The Gest of Robyn Hode:

A Critical and Textual Commentary

by Robert B. Waltz
with a foreword by David G. Engle, Ph.D.

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To

Dr. David G. Engle

and

Bennett Schwartz

Traditional Ballad Index Colleagues

Advisors

and Friends

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Foreword
by David G. Engle, Ph.D.

In 1992 when Robert Waltz asked the "ballad-l" email list "has anyone heard of a ballad index?," I said, yes, I was working on an indexed catalog of German ballads as one of my tasks as curator at the German National Folksong Archive (their equivalent of our Library of Congress' then Archive of American Folksong). We've been colleagues ever since on the *Traditional Ballad Index: An annotated source to folk song from the English-speaking world.* This collaboration has been a significant privilege (and advantage!) for me, both in my own ballad work and in creating and then heading the Central California Folklore Archives over the last 30 years.

Robert Waltz is a man of research, but better yet he is a realist, establishing firm ground from which to develop his conclusions, rather than some dreamer, searching for tantalizing tidbits from tampered (and ofttimes "reconstructed") evidence. After all, what would you expect from a man whose email signature reads "'Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe.' — Geoffrey Chaucer, The Franklin's Tale, line 1479."

Waltz is a trained mathematician who shows his work. He is a musician, not a song writer, but a singer of tales, who knows how songs work, and as a folklorist knows how the folk process ("change") works. As a linguist and an historian he has spent untold hours rummaging in the "attics" of previous centuries. (Yes, he is fluent in Middle English, once muttering about this project: "it has been so long. A significant part of my brain has moved to fifteenth century Yorkshire.") As a seeker and researcher, he has pursued paths back down various Biblical manuscript traditions, comparing texts, establishing heredity of ideas and "chains of transmission." And as a folklorist, singer and song indexer and commentator, he has turned a bright shining light on hundreds of songs in the process of making the story-songs ('way beyond the low-hanging fruit of the 305 celebrated "Child ballads") easily accessible. Finally.

All of these skills Robert Waltz brings to bear on his edition of *The Geste Robyn Hode.* Waltz goes back to where major scholarship on a major work of English literature left off and brings it up-to-date, contributing decisively to our ability to assess the Geste accurately.

William Clawson summarized the Geste's stature in his "Gest of Robin Hood" thesis (Toronto, 1909)

> Among those Robin Hood ballads which are derived from genuine popular tradition, the *Gest of Robin Hood* undoubtedly holds first place in interest and importance. It not only gives the fullest and most comprehensive account of the habits and character of that famous outlaw, but also relates a greater number of his adventures than any other ballad. It is one of the best examples in mediaeval literature of skillfully arranged and effectively phrased narrative. Finally, it is the only example in English, and perhaps in European literature, of a poem which, while employing the material, the metre, and to some extent the style of

> the single ballad, shows in its length (456 ballad stanzas), in its combination of originally separate ballads of the hero, and in its obvious aim to give a complete picture of that hero's character and career, a decided approach to the method and style of the epic. *The Gest of Robin Hood* is, therefore, of great significance, not only as a masterly narrative of a popular mediaeval hero, but also as a contribution to the problem of epic origins and of the relations between ballad and epic. [pg. 1]

In the meantime a wealth of available material both from the Geste and from its times has surfaced along with a whole tool chest of new approaches and methodologies for editing Middle English manuscripts and prints. As a case in point, Waltz provides a text capable of feeding these newer approaches, because, as he writes:

> for the first time in a century and a half, the poem has a single orthographic base. This will, for the first time, make real lexical studies possible.
>
> With all that said, I've done my best to create a critical apparatus that will let you figure these things for yourself, because it records all the variants of all the prints (except the spellings of "Robin Hood" and "Little John," which would make the apparatus several pages longer without accomplishing much). The following pages explain how to read the critical apparatus. [pg. 40]

I asked Waltz what had first sparked his engagement with the Geste. It's best I let him answer here:

> It's been fifteen years, or nearly, since I mentioned it to Ed Cray [folklorist and professor of journalism at the University of Southern California], so my memory is imperfect.
>
> But I think it was when I looked at Child's entry on the "Gest," and realized that his one version was compiled from seven different sources. (Most of us fail to pay much attention to the fact that Child's "versions" are often composite....)
>
> For the "Gest," there were no fewer than seven sources that went into his version, and they were all printed copies, not field collections. Unlike folk songs, where all versions are important, the "Gest" is a case where there was an archetypal version (that is, a last common ancestor of the copies), and all those printed copies were more or less poor descendants of that archetypal copy. So the text of the "Gest," unlike the text of (say) "Billy Boy," was a matter for textual criticism. Because the only copy that had anything to do with oral tradition (if it did) was that archetype.
>
> Textual criticism fascinates me, and here was a Child Ballad (one of very few) to call for textual criticism. So I started digging. And realized that there was a lot more work to do.

> That's how I produced my first edition, for Ed Cray and Loomis House, starting in 2012. Then, about five or six years ago, I managed to find a photographic copy of the print that Child called "a," and realized that my first edition was not sufficient (it was based on Child's transcriptions, which were not quite 100% accurate). And, by then, I was hooked on the history of Robin Hood, too. And so I produced the most comprehensive edition I could.

Waltz works with the trained precision of the skilled surgeon coupled with the physicians' deep respect for the corpus being restored. His book runs the gamut from the smallest details of early printing and late medieval culture through a rigorous "copy text" establishing a firm foundation for further investigation, to a modernized, quite readable "modern adaptation" for any casual reader.

He investigates the language of the *Geste*, its possible music, and goes into considerable depth discussing the literary, historical and socio-cultural contexts in which the Robin Hood legends and the Geste flourished. For instance, Waltz' notes on the contents of the Gest discuss passages which might help us discover or better understand historical references in the Geste, all the while emphasizing that the Gest itself is unabashedly fiction [373].

The quite extensive documentation of literary influences stretches from the biblical to the folktale and the courtly medieval romances. In addition he devotes a good share of the book's time to the changes and refashioning of the material through later authors/printers, e.g. "Who Made Maid Marian" and how Robin Hood was moved "posthumously" from the reign of Edward II to that of Richard Lionheart.

It is rare to be able to describe an often highly technical treatise as "well written," but certainly that is the case here, especially when Robert debunks baseless phantasies promulgated as explanations for various Robins Hood, Friars Tuck or Maids Marian.

Waltz shows us, so to speak, both the weeds and the forest.

And if it seems difficult to find one's way through this intellectual landscape, Waltz aids us with a thorough table of contents which can lead us directly to the relationships between the several printed sources, or to the composite copy text, or its critical apparatus and commentaries, to an explanation of Waltz's methodologies, or the modernized version, and so on, everything conveniently linked.

There is a whole lot of "trouthe" in this work. Learn and enjoy!

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July, 2025

Preface

Francis James Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* contains about forty ballads or ballad-like pieces about Robin Hood. "The Gest of Robyn Hode" is not only the longest and most important of these, it is the longest ballad by far in Child's collection — so long that it should properly be called a romance, not a ballad. It is also our most important source for the legend of Robin Hood, particularly in its early stages.

In 2012, I published my first book on the "Gest." This consisted primarily of a text plus a semi-modernized "translation." That shorter book remains the edition for those who want a straightforward printed text with a parallel translation of the "Gest."

That edition, though, was limited by the need to keep it short. It had little room for commentary or explanation. It turned out to have another limitation: It was too dependent on Child.

This is hardly a unique problem. Child's was the first critical edition of the "Gest," and the first based on all the primary sources; as such, it was a brilliant piece of work. The next two serious editions, those of Dobson and Taylor and of Knight and Ohlgren, were also based largely on Child — so much so that they even retained some of his transcriptional mistakes.

But Child was a nineteenth century critic, and the field of textual criticism has advanced, most notably in the area of the "copy text." And Child had to work from transcripts of the texts. The transcripts he used were mostly pretty good. But they weren't perfect, and a few of their errors worked their way into the printed text — a fact I didn't know in 2012. It was only when I saw photographs of the "Lettersnijder" edition that I realized that we needed to go back to the actual sources.

This edition, then, is the first text of the "Gest" *ever edited* from photographs of the prints themselves. And it is the first to be edited according to copy-text principles. Plus it is the first to have a true critical apparatus, showing the readings of all the prints on the page rather than forcing future students to flip back and forth. Every one of the eight editions was checked three times, and from photographs in the case of all the editions except parts of two fragments. I am sure that, like Child, I have a few errors in my transcriptions — to make a perfect critical apparatus is frankly beyond the capability of a single human being. But I have reason to hope that this represents the most accurate collection of textual information ever compiled for the "Gest."

The task of actually editing the text (as opposed to collecting the variants) was humbling. Proper criticism involves creating a family tree of the manuscripts, trying to determine the oldest reading that survives — and then, if that oldest reading appears corrupt, emending it. The first parts of this process are mostly a science, but the process of emendation is mostly an art: an editor may be sure that something is defective (as when a line is missing!), but that doesn't tell the editor what to print instead. I have marked many conjectures; I have adopted few, even when it meant leaving a line blank. Perhaps this edition will give a future A. E. Housman or W. W. Greg the tools to properly emend the "Gest."

Although my original and primary goal was to produce a text and apparatus of the "Gest," I probably would not have gone to all that work had I not had two other insights. One was the solution of the old conundrum of who is the "Saint Richard"

referred to in the text of the "Gest," whom I now believe to have been Richard Scrope, the martyred Archbishop of York. The other is a new proposal regarding the sources of the "Gest." It has long been accepted that the poem was compiled from two or more early sources; I have added nothing new in that regard. But I think I have come up with a new proposal as to how those sources were used: That two sources, which we might call "Robin and the Knight" (Fits I-III) and "Robin and the King" (Fits VI-VIII) were the basis of the story, the "bookends" about which the poet built his tale, and the poet's other sources (one or two, plus a fragment) were mined to create intermediate incidents and weave the whole together.

Of course, those discoveries are literary discoveries, not textual. In addition to the textual material (text, apparatus, and textual commentary), this edition includes extensive notes on the meaning of the "Gest," taken from earlier commentators and my own thoughts, plus a complete glossary that approaches the status of a concordance. To this are added appendices regarding the history of the Robin Hood legend.

Several scholars have attempted to show that the "Gest" is a biographical account of an actual outlaw named Robert Hood or some such. Child heaped much scorn on Joseph Hunter, the first to make a serious attempt at such a reconstruction. I think that Child was mostly right — since we have references to an outlaw named "Robinhod" or some such well before the earliest reasonable date for a legendary longbowman, and since such faint chronological references as we have spread across a very long period, the "Gest" can hardly be an account of a real person.

But there is such a thing as historical fiction. The "Gest," or at least the "Robin and the King" source, is set in the time of "King Edward." It seems likely that, at the time the "Gest" was compiled, many people thought that Robin really had lived in the time of one of the three Edwards (the father, son, and grandson Edward I, Edward II, and Edward III, who between them reigned from 1272 to 1377). The modern notion that Robin lived in the time of Richard I and John is mostly due to the work of Joseph Ritson, and makes very little sense. The events in the "Gest" fit better in the Edwardian era, and many of the details fit best specifically in the reign of Edward II. I will not claim certainty, but it seems to me likely that the "Gest" is a fiction that we are to understand as taking place in the time of Edward II. The commentary provides evidence for, and inferences that follow from, this assumption. I repeat, *I do not think the "Gest" is history,* and I do not think there was a Robin who lived in the time of Edward II. But I would not be deeply surprised if the author of the "Gest" — who lived a century or more after that — *did* believe in a Robin who lived in Edward II's reign. This, I suspect, was the medieval view of Robin Hood — until writers like Anthony Munday and the compilers of the various Robin Hood garlands started rewriting the story for their own ends.

Because the critical edition requires a lot of space on the page, the critical text no longer has the parallel modern English rendering of my earlier printed book; I still include a modernized text — but since it is no longer set beside the text of the "Gest," I have taken the opportunity to make it (slightly) less of a gloss and more of a modern, fluid rendering. This book is for in-depth study, but it is also intended to make it possible for the lay person to appreciate a poem that was, in its time, very popular — not many works went through eight editions in the sixteenth century!

Most scholars have long lists of debts. But I'm autistic; I mostly sit at the computer and work. Still, I owe a great debt to the late Ed Cray for encouraging my first edition. I owe thanks to the members of the Ballad-L mailing list for ideas and encouragement. Dr. David Engle and Ben Schwartz made valuable suggestions about the presentation, and David wrote a foreword that is far better than I could hope to produce. Steve Roud and David Atkinson located photos of the prints for me. My parents, Dorothy and Fred Waltz, kept me going while I did all this work. And Martha Galep and Sarah Cagley were of great personal help to me during the making of the print edition.

Other scholarly debts are indirect. Much information about the various copies of the "Gest" is based on the work of Thomas Ohlgren. I have used the works of J. C. Holt extensively; even now, more than half a century after it was written, I consider it the best overview of the medieval Robin Hood legend. Consulting these and other references has of course made this a better book.

Any errors that are to be found here are obviously mine. And my hands are now fairly unsteady, and I have a minor linguistic disorder that sometimes causes me to use wrong words. I had to proofread and index this book myself; and at some point I had to stop perseverating and re-re-rereading and actually make the thing available! forgive all the errors that arose somewhere between my brain and what appeared on the computer screen....

If You Like This Book

This book is free. This is deliberate; I want people to have access to the information. I have no idea if it will prove either useful or entertaining to anyone. But if you find it useful, you might consider giving a donation to either the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress or the English Folk Dance and Song Society (now known, as the result of one of the most disastrous examples of marketing-ese ever created, as Folk England), or the Middle English Texts Series (METS), which makes available the texts of many of the works cited in this book.

Or just share the book. The more people who see it, the greater the odds that scholars will become aware of it.

Web sites:

American Folklife Center: https://www.loc.gov/research-centers/american-folklife-center/about-this-research-center/support-the-center/

English Folk Dance & Song Society: https://www.efdss.org/

METS: https://metseditions.org/

Part A: The Text of the "Gest" — Middle English Text and Critical Apparatus

Modern Editions of the "Gest"

The first modern edition of the "Gest" was that of Joseph Ritson in his book *Robin Hood.* John Mathew Gutch in 1866 produced a modernized version. Both were based on the Wynken de Worde copy referred to as **b**, and Ritson's text can hardly be considered properly edited, though it made some useful textual suggestions. Francis James Child's first printed version, in Child-ESB, was a slightly retouched version of Ritson.

But when Child published *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads,* he produced the first truly critical edition of the text. He used all the copies then known, including the **a** printing as well as **b**. It was a milestone: Child detected and corrected far more problems than Ritson ever had; it is my impression that his conjectures and corrections outnumber all other editors combined. It was so much a milestone that the more recent editions — those of Gummere, Dobson and Taylor, and Knight and Ohlgren — basically took Child's texts and made a few idiosyncratic changes. They even retained many of the errors, misspellings, and unattested readings of Child's text.

Dobson and Taylor and Knight and Ohlgren, at least, should have known better. By their time, the fragments I have called **p** and **q** had been discovered, and it had been shown that they were from a text printed by Richard Pynson. Moreover, it had been shown by Oates that the **a** edition was a (very erratic) reprint of Pynson's edition. Child had made **a** the basis of his text wherever it existed, and Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren did the same. *But Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren had not treated* **p** *or* **q** *as the basis of their text where they existed.* This makes no sense; a copy of a text cannot be more original than the text it is copied from. If **a** is better than **b**, then **p** and **q** are better still.

This edition represents the first attempt since Child to truly edit the text directly from the sources — not by taking the text of Child and making some random changes. The result is not dramatically different from Child — I want to stress that Child's was pretty close to being the best edition possible at his time. It's just that we now have (a few more pages of) a good text, plus textual theory has advanced since Child's time. Child basically did what would now be called a "best text edition." Mine is an eclectic, stemmatic edition using a copy text. At its heart, it's still a lot like Child's text (enough so that I, like all the other editors, started with a copy of Child's text as a collation base. But my modifications were comprehensive, whereas the others' were casual. I didn't just change things; I recollated every print. Three times. I mention using Child as a bade simply because I might have accidentally retained one or two of Child's spellings). The outcome at first glance looks very different from Child's, for reasons I'll get to, but the underlying meaning is still mostly the same.

I would not consider this the last word. One of the reasons I used a copy text was to try to make sure that the spelling conventions consistent, without shifting between the orthography of **a** and **b**. This allows me to make linguistic analysis that really wasn't possible with Child's text. Future editors, based on this information, may be able to produce an even more advanced text.

I hope so.

The Text of the Gest

Chances are that we do not have the text of the "Gest" in anything like its original form. We don't have an original manuscript, and we don't have any collections from oral tradition. All we have is printed copies, and copies of editions almost certainly printed some decades after the piece was composed. We know they are defective, because they all are missing lines.

An important note: Although Child printed the "Gest" in stanzas, *not one of the prints does so.* They mostly print it in modern lines, but they often shove what should be a multiple lines onto a single line to save space. Thus Child's stanza divisions are reconstruction and (I think) wrong in a few cases.

The list below catalogs the printed copies of the "Gest" that still survive. We will examine their text later on.

