as much esteem by their uncles as by their fathers. Indeed, some regard the relation as even more sacred and binding, and prefer it in receiving hostages. . . .But every man's own children are his heirs and successors"(*Germania*, 20). In OE there were separate words for maternal uncle, *eam*, and paternal uncle, *faedera*. *Sweostorsunu* was sometimes written thus as a single word. For the relationship in
Irish Literature see O'Cathasaigh

References to the sisterson relationship are found in English literature as early as *Beowulf* and as late as the last books of Malory's *Morte Darthur* at the end of the 15C. Beowulf's love for and loyalty to Hygelac comes partly from the fact that Beowulf is Hygelac's sisterson. Arthur, holding the dying Gawain in his arms, cries "Alas, Sir Gawain, my syster son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most" (*Morte Darthur*, "The Day of Destiny,"). In his *Brut* (late 12C-early 13C) La3amon emphasised the same relationship between Arthur and Mordred when Mordred turns traitor. Here, as in the Tristan stories

(Tristan is Mark's sisterson) audiences were expected to notice the special heinousness or tragedy of the nephew's disloyalty to his mother's brother, though the sacredness of the relationship may have been archaic and vestigial by late medieval times or even by the time *Beowulf* was written. (See Farnsworth and Spolsky). Apart from those already mentioned, there are a number of other prominent examples of the relationship in medieval literature. (Nephew's name first):

1. *Beowulf*: Fitela and Sigmund; Hildeburh's son and Hnaef.
   (Hrothulf is Hrothgar's brother’s son)
2. *Maldon*: Wulfmaer and Byrtnoth;
3. *Song of Roland*: Roland and Charlemagne
4. *Waltharius*: Patavrid and Hagen
5. *Ballads,* Child II, 268; III, 1-12 and 370; V, 156.

Farnsworth, Gummere; Spolsky.

STANZA LINKING

The repetition in whole or in part of the last section of one stanza in the first section of the next stanza throughout a poem. The repetition may involve one word or a whole line, and it may occur in the first word of the new stanza or several lines in. The device seems to occur in Middle English only with alliterative poems (see Brown, 274) which are all from the North or North West MIdlands of England or from Scotland. Because the device is well known in Welsh verse, Brown suggests that there was possibly some influence from Welsh poetry upon the poets of the neighboring West Midlands of England. The French sestina is, of couse, a very complex form of line and stanza linking.

Stanza linking occurs prominently in the English metrical romances *Sir Perceval, The Aunters of Arthur, Sir Degrevant,* all Arthurian, and somewhat less commonly in *Sir Tristrem, and Thomas of Erceldoun*. It is noticeable in some of the York mystery plays (especially nos. 40 and 46) and in the poetry of Laurence Minot (see Medary, 201). It is , however, probably best known from the poem *Pearl,* parts of which will be used here to illustrate the technique:

Fit XII, Stanza 55

****
****

And the grace of God is ***gret innogh*** *(last line).*

Fit XII, Stanza 56 .
Grace innogh *the mon may have*
That synnes thenne new, 3if him repente
****
And inoscente is ***saf and ryghte***

Fit XII, stanza 57
Ryght *thus I knaw wel in this cas*
****
The innosent is ay ***saf by ryght****.*

Several of the stanza-linked poems here mentioned also use the device of ending the poem with the same word or phrase with which it began. thus linking the last stanza with the first. (See Medary 267-8, and entry above on *Beginnings and Endings*)* .

C. F. Brown; Medary; Osgood.

STEWARD (See SENESCHAL)

SWORD

The importance of this weapon in a warrior society does not need to be stressed. Indeed, the sword was a functioning piece of military equipment until comparatively modern times, and it was and remains a symbol of significance. A good sword was a very valuable possession, and in Anglo-Saxon times it was often passed on from generation to generation, or returned to the lord on the user's death according to the custom of heriot whereby the weapon was merely lent to the user for his lifetime. Hence comparatively few swords have been found in graves, and these few were sometimes old and mended, or were completely fragmentary at the time of inhumation. Good swords were too valuable to be buried.

It is not surprising that great swordsmiths became legendary in heroic societies: Hephaestus or Vulcan in classical myth, Novak in Slavonic. In Teutonic there were Regin, Mimir, Alberich, and above all, Weland (Wayland, Volundr). Many heroes from classical times onwards, including Perseus and Achilles, had magic swords. Swords also, however, had a way of breaking or failing in some other way at the most awkward moments. (See Garbaty).

The importance of the sword in medieval times is emphasised by the fact that some were given names in literature. There are not many names recorded in OE: Naegling, Hrunting, perhaps Hunlafing (*Beowulf* 1143, 1457, 1659, 2680), and Mimming (*Waldere*, 1-5). There are, by contrast, over 50 sword names in Old Norse, not to mention ON names for helmets, axes, etc. However, all Old Norse Mss in which sword names are found are fairly late (13C and later), and it is possible that sword naming had by that time become largely a literary convention though earlier Arthur's arms are named in La3amon's *Brut,* an English poem (c. 1190) -- his sword is called Caliburn; his helmet: Goswhite; his spear: Ron; his shield: Pridwen. The Culhwch and Olwen section of the Welsh *Mabinogion* names these rather differently.

Perhaps naming arms was never more than a poetic convention, for none of the swords that have been found has an indisputable name. Some swords of the Anglo-Saxon period were inscribed with runes or Roman letters, the runes always on the hilt or scabbard, the Roman lettering sometimes on the blade. The inscription generally named the owner or the smith (Ulfberht, Ingelrii), "but there is a possibility that runes were sometimes used in this way to give the name of the sword itself." (Davidson, 101). The hilt of the sword that Beowulf brings back from the deep where he slew Grendel's mother, is carved with the story of the flood (!), and the hiltguards with runes indicating the owner's name. Even actual swords of a later period, (1150-1300) while often inscribed with the name of the smith (e.g. Gicelin) or a religious phrase ("In nomine domini"), do not appear to have names of their own. The most common inscription of this period is a long string of unrelated letters like NEDRGNEDRUSDRCNEDRUD.

The sword could symbolize ideas such as political or spiritual right, or physical chastity. Arthur's right to a kingdom is proved by his singular ability to pull the sword from the stone or anvil. Galahad, who is to achieve the Grail, also pulls a sword from a stone, and Sigmund draws Branstock from an oak. (For further examples see Stith Thompson, H 31.1). The sword laid between the sleeping man and woman symbolized their chaste relationship. This fairly common motif occurs notably in *Amis and Amiloun, Tristan and Isolde,* and various poems about Siegfried's courtship of Brunnhilde for Gunnar (Gunther).

Here is a selection of the more famous sword-names and associated heroes from medieval literature in various languages:

Arondight:	Lancelot
Balmung:	Siegfried
Brimir:	Odin
Brownsteel:	Arthur
Caliburn:	Arthur
Clarent:	Arthur & Mordred
Colbrand:	Arthur
Courtain:	Ogier the Dane
Durendal:	Roland
Excalibur:	Arthur, Gawain
Flamberge:	Charlemagne
Galuth:	Gawain
Gram:	Sigmund
Haunchecler	Ogier theDane
Hrunting:	Unferð, Beowulf
Joyeuse:	Charlemagne
Mimming:	Witege (Weland's son), Waldere
Morglay:	Bevis of Hampton
Mountjoy:	Charlemagne
Naegling:	Beowulf
Quernbiter:	Haakon the Good
Sauvagine	Ogier
Sigrljomi:	Rolf Kraki
Skofnung:	Rolf Kraki
Tyrfing:	Angantyr; his daughter Hervor

Bordman, p. 102; Brewer, **Dictionary;** Ellis-Davidson; Falk.

TRIVIUM See Liberal Arts

TROY (See Greece and Rome, Matter of)

TYPOLOGY

Typology, a kind of biblical exegesis dating from early times, is a way of interpreting the persons and events in the Old Testament as prefiguring those of the New Testament. Historic prefiguration has had many terms; *figura* was one of many Latin terms, *allegoria* and *typus* were frequent Greek terms. In this kind of biblical exegesis Old Testament persons or events are referred to as “types”, and their New Testament counterparts by the unfortunate term “antitypes” . For example, Isaac carrying the wood for the altar on which he is to be sacrificed by his father Abraham prefigures Christ who carried the wood of the cross on which he was sacrificed by the will of God the Father. The flight of Jacob from the wrath of his brother Esau prefigures the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt to avoid Herod. The sale of Joseph by his brothers prefigures the sale of Jesus by Judas, and so on.