The Early Copies

Like most of the Robin Hood ballads (and, of course, like the romances), we have no field collections of the "Gest" — it is likely that it never existed in tradition. What we have are printed editions. Child's great edition is based on seven of these, which he called **a**, **b**, **c**, **d**, **e**, **f**, and **g** — a system usually but not always followed by the later scholars (and which I have extended due to the finding of additional texts). These prints are cataloged as follows:

a. "A Gest of Robyn Hod," is in the National Library of Scotland. The call number is Advocates Library H.30.a. Discovered in 1785 (Phillips/Keatman, p. 11). Often referred to as the "Lettersnijder edition," based on the font used; also sometimes the "Antwerp edition" based on where it is suspected to have been printed (Phillips/Keatman, p. 12), though the connection to Antwerp cannot be proved. Contains all or parts of Child's stanzas 1–83, 118–208, 314–349 — just under half the total. Currently consists of leaves 1-5, part of 8, 9-12, and 19-20 of probably 28 original leaves. 33 lines per page. The introductory heading reads "℄Here begynneth a gest of Robyn Hode"; the final colophon, if there was one, is lost. Photographs of the whole print can be seen in Chepman/Myllar; I cite it on the basis of these photographs. In addition, a photo of the front graphic can be found in the photo section preceding p. 223 of Ohlgren, and a photo of the whole first page is on p. 107 of Ohlgren/Matheson. Isaac's plates 92–93 show the layout of two interior pages. It is Dobson and Taylor's A.

b. "A Lytell Geste of Robyne Hode," printed by Wynkyn de Worde. The surviving copy is in the library of the University of Cambridge, Selden 5.18. 30 lines per page. The introductory heading reads "℄Here begynneth a lytell gest of Robyn hode"; the final colophon reads "℄Explycit. Kynge Edwarde and Robyn hode & Lytell Johan Enprented at London in Fleteſtrete at the ſygne of the ſone By Wynken de Worde"; this is followed by de Worde's woodcut printer's mark on the final page.

Punctuation is almost non-existent. A ☾ is used to mark when a line overflows to the next line. Periods are used to denote roman numerals when a number is not spelled out (e.g. "⁊The.vi.fytte") and in quire/signature numbers (e.g. "A.ii." appears at the bottom of page 2) but the few marks in the text of the page more often appear to be accidents than meaningful. The first letter of lines seem to be capitalized, and so do most names,

but even this is sporadic (e.g. in line four we read that our hero's name "was Robyn hode," and this usage occurs frequently).

Suspension (that is, an overbar over a letter to indicate that the next letter is an m or an n) occurs occasionally (e.g. stanza 2, line 2, "Whyles he walked on groūde"=grounde) but is neither common nor consistent. Lower case "i" is un-dotted, that is, "ı." "Th" is usually spelled out, but occasionally represented by y (never by þ), and this may have a superscript letter, e.g. ẙ=the. I and J are not distinguished in either upper or lower case; neither are U and V. Lower case "r" has two forms, "r" and "ɾ," with no simple rule to determine which is used (e.g. in line 1.2 we have "frebоɾe blood." Lower case "s" uses long s (ſ) inside a word, "s" at the end, so e.g. line 2.3 reads "So curteyſe an outlawe as he was one."

Cited based on the photographs from Early English Books Online. (Since, however, the quality of those photos range from poor to abominable, I have sometimes consulted Ohlgren/Matheson-Texts to see how they read a particular passage.) Photos of the frontispiece can be found in Ohlgren (again, in the section preceding p. 223), on p. 113 of Ohlgren/Matheson, and in Holt, p. 14. Dobson and Taylor cited it as B.

c. Bodleian, Douce e.12 (called Fragment #16 by Child). Duff-Bibliog #361. Two leaves. Portions of stanzas 26–60 only, said by Duff-Bibiog, p. 100, to have been taken from a binding and to be the central leaves of a quire.

The introductory heading and final colophon, if any, are lost.

Unlike **b**, **c** has punctuation, although it is relatively slight. It consists primarily of periods at the ends of lines. We have four pages with 34 lines per page, so 136 lines in total. I count 41 periods at the end of these lines (although one or two may be spots on the images); one line ends with a colon instead. Many but not all of these correspond to where we would end sentences. Periods are also used for quire/signature numbers (specifically, "a.iii" appears at the bottom of the first surviving page; no others have been preserved). There is one instance of periods to denote numbers ("but .x.ſ." for "but ten shillings"). The first words of lines are capitalized; so are the names Robyn and Johan (the last name "Hode" does not appear in the fragment). The name "Lancasesshyre" is not capitalized; it is given as "lancasesshyre."

"Th" is usually written out, but we do see at least one instance of y for th:

It was never ẙ manner, by der worthy god

Lower case "i" is dotted, although it looks more like í than i. I and J are not distinguished in either upper or lower case; neither are U and V. Lower case "r" has two forms, "r" and "ɾ," with no simple rule to determine which is used; in two consecutive lines we read "I was neuer so gredy by der woɾthy god / My dyner foɾ to cɾaue." Lower case "s" uses long s (ſ) inside a word, "s" at the end.

Cited based on the photographs from Early English Books Online. Since, however, the quality of those photos is poor, I have sometimes consulted Ohlgren/Matheson-Texts to see how they read a particular passage. A photo is on p. 121 of Ohlgren/Matheson. Dobson/Taylor refer to Child's **c** and **d** under the siglum D.

d. Bodleian, Douce f.1 (called Fragment #17 by Child). Portions of stanzas 280–350 only. The pages were placed in binding strips and have been trimmed; this has resulted in the loss of text at the beginning of lines as well as at the top and bottom of pages.

Unusually, the first page of edition indents alternate lines, so that some lines are more defective than others, but this does not occur on other pages.

Lower case "i" is dotted. I and J are not distinguished in upper case (I'm not sure there is a lower case "j"); neither are U and V. There is only one form of "r." Lower case "s" uses long s (ſ) inside a word, "s" at the end.

Cited based on the photographs from Early English Books Online. Since, however, the quality of those photos is poor, I have sometimes consulted Ohlgren/Matheson-Texts to see how they read a particular passage. A photo is on p. 125 of Ohlgren/Matheson. Dobson/Taylor refer to Child's **c** and **d** under the siglum D.

e. Bodleian, Douce f.51(3) (called Fragment #16 by Child). Portions of stanzas 435–450 only; from stanza 443 on, only the ends of the lines survive. A photo, showing the extent of the damage, is on p. 100 of Ohlgren/Matheson. It is reported to have been extracted from the binding of a book (Oates, p. 3). Dobson/Taylor collectively cite **e**, **p**, and **q** under the symbol P, since they are from the same edition. Since I am citing from a printed text, I cannot list orthographic peculiarities of this edition.

f. "A Mery Geste of Robyn Hoode," British Library C.21.c. Printed by William Copland, meaning that it is from 1548 or later although before 1570. Since Copland registered a Robin Hood play in 1560, and Copland's print contains two dramas as well as the "Gest" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 208), it has been suggested that 1560 is the year of printing — although Dobson/Taylor suggest that Copland had printed the plays in an earlier separate form, in which case the date of this copy must be after 1560. This agrees with the suggestion of Ohlgren/Matheson-Texts, which says that a few letters appear to match later forms from Copland's press, so a date *c.* 1565 has been suggested.

Like **b**, it occasionally uses suspensions, and "y" for "th," but not in the same places. Punctuation is almost non-existent. Lower case "i" is dotted. I and J are not distinguished in either upper or lower case; neither are U and V. Lower case "r" has two forms, "r" and "ꞅ." Lower case "s" uses long s (ſ) inside a word, "s" at the end. The first words of lines are capitalized, as are most names, but this edition is another that sometimes prints "Robyn hode" or the like. Or just random letters; it is a low-quality piece of work, and the compositor seemingly had no idea how to spell.

Cited based on the photographs from Early English Books Online. Of all the EEBO photographic versions, the quality of **f** is by far the worst, with jittery images and sometimes the reverse showing through the photograph, so that I have often had to cite **f**$^{\text{vid}}$ (meaning that that is my best guess as the reading). On several occasions, I find that my reading disagrees with Ohlgren/Matheson-Texts; the photos really are hard to read. To make matters worse, as we shall see, its orthography is very inconsistent. A photo is on p. 129 of Ohlgren/Matheson. Dobson and Taylor made the unfortunate decision to ignore Child's sigla and cite this as C.

Note that this is not the same edition as ***f***, although both are by Copland.

g. "A Mery Iest of Robin Hood," Bodleian Library, Z.2.Art.Seld. Printed for Edward White, who was active well into the seventeenth century (e.g. Wikipedia reports that he printed the 1611 third quarto of Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus." He or a relative was also among the first to license "Greensleeves"). He may well have known Anthony

Munday, of whom more below. Gutch, p. 141, suggests on the basis of a Stationer's Register entry that this copy was printed in 1594.

It has much the most elaborate punctuation of any of the prints, using period, comma, and colon, as well as a sort of an equal sign = used for the hyphen -, although all of them are rare at the beginning and get even more rare toward the end. Nouns referring to particular people tend to be capitalized, e.g. Sellerere, Abbot, Priour, Sheriffe; also Castle; although we still have "Robin hood" (usually with that modern spelling). There are still two forms of r, and we still have long s (ſ), and I/J and U/V are not distinguished. The spellings are much more modern than in any of the other copies. Lines generally do *not* start with upper-case letters unless they are the beginning of a sentence or other syntactical unit.

Cited based on the photographs from Early English Books Online. This is much the most legible of the copies, and the photos are good; there is rarely much uncertainty about the reading. Too bad it's the least valuable of the texts (Dobson and Taylor, e.g., didn't bother to cite it).

Since Child's time, three more small fragments have been discovered. For reasons to be seen, I am labeling them ***f***, **p**, and **q** rather than **h**, **i**, and **k**. The more important fragments, **p** and **q**, were studied in detail by Oates, and the descriptions are from his paper.

f. A single leaf, Oxford, Cordington Library, All Souls college, k.4.19. Contains portions of stanzas 440-455, meaning that it is almost certainly the next-to-last page of a copy. Heavily trimmed, with substantial loss of text on the recto and a few minor losses on the verso. It has no attribution on the surviving page, but the typeface is the same that Copland used for **f**. Moreover, the lineation matches **f**. As far as I know, it is universally accepted that this was printed by Copland. It is not, however, a direct copy of **f**, although it may be based on **f**. It is certainly not an ancestor of **f**.

p. The "Penrose fragment," formerly owned by Boies Penrose but now in the Folger Shakespeare Library. A full leaf and a portion of a second, recovered from a book binding. Stanzas 227.4–235.2, 243.2–250.4, 312.4–319.3, 327.3–335.1. Dobson/Taylor collectively cite **e**, **p**, and **q** under the symbol P, since they are from the same edition.

q. The University of Cambridge fragment, 4.J.3.6. Found in a book binding and presented to Cambridge University in 1917. Contains 220.1–227.3, 319.4–327.2. Dobson/Taylor collectively cite **e**, **p**, and **q** under the symbol P, since they are from the same edition.

What We Know about the History of the Prints

Although the earliest witnesses (at least **b** and **e**+**p**+**q**; also probably **a c d**) were almost certainly typeset within a century of the composition of the "Gest," there are three reasons to think that they are not especially close to the original. One is the fact that they all share various clear errors, such as the omission of lines, starting as early as the first line of stanza 7. The second reason is that they have many disagreements. The third argument is linguistic, based on the dialect used in our extant copies.

The first two arguments are readily verified from the critical apparatus. The third is more indirect. The place names mentioned in the "Gest" make it almost certain that it was written by a Yorkshireman (see the note on Stanza 3) — and a Yorkshireman who rarely travelled beyond his home county. Yet the text as we have it is in fairly generic late Middle English, with almost no signs of northern dialect (Brandl, according to Clawson, p. 7–8, detected what he considered "Northern rhymes" in certain sections, but Clawson says that such rhymes are found throughout the poem, and the words are in any case found in other parts of the country than the north. With the exception of a few northern-seeming forms such as "ony" for "any," there is very little distinctly northern about the poem as we have it — and even those were eliminated in some of the prints). Chaucer could almost have written it; certainly he would have understood it with little difficulty. There are some Robin Hood ballads in northern dialect, such as "Robin Hood and the Bride," a variant of "Robin Hood and Allen a Dale" [Child 138] found in the Forresters manuscript, but the "Gest" in its printed forms is not one of them.

And yet, this is the period when regional dialects of English were at their strongest and most distinct, and because English was only slowly regaining its role as an official language, "authors in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries generally wrote the English that they spoke — whether in London, Hereford, Peterborough, or York" (Burrow/Turville-Petre, p. 5). Admittedly the "Gest" is from the fifteenth century. But the expectation would still be that it would contain local linguistic forms.

The fact that the text is so free of Northernisms strongly argues that there was a recensional (editing) stage when these characteristics were purged. What's more, because the surviving prints are all in essentially the same dialect (although not the same orthography), all our surviving copies must derive from this de-Northernized copy of the text. (In technical terms, the archetype of our surviving witnesses is not the same as the autograph, or, to put it another way, the most recent common ancestor of the surviving texts is not the same as the original.) This needs to be kept in mind in evaluating our surviving witnesses. Dobson/Taylor, p. 6, suggest that "the next move in the investigation of the Robin Hood legend would seem to lie with linguistic scholars." But this challenge was not taken up until Ohlgren suggested it to Lister M. Matheson, and even Matheson's work is very preliminary.

Matheson, on p. 210 of Ohlgren/Matheson, declares that the printed editions of Pynson, de Worde, Goes, and Notary have all adapted the text to fit their preferred dialects (which means little, given that all of them but Goes spent their entire careers in London and Westminster, and even Goes spent time with de Worde!), but adds that "a number of Northern spelling and forms survived this process.... Their appearance suggests strongly that the original author was indeed a Northerner and possibly a Yorkshireman." I must confess that I do not see how his methodology can support such a strong conclusion (in fact, as a mathematician, I don't see how it can support *any* conclusion); his method is to compare the prints against the suggested regional dialects — but not to compare the prints against each other in a meaningful way. Only by this means could he determine the residual dialect before the various changes. When I compare the texts against each other, a different conclusion emerges.

Matheson suggests, based on his analysis, that the source for the Pynson and de Worde editions was not a lost print by Caxton, because in that case the spellings would have been more standard. I agree that their orthography is very different, but this strikes me as very weak — if the spellings are inconsistent, the vocabulary is not! Spellings were not yet standardized, and the easiest explanation is that either Pynson or de Worde — or both — simply adopted a new spelling system. Even if Matheson's conclusion stands — and I again think it an over-confident result — it does not mean that there was no Caxton print. It merely means that at least one of the two later printers did not retain the original orthography. In fact I think the evidence is strong that there *was* a recent common source, due to the defects that both families share. Personally I suspect there was a Caxton print, which both Pynson and de Worde followed while adapting the spellings, but I grant that there is no proof.

The strong evidence is that there were two recensions, representing the texts of Pynson and de Worde, and that the spellings of the major prints are determined by which family they belong to. Then the later prints, Copland's and especially White's, modernized it toward their preferred orthography.

In any case, the Pynson and de Worde prints are the ancestors of all the other substantial copies, and they differ (slightly) in the text as well as the orthography, and the orthography is generally maintained within the two family types. The text as I edit it is eclectic in its substantive readings but adopts the orthography of the de Worde text. More on this below. For now, let's see what we can determine by inference — information deduced by looking at things such as the typeface of the prints.

It may be helpful to refer to this chart showing where the various editions are extant. The diagram below gives a rough outline of the surviving contents of each of the prints. It shows ten-stanza blocks and whether each text is complete (•), partial (o), or lacking entirely( ). The line at the top shows the stanza numbers, in blocks of 50.

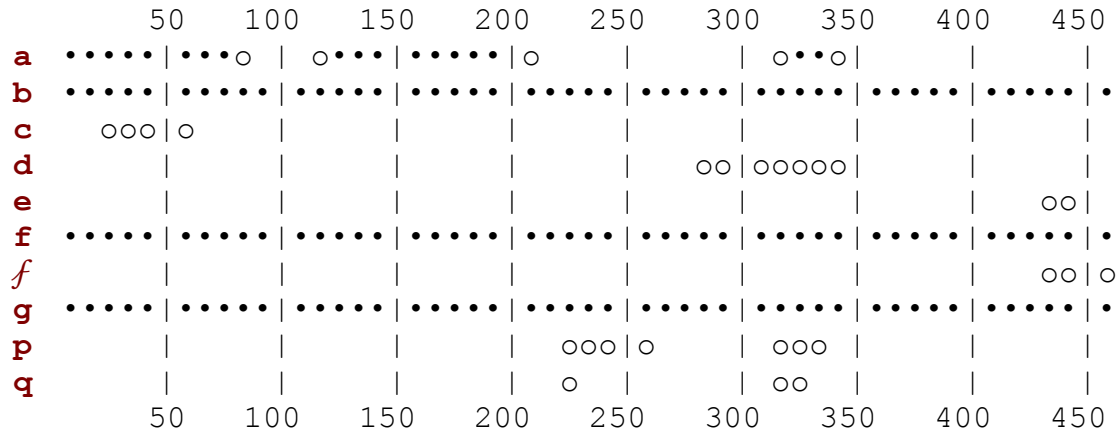


Figure 1: The Extent of the Prints of the "Gest"

Thomas Ohlgren thought he could determine the printer of every edition except **a** (Ohgren/Matheson, p. 98). In addition to Pynson for **epq**, de Worde for **b**, Copland for **f** ***f***, and White for **g**, he argues that **c** is the work of Hugo Goes of York, while **d** comes

from the press of Julian Notary. The attributions of **b**, **f**, and **g** are based on colophons and can be considered certain.

I wouldn't consider Ohlgren's attributions of **c** or **d** to be very strong. The connection of **c** with Goes is also found in the *Short Title Catalog*, but the font proves relatively little. Since Goes, de Worde, John Scolar, and Thomas Berthelet all had copies of de Worde's Textura 95, and Pynson had something quite close, any of them could have been responsible — indeed, subjectively. the way the text is printed looks to me a bit more like the sample of Scolar in Isaac than the sample of Goes. The *Short Title Catalog* suggests 1506–1509 as the date, but with a question mark. Keep that caution in mind in the discussions which follow.

Inferences about the Surviving Prints:

a/*Lettersnijder: National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library H.30.a*

The type of **a** (Lettersnijder) is Lettersnijder 98 — that is, 20 lines are 98 millimeters tall, making the type 13.9 point (in the modern usage of 72 points=1 inch.) The orthography is very peculiar. The first page is set entirely as prose, with no line breaks — Oates, p. 9, makes the reasonable suggestion that it was originally intended to be set as poetry, but then it was decided to include the woodcut of the mounted archer at the top, and the text had to be reset and dramatically compressed to make room for it in the space already allocated.