This way of reading was not peculiar to early Christians; in fact they probably borrowed it from Jews. Gerald L. Bruns observes that the practice of typology by early Christian theologians was continuous with *midrash* and *pesher*, the rabbinic methods of exegesis . “The Old Testament is to be read as a midrash of the New, just as the New Testament is a midrash upon the Old”
(Bruns, 635).

Early Church theologians justified their typology by citing passages in the Pauline Epistles, where the Jews in the desert are called “figures of ourselves” (I Cor. 10:6, and 11) and where Paul finds the crossing of the Red Sea a prefiguration of Baptism, and manna of the Eucharist.. Thus the Old Testament was transformed by early Christian theologians “from a book of laws and history of the people of Israel into a series of figures of Christ and the Redemption”. Another influence in early Christian exegesis was a Greek tradition which sought to explain the gods of Homer as “poetical devices for talking about natural and psychic forces” (Donahue 64). This method of interpreting Homer was used to defend the poet against attacks by those who saw blasphemy in Homer’s portrayal of the gods. The Hebraic and Greek traditions of exegesis become mingled in the writing of Philo of Alexandria whose example was followed, in turn, by the early church Fathers beginning with Origen.

The medieval Mystery Plays * dramatized for the common people many stories from the Old Testament which had typological significance. In the plays about the Flood, Noah was seen as a type of Christ, the ark as a type of the cross and of the Church . The story of Abraham & Isaac is a favorite in the Mystery Plays and many of the Play cycles conclude with it. There is, however, a scene depicting Moses and Pharaoh in the York cycle which was “carefully modelled to foreshadow the dialogue between Christ and Satan in the Harrowing of Hell” (Woolf 153). (See Harrowing*).

By the year 1470 an illustrated **Bible of the Poor (Biblia Pauperum),** was available as a popular picture Bible, presenting Old and New Testament stories in printed triptych panels to a wide segment of the population

Some of the block prints together with the translations of the accompanying texts can be found at

http://amasis.com/biblia/ibp/index.html

One triptych from ***The Bible of the Poor*** *shows Christ standing at the jaws of hell in the center panel.* (See entry for Harrowing*)
One side panel shows David cutting off the head of Goliath;
Samson slays the lion in the other panel.
(Labriola and Smeltz, 42)..

Both words and block print can be found at
http://amasis.com/biblia/ibp/index.html
Click *h*.

f and *s* also show block prints with words.
The other letters give words only.

For modern readers the *Bible of the Poor* is a virtual handbook of biblical iconography and typology, as well as a means of interpreting the Mystery Plays , which include many of the same events depicted in the picture Bible.

Like the *Bible of the Poor* medieval cathedrals showed scenes of types and antitypes in stone and especially in stained glass representation. Emile Male (140) illustrates how six different cathedrals contain the same typological scenes in an almost identical manner. Lydgate's *A Procession of Corpus Christi* describes a series of tableaux that includes a chronological Old Testament sequence of stories which are "types" of the Eucharist and Christ's sacrifice: Melchisedek, Abraham entertaining the three angels, the sacrifice of Isaac, Jacob's ladder, the manna in the wilderness, Aaron, and David and Goliath.

More recently some literary critics have begun to study the literary use of biblical typology in secular texts such as *The Pearl, Piers Plowman,* and some of Chaucer's work .

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT (Where are they who lived before us?)

The *Ubi Sunt* formula on the transience of human life and joy, is widely diffused in medieval literature in Latin and in various vernaculars, in both sacred and profane writing. It is perhaps best known to most readers in the form of Villon's famous refrain "Et ou sont les neiges d'antan?" ; in Rossetti's rendering in *The Ballade of Dead Ladies* : "But where are the snows of yesteryear?" ; and now perhaps in Philip Larkin's take on both, a jeu d'esprit, named like Villon's, that also manages to be touching: *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis*.

The formula is much older than Villon, like the theme it expresses — the contemplation of mortality and the vanity of human wishes. J.W. Bright ***(MLN,*** 1893) sought to show that the formula was used by the classical poets, but many of his citations do not seem really relevant. More convincingly Etienne Gilson demonstrated the use of the formula in Old and New Testaments, and in Christian ecclesiastical writing. At any rate, its wide diffusion in the Middle Ages seems to derive mostly from the much-read encyclopedist Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) and from Boethius. By the 12C or 13C it was already a "banalité theologique," and about the same period writers began to emphasise two elements found less often in the older versions: they now regularly substituted specific names of famous men and women for the general classes more common in earlier occurrences (David, Alexander, Hector, for emperors, kings, princes. Plato, Cicero, Aristotle for "litteratus", "doctor," etc. (See also *De Casibus* entry above). The second new element was an emphasis on the transience of woman's beauty.

The formula occurs mostly in connection with a number of interrelated themes and conventions common in the literature of the Middle Ages: the Wheel of Fortune*, the Dance of Death*, Contemptus Mundi,* the Debate* of the Body and Soul , De Casibus*, and so forth.

Very full citations and references will be found in the critical works cited below. The following representative samples are meant as a small anthology to illustrate the kind of variation to be found within the set formula:

1. *Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent?*
Quid Brutus, aut rigidus Cato?
(Boethius, *De Consolatione*,II, poema 7).

Where now are the bones of faithful Fabricius? What has become of Brutus or of inflexible Cato?

2. *Hwaer sint nu þaes Welandes ban, oþþe hwa wat nu hwaer hi waeron?*
Oþþe hwaer is nu se foremaera and se araeda Romewara heretoga, se
waes haten Brutus, oþþe naman Cassius?
Oþþe se wisa and faestraeda Cato, se waes eac Romana heretoga ....
(King Alfred's *Boethius*, MS Bod 180, XIX; slightly different version in Meter 10).

Where are the bones of Weland [the famous smith], or who knows where they might be? Or where now is Brutus the famous and resolute leader of the Romans? Or Cassius? Or the wise and steadfast Cato, who was also a Roman leader?

3. *Dic ubi sunt reges? ubi principes? ubi imperatores? ubi locupletes rerum? ubi potentes saeculi? quasi umbra transierunt, velut somnium evanuerunt.*
(Isidore's *Synonyma*, II, 91).

Tell us where are the kings? Where the princes? Where the emperors? Where the rich of the world? Where the powerful of this earth? Like a shadow they have passed
like a dream they have vanished.

4. *Hwaer cwom mearg? hwaer cwom mago? hwaer cwom maþþumgyfa*
Hwaer cwom symbla gesetu? Hwaer sindon seledreamas?
(*Wanderer*, 92-93).

Where is the horse, and where his rider? Where is the giver of treasure? Where are the feasting places and the joys of the banqueting hall?

5. *Ubi Plato, ubi Porphyrius?*
Ubi Tullius aut Virgilius?
Alexander ubi rex maximus?
Ubi David rex doctissimus?
Ubi Solomon prudentissimus?
Ubi Helena Parisque roseus?
Ceciderunt in profundum ut lapides.
Anon. 12C

Where are Plato and Porphyry, Cicero and Virgil? Where is Alexander the greatest of kings? David the most learned, and Solomon the wisest of monarchs?
Where are the beautiful Helen and Paris? They have fallen into the abyss like stones.

6.	*Where is Paris and Eleyne*	Helen
	Ðaet were so bright and fair on bleo?	of face
	Amadas and Dideyne,	
	Tristram, Iseude and all theo?	those
	(Luve Ron 13 C).	

7.	*Where beth they bifore us weren,*	
	Houndes ladden and hawkes beren	
	And hadden field and wood,	
	The riche levedies in hoere bour	ladies / their bower
	That wereden gold in hoere tressour,	wore g. in their headdresses
	With hoere brightte rode?	their b. faces
	(Anonymous 13 C)	

Where are those who were before us,
who led hounds and carried hawks
and possessed fields and woods?
The rich ladies in their bower
that wore gold in their hair,
with their bright faces?

E. Gilson ; J.E. Cross, *Ubi Sunt Passages*.

VICES & VIRTUES (See Psychomachia)

VIRGIL

Virgil was known to the Middle Ages as the greatest of Roman poets. Indeed, in one respect his reputation was somewhat higher than it is today, for he was regarded as something akin to an OT prophet because of his famous Fourth Eclogue which was widely taken as a prophecy of the birth of Christ. The practice of the *sortes virgilianae* is presumably related to Virgil's reputation as a kind of pagan prophet. It consisted in putting one's finger at random into a volume of Virgil and using the verse thus found as some kind of guide to a course of action. The use of the Bible in the same way is not unknown today. Virgil's repute in medieval times is crowned by Dante's use of him as a guide in the *Divine Comedy*.