The spaces between words are often very small — in a lot of cases, there are no spaces at all. The only punctuation marks are points which are placed almost at random (certainly not where we would place periods; some hardly even qualify as comma breaks) and a handful of section marks, some of which indicate line breaks. Like the other editions, it lacks stanza divisions, and it does not hesitate to break stanzas across pages. We often find two lines set as a single long line, which makes it difficult to estimate how many lines were in the missing sections.

The first letters of lines are capitalized, but almost nothing else (e.g., taking the two samples in Isaac as typical, in lines 50.2–58.1, we find the following: "lancaster," "seynt mari abbey," "criste" (christ), and four instances of "robyn" — balanced by one instance of "Robyn," as well as "Caluere." If you can see a pattern in that, you're smarter than I am). In the second sample, proper names are often capitalized ("Robyn," "John," "Scarlok," although not "wylluam" or "much"), as is the pronoun "I." This second section also typically spells "The(e)" with a thorn and a suspension, ŷ, i.e. y^{e} or þ^{e} , hence "the" — a usage not found in the first sample.

I wonder therefore if there were two typesetters, one more familiar with English orthography than the other, although in general both use the orthography of the exemplar, e.g. "gode" rather than "good."

Gutch1, pp. 80, 142, contends that Lettersnijder was issued by Myllar and Chepman in 1508, and Holt, p. 122, also refers to it as among "the Chapman (sic.) and Myllar Prints of 1508." This is understandable but a mistake. Chepman and Myllar were authorized to print mass books and other materials in Scotland in 1507. The only substantial collection of works from their press is Advocates H.30. This book contains in one binding no fewer than eleven quarto books. The first nine of these are

typographically similar, and seven of the nine contain a colophon or other markings associating them with Myllar and Chepman. The three with dates are all from 1508: *Porteus of Noblenes*, Chaucer's *The Maying*, and the *Knightly Tale of Gologros and Gawaine*. (For the full list of contents, see Chepman/Myller or Isaac or p. 144 of Gutch1)

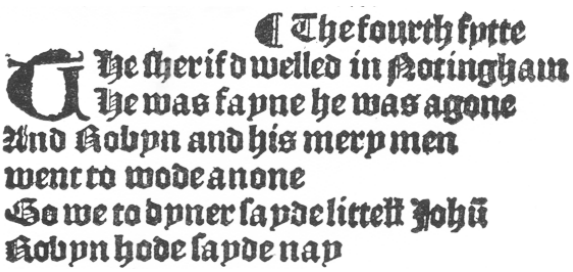

¶ The fourth fytte
¶ He sherif dwelled in Notingham
He was fayne he was agone
And Robyn and his merp men
went to wode anone
Go we to dyner sayde littell Johū
Robyn hode sayde nay

Figure 2: Sample from the Lettersnijder edition, a.

The text above is from Stanzas 205.1–206.2, the beginning of the fourth fit; it reads:

℄*T*he fourth fytte
¶He sherif dwelled in Notingham
He was fayne he was agone
And Robyn and his mery men
went to wode anone
Go we to dyner sayde littell Johū
Robyn hode sayde nay

Note the use of a suspension (a bar above the letter) in the name "John" in the next to last line. This indicates that the letter with the suspension is to be followed by an n — i.e. the name is actually "Johnn" — except that the typesetter has done another of his inversions and spelled the name "Johū"="Johun" rather than "Johnn" (a spelling he gets right four lines later) or "Johan." Observe also that there is no indication of stanza divisions and no punctuation.

The natural assumption is that the last two items in the volume are also from Myllar and Chepman, especially since item #10, *The Twa marrit wemen and the wedo*, is attributed to the Scottish poet Dunbar and would be just the sort of thing you would expect Chepman and Myllar to print. But it is notable that every one of the properly attributed Myllar and Chepman prints is in a Textura face. The Advocates copy of the "Gest" is not in Textura; it is, of course, in Lettersnijder.

The link to Myllar and Chepman appears dubious on other grounds. The small catalog of their known works includes two by Dunbar, one by Henryson, and Blind Harry's *Wallace* — Scots poets all. Their other works, if not as obviously Scots by authorship, are strongly Scottish in style — Hahn's edition of *Golagras and Gawain* (Hahn, pp. 234-277), based on the Myllar/Chepman edition, is so broadly Scots that it is not until line 76 that he can go a whole line without a gloss! Whereas at least 80% of the lines in the "Gest" make perfectly good English sense as printed, without need for explanation. And, as Clawson says on p. 2 (cf. Isaac), the incipit to the Advocates text of the "Gest" reads "Here begynneth" (English), not "Here begynnis" (Scots), a reading which would surely have been "Scotticised" even if nothing else had been.

Thus the strong weight of evidence is that Chepman and Myllar did not print the "Gest." There is, indeed, no reason to think that the printer was Scottish. And even if they did print it, that would make it likely that **a** is later than **b**, since Chepman and Myllar did not go into the printing business until 1507 (and do not seem to have printed anything after 1510; Isaac, before plate 86).

We can't say much else about the printer, because the Lettersnijder font was common around the beginning of the sixteenth century. Most printers who used Lettersnijder were Dutch, and there are a few instances of errors in the text of the "Gest" which make sense in Dutch (e.g. "mijn" for "mine"; 200.3), so it is highly probable that it was the product of a Dutch press. Chepman/Myller, p. xvi, Knight/Ohlgren, p. 80, and Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 101, mention an attribution to Jan van Doesborch of Antwerp, but this is speculation; the only real support for the belief is the fact that van Doesborch printed books for the English market. Isaac, in notes regarding Laurence Andrewe, mentions a belief that van Doesborch published only books associated with Andrewe, and there is no reason to think the "Gest" should be so associated. Coote, p. 9, offers instead Gerhaert Leeu as a printer, but this hypothesis has no better support.

Because we do not know the printer, the date is very uncertain; the period 1510–1520 is often suggested, but it might be a decade or two earlier or later. Holt, p. 15, merely suggests that it was published in Antwerp between 1510 and 1515. The only certainty is that it must have been printed after Pynson began printing, since it is copied from a Pynson edition, or at least an edition itself derived from a Pynson edition.

Apart from not knowing English very well, the compositor also shows signs of inexperience in his craft. In particular, he seems to have had trouble with inverted letters, such as n/u and, once or twice, m/w. (To be sure, this might have been the fault of whoever set up his type case and left it somewhat "out of sorts.") There may also be a few instances of mistaking the letter thorn (þ) for a d when it should have been transcribed th. (See the textual note on Stanza 179). This may indicate that the manuscript ancestor of **a** and **b** still used eth (ð) and/or thorn — though it could hardly be a property of a print ancestor, since the fonts of the period did not include those letters. And I have not spotted any instances which might arise from confusion caused by a yogh (ȝ).

(Incidentally, although **a** has the most problems with inversions, **b** also has a few, in 299.1, 305.3, 363.2.)

The layout of **a** is interesting. Chepman/Myller, p. xv, gives its collation — that is, its quire arrangement — as A^6 b^6 $[c^4]$ d^6 $[e^4?]$, for an estimated total of 26 leaves. That is, there are six leaves (three sheets, or twelve pages) in the first quire, six in the second, just four (two sheets, or eight pages) in the lost third quire, six in the fourth quire (which is fragmentary but evidently complete enough to let them count leaves), and an estimated four leaves in the final quire.

The assumption that the last quire has four leaves can be tested. **a** reliably has 33 lines of type per page (already a strange format for a poem in couplets, which would have benefitted from 32 or 36 lines per page to keep rhyme words on the same page). The leaves that survive are 1-5, part of 8, 9-12, and 19-20 (in other words, most of quire a, the second part of quire b and the middle sheet of quire d; all of c and e are gone). The

diagram below shows this, with surviving leaves in red and lost leaves in black. Thus, by this estimate, there would be twelve pages after the last surviving page.

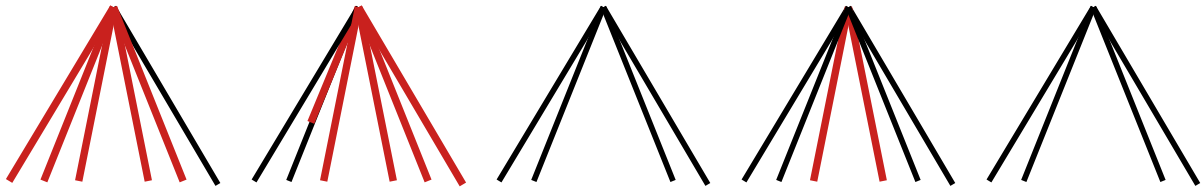


Figure 3: The Leaves of the Lettersnijder Edition

The last surviving page of **a** ends at line 1395. The "Gest" as a whole is probably 1824 lines. So the missing final portion of **a** should contain about 429 lines. 429 divided by 33 is... precisely 13 pages. But you can't have 13 pages; it must be 12 or 16. Could the whole thing have been compressed into 12? Yes, if the typesetter used the sort of compression used at the beginning. Easier that than trying to spread that text across 16 pages — though of course the last three pages could have been blank, or one of them could have (very likely did) contain the printer's mark. I don't think we can be dogmatic about the length. But I do wonder if the fact that the whole thing works out to *exactly* thirteen pages doesn't mean that **a** was set starting at both ends and working toward the middle. That would imply a degree of planning that belies the muffed up first page. Either that, or **a** was typeset from an ancestor which also had 33 lines per page.

Child, p. 40 note †, offered a handful of instances which made him believe **a** more primitive than **b**, and this opinion has been repeated many times. I do not consider Child's short list of examples sufficient to be decisive — Child is right that **a** has the better reading in many of these cases, but that proves only that **a** is not descended from **b**. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 101, also admits doubts. More on this when I discuss the textual nature of the prints.

b/*de Worde: University of Cambridge, Selden 5.18*

Wynkyn de Worde's **b** text is without doubt the earliest of the complete copies. The piece has no internal dating, but de Worde (the successor of England's first printer Caxton) worked from 1492 to 1534. The colophon lets us be more specific than that; **b** was "Enprented at London: In fletestrete at the sygne of the sone." De Worde did not move to Fleet Street until 1500. Thus the earliest possible date is in that year.

Plomer reports that almost every dated book printed by de Worde before 1500 was a reprint of an earlier Caxton volume, so if Matheson was right in thinking de Worde got it from a source other than Caxton, that's also evidence for a post-1500 date.

Binns, p. 109, suggests that the "Gest" was printed around 1498–1500, when de Worde was busily printing other romances — "Bevis of Hampton," "Sir Eglamour," and "Guy of Warwick." (E.g. Duff-Hand-List, p. 2, lists as his only four books certainly dated to 1498 the "Description of Britain," the "Morte d'Arthur," the "Canterbury Tales," and the "Golden Legend"/"Legenda Aurea.") This makes excellent sense but suffers from the fact that a date before 1500 is ruled out by the colophon.

However, de Worde — although his typography was always behind the times (Binns, p. 110, says that "most of his printing was of indifferent quality and some of it

was thoroughly bad") — gradually changed his fonts and his collection of clip art (he initially used pure Textura-style blackletter but eventually acquired Roman and Italic and even an abominably ugly Greek type; Moran, pp. 26–38, has history and examples).

Based on the facsimiles, it appears de Worde published **b** using his Textura 95 font (Duff's #8; facsimiles in Isaac, figures 2, 3, 7, 8 and Duff-Bibliog, plate XIV, where it is called #4). As with the "98" in Lettersnijder 98, the number "95" refers to the size of the type — it means that 20 lines of type were 95 mm. tall. In other words, 20 lines equalled 270 points, meaning that it was about 13.5 point type (though far less legible than 13.5 point type today, because Textura is incredibly narrow). The use of Textura is hardly a surprise — Textura was about as venerable as a face could get; the Gutenberg Bible was printed in a Textura, and that face was based on contemporary German book hands (Binns, p. 182 — although Gutenberg's Textura was more legible than the Pynson and de Worde versions; I would guess that Gutenberg used higher-quality metal for his type).

Isaac, facing figure 1, says that Textura 95 was "the most frequently found of all de Worde's types in the sixteenth century"; he used it for his entire career. Duff-Bibliog, pp. 127–129, lists 103 books believed to have been printed by de Worde before 1500; 82 of these use at least some Textura 95, and 26 appear to use it exclusively. However, it did evolve somewhat; in this period, there were multiple forms of the letters a, d, h s, v, w, and y (Isaac, figure 1). The heading line of de Worde's edition of the "Gest" uses four of these letters, in states a–1, d–1, h–1, and y–2. The y is datable: de Worde was using y–1 in 1502, but by 1506 had shifted to y–2 (Isaac, notes to plates 2 and 3). This is perhaps related to his selling or giving his type to Hugo Goes.

So the date almost has to be after 1503. But on other grounds, the sooner after the move to Fleet Street, the better. The illustration at the head of the print shows a woman, a man carrying a sword backwards, and a man who appears to be a herald. The artwork has no relevance at all to the "Gest," and de Worde gave up a large portion of his clip art (as well as some fonts of type) when he made his move; much of the material, in fact, ended up in the hands of another printer, Julian Notary (Duff-Printers p. 131). Had de Worde printed the "Gest" before his move, or long after, he could probably have used better art.

Another argument for a not-too-late date is the fact that, in around 1507, de Worde and his rival Richard Pynson began a policy of cooperation (Isaac, notes on Pynson). This ended a strong rivalry that had existed between the two. Given that de Worde and Pynson both produced editions of the "Gest," this is an argument that the de Worde edition was printed before their agreement.

Although none of the individual points is decisive, collectively they are strong evidence for Ferguson's date of around 1506 (Oates, p. 7); this date is also found in the *Short Title Catalogue of Book Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland, 1475–1640* (Ohlgen/Matheson, p. 112). For what it's worth, my own independent estimate of its date, based on examination of the letterforms used and on what we know about when de Worde used them, was *c.* 1505.

Although de Worde was starting to publish new material by 1505, his edition is likely a reprint rather than being taken from manuscript. The question is whether it is a

reprint of a print by Caxton. Scragg, p. 2, says that "Caxton, the first English printer, used <th> usually, but occasionally compromised by using thorn's nearest typographical relative, <y>." That is, in places where a medieval scribe would normally have used thorn, þ, Caxton usually transcribed it as "th" but occasionally as "y." What do we find in the de Worde edition? I looked at several places in the de Worde print looking for each form. (The count is casual, so I might be off by a few in the count of uses of "th," but I am confident I spotted all uses of "y.")

In first fit, there are 213 places where þ might have been used. In 212 of them "th" is used. The only exception is in stanza 75, where the last two lines of the stanza are shoved onto a single line which reads

ye must gyve ye̊ knight an hors to lede home all th⁹ good.

This was a line that overflowed the margin, and it is the *only* place in the entire fit where we see y used for th — a line where the typesetter desperately needed to save space.

In the eighth fit, I counted 126 uses of "th," none of "y," except for a place or two where "ye" might have been used to mean "th."

Clearly the de Worde print uses "y" for "th" only when it must. It is true that **a** also uses th much more than it uses ye̊ or yt or similar, but **b**'s preference is stronger.

There are a few other abbreviations in **b**, notably "Johan" is almost always spelled with a suspension, "Johā." There are a handful of other suspensions as well.

None of this constitutes proof that it is reprinted from a Caxton original, but such data as we have is consistent with that hypothesis.

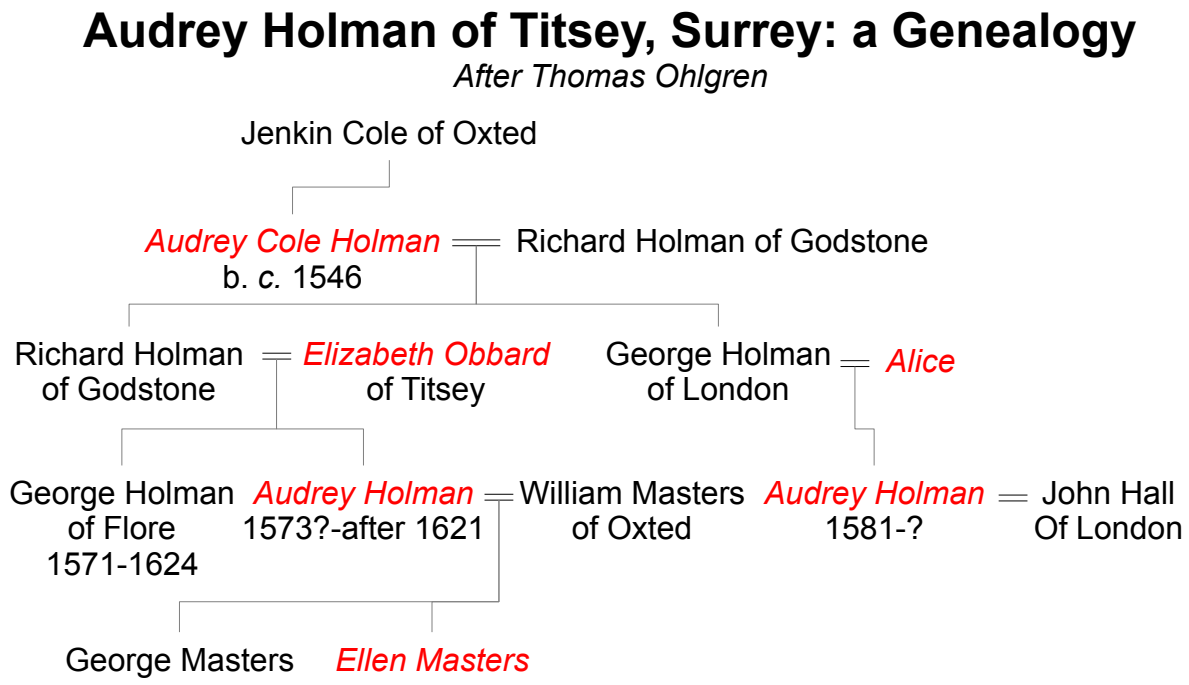


Figure 4: The family of Audrey Holman

Of all the copies of the "Gest," de Worde's appears to have been the most used. No fewer than three readers put their names in it (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 117). One called himself "George Poll" (Powell) and urged readers to kiss his "briche and buttocks." A

second simply says "By me John"; this is perhaps John Cony, who signed that name to two other books which were bound with the Gest, "The assemble of goodes" and "The Frere and the Boye" (interestingly, another copy of the latter poem is also bound in the volume containing sole copy of "Robin Hood and the Potter").