Legends about Virgil, mostly unconnected with his previous reputation as a great poet and guide began to appear in writing about the middle of the 12C. In these, Virgil appeared as a magician, credited with the invention of numerous marvellous creations. One of these was a collection of human automata which pointed towards any Roman province where rebellion had raised its head. Hence, one of these was known as *Salvatio Romae* (Salvation of Rome). Another was a mirror which performed a similar function. There was a fly of brass or bronze which kept real flies out of Naples (where Virgil lived), and a *Bocca della Verita* (a mouth of truth) which would bite off the fingers of any unfaithful wife who put her hand into it and lied.

Perhaps the best-known story about Virgil was one that was meant to illustrate the weakness of even great men when seized by inordinate desire for women. (Here Virgil joins the older biblical quartet of Adam, Samson, David and Solomon, though rather more comically). Virgil fell in love with a woman to whom his suit was not welcome, and to cure him the woman arranged a midnight tryst at her home where Virgil was to climb into a basket and be hoisted up to her room. She drew the basket up only half way, however, and left her would-be lover suspended until the morning, when he became the laughing stock of the city. Why the great magician was unable to extricate himself from this rather simple predicament is not clear. But Merlin was unable to release himself from a similar, more malevolent trap set by Nimian or Viviane. The theme of Virgil's basket was quite a favorite with artists through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.

For an illustration by Lucas van Leyden (c. 1490) see the web at

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/intg/hod_41.1.23.htm

To the standard OT figures mentioned above John Gower in *Confessio Amantis*, VIII, 2667 ff) attaches Virgil and Aristotle * to form a list of besotted lovers who were humiliated by their women. (For the quotation from *C.A.* see Aristotle* entry above; see also Senex Amans*).

Spargo; Comparetti

VOW

We are not here concerned with the religious vow but with the heroic or chivalric vow which is also to be distinguished from the Boast * . The vow is a promise to do something in the future: to die fighting rather than surrender, for example. In OE and ON literature especially, such vows are often associated with drinking bouts, where caution was diminished or absent. The practice was not mere drunken bravado, however, but had a purpose in a heroic society: it was meant to cultivate pride in martial prowess, essential to survival of such a society. Brave words uttered in the beer hall had to be matched with brave deeds on the battlefield. While the sons of Odda in *Maldon* and Wiglaf's companions in *Beowulf* earn eternal infamy by their failure, Wiglaf and the loyal retainers of Byrtnoth reap eternal fame by fulfilling their vows. (*Maldon,* lines 185 ff, 213, 246, 274, 289-90; *Beowulf* 2631 ff.) La3amon's *Brut* (c.1190), an early Arthurian poem in alliterative verse, has more than its share of vows, boasts and taunts throughout.

The convention continues in English and European literature, though not always seriously. Even in the early *Pelerinage de Charlemagne* (c. 1115) the outrageously boastful vows are comic, as are those in the English *Avowing of Arthur*. In the 14 C French poems *Les Voeux de Paon* (rendered into Scottish English as *The Buik of Alexander*) and *Les Voeux de Heron* (Vows of the Peacock / Heron) both knights and ladies are involved in vowing on the body of a bird. Some of this may be satire or even parody. Certainly the whole convention ends in the burlesque of Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* and the anonymous English poem *The Tournament of Tottenham* (early 15 C).

Whiting; M.. Murphy 1 , *Vows*

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

This theme or convention is ubiquitous in the art of the Middle Ages, and intimately related to other themes in medieval literature such as *Ubi Sunt, Nine Worthies, De Casibus* (* *). They are, indeed, all aspects of the same theme of Mutability. The notion of Fortune whimsically spinning a wheel with men on it probably originates for the Middle Ages with Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* (II, poem 1, prose 2). Here Fortune presents herself as non-malevolent, but, at the same time, as raising or degrading men for her own amusement. She implies that men get on the Wheel only if they wish. Chaucer, however, in his ballade *Fortune* makes her say to the "plaintiff":

> *Thou borne art in my regne of variaunce* kingdom
> *About the wheel with others must thou drive* (45-46).

In the *Alliterative Morte Arthure,* on the other hand, Fortune tells Arthur:

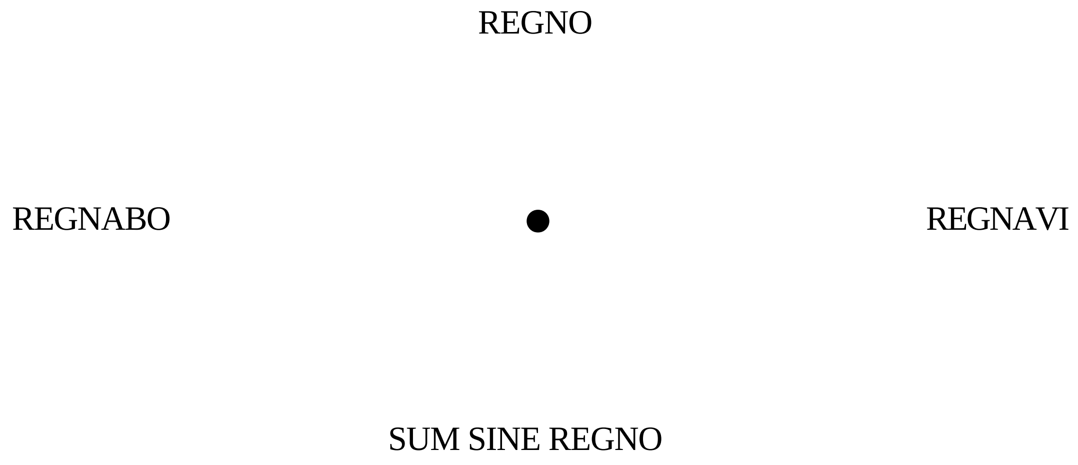
> *"I chose thee my selfen ..."*
> *And (she) sette me softly in the see* seat
> (3347-3350).

There are, therefore, at least three notions of the relationship of man to the Wheel of Fortune.

a. He can choose to be on it or not.
b. Fortune singles him out to be on it.
c. Everyone is on it whether he wishes or no.

Possibly the most potent presentation of the Wheel in medieval English literature is that in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (3250 ff) where Arthur shares his fate with the other eight of the Nine Worthies * . Two other versions of the Death of Arthur also present the dream in which Arthur sees himself hurled to destruction from the Wheel, but neither of them shows or even mentions Lady Fortune: the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* (3168 ff), and Malory's *Morte Darthur* ("The Day of Destiny"). The Wheel is also prominent in the poem *Summer Sunday* and in King James's *Kingis Quair* (1114 ff).

Visual illustrations of the Wheel are as common as their literary counterparts. One of those occurs so frequently that Patch calls it the Formula of Four. It shows four figures on the Wheel, one each at the 12, 3, 6, and 9 o'clock positions. The figure at 12, generally crowned, is accompanied by the Latin word "regno" (I reign). The others--clockwise--with "regnavi" (I have reigned), "sum sine regno" (I am without a throne). Both of these are tumbling off.
The fourth, "regnabo" (I shall reign), is clawing his way up.



Pickering; Patch

WYRD

The meaning of this Old English word and concept has been much disputed. Clark Hall's **Dictionary** glosses it as follows: fate, chance, fortune, destiny -- Fate, the Fates, Providence -- event, phenomenon, transaction, fact, deed -- condition, pleasure.

These glosses illustrate the wide range of meanings that can be attached to the word in a variety of contexts. The "Fate" meaning is the one that has been of most interest. Nineteenth century scholars had a strong tendency to insist that *Wyrd* always signified a purely pagan notion that stubbornly survived Christianity, and was a personifiction of Fate in some purely heathen sense, an all-powerful force decreeing what happens to everyone and striking down all eventually. But clearly the word in Anglo Saxon sometimes means Providence in the Christian sense of God's will, a concept that can persist, as it still does, side by side with a notion of impersonal chance or fate. The determination in the 19th and early 20th century to find in *Wyrd* only a pagan notion sometimes "perverted" by "monkish interpolators" was, as E.G. Stanley put it, the result of "a prejudice which turned into a predilection" during the a period when "the search for Anglo-Saxon paganism" was at its height.

Stanley

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Abbreviations:
ALMA: Arthurian Literature in the Midddle Ages; CR: Chaucer Review;
PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America;
JEGP: Journal of English and Germanic Philology; PLL: Papers in Language and Literature; ELH: (English Literary History)

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Here taketh the senior maker of this book his leave in borrowed words:

Now have good day, O good men all,
And have good day both young and old
And have good day both great and small
And grammercy a thousand fold.
If ever I might, full fain I wold
Do aught that were unto you lief.
Christ keep you out of car•s cold
For now is time to take my leave.

Adapted from the Vernon MS as printed in Carleton Brown's ***Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century****, # 97*