The third name is entered twice, with different spellings: One claims the book is "Avdary Holman[']s," the other says it is "By me avdery homan of titsey." Audrey Holman also put her name in two of the other books bound with the "Gest." Ohlgren devoted significant effort to trying to locate Audrey Holman, eventually coming up with three candidates (Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 117–120). His most likely candidate is his #2, the daughter of Richard Holman. We don't have her dates, but her older brother was born in 1571 (meaning that she was probably a few years younger), and she was still alive in 1621. She eventually married William Masters and had two children. Her cousin, the daughter of George Holman, is also a good candidate, and her grandmother Audrey Cole also a possibility although a lesser one. No matter which Audrey it is, she cannot be the original owner. Still, the fact that the book went through at least three and probably four owners before being entered into the Bagford collection shows how well-liked it was.

Fragments (**c**, **d**):

It is has been suggested that **c** and **d** are from the same original — note, e.g., that Dobson/Taylor cite them under the same siglum, although they do not quite state that they are the same edition. However, even a casual glance at the letter forms shows they are distinct. Moreover, the nature of their texts seem to differ; **c** seems to be closer to **b** than is **d**.

c*: Bodleian, Douce e.12*

Ritson thought **c** to have been printed by Wynkyn de Worde — but dated it 1489 (Child, p. 40). The type is assuredly a state of the Textura 95 used by de Worde. Duff-Bibliog, p. 100, has no doubt that it is by de Worde — but says that that "though in the earlier type it has the later I, and Caxton's I does not occur. It cannot be earlier than 1500, and quite probably was printed a year or two later." Ritson's date is impossible, because de Worde was Caxton's assistant until Caxton died in 1491 (Duff-Printers, p. 23); de Worde could not produce a book of his own before 1491, and the evidence is that it took him several years to start publishing large numbers of books (perhaps because he did not have Caxton's skills at compiling and editing). Knight/Ohlgren, p. 87, mention the attribution to de Worde but not the year. Oates, p. 6, accepts the attribution to de Worde, and thinks that it predates **b** (a possibility we shall have reason to consider below), but does not offer a date.

The type is a good argument for the attribution to de Worde, but because there are so many Texturas floating around, it isn't proof. **c**'s use of punctuation, which is almost entirely absent in **b**, is a significant argument that it is *not* by de Worde — and probably argues that it is more recent.

Farmer instead suggested John Rastell as a printer (Child, p. 40), and Ritson at times seems to cite **c** as by Rastell. Rastell's dates are disputed; Child claims 1517–1536, but Isaac's introduction to Rastell suggests that he was in business from about 1512. (He

also has the distinction of being the first English printer to handle music and text in one pass.) However, Rastell is another printer using those ubiquitous Textura types, so I doubt this can be demonstrated with certainty. I will say that, based on the facsimiles in Isaac, **c** doesn't look like Rastell's style.

Ohlgren is convinced that **c** is the work of Hugo Goes, and cites it as such on pp. 149-155 of Ohlgren/Matheson-Texts (though the statement on p. 149 that "scholars now believe that it was printed in York by Hugo Goes" is Ohlgren anonymously citing himself and should be treated with as much trust as any other fake citation is granted). It certainly makes sense that Goes would want to print the "Gest," since he spent at least part of his career in York, where there would presumably be a local market. And it makes even more sense that the work of Goes would be mistaken for the work of de Worde, because Goes obtained his primary typeface, a Textura 95, from de Worde (Isaac, notes to plate 35). It is likely that Goes was an apprentice of de Worde's who set out on his own around 1503, since de Worde did not use that state of Textura 95 after 1502. (And they probably stayed in touch, because after 1518 de Worde re-obtained some fonts used by Goes or his associate Henry Watson; Blayney, p. 127.) Goes was certainly in York in 1509, since the one work undeniably attributed to him by Isaac was printed in that year, and apparently left by 1513, since a different printer took up work there in that year (Blayney, p. 127).

There are some complications with assuming Goes was the printer. Our knowledge of Goes is limited; according to Isaac, we have three addresses for him (London, Beverly, and York), but the two former addresses were taken from materials now lost; our only datable book was printed at "York, in the Street called Steengate" in 1509 (Isaac). For a long time we had records of only three books by him (Binns, p. 129), and only one — the *Directorium Sacerdotum* — still survived. Since Isaac's time, a few other items have been identified — two grammars, an indulgence. The general impression is of a printer of religious works. The one exception is a fragment of an edition of the romance "Bevis of Hampton" credited to him (Blayney, p 74), but I distrust the attribution.

We certainly cannot rule out the possibility that Hugo Goes printed the "Gest," given that demand for it would likely be high in Yorkshire. And he might have gotten a copy from de Worde, or have worked from de Worde's source edition. Still... while the survival of early books is rather a matter of chance, the fact that we have so many surviving books by de Worde, and so few by Goes, is at least a slight argument against Goes as the printer. Ohlgren's suggestion, based on p. 122 of Ohlgren/Mathison, is based not on typography but on the readings of the text. This is a point worth examining in detail. I'm going to print the entire extant text of **c** and compare it against **a** and **b**. The excerpt below prints the text of all three prints in the same line. Where all three agree, it is shown in plain text. Where they disagree about a word or phrase, the text is in colored bold type with the variants separated by slashes. So, for instance, the first line reads:

of/&:Of hym I haue herde **moche/moch/myche gode/&:good**

So the prints disagree on whether "of" should be in upper or lower case. All agree on "hym I haue herde." They all have different readings for the word we now spell

"much." **a,** the first witness, has "moche," **b** has "moch," **c** has "myche." There is also a disagreement on the final word, the one we now spell "good," with the alternatives being "gode" or "good." Here, however (as in the case of the capitalization of "of"), it is two witnesses against one. In both cases, **b** and **c** agree (that is, they read "Of" and "good") against **a** (which has "of" and "gode"). In all cases of two against one, the variant with two supporters will have a notation to say that this is the reading with two supporters, and it will show which two. So, e.g., "**gode/ꝺ:good**" means that "good" has two supporters, **b** and **c**; "gode" is supported by the remaining witness, **a**.

Variants are classified as substantive (they affect the meaning) and incidental or accidental (they affect only spelling and orthography). For example, the gode/good variant is incidental; it's just a spelling variant. Incidental variants are shown in **blue**. Substantive variants (such as that one in the third line, between "my brethren all *three*" or "my brethren all *in fere")* are shown in **red**. As we shall learn, the distinction is important in understanding the nature of **c**.

There are a few places on the fourth page of c which cannot be read. The text in those places is shown in brackets with a [grey background]. Note that, for this purpose, I have preserved the long s used in the prints, and do not distinguish i/j or u/v, whereas in the critical text in this volume, I use a modern i. j. s, u, and v.

26[.4]
of/ꝺ:Of hym I haue herde **moche/moch/myche gode/ꝺ:good**
27 I graunte he **ſayde/ꝺ:ſayd** with you to wende **./-/.**
My **ꝺ:bretherne/brethern** all **ꝺ:in fere/thre -/-/.**
My **purpos/ꝺ:purpoſe** was to haue **ꝺ:dyned/deyned today/ꝺ:to day**
At **blithe/ꝺ:blythe** or **Dancaſtere/ꝺ:dancaſtere**
28 **Furth/ꝺ:Forthe** than went this **gentyl/ꝺ:gentyll knight/ꝺ:knyght**
With a carefull chere **./-/-**
The **teris/ꝺ:teres oute/ꝺ:out** of his **iyen/ꝺ:eyen** ran **./-/:**
And fell downe by his **ƀ:lere/ere**
29 They brought hym **ꝺ:to/unto** the lodge dore
Whan Robyn **ꝺ:hym gan/gan hym ſee/ꝺ:ſe**
Full curteyſly dyd of his hode
And **ꝺ:ſet/ſette** hym on his **knee/ꝺ:kne**
30 Welcome **ſir/ꝺ:ſyr** knyght **than/ꝺ:then** ſayd Robyn
Welcome **ꝺ:art thou/thou arte** to me **./-/.**
I haue **abyden/ꝺ:abyde** you faſtynge **ſir/ꝺ:ſyr**
All theſe **ꝺ:ouris/houres** thre
31 **Than/ꝺ:Then** anſwered the **ƀ:gentyll/g ntyll knight/ꝺ:knyght**
With wordes fayre and fre **./-/-**
God the ſaue **goode/ꝺ:good** Robyn
And all thy fayre meyne
32 They **ƀ:waſſhed/weſſhe togeder/ꝺ:togyder** and **ƀ:wyped/wypped** bothe
And **ſette/ſet/ſat to/ꝺ:tyll ƀ:theyr/there ƀ:dynere/dyner**
Brede and wyne they had **ꝺ:ryght/- ynought/ynough/Inough ./-/.**

And noumbles of the dere -/-/.
33 Swannes &/ꝛand felſauntes/ꝛfeſauntes they had full gode/ꝛgood ./-/-
And foules of the ryvere/ꝛreuere
There fayled none/ꝛnon ſo litell/ꝛlytell a birde/ꝛbyrde ./-/-
That euer was bred on bryre/ꝛbrere
34 Do gladly ſir/ꝛſyr knight/ꝛknyght ſayde/ꝛſayd Robyn
Gramarcy/ꝛGramercy ſir/ꝛſyr ſayde/ꝛſayd he
Suche a dinere/dynere/dyner had I nat/I not/Inot ./-/-
Of all ꝺ:theſe/this wekys/ꝛwekes thre
35 ꝺ:If/yf I come ageyne Robyn
Here by thys/ꝛthis contre/ꝛcountre
As gode/ꝛgood a dyner I ſhall the make
As that thou haeſt /ꝛhaſt made to me
36 Gramarcy/ꝛGramercy knyght ſayde/ꝛſayd Robyn ./-/-
My is ꝺdyner/dener whan that I it/I/that I haue ./-/-
I was neuer ſo gredy bi/ꝛby dere worthy god
My dyner for to craue
37 But pay or ye wened/ꝛwende ſayde/ꝛſayd Robyn
Me is ꝺ:thynketh/thynke it is gode/ꝛgood ryght ./-/.
It was neuer ꝺ:ẙ/the maner by is ꝺ:dere/der worthi/ꝛworthy god
A ꝺ:yoman/yeman ꝺ:to/- pay for a knyhht/ꝛknyght ./-/.
38 I haue nought ī/ꝛin ꝺ:my/mi coffers/ꝛcofers ſaide/ꝛſayd ẙ/ꝛthe knyght
That I may profer for ſhame ./-/-
Late/ꝛLytell Johñ/ꝛIohan go loke ſayde/ſayd/seyd Robyn ꝺ:-/hode
Ne let nat/ꝛnot for no blame
39 Tel/ꝛTell me truth/trouth/treuthe ꝺ:than/then ſaide/ꝛſayd Robyn
So god of/ꝛhaue parte of me/ꝛthe ./-/-
I haue no more but.xx shelynges/ꝛbut.x.ſ. ſayde/ꝛſayd ẙ/ꝛthe knyght
So god haue parte of me
40 If/ꝛYf thou hast/ꝛhaue no more ſayde/ꝛſayd robyn/ꝛRobyn
I woll/ꝛwyll nat/ꝛnot one peny *[c penλ, that, is y upside down]*
And yf thou haue nede of any/ꝛony more ./-/-
More ſhall I ꝺ:lend/len the ./-/-
41 Go nowne/ꝛnow furth/forth/forthe littell/ꝛlytell Johñ/ꝛIohan
The truth/trouthe/truthe tell thou me ./-/-
If/ꝛYf there be no more but .xx.selings/but.x.ſ./qnt.x.ſ *[c with b except for inversion]*
No/ꝛNot one peny that I ſe •/-/.
42 Lytell Iohñ/ꝛIohan ſprede/ſpred/ſpored downe hys/his/is mantell
Full fayre upon the grounde
And there he fonde/ꝛfounde in the knyghtes cofer ./-/.
But euen halfe -/ꝛa pounde *[c pouude by inversion]*
43 Littell/ꝛLytell Iohñ/ꝛIohan let/ꝛlete it lye full ſtyll
And went to his mayſteer/ꝛmayſter -/ꝛfull lowe
What tydinges/ꝛtydynge Iohñ/ꝛIohan ſayde/ꝛſayd robyn/ꝛRobyn ./-/-

Sir/ꝛ:Syr the knyght is true/ꝛ:trewe inowe/Inough/Inowe ../-/-
44 Fyll of the beſt wine/ꝛ:wyne ſayde/ꝛ:ſayd Robyn
The knyght ſhall begynne ./-/.
Moche/Moch/Myche wōder/ꝛ:wonder thīketh/thynketh/thynket me ./
Thy clotynge/ꝛ:clothynge is ſo thine/ꝛ:thynne
45 Tell me one worde ſayde/ꝛ:ſayd robin/ꝛ:Robyn ./-/.
And counſel/ꝛ:counſell ſhal/ꝛ:ſhall it be
I trowe thou warte/werte/were made a knyght of force/ꝛ:forſe ./-/-
Or ellys/ꝛ:elles of yemanry
46 Or ellys/ꝛ:elles thou ꝺ:haſt/haste bene/ben/be a
ſori/ꝛ:ſory huſbande/houſband/husband ./-/-
And lyued/ꝛ:leued in ſtrocte/ꝛ:ſtroke and ſtryfe
And okerer or ellis/ꝛ:elles a lechoure ſayde/ꝛ:ſayd robin/ꝛ:Robyn
Wyth/ꝛ:With wronge haſt ꝯ:-/thou led thy lyfe ./-/-
47 I am ꝺ:none/nene of those/them/tho ſayde/ꝛ:ſayd the knyght ./-/.
By god that made me
And hundred wȳter/An.C. wynter/An.c.wynter here before -/-/.
Myn/ꝛ:My auncetres/ꝛ:aunſetters knyghtes haue bene/ꝛ:be ./-/-
48 But oft/ꝛ:ofte it hath befal robyn/ꝛ:Robyn ./-/-
A man hath be dyſgrate
But god that ſitteth/ſyteth/syt in heuen aboue *[c heue naboue]*
May ꝯ:amende/amend his ſtate
49 Withyn/ꝛ:Within ꝯ:this two/two or three yere robyneꝛ:Robyn he ſayde/ꝛ:ſayd ./-/-
My neghbours/ꝛ:neyghbores well it knowe
Foure hundred/hondreth/hondred pounde of gode/ꝛ:good ꝺ:money/meney
Ful/Full/Fbll well than myght I ſpende
50 Nowe/ꝛ:Now haue I no gode/ꝛ:good ſaide/ꝛ:ſayd the knyght
But my chyldren and my wyfe
God hath ſhaped/ꝛ:ſhapen ꝺ:ſuch/ſuche an ende -/-/.
Tyll god yt/ꝛ:it may amende
51 In what maner than/ꝛ:- ſayde/ꝛ:ſayd robyn/ꝛ:Robyn
Hast thou lorne/ꝛ:lore thy rycheſſe/ꝛ:ryches
For my greate/ꝛ:grete foly he ſayde/ꝛ:ſayd
And for my kyndneſſe/ꝛ:kyndeneſſe
52 I had a ſone ꝺ:forſoth/forsothe robyn/ꝛ:Robyn
[That ſhulde/ſholde] hau/ꝛ:haue ben ꝺ:myn/myne ayre/ꝛ:eyre
Whanne/ꝛ:When he was twenty wynter olde ./-/-
In felde wolde iuſt/ꝛ:Iuste full fayre/ꝛ:feyre
53 He ſlewe a knyght of lancaſter/lancaſtſhyre/lancaſeſſhyre
And a ſquyer/ꝛ:ſquyre bolde
For to ſaue hym in his ryght
[My] godes/ꝛ:goodes both ſette and ſolde
54 [My] londes both/beth/bothe ſette to wedde robyn/ꝛ:Robyn
[Uuty]ll/[Unty]ll a certayn/ꝛ:certayne ꝯ:day/daye

[To] a ryche abbot here beſyde **./-/-**
[Of ſ]**eynt/ꝑ:[ſ]aynt mari/ꝑ:Mary abbey/ꝑ:abbay**
55 [Wha]t is the **ſom/ꝑ:ſomme ſayde/ꝑ:ſayd a͛:robyn/Robyn -/-/.**
Trouth/ꝑ:Trouthe than tell thou me **./-/-**
Sir/ꝑ:Syr he **a͛:ſayde/ſayd** foure **hundred/ꝑ:hondred** pounde
[T]he abbot tolde it to me **-/-/.**
56 Nowe **&/ꝑ:and** thou leſe thy **lond/ꝑ:londe ſayde/ꝑ:ſayd** Robyn **./-/.**
[Wh]at **woll/ꝑ:ſhall** fall of the
[Ha]ſtely I **wol/ꝑ:wyll** me buſke ſayd the knyght
Ouer the ſalte ſee
57 [An]d ſe **were/where/wher criste/ꝑ:cryſte** was **quyke/ꝑ:quycke** and dede **./-/-**
[On] the **mount/ꝑ:mounte** of **Caluere/calvare/calvere** **./-/-**
Farewell frende and haue **gode/ꝑ:good a͛:day/daye** **-/-/.**
It **ma/ꝑ:may no/not/noo** better be
58 **Teris/ꝑ:Teeres** fell out of **hys/ꝥ:his iyen/eyen/-** two **./-/.**
[He] wolde haue gone **hys/ꝑ:his -/-/eyen a͛:way/waye**
[*n.b. in* **c** *"eyen," which matches* **b** *in 58.1, has accidentally fallen to 58.2]*
[**Fa**]**re wel/ꝑ:[Fa]re well a͛:frende/frendes** and haue **gode/ꝑ:good a͛:day/daye** **-/-/.**
[I] ne haue **no/-/noo ꝥ:more/nother** to pay **-/-/.**
59 [W]here be thy frendes **ſayde/ꝑ:ſayd** Robyn
Syr neuer one **wol/ꝑ:wyll a͛:me knowe/knowe me**
While/ꝑ:Whyle I was ryche **ynowe/Inow/Inowe** at home **./-/-**
Great/ꝑ:Grete boſt **than/ꝑ:then** wolde they blowe
60 And **nowe/ꝑ:now** they renne away fro me
As **beſtis/ꝑ:beſtes** on a rowe **./-/-**
They take no more hede of me **-/-/.**

I have classified the variants into seven classes: those where the three witnesses all disagree, places where two agree against one in red variants (three classes of these), and places where two agree against one in blue variants (three classes of these). (After some consideration, I excluded the punctuation at the end of the lines, because **b** always omits that punctuation, while **a** and **c** seem to include it almost at random, with little or no relation between the two texts.) The table below shows the number of variants of each type. In all, in these 132 lines, there are no fewer than 246 variants — though 185 of them (75%) are two-way blue variants that have no effect on the meaning. The full classification is as follows:

		Variants of this type	% of total variants
Three-way variants		29	11.8%
Red (substantive) Variants	a=b	4	1.6%
	a=c	10	4.1%
	b=c	18	7.3%
Blue (incidental) Variants	a=b	17	6.9%
	a=c	14	5.7%
	b=c	154	62.6%

For classification purposes, the three-way variants tell us nothing. What we need to do is look at the 217 two-against-one variants. Let's prepare a second table looking only at the two-way variants. This time, we'll count red and blue variants separately, but also do a combined total for all two-way variants

		Variants of this type	% of total variants
Red (substantive) Variants	a=b	4	1.8%
	a=c	10	4.6%
	b=c	18	8.3%
Blue (incidental) Variants	a=b	17	7.8%
	a=c	14	6.5%
	b=c	154	71.0%
All Two-Way Variants	a=b	21	9.7%
	a=c	24	11.1%
	b=c	172	79.2%

Note that **b** and **c** agree in 79% of variants, and **c** agrees with **a** in only 11% of cases (in the other 10% of cases, it goes its own way — typically in error). This close similarity in orthography cannot be attributed to similar standards; Scragg, pp. 67, notes that Caxton, de Worde,, Pynson, and the printers of that generation had no orthographic standard and, indeed, were so haphazard in what they did that it slowed the adoption of the chancery standard. Indeed, some printers were so sloppy as to use different spellings in the same work, and often on the same page (something we shall see with dramatic regularity in **f**). Such close orthography *must* derive from a genetic relationship. Contrary to some claims, **c** is, without doubt, a text of the **b** type.

However, there is another point: In incidental variants, **c** agrees with b in 154 of 185 variants (83%), and it agrees with **a** in 14 (7.6%) while going its own way in 17 (9%).

By contrast, in substantive variants, **c** agrees with **b** in 18 (56%), with **a** in 10 (31%), and goes its own way in 4 (13%).

To a trained critic, those numbers should stick out like a sore thumb. **c** is closer to **b** than to **a**, but *in substantive readings* it moves much closer to **a**. This is important because, when a text is corrected, it tends to be corrected in substantives, with incidentals largely ignored. People tend not to notice differences in incidentals — and,

probably, don't bother to correct them if they do. The orthography of **b** and **c** is too close to be accidental; either one is the parent of the other or both derive from a lost original. *But **c** has been corrected, imperfectly, toward the **a** type.* Bottom line: **c** is a **b** text with scattered **a** readings. *It is not an **a** text.* This does argue that the direction of flow is from **b** to **c**, not the reverse — that is, that **b** is either the ancestor of **c** or is a more accurate transcription of the original text of both. This is the assumption followed in this edition: that where **c** agrees with **b**, it has no value, but where **c** disagrees with **b**, it is (or might be) an independent witness, and is treated as such. In other words, if **ac** agree against **b**, and there is no strong reason to prefer either reading, I will adopt the reading of **ac**. If, on the other hand, **bc** agree against **a**, that combination has no more weight than **b** alone. (Although, since I use **b** as a copy text, I'll tend to adopt the **bc** reading unless there is a reason to prefer the reading of **a**.)

That is the textual situation. What about history? Does this give tell us anything about who printed **c**?

I do think the nature of the text reduces the odds that **c** is by de Worde. Why would he bother correcting his own text against a different standard — and correcting it mostly in places which, while substantive, are still not very significant? But I don't think this is absolutely proof it's not by de Worde — after all, Pynson was a respected printer from whom de Worde might borrow. And the type itself appears to argue that **c** was a de Worde type. Isaac says that Goes's Textura 95 had an updated w, but it doesn't appear to me that **c** uses this w; it appears to me that it uses the forms of w that Isaac, in his preface to de Worde, calls de Worde's w^2 large and w^2 small. Blayney does not mention Ohlgren's attribution. I allow the possibility but am not convinced.

Ohlgren does not absolutely deny the possibility, mentioned above, that de Worde published **c**. On p. 122 of Ohlgren/Matheson, he says that if it is by de Worde, it must be earlier than **b** — a statement which he does not justify and which I think likely false, for reasons given above. He goes on to claim that **b** and **c** have significant differences, which he considers strong evidence that **c** is not by de Worde. I disagree; the differences between the two are relatively small. I think we must consider the printer of **c** uncertain.

Ohlgren says on p. 123 of Ohlgren/Matheson a suggestion that the Goes edition might have encouraged people to name all sorts of places in Yorkshire after Robin. This is another thing that is possible but beyond proof.

In any case, given its fragmentary nature and similarity to **b**, **c** has little effect on our final text.

d: *Bodleian, Douce f.1*

The *Short Title Catalog* dated this fragment "c. 1515?" — but does not list a printer; the date was apparently only a guess. It consists of eight pages, recovered from a binding, but in very bad shape because of trimming; four of the eight pages are trimmed with substantial loss of text on the left, and the others are trimmed on the right, with some loss there although less extensive. The upper and lower margins are also trimmed, with loss of several verses. There are other, smaller defects. Collating it was a real chore.

Ohlgren believes this fragment was published by Julian Notary. This is based on **d**'s use of Textura 92 (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 126) The type certainly resembles Notary's Textura 92. But the difference between Textura 92 and Textura 93 (or even Textura 95) is really only a difference in leading. Plus Notary wasn't the only printer using a Textura 92. Ohlgren says he was the only "major London printer" to use Textura 92, but offers no reason to think **d** came from a London printer. Ursin Mylner, who succeeded Hugo Goes in York, also had a Textura 92 (Isaac, before plate 44). and there were Textura 93s in the library of John Rastell (Isaac, before plate 36; Rastell, interestingly, printed a book called *The Twelve mery gestys of one called Edith*), Henry Pepwell (Isaac, before plate 48), Peter Treveris (Isaac, before plate 53), and Richard Bankes (Isaac, before plate 55).

There are several arguments against the attribution to Notary, starting with the catalog of materials Notary printed. The list on p. 129 of Duff-Bibliog includes seven items. Six are in Latin and appear to be church books — Plomer says that Notary's "printing lay principally in the direction of service books for the church." Even his non-church books, such as the *Golden Legend* and the *Chronicle of England,* were probably intended mostly for a highbrow audience. The only exception is a print of Chaucer's "Mars and Venus" — and even Chaucer was clearly more "highbrow" than the "Gest." Notary seems to have been aiming for a market both educated and clerical; the "Gest," with its popular tone and bias against the church, hardly fits!

Also, Notary had a liking for odd publication formats; McMurtrie, pp. 310-311, points out that he published the smallest book ever produced in the early printing period, the *Horae ad unum Sarum,* with a printable area of only about one inch by one and three-quarters.

Finally, although the font fits, the composition of **d** just doesn't look like Notary's work to me. Duff-Bibliog, plate XIX, is of Notary's edition of Mirk's *Liber Festiualis,* printed 1499 in Textura 92. It uses a very large mark for a period — almost a bullet rather than a dot — and it regularly uses suspensions in the word "and" (that is, it has "ād" instead of "and" or the ampersand that several of the printers of the "Gest" sometimes used). Isaac, figure 27, is of Henry VII's statutes of 1507. This tends to spell out "and" but uses other suspensions (e.g. "Londō" for "London"). I don't see many similar uses in **d**. Nor does **d** use variant forms of the letter "r" (r and ꞅ) as found in both Notary samples. It is true that **d** a superscripted form of "the" (y̌) that is also found in Duff's facsimile. But that is common. I think we have to leave **d** unattributed.

Because of the damage at the top and bottom of the sheets, it is hard to be sure of the exact number of lines per page, but I came up with about 37 lines per page, give or take a line. This means a slightly larger printable area than most of the other prints, but we

can't really determine the exact page size (unless someone can match the paper by watermark).

Unfortunately, we can't determine **d**'s textual affiliations by the same word-by-word method as we used for **c**. There are two reasons for this. First is because **a** only exists for part of the contents of **d**. Equally significant are the lacunae in **d**. There are too many places where we can determine the general reading of **d**, but not the exact orthography. A word-by-word comparison therefore won't work. And there isn't enough text to do the broad comparisons we can use to show that **b**, **f**, and **g** are related. **d** does have punctuation (unlike **b**), but of the same strange nature we saw in **c**: most often a dot at the end of line, but with many of the dots not being at places where a break is called for, and there are many long runs of text with no punctuation at all.

My impression is that the orthography is generally closer to **b** than **a** — e.g. it calls Little John "Johan." But it has many readings that agree with **a** rather than **b**. The temptation is to say that it is a **c**-like text: **b** was the textual basis, but corrected toward **a**. Indeed, it might be that **c** and **d** are copied from the same original. But **d** has, I think, a higher rate of incidental agreements with **a** than did **c**. The data is too limited to allow a firm statement, but **d** *may* (I emphasize *may;* the text is too short to be certain) represent a different line of descent from the two main families. This will be important in our reconstruction of the text.

For fragment e, see under p

f/*Copland: British Library C.21.c*

Child has little to say about **f** other than the attribution to William Copland, apparently writing it off as modernized, though he doesn't say much about its ancestry. Gutch1, pp. 80, 141, follows Ritson in saying that Copland's **f** print seems to have been derived from **b**, and Clawson, p. 3, declares it "apparently a reprint of **b**." Phillips/Keatman, p. 13, agrees, saying it "appears to be a reprint of **b**." Although "reprint" is too strong a word (the dialect has been modernized and there are some lines have been heavily changed), it is clearly true that the "b" type rather than the "a" type is the source; I noticed the matter independently before I saw the (brief and undocumented) claim in Gutch. It is strange to note that Child and other recent editors seem to have paid little attention to the fact that it's derived from **b** — Child cites the variants in **f** without saying anything about the ancestry of that print. (He did note in his very short introduction to the "A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode" in Child-ESB that **f** is "apparently made" from **b**, but does not pursue the fact.)

It is hardly surprising that William Copland followed the text of de Worde, because it is believed that William Copland was either the younger brother or the son of another printer, Robert Copland — and Robert Copland, like Hugo Goes and others, worked for Wynkyn de Worde early in his career (Isaac, introduction to Copland; Duff-Printers, p. 146), and apparently was responsible for editing some of de Worde's editions (Duff-Printers, p. 7); he was also mentioned in de Worde's will (Duff-Printers, p. 139).

Thus it is very likely that William Copland would have worked from a copy of de Worde's own earlier printing — indeed, it is possible that Robert Copland worked on **b**. Ohlgren seems to think it more than possible; on p. 114–115 of Ohlgren/Matheson, he suggests that the "rose garland" used in the archery contest of stanza 398 may have been an interpolation by Copland. This seems fanciful. It is true that Robert Copland worked "at the sign of the Rose Garland in Fleet Street" (Plomer), but that was later. The other obvious difficulty is, if Copland had been rewriting the "Gest," why didn't he fill in the several lacunae in the poem? And we find other mentions of rose garlands in the Robin Hood literature; see, e.g, Knight, p. 7. If there is any connection between the two, it probably goes the other way: the mention in the "Gest" put a thought in Robert Copland's mind.



Figure 5: One version of Robert Copland's printer's mark with rose garland emblem

Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 186, notes the somewhat curious fact that there seem to have been many early editions of the "Gest," but that production then slacked off. Ohlgren thinks there was a forty-five year gap between the Notary and Copland editions. Since his date for Notary's print is conjectural, the gap may not have been that long — but it was probably substantial. Ohlgren's suggestion is that copies ceased to be printed because Henry VIII turned Protestant and Robin Hood was very Catholic. This does not account for the whole gap, because Henry was still quite Catholic, thank you, in 1520 (and even 1530), and never ceased to regard himself as Catholic. But it might explain part of the gap.

The front page of **f** is entitled "❧ A mery gest of Robyn hoode and of his lyfe, wyth a new playe for to be played in Maye games very plesaunte and full of pastyme." Below this are three woodcuts. One is of a bowman. A second is of an halberdman with a helmet and at least partial armor. It is labelled "Lytel John," but clearly it was a stock piece of art, because nowhere in the "Gest" does Little John use a halberd. The third woodcut is a generic ornament.

The explicit of the "Gest" itself reads "❨Here begynneth a lytell geste of Robyn hoode and his mery men, and of the proude Shyryfe of Notyngham."

The colophon at the end reads "Thus endeth the lyfe of Robyn hode." This is followed by a couple of printer's symbols ❨ ❩. The rest of the column is blank. Then follows the short Robin Hood play for the May Games. The play is nine pages long and features the characters of Robyn hode, Lytell John, Fryer tucke, The potters boye Jacke,

and The potter. Then follows the general colophon "(Imprinted at London upon the thre Crane wharfe by wyllyam Copland."

Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 132–133, suggests that Copland printed the work in part because of its anti-clerical tone. There is no real evidence either way.

As an example of typesetting, **f** is extraordinarily bad. Like **b**, it is almost entirely lacking in punctuation. The beginnings of many lines, but not all, are capitalized. It would appear, based on the results, that whoever typeset **f** neither knew how to spell nor knew how to follow the text before him. As a simple example, take the word that we now spell "said." All the other prints have a consistent spelling. **b** reliably spells it "sayd," so that is the spelling that usually shows up in the present edition. **a**, although prone to mistakes, almost always spells it "sayde." The modernized text of **g** uses our modern spelling "said." But **f**… there is no telling. For example, in stanzas 233-236, the word "said" is used six times. How is it spelled?

233.1: said 233.3: sayd 234.1: sayde
234.3: sayd 235.1: said 236.1: sayd

That's three different spellings in the spare of thirteen lines! And it occasionally uses a fourth spelling, "saide," as well.

There are sections where **f** hardly varies at all from **b**. There are places where it seems to have a consistent orthography, not **b**'s, for a few stanzas. And there are places where it simply seems to produce random spellings. I have no explanation for it; the one thing it makes clear is that the orthography of **f**, like its text, has no authority at all. Also, the orthography implies that **f** derives directly from **b** (or perhaps **c**), since it follows that copy's orthography at some points; there is no intermediate copy.

***f*/Copland: Oxford, Cordington Library, All Souls college, k.4.19.**

Although also printed by Copland, ***f*** is by no means identical to **f**. **f**, as we saw, is notable for its extremely erratic spelling. I think ***f*** must be by a different compositor, because, although its text agrees substantially with **f** for the few stanzas it contains, the spelling has been comprehensively regularized. In fact, it is almost identical to **g**. On the evidence, ***f***, not **f**, is the direct ancestor of **g**. I think it likely, although not quite certain, that ***f*** was a resetting of **f** by a more competent compositor — perhaps one who was told to straighten out the spelling. If so, he did a pretty good job, at least for the tiny bit of text that survives.

g/White: Bodleian Library, Z.2.Art.Seld

White's **g** text rarely gets much attention, simply because it is so much later than the others. It is instantly clear that the text has been much modernized, although this does not by itself prove whether it is from a good or a bad source. I would say it moves at least 75% of the way from the orthography of **b** to modern orthography. In particular it is much more modern in its use of i versus y (e.g. it has "king" and "knight" for **b**'s "kyng(e) and "knyght(e)"). We will cover its affinities below.

This is the only one of the prints which has survived in two copies (the Bodleian and one other), but the other copy has been in private hands until quite recently. As far as I know, no examination has been made to be sure that the two copies are identical. I have worked from scans of the Bodleian copy.

The front page of **g** is entitled "❧ A mery Iest of *Robin Hood* and of his life, VVith a newe play for to be plaied in Maye games. Very pleasant and full of pastime." (The r of "for" is actually upside-down, ɹ.) This is essentially the same title as in **f**, but with the spellings modernized. This also shows how much more versatile a typographer White was: **f**'s version of this text used just two fonts, but White's has four sizes and also has an italic for one of them. At the bottom of the page it says "London. Printed for *Edward White*." This uses a sixth face.

The title page of **f** has three woodcuts: a bowman, an halberdman labelled "Lytel John," and a generic ornament. White has a modified version of this layout. He used the printer's identification "London. Printed for *Edward White*" in place of the generic ornament. Above this, as in the Copland edition, he has woodcuts of Robin and Little John. The woodcut of Robin in White is so similar to Copland's that it appears to be a deliberate copy. That of Little John, however, is definitely different — and better. And the caption "Litle John" above the image of John is in yet a *seventh* tyepface, which appears to be the face used in the body of the print.

The explicit of the "Gest" itself reads "¶Heere beginneth a little iest of Robin Hood and his merry men and of the proud Sheriffe of Nottingham." This again matches Copland but with the language modernized.

The colophon at the end reads "Thus endeth the life of Robin Hood" — again, Copland's explicit, with modernized spelling. The rest of the column is blank except for the catchword "heere," intended to help the binder know which page comes next.. Then follows the short Robin Hood play for the May Games. In White's version, it is eight pages long, but appears (like the "Gest" itself) to be a modernized version of Copland's play. Unlike the Copland edition, there is no final colophon for the overall work -- after all, the printer was listed on the cover.

It's sad that **g**'s text is so corrupt, because otherwise it is by far the most pleasant of the prints to read. The typeface is clear and highly legible (more so than any of the other prints), the spelling is more consistent than the other prints, and it even uses punctuation! Somewhat irregularly, to be sure (probably because its sources were inconsistent), but it is working toward a regular orthography. White's and Pynson's are the only prints of the "Gest" that are at all attractive to the eye.

*Fragments (**e, p, q**): Bodleian, Douce f.51(3); Folger Shakespeare Library (Penrose collection); University of Cambridge 4.J.3.6*

From the pagination and lineation, it will be evident that the two **p** and **q** fragments are from the same edition. It is also generally accepted that **e** is part of the same print (although not necessarily part of the same copy of that print). It is also clear from the fact that the first verses of **q** come before the first verses of **p**, but the last verses of **p** come before the last verses of **q**, that the two were not properly bound in a single quire. Oates, pp. 5–6, is convinced that they were mis-collated — that is, the edition had its pages out of order.

This raises an interesting point. The **epq** text is widely attributed to Richard Pynson. The suggestion seems to go back to Duff-Bibliog, p. 100, based on a single leaf of **q** (even though he admits that the "collation [is] not known"). Duff's argument convinced Isaac (preface to images 92 and 93 of the "Gest"), and was accepted without question by

Oates (p. 4), Dobson/Taylor (pp. 71–72), and Ohlgren (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 98). In terms of the type, this fits — **epq** seems to be in the Textura 95 that Isaac (in the notes preceding plate 13) says was Pynson's standard type.

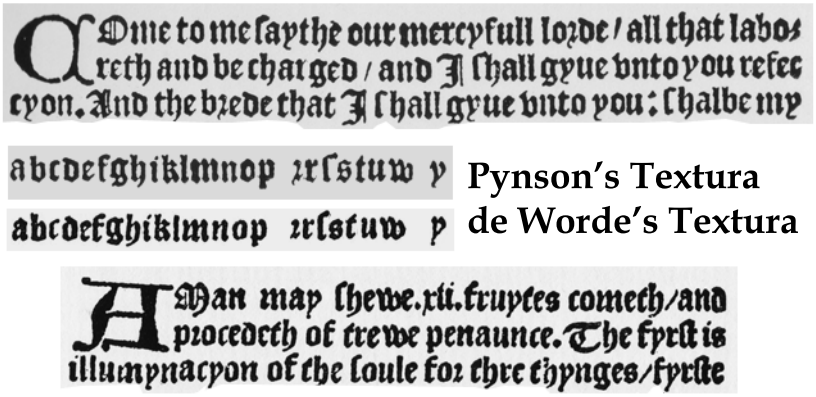


Figure 6: The Textura 95 Types of Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde
The top sample is from Pynson's 1504 edition of *The Imitation of Christ*
The bottom is from de Worde's 1502 *The Ordinary of Christianity or of christian men*
Although similar, the types are not identical; compare the letters d, h, m, o, f, w, and y. Differences in type do not necessarily indicate a different printer; De Worde had twelve different forms of w, four of h and s, three of u/v and y, two of a and d.

The caution is that, as we already saw, almost everyone had a Textura 95: de Worde (Isaac, before plate 1), Pynson (Isaac, figures 13, 14, 15, 19 — indeed, based on figure 19, Pynson's collection of ornaments includes several which appear to me to be exactly the same as those de Worde used in the "Gest"), Hugo Goes (Isaac, before plate 35; Goes acquired his Textura from de Worde), Robert Copland (Isaac, before plate 45), John Scolar (Isaac, plate 47; he and his successor Charles Kyrfoth, like Goes, had their Textura from de Worde), John Skot (Isaac, before plate 50), Thomas Berthelet (Isaac, introduction to Berthelet, says he is another case where that printer acquired the type from de Worde), John Byddell (yet another who had worked for de Worde and may have gotten some of his type; Isaac, introduction to Byddell), John Herford (Isaac, introduction to Herford).

Plus, as we saw in the discussions of **c** and **d**, Julian Notary had a Textura 92 (Isaac, before plate 26), as did Ursin Mylner (Isaac, before plate 44). There were Textura 93s in the library of John Rastell (Isaac, before plate 36), Henry Pepwell (Isaac, before plate 48), Peter Treveris (Isaac, before plate 53), and Richard Bankes (Isaac, before plate 55). Even Chepman and Myllar, in Scotland, used a Textura 93 similar to de Worde's Textura 95 (Isaac, introduction to Chepman and Myllar).

This list could easily be extended, especially given how freely de Worde spread his favorite font around. Plomer goes so far as to suggest, regarding the Textura family, that "there seems reason to believe, from the great similarity both in size and form of the fount in use by De Worde, Notary, and Pynson at this time, that it was obtained by all the printers from one common foundry. Nor is it only the letters which lead to this conclusion, but the common use of the same ornaments points in the same direction. The only difference between the black letter in use by Pynson in the first years of the

sixteenth century and that of his contemporaries, is the occurrence of a lower case 'w' of a different fount." And, as Duff-Bibliog points out on p. ix, "it is clear that almost all early English printers well understood what is now called 'leading,' that is, producing a greater space between the lines by inserting slips of metal, so that we find the same type often with two, sometimes with three, different measurements." Thus simply measuring the height of the type is not sufficient to determine which font it is.

Ohlgren says on p. 101 of Ohlgren/Matheson that **epq** uses the forms of "w" and "s" found in Pynson's Textura 95. This appears correct based on Isaac's samples, but the sample is too small. The fact that **epq** seems to be in Pynson's type is not quite proof.

Matheson, on p. 203 of Ohlgren/Matheson, affirms that the orthography of **epq** matches Pynson's. This too is strong evidence at a time when different printers followed very distinct standards. But it appears from the footnote on p. 249 that Matheson used only a small set of facsimiles, meaning he didn't have much material to work with.

According to Binns, pp. 110–111, Pynson was a Norman; he perhaps began as a bookseller rather than a printer. He probably learned the printing trade from Guillaume Le Talleur of Rouen, and in 1490 took over the printing business of William de Machlinia of Belgium. He moved to Fleet Street in 1500, began to work on government documents in 1503, became Royal Printer in 1508, introduced Roman type into England in 1509, and retired in 1528, dying two years later. According to Binns, p. 512, his listed output consists of law books, official publications, and missals. Steinberg/Trevitt, p. 48, declare that Pynson "obtained a virtual monopoly of law codes and legal handbooks."

Steinberg/Trevitt, p. 48: "Pynson published some 400 books, technically and typographically the best of the English incunabula." Plomer says, "Wherever he came from, Richard Pynson was the finest printer this country has yet seen, and no one, until the appearance of John Day [who began work in 1546 and did his best work in the 1560s], approached him in excellence of work." Or Binns, p. 112, "Pynson was without doubt the finest printer of his day. He had a fine range of types and used them well. His press-work was superior to that of his contemporaries. He used illustration more sparingly and more effectively than de Worde, and was much more successful with his decorative initials and borders." And yet he decided to print something completely different in the "Gest," and when he did so, he got the pages in the wrong order?

I'm not really trying to suggest that someone else was responsible for **epq**. I am merely very cautious.... The matter is trivial; we are less concerned with the printer of **epq** than its text. The one important result of Ohlgren's examination is that, if **epq** is indeed by Pynson (and I think it extremely likely, just not certain), then it almost certainly dates from 1505 or earlier, when Pynson adopted a different form of w. And it must be after 1495, when Pynson obtained that Textura font. This might make it slightly older than de Worde's edition, but probably not much. The crucial point is that it has an a-type text, and one that is older than **a** itself — and almost certain a direct ancestor of **a**.

The Textual Assumptions Behind This Edition

The text of this edition is significantly different from all that have gone before (including my first edition). The reason is that I have used a different method of editing. A brief summary of the method used is that it is a mildly eclectic stemmatic edition which uses **b** as a copy text.

A stemmatic edition is one that takes all the ancient copies of a text and creates a "family tree" — the "stemma." It looks very much like a genealogy, except that there are (usually) no marriages; every copy has one and only one parent. The parent of everything is the "Archetype" — the last common ancestor of all the surviving copies. (This may or may not be the Autograph, or the original copy, but it is as close as the stemma can take us. To go from the Archetype to the Autograph can only be done with conjectural emendation — something that every editor of the "Gest" has resorted to at some places.)

The family tree is important, because it lets us "weigh" our witnesses. For example, suppose **f** is a descendant of **b**, or to put it another way, **f** was copied from **b**. (Which, in fact, it appears to be.) The crucial points is, this means that *f has no authority as long as we have b available.* There are only two sorts of readings in **f**: readings which derive from **b**, and readings where **f** accidentally or deliberately mis-copied **b**. For readings where **f** agrees with **b**, we can just go ahead and use **b**. And wherever **f** disagrees with **b**, we can ignore it, because its reading is either a conjectural correction or an error by the typesetter. *The readings of f are not based on knowledge of the original.* Stemma play a role in reconstructing a text — e.g. if there are three independent copies of a lost original, we will generally assume that two copies are more accurate than one — but the single greatest use of a stemma is to allow us to ignore the "downstream" witnesses and so simplify the task.

The best reconstruction of the stemma of the "Gest" I can offer is given below (the fact that so many witnesses are incomplete makes it much harder to assign them places). I will attempt to justify this below.

The most obvious thing about the "Gest" is that almost all the copies fall into one of two families, which we can call "a" and "b" after their most substantial representatives. (That is, the primary and most substantial representative of the "a" type is **a**, and the primary representative of the "b" type is **b**. We might also call them the "Pynson" and "de Worde" families after the printers of the leading representatives of each.) These types differ both in "substantives," i.e. substantial and important differences (e.g. the a type calls Robin's second-most-important follower Will "Scarlock," while b calls him Will "Scathelock"), and in incidentals (e.g. a uses the spelling "gode" while b uses the spelling "good") as well as a few things that fall in between (e.g. a calls Robin's chief follower Little "Johnn" while b calls him Little "Johan"). That distinction into two groups is easily drawn, but it is not all we hope to know. We must try to arrange all the copies into a family tree.

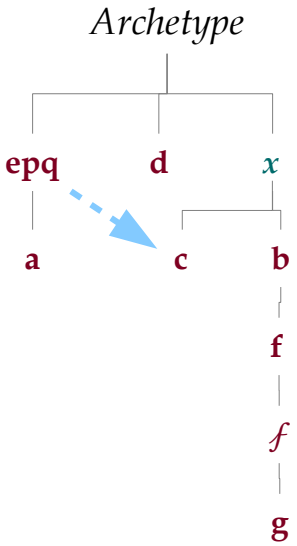


Figure 7:
The Stemma of the "Gest"

It is easiest to define the relationships between the substantial texts, **a**, **b**, **f**, and **g**. It is quickly evident that **a** is an a text and **b f g** are b texts. We see this in the fact that **f** agrees consistently with **b** where **a** and **b** differ, and so does **g**. Furthermore, where **f** differs from **b** (and **a**), **g** follows **f**. This would theoretically allow the possibility that **b** was descended from **f** or **g** — but this is excluded on two grounds. One is the simple fact that **b** is older than **f**, and **f** is older than **g**; **b** cannot possibly be copied from **g**! But it would theoretically be possible that (say) **g** was a very late but exact copy of an early text, and **b** a less correct copy of this text with several corrupt texts in between. In that case, **b** would effectively be a copy of **g**. However, this is not true of the "Gest"; the oldest of the three, **b**, is in fact the ancestor of the other two. This is confirmed by the fact that some of the readings of **f** and **g** are corruptions of the correct readings of **b**.

Although Child realized that **fg** were relatives of **b**, there is no indication he even thought in terms of a stemma.

Clawson, p. 3, calls **g** "very similar" to **f**. Phillips/Keatman, p. 13, call it a "second generation" copy of **b**, without mentioning that **f** is the intermediate generation — but there really isn't much doubt.

There are indications that the copy of **b** used by the compositor of **f** was damaged. A good example is in Stanza 305. The text of **b** has the injured Little John beg Robin to kill him, saying "No lyfe on me be lefte." All **fg** can offer is "That after I eate no bread," which is so utterly feeble that the only possible explanation is that the exemplar was damaged. In Stanza 400, **b** has "And bere a buffet on his hede, I-wys right all bare," while **fg** give us "A good buffet on his head bare, For that shal be his fine," which fails to rhyme and is inept anyway. These readings suffice to prove the kinship of **fg**. The relationship to **b** is less instantly obvious but will be evident to anyone who goes over the collation. This is textual (as opposed to chronological) evidence that **f** is copied from **b**, not vice versa.

These facts allow us to establish the relationship between these texts: **b** ➔ **f** ➔ **g**.

It was Oates who determined that the same sort of flow goes from **epq** to **a**. Unfortunately, without photos of **epq**, I cannot entirely verify Oates's suggestion; everything depends on the exact readings of **epq**, and I don't entirely trust Ohlgren's transcription. But I have no reason to question Oates's conclusion, and much reason to believe it. Dobson/Taylor, p. 8, suggest that **a** is "apparently a cheap reprint of a previous and now lost edition by Richard Pynson," i.e. of **epq**. This followed from a comparison made on p. 9 of Oates, who compared the 70 lines for which **epq** and **a** both survive. Oates found several significant differences between **a** and **epq**, but six times as many cases where the two agree with each other against **b**. It is clear that they represent a single phase of the text, and it is likely that one is a copy of the other.

Oates was convinced that **a** is a copy of **epq**. His evidence extended beyond the textual. The woodcut at the head of the Lettersnijder edition is a copy of one used by Pynson in his edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. But (contrary to, e.g., Holt, p. 122) **a**'s woodcut is emphatically a copy — the images can be seen side by side on pp. 104–105 of Ohlgren/Matheson, or in the overlaid version here, and the *Canterbury Tales* version differs in the face, the spurs, the ribbons on the horse, and other details from the

Lettersnijder version; in addition, Lettersnijder is cropped more closely. The illustration below, comparing the two, demonstrates this.



Figure 8: The illustrations of the Pynson Chaucer and Lettersnijder "Gest." Differences shown in color. Black shows items that are roughly the same in both woodcuts. Green shows material found in the Pynson Chaucer but not in the Lettersnijder "Gest"; red shows items from the "Gest" not found in Pynson. Both illustrations have frames; note how the red "Gest" frame is much smaller than the green Chaucer frame — i.e. the Pynson Chaucer illustration shows the end of the horse's tail and some additional grass at the bottom of the illustration. The "Gest" version shows more decoration on the horse's gear. The faces of the archer are also quite different, although this is difficult to illustrate.

Oates believes — and I think it almost certain he is correct — that Pynson used that same illustration of a yeoman archer in his edition of the "Gest," and the Lettersnijder printer then copied it (and, as mentioned, forgot to leave room for it!).

I am not as sure as Oates that **epq** is the immediate parent and **a** the child — the amount of overlapping text is too small to be absolutely certain — but they are certainly both representatives of the a branch of the stemma, and **epq** is the more reliable.

Matheson seems to confirm Oates's conclusions regarding **a** on other grounds, declaring on pp. 200, 203 of Ohlgren/Matheson that the spelling of **a** closely matches **epq**. (This is patently true.) He does note a few variants in **a** which are valid English alternatives rather than errors, and suggests that this might mean that a native English speaker was involved in the typesetting of **a**. It strikes me as at least as possible that the copy of **epq** used to create **a** had a few corrections written into it — but it might also be that these variants are from the typesetter of **a** who knew English, as opposed to the one (responsible for the majority of the remaining text) who did not.

Thus the "a" branch of the stemma consists of **epq** and **a**, with **a** having value only where **epq** is defective (admittedly, most of our knowledge of the a text comes from **a**).

This has minor implications for the date of **a**. If the Lettersnijder edition is derived from Pynson, it must be post–1490, when Pynson began printing, and likely post–1495. Probably Lettersnijder is later than that. If Duff is correct in dating Pynson to 1500, then

a date after 1510 seems likely for Lettersnijder. (On the other hand, Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 107–108 suggests a date in the early 1490s for Pynson, which allows Ohlgren on p. 110, to claim a date of *c.* 1495 for Lettersnijder. I think this unlikely but not impossible.)

That leaves **c**, **d**, and **ſ** to be fit into the stemma. Of these, **ſ** is the easiest. Since it is by Copland, we can assume that it stands close to **f**, and indeed in substantives the two seem very close insofar as **ſ** is extant. However, **ſ** — unlike **f** — has a consistent and regular orthography, and this orthography approaches **g**'s. **ſ** consistently is more distant from **b**, and more like **g**, than is **f**. So **ſ** is an intermediate between **f** and **g**, and the full lineage of the descendants of **b** is **b** ➙ **f** ➙ **ſ** ➙ **g**. Not that it really matters, since **ſ** is such a small fragment and it resides so far down the stemma anyway!

c presents a harder problem. Ohlgren, p. 122, thinks (on the basis of spelling rather than text) that **c** is another copy of Pynson. This makes me wonder if he even examined the text of **c**. As we have seen, both text and orthography make it a first degree relative of **b** — parent, sibling, or child. But which? The fact that **c** is so short makes this very difficult. With more text, we could probably be sure; or if we truly knew their dates, we could make a good guess; as it is, we simply cannot be certain. The differences between the two seem mostly accidental, which allows the possibility that one is the parent of the other. As stated above, **c** sometimes seems to have a-branch readings. Plus the general impression I have is that **b** and **c** *both* have some superior readings at their points of variation. I am not certain of this, and there aren't enough examples for proof, but it is my feeling. And that makes them siblings, equally descended from the hypothetical parent text I label *x*. (In theory, the relationship data would be equally satisfied if **b** and **c** were both close copies of the archetype, and **a**'s text extremely defective. But there are too many places where a's text seems superior for this to be likely. It is much more likely that **b** and **c** are descended from a common source which is lost.) It is important to realize what this means: where **b** and **c** differ, either one might represent the text of *x*. And that means, with good stemmatic logic, that if **b** agrees with **a**, then that agreement is to be preferred to the reading of **c**, but where **c** agrees with **a**, then the combination **ac** trumps **b**.

Of all the fragments, the most problematic is **d**. It agrees sometimes with the a group, sometimes with b. But it is also very badly done. There are three basic possibilities. First, it is actually a text that has mixed a and b type texts. This sometimes happens when one text is compared against another. This is the normal state of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, e.g. — they have been compared and corrected so many times that their ancestry is completely blurred. We see this in a few printed editions of Shakespeare plays, too, and a lot of copies of *Piers Plowman* show seem to alternate blocks with different ancestry. But this sort of mixture is rare, and the differences between copies of the "Gest" are not big enough to seem to call for that sort of correction and mixing.

The second possibility is that **d** is just so erratic that it seems to alternate between groups because it is simply so *bad.* This too can happen once in a while — it's called "long branch assimilation." But if that were the case, we'd expect to see more readings where **d** goes its own way, and probably more readings that are nonsense. We can't prove this idea wrong, given how little text we have, but which seems unlikely.

The final possibility is that **d** is neither an a-group nor a b-group text, but that it goes back to the archetype by a third route. This is the most useful and helpful situation. It may be overly optimistic, but it is the assumption I have made in the stemma above. I emphasize that I am sure about **a epq** being a texts, and **b c f g** being b texts, but I am *not* sure about **d**. The good news is, even if this assumption is wrong, it will only matter in places where **a** and **b** disagree and we would have no other solid basis for a decision.

The first thing to note about the above stemma is that everything below **b** is meaningless. Ritson and Child both occasionally consulted **f**. But, as I've said above, **f** has *no authority*; it is an offspring of **b**. The *only* authorities are **a b c d epq** — and even **a** loses its authority where **epq** exists.

This gives us three sorts of situations: Those where we have three textual groupings (**a**, **b**, **d**), those where we have two (**b/c** versus **a** or **epq**), and those where we have only one (**b**).

In the first case, I generally follow the majority. That is, **ab** beat **d**, **ad** beat **d**, **bd** beat **a**. It is on this basis, e.g., that I chose "Scathelock" (the reading of **bd**) over Scarlock (the reading of **a**) — although, if one reading seems clearly superior to the others, I of course follow that; this is standard editing behavior.

The third case is also simple: If the b-group is all we have, we follow **b**, perhaps emending by conjecture when the text seems too corrupt.

The second case, **b** versus **a/epq**, is the hardest. The two-branch stemma is a situation known to textual criticism as the "Bédier Problem," after a textual scholar who found that the stemmas for most of the books critics had studied ended up having two branches. Joseph Bédier actually went so far as to accuse scholars of creating two-branch stemma on purpose, so that they would have the maximum scope for choosing the text they wanted — because, in a two-branch stemma, as long as the two branches are equally good, there is no basis for deciding between the readings of the two branches. Which means that the editor can choose whatever reading the editor feels is "best."

It's methodologically easy to reduce a stemma to a Bédier two-branch problem. Without doing statistics, it seemed to me that **d** is a little closer to **b** than **a**, e.g., so I could have stuck it with **b** if I were the sort who wanted to create a Bédier stemma. I don't; I believe that editing should be as rigorous and repeatable as possible. So I much prefer a three-branch stemma, and was happy to find that **d** seemed to allow one. But **d** is simply too brief to solve most problems. For roughly half the "Gest," we're in the situation of a two-branch stemma, and have to choose between the readings of the branches.

The question then is whether the a or b branch of the stemma is better, or if they are different but roughly equal in quality.

Although we cannot prove whether **epq** or **b** is the older text, Child (p. 40), Dobson/Taylor, and Knight/Ohlgren (p. 80) all consider **a** to be the more primitive. Child's evidence is summarized in a single note on p. 40 listing about a dozen variants — enough evidence to prove that **a** sometimes had superior *readings*, but not enough to prove it a superior *text*. The primary evidence, really, is that **a** was incompetently typeset (note that there is a *homoioteleuton* error as early as the second stanza). As

Streeter, p. 42, observes, manuscripts written by "ill-educated" scribes or created in out-of-the-way places often preserve earlier forms. But some of the manuscripts preserving these forms are in fact very bad copies. An incompetent copyist may still copy a bad text; it's just that the copyist isn't likely to deliberately fiddle with it. The fact that **a** is copied from **epq** (which Child could not know) in fact vitiates his argument; we must judge **epq**, not **a**.

As Ohlgren/Matheson states on p. 101, "Since 1899.... all of the poem's editors have repeated Child's assertion that the Lettersnijder edition [**a**].... is the earliest surviving edition.... and hence it has been given pride of place in various critical editions, even though it is in an incomplete state. It has even supplanted the almost-complete Wynkyn de Worde edition [**b**]." This even though, as Ohlgren continues, "Lettersnijder is not only a decidedly poorer version of the text but also an almost incompetent copy of an earlier version by Richard Pynson, which now must be recognized as the earliest surviving edition of the poem." (That last point about Pynson's dating is of course not certain.)

Child in particular took **a** as his copy text insofar as it is extant; he used other readings only where it appears badly corrupt. Both Child and Knight/Ohlgren follow their copy text so closely as to alternate between spelling Little John's name "Lytel Johan" where **b** is the copy text and "Litell Johnn" where **a** is extant — an obvious absurdity. Similarly, they alternate between "good/gode" and "sayd/sayde" and other variants depending on which witnesses are extant.

I have never been convinced by Child's argument. Child's collation method has a tendency to obfuscate differences (particularly since he was inconsistent in how he recorded variants, and many minor variants are omitted), but when I converted it to an inline collation, it was easy to see the two groups mentioned above: **a** on the one hand and **bfg** on the other.

But the common ancestor of **a** and **b** was not the original. This is definitively shown by the missing lines (7.1, etc.), and likely by the leveling of the northern dialect. And a lot of the allegedly-archaic forms in **a** don't mean much. Take the distinction I've mentioned several times, between **a**'s "gode" and **b**'s "good." The form in **a** looks archaic — but the poem pronounces the word as one syllable, "good." (Look at like 1.3: syllable count shows that Robin was a "good yeman," not a "goodë yeman.) Yes, some of those terminal -e endings were still pronounced in Chaucer's time, but they were already dying out, *fast,* and the "Gest" is post-Chaucer. (And even Chaucer seems to have spelled that word "goode" or perhaps even "good.") The spelling "gode" is an orthographic choice; it is not a sign of antiquity. It might even be a deliberate archaism.

Which is more likely, that de Worde and Pynson had access to separate manuscript copies of the "Gest," both with many of the same defects but with different orthography, or that de Worde and Pynson had access to separate copies of a print edition, probably by Caxton, which they both reprinted with some modification? And if there was a Caxton original, then who would be more likely to modify it, Pynson or de Worde (who had great respect for his former master's edited texts)? The easiest logical explanation is that the two are based on a single printed ancestor, which one of them modernized.

Hence I think Child's extreme preference for **a** exaggerated. Recall that **a** is probably Dutch, typeset by a Dutch compositor. Many of its errors are pure and simple goofs — e.g. in 6.4, "vnkoutg" for "vnkouth"; 15.4 "mynge" for "mynde." Clearly the compositor of **a** simply transcribed the original mechanically (if erratically) — but that doesn't mean that Pynson, who produced the original of **a**, did so.

Wynkyn de Worde, although born in the Low Countries, was thoroughly familiar with English, and his work was designed to make English audiences comfortable — and, indeed, to standardize the language. His press made a habit of updating grammatical forms (Steinberg/Trevitt, p. 58). But there is no hint that de Worde made substantial revisions. Where the difference is one of fundamental meaning, as opposed to grammatical form, it is obvious that **b** has as much authority as **a**, and the poem should be re-edited on that basis. This was what I did in my first edition, which was agnostic between **a**'s and **b**'s texts but used **a**'s (Pynson's) orthography where it was extant. Having now looked past Child's collations to the actual orthography, I am no longer convinced that even Pynson's orthography is more valuable than de Worde's.

The fact that Pynson and de Worde and (apparently) three other printers all issued versions of the "Gest" around the beginning of the fifteenth century is obviously a testimony to its popularity. But the fact that Pynson and de Worde have noticeably different texts is also noteworthy. If two printers, who sometimes worked together, and were for very long based on the same street, produced substantially different versions, this clearly implies that one is not dependent on the other, although it is likely they are based on a common recent source.

Bottom line: The text of the "Gest" needs to be re-edited eclectically — that is, assessing each difference on a case-by-case basis, with no clear preference — based on the Pynson and de Worde types, with **c** and **d** consulted where extant and conjectural emendation sometimes necessary, especially in the places where Pynson is lost. The text of this edition is based on this principle.

Fortunately very few of the differences between the texts are truly important — the main reason why the texts are considered to go back to a single fairly recent original. But at least one variant, in Stanza 53, is potentially significant; see the note on that verse.

If we were to grade the condition of the text, we would probably list it as "fair." There is no real doubt as to the general course of the narrative, meaning that the text of the "Gest" is in better shape than, say, the text of the "Death." But the amount of minor damage is extensive. As a result, I have included a textual commentary starting on page 169 to discuss the more important problems with the text of the "Gest."

The stemma defines how my text is edited when it comes to substantive readings. If one branch's reading seems clearly superior, I of course adopt it; that is what makes my text mildly eclectic. And if a reading is truly bad, I may emend it if I can think of a good alternative.

Why a Copy Text?

Although my text eclectically chooses the superior-seeming reading, there are times when neither reading is inherently superior, or (far more often) where the differences

between the types is one of orthography rather than an substantive difference. In those cases, I follow my copy text.

To start with, let's define a copy text. It's a term used when one edits from multiple sources, typically with different orthographies (spelling, punctuation, etc.) When one edits from a copy text, one follows the orthography of one particular edition, which is the so-called "copy text." This does *not* mean following the copy text blindly (that's what's called "best text" editing, and it is very close to being what Child did); in some cases, one might even think that in "substantives" (readings of major importance), a different source is more valuable than the copy text. (This is sort of the case in the New Testament, for instance, where the modern printed editions follow the *text* of the earliest manuscripts, but use the spelling, punctuation, and accentation system of later manuscripts.) But the copy text "wins" on orthographic questions, and often (although not always) the copy text is given a casting vote on more important textual questions where the other evidence simply does not allow a decision. (Alternatives to copy text editing, in addition to "best text" editing, are regularized texts — the editor picks an orthographic system and follows it, no matter what the source texts say — and an all-out eclectic edition, where the editor frankly does whatever the editor wants. All of these have their places — best text editions can be useful when one source really is much better than the others, and regularized texts are very helpful for beginners who aren't equipped to deal with all the vagaries of old texts — but the copy text edition is generally best for getting the feel of an actual real source without being absolutely bound by a particular manuscript or print.)

Why **b** *as a Copy Text?*

To understand why the use of **b** as a copy text is important, we need to look at earlier modern editions of the "Gest." The earliest serious edition, Ritson's, was basically an edition of **b**, occasionally corrected by **f** or other sources or by conjecture. Child's first edition, Child-ESB, pp. 42-123, the one I've cited as ***C1***, was little more than a lightly retouched version of Ritson — it even retained Ritson's otiose accent marks ("yemàn," etc.).

When Child came back to the question for *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads,* he gave the matter much more thought — and studied the text of **a**. We can only partially reconstruct his thoughts; as we saw, he offered evidence that he thought showed **a** had an older text than **b** — but I suspect he also observed that **a** was incompetently done, and applied the rule that a text copied by an incompetent will be marred by stupid errors but will not be rewritten. In other words, he felt that **a** was a bad copy of a good text. On this basis, Child used **a** as his copy text where it was extant, turning to **b** only where **a** failed (and being unduly reluctant, it seems to me, to depart from **a** even when **a** was bad). And Child's text was so clearly superior to what went before that all the more modern editions — ***FBG DT KO*** — have followed Child's lead, seemingly without thinking about it. (Possibly they were misled, as I was in my first edition, by Child's imperfect collations of the various prints. There are too many things omitted. They sufficed to show the broad outlines of the stemma, but not the orthographic details.)

There are two problems with Child's approach. One, obviously not his fault, is that he did not and could not know that **a** was descended from **epq**, and that **epq** was

published by Pynson, who was at least as capable of fiddling with his texts as was de Worde — de Worde seems to have preferred to just reproduce whatever text was before him. On this basis, if any of the texts should be treated as primitive, it ought to be de Worde's!

(In any case, ***DT*** and ***KO*** knew that **epq** was the ancestor of **a**. If they preferred **a** to **b** as copy text, they should have used **epq** as copy text in preference to **b** — and in preference to **a.** *But they don't.* Where it is extant, **a** is their copy text. Where it isn't, they use **b**, even if **epq** is extant. In other words, they deliberately choose an inferior text. It makes no sense.)

The real problem is that **a** and **b** use substantially different orthography. Does it really matter whether we use the spelling "gode" or "good"? No, it doesn't — after all, the "Gest" was written for recitation, not to be read; whatever spelling the scribe originally used was just a personal habit, not really vital to the text. But if we are to do vocabulary studies, we really need to have a truly consistent text. This was not something Child really thought about; it's more a matter for computer analysis. But for that sort of analysis we want a consistent orthography — and that can only come from one of the complete texts, **b**, **f**, or **g**. Of these, **b** is the ancestor of the other two, and in any case **f** is wildly inconsistent and **g** is heavily modernized. **g** might be a good basis for a regularized edition, but for a true edition, only **b** can serve as the copy text. Hence this edition, the first one since Child's first edition to use **b**'s orthography throughout, rather than alternating between **b** and **a**. I don't really know that **b**'s orthography is closer to the archetype than **a**'s (though I suspect it is).What I know is that **b** is complete.

The proof of this is that, when I went from the first edition of this work (which used Child's orthography) to the second edition (which used **b** as a copy text), the number of total word forms in the document decreased by about 10%. This is not because actual *words* were eliminated (with only a handful of exceptions); it is because, for the first time in a century and a half, the poem has a single orthographic base. This will, for the first time, make real lexical studies possible.

With all that said, I've done my best to create a critical apparatus that will let you figure these things for yourself, because it records *all* the variants of *all* the prints (except the spellings of "Robin Hood" and "Little John," which would make the apparatus several pages longer without accomplishing much). The following pages explain how to read the critical apparatus.

How to Read This Apparatus

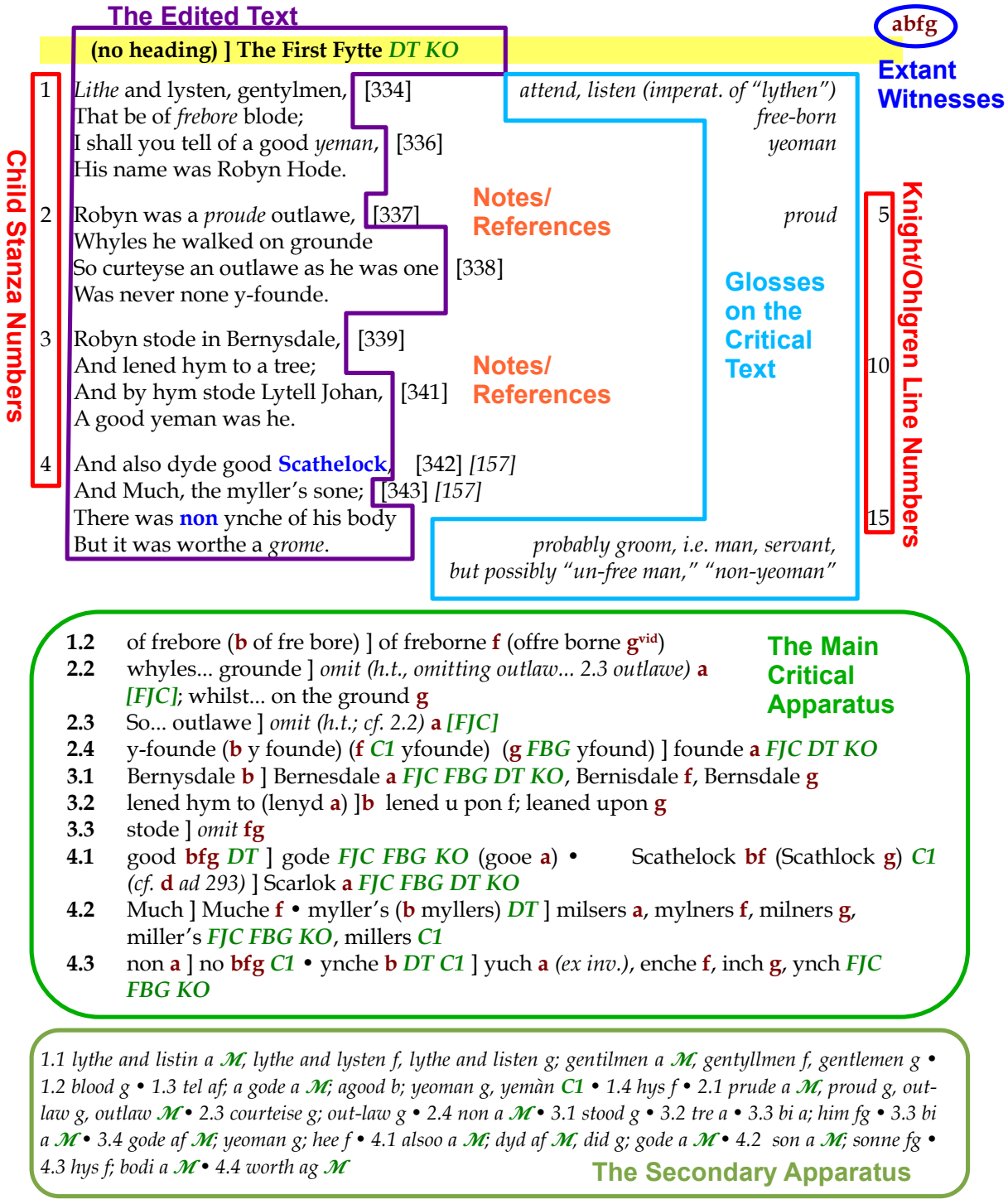


Figure 9: A Sample Page of the Critical Apparatus

The critical apparatus of the "Gest" has no fewer than seven parts (though you won't need most of them most of the time). These are diagrammed on the illustration above. The purpose of each part are described below.

1. **Extant Witnesses.** (Upper right corner of the page.) The prints that contain the list of prints that exist for the text on this page. In this case, the prints are **a**, **b**, **f**, and **g**; **c**, **d**, **epq**, and ***f*** are defective. If a witness exists for *part* of the text on the page, then it is shown in (parentheses). So **ab(c)fg** means that **a**, **b**, **f**, and **g** exist for the entire passage; **c** exists for part, but only part. A note between the main and secondary apparatus will generally describe the state of the fragmentary witnesses for a particular page. You can consult the extant witness list to know which witnesses are available for each line.
2. **The Edited Text.** The goal toward all this effort is directed: My best attempt to reconstruct the ancestral text of all the prints of the "Gest." This is reconstructed using the standard classical methods of *recenscio, selectio, examinatio,* and *emendatio:* that is, I constructed the stemma (described above; this is *recensio*), attempted to determine the archetype (*selectio*), and then, where it is defective (*examinatio)*, tried to emend to reconstruct the original *(emendatio)*. In the case of the "Gest," *emendatio* sometimes fails; there just aren't enough hints to reconstruct. These are the places where I print blank lines [...].
   It will be observed that most of the text is in plain roman type. This is where I consider the text to be certain or nearly so (except for orthography, which is covered in the Secondary Apparatus). In a few places the text is in bold blue type (e.g. **Scathelock** in line 4.1). This means that I believe there are significant doubts about the text at this point. This most often arise (as it does in this case) because the **a** and **b** texts have a substantial disagreement, but it can also arise because all the texts appear corrupt. In any case, these are the points where one should be cautious with the reading.
3. **Child's Stanza Numbers.** (Left edge of the page.) The standard numbers used to refer to the verses of the "Gest." Ballad scholars will tend to cite the "Gest" by stanzas; literary scholars may prefer line numbers:
4. **Knight/Ohlgren Line Numbers**. (Right edge of the page.) Another system for finding items in the text, counting lines from the beginning of the text. Used only by the Knight/Ohlgren among the modern editions, probably because they're the most English-lit sort of editors. (But it is worth remembering that the stanzas are not marked in any of the prints; it was Child's choice to print the text in stanzas and refer to them by numbers. Knight/Ohlgren's choice would be reasonable — except that everyone else cites Child's stanzas.)
5. **Notes/Reference.** Links to information about this particular line. If the link is in [plain text], it refers to the commentary on the meaning of the "Gest" which precedes the Appendix. If the link is in *[italics]*, it is a textual reference, pointing to the textual commentary which follows the critical text. Thus those interested in understanding the meaning of what they are reading should check the links in [plain text], but hardly need to bother with the others. The links in *[italics]* are of interest primarily to textual critics: they explain why I chose the reading I did.

Observe that, in this case, there are commentary references for about half the lines, but there are only two textual references, both in the uncertain portion of the text in stanza 4. The first one, for instance, discusses the Scarlock/**Scathelock** variant. Not every item in blue will have a textual note, but the more important ones usually do.

6. **Glosses on the Critical Text.** Explanations of the meanings of obscure Middle English words. The word is shown in the edited text in *italics,* with the gloss in the right margin. So the first word of the first line in the "Gest" (and on the sample page) is *Lithe* (often spelled "Lythe"). This is in italics because the word is no longer current. The explanation is at right: *attend, listen up (imperat[ive] of "lythen")*. Keep in mind that these glosses are generally short; if the meaning is complex, there may be a note on the line, and it never hurts to check in Appendix II: The Language of the "Gest" — this will often list other uses of the word, and provide other alternate meanings.
7. **The Main Critical Apparatus.** This provides information on the readings of the various prints, as well as of the four other critical editions. For details on how to read this, see Understanding the Main Critical Apparatus below. To prevent cluttering the page with all the minor spelling variants in the prints, this apparatus in general presents only variants that are significant for the meaning; lesser variants are relegated to the Secondary Apparatus. Many such decisions are arbitrary, of course; the difference between "gode" and "good" is clearly minor, but in a number of places we see a variation between "ony" and "any." Is this significant? "Ony" might be a northernism — or it might not. Hard to tell. Sometimes my decisions on something like that will come down to how much room there is on the page; also, if there is a major variant which has orthographic sub-variants, all the variants, no matter how trivial, are noted in the main apparatus. In any case, truly major variants — the ones that affect the meaning, and all non-trivial differences between the editions — will all be in this apparatus.
8. **The Secondary Apparatus.** This covers all the minor spelling variants and orthographic differences and such not covered in the Critical Apparatus. Because the variants in this apparatus are mostly just spelling variants, they are summarized much more briefly. There is no "lemma" (that is, no indication of the main critical text); it's assumed you can figure that out. And the apparatus is abbreviated. There may be multiple variants in a single line of the text; if so, they are separated by semicolons. The readings of the various prints are separated by commas. So, for instance, the second apparatus for the very first line of the "Gest reads:

    *1.1 lythe and listin a **M**, lythe and lysten f, lythe and listen g;*
    *gentilmen a **M**, gentyllmen f, gentlemen g*

The figure "1.1" means that it refers to stanza 1, line 1. The text adopted for this line, which is that of **b**, is

    Lithe and lysten, gentylmen

The apparatus means that, instead of "Lithe and lysten," **a** reads "lythe and

listin"; this is also the reading of the four modern editions (summarized as **𝓜**). **f** has "lythe and lysten"; **g** reads "lythe and listen." The semicolon means that that is all the variants involving the text "Lithe and lysten." Then come the variants against **b**'s reading "gentylmen." Here, **a** and the modern editions (again symbolized by **𝓜**) read "gentilmen," **f** has "gentyllmen," and the ever-modern **g** reads "gentlemen." As you can see, these are all changes in spelling. I don't honestly know if the reading of **a** or **b** is correct — indeed, if the poem was taken down from dictation, it's possible that neither matches the way the author would have spelled it. In both of these variants, I simply follow the reading of **b** because it is my copy text.

We can take two more examples for the first two lines of stanza 2. Here the critical text reads

> Robyn was a proude outlawe,

The apparatus reads

> *2.1 prude a* **𝓜**, *proud g; outlaw a* **𝓜**, *out-law g*

This is the one place where I *don't* put variants even in the second apparatus: there is variation in Robin's name; **a** actually reads Robȳ (the overbar indicating an n, i.e. "Robyn"), **b** has Robyn, **f** has Robyn, **g** has Robin. But, because there are so many instances of "Robyn" and "Robyn Hode," I don't note that. We do, however, note that where the critical text reads "proude" (which you can assume to be the orthography of b unless otherwise noted), the text of **a**, followed by the modern editions, reads "prude"; **g**, ever the most modern, reads "proud." At the end of the line, **b**, **f**, and my text read "outlawe," but **a** and the modern editions have "outlaw," while **g** reads "out-law." In every case, the difference is entirely one of spelling, not meaning; the important variations are in the main apparatus.

Understanding the Main Critical Apparatus

The critical apparatus is designed to be easy to read. (If you think this is complicated, you should see some of the apparatus out there....) Readings are presented in order, from the top of the page down. Line numbers are shown in bold. Points of variation are separated by bullets •. The *lemma* (reading of the text) is printed first, then a bracket], then the various other readings and their supporters. For instance, the first variant is

- **1.2** of frebore (**b** of fre bore)] of freborne **f** (of fre borne **g**^{vid})
  lemma variant readings

This means that there is a variant in line 1.2. For "of frebore," the reading found in the text (and supported by **a**, with **b** in agreement except for having a space that we would not include in the word today), **f** reads "of freborne," which **g** appears to rewrite as "of fre borne". But it's not quite clear what **g** reads; the actual print appears to say

of frø borne

with too little space between "of" and "fre," and too much between "fre" and "borne," plus the e of "fre" appears distorted. This is probably a glitch in the scan, but I mark the reading of **g** as **g**^{vid} because I'm not absolutely sure what **g** reads.

This is a relatively simple variant, with no real doubt as to the original — after all, **a** and **b**, the only editions which matter (since **f** and **g** derive from **b**), are basically in agreement. All the critical editions agree on it. A more difficult variant is found in line 4.1, where the text reads

And also dyde good **Scathelock**,

and the critical apparatus reads

4.1 … • Scathelock **b** (Scathelocke **f**) (Scathlock **g**) ***C1*** *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***

The use of **bold blue type** in the text indicates that this is a difficult and uncertain reading. The text I have adopted, *Scathelock,* is found in **b**, with **f** having the minor variant *Scathelocke* and **g** having the minor variant *Scathlock.* Child's first edition, ***C1***, also has this reading. The next item, *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*, is an observation that **d**, although not extant for line 4.1, *is* extant for stanza 293, and reads *Scathelock* there. Going against the reading *Scathelock* is **a**, which reads "Scarlok," a reading adopted by all the other editions, shown in ***bold green italic: FJC*** (Child), ***FBG*** (Gummere), ***DT*** (Dobson/Taylor), and ***KO*** (Knight/Ohlgren). (Observe that, in the actual apparatus, this point of variation has not one but two links, one to the commentary and one to a textual note; the textual note in this case explains why I chose the reading *Scathelock* against all the other editions.)

There are a number of other notations which sometimes occur in the apparatus. The most important of these is the conjectural reading. So line 7.1 is absent from all the prints, with no notation in any of the prints that anything is lacking. (We know it is absent, however, and that it is that *particular* line that is missing, because the line following 6.4 has three stresses rather than four, and rhymes with the three-stress line

two lines after that). We have absolutely no idea what the missing line was. But there have been many guesses. So the apparatus reads

- **7.1** (line absent from **abfg**)] Here shall come a lord or sire ***KO*** *cj.,* Till that I have som bolde baron (***DT in it.*** *cj.)*, Or els some byshop or abbot ***C1*** *ex Ritson cj.*, We shall await some bold abbot ***RBW*** *cj.,* We shall await King Edwarde's (?) men ***RBW*** *cj.*

The lemma tells you that the line is missing (and I show it as missing in the text; I have not been so bold as to adopt a conjectural reading here). But many editors have made guesses: "Here shall come a lord or sire ***KO*** *cj.,* means that Knight and Ohlgren guessed that the reading might have been "Here shall come a lord or sire" (the notation "*cj.*" means a conjecture, i.e. a guess). "Till that I have som bolde baron" was Dobson and Taylor's guess. "Or els some byshop or abbot " was Ritson's guess, followed by ***C1***.

I will sometimes include one of my own conjectures; these are marked ***RBW***. Note that I offered two of them at 7.1 (but didn't feel confident enough in either of them to put them in the text). The first instance in which I place one of my conjectures in the text is in 5.3, where I have printed *an ye* instead of *and ye* or *and if ye* of the prints. I have conjectured liberally, as a suggestion to future editors, but only very rarely adopt a conjecture into the text.

The more difficult variations have an explanation in the textual notes, but if the explanation is simply enough, I may just include it in the apparatus in italics. Am example of this is in line 6.2, where the text reads

'To dyne **have I noo** lust,

while the apparatus has

6.2 have I **a**] I have **bfg** • noo *(i.e. probably* no*, but perhaps* now*)* **a**] no **bfg** • lust] lest *(sic.)* ***C1***

So this line has no fewer than three variants. The first is the difference between "have I" and "I have." The former is read by **a**, the latter by **b**, **f**, and **g**. There is no reason for preferring one reason to the other, which is why I've marked it as a blue variant, but I went with the reading of **a** on the grounds that moderns would be more likely to change the reading.

This is followed by a variant "no" versus "noo" — another case of **a** versus **bfg**. Here I have again chosen the reading of **a**, this time because it admits of multiple explanations, and the apparatus lists those explanations.

The third variant, "lust" versus "lest," is just a typographical error in Child's first edition.

The apparatus is set up to show four stanzas per page (usually).

In preparing this apparatus, I read every print three times. For **a**, I used the photographs in Chepmann/Myller. For **epq** and ***f***, I perforce used the Knight/Ohlgren transcriptions (except that I have photographs of part of **e**). For **b**, **c**, **d**, **f**, and **g**, I first used Knight/Ohlgren's transcriptions (to get a fully legible first cut), then used the screen version of the EEBO photographs for the second pass, then printed the EEBO photographs and worked from that, on the principle that three different looks would give me three different chances to get the text right. Given the number of corrections I was still making on the third pass, I am sure there are still some errors in the apparatus.

This is really a job that should have been done by three different people, not one person three times! But I think I have reached the point of diminishing returns. Rest assured, I spent a *lot* of time on this. I can only apologize for any errors that remain.

The prints of the "Gest" do not distinguish i/j and u/v; the use of these letters has been conformed to modern orthography and such changes are not noted. In addition, "y" is sometimes used as a shorthand for "th" (normally in the combinations ỷ=the and ẏ=that); these have been expanded without comment unless it has some significance for the meaning (e.g. ỷ might be either "the" or "ye").

Note: The variations in the spellings of the two most important characters in the "Gest," Robin Hood and Little John, are not cited in either apparatus, which would be unduly burdened thereby. The normal usage in each text is as follows:

Robyn Hode: so **a** **b**; **f** might do anything; **g** usually "Robin Hood"

Little John: **a** typically *Littel(l) Iohn̄,* (i.e. "Johnn"); **b** "Lyttel Johan"; **f** might do anything (e.g. "Lytel John"); **g** "Little John." However, the spelling of "Littel/Lytle/Lytell" varies in the prints.

Where one of the prints departs in a substantial way from its usual usage, *that* will be noted.

Additional symbols sometimes found in the apparatus include the following:

- *apud*: according to, i.e. this authority reads the text of the cited print thus.
- *cf. ... ad....:* compare the reading of the cited print at the stanza (not line) cited
- *cj.*: conjecture, i.e. a reading placed in the text or margin by a particular editor despite not being found in any of the prints. An editor will generally offer a conjecture if the existing text seems impossibly corrupt; it is an attempt to guess the reading that gave rise to the corrupt reading. Conjectures can range from the trivial (e.g. in 54.2 **a** reads "uutyll," which should surely be "untyll"; the second "u" is an upside-down "n") to the very major (e.g. an attempt to figure out what the missing line at 7.1 might have read). All the editions have occasional conjectures, and I added some of my own. So, for instance, ***KO*** *cj.* means that the Knight-Ohlgren edition printed this reading as a conjecture; ***RBW*** *cj.* means a conjecture that I myself made. Sometimes I will list conjectures that were offered by scholars who did not produce an edition, e.g. *Clawson cj.* means that this was a suggestion Clawson made in his edition of the "Gest." See also *ex cj.*
- *ex* or e*x...?* from, as a result of, with an explanation, i.e. this reading may has arisen as a result of....
  - *ex cj.:* by conjecture, i.e. the edition cited adopts this reading despite it not being found in any of the prints. So, e.g. ***FJC*** *ex cj.* means that Child's edition adopts this reading even though it is a conjecture.
  - *ex err.* or *ex err.?:* by error. Usually used for an idiosyncratic reading of one of the modern editions, perhaps the result of a misprint.
  - *ex inv:* by inversion, i.e. the typesetter flipped the letter upside down. This is common in **a**, which often inverts u/n (plus, since it uses "u" for "v," v/n) and also, on occasion, m/w. We already had an example of this above, where **a** in 54.2 reads "uutyll" when it should be "untyll."

- *eyeskip:* see *h.t.*
- *h.t.:* homoioteleuton, i.e. loss of text due to similar endings. We see our first instance of this as early as 2.2, where **a** omits the words from "outlawe" to "outlawe"; it is an extremely common sort of error. We occasionally see other sorts of errors between similar groups of letters, a phenomenon collectively called "eyeskip," but *homoioteleuton* is much the most common sort of eyeskip, especially in poetry where it applies to whole lines.
- *marg* or superscript ^{marg}: in the margin. Used when an editor prints two readings, e.g. ***FJC***^{marg} means that Child prints this reading as an alternative to his main text.
- *vid* or superscript ^{vid}: *videtur*, "it appears." So, e.g., **f**^{vid}, **g**^{vid}. Used for readings where the text of the print cannot be read with absolute certainty due to stains or blurring or damage to the manuscript or simply because the photographs I have are poor and the type was not set very well. This problem occurs most often with **f** due to the poor quality of the photos.
- *[ ]:* In many editions, including Child's and Gummere's, a text enclosed in [square brackets] indicates a place where the text is in doubt. This edition does not use brackets but cites instances of brackets in the other editions.
- ***M***: used in the second apparatus, to indicate the consensus of the four modern editions (***FJC***, ***FBG***, ***DT***, and ***KO***) where they have an orthographic difference from the main text. This notation will generally occur where there is an orthographic difference between **a** and **b** and the modern editions follow **a**. Where the modern editions disagree among themselves on orthographic matter, the individual editions are cited, except for the case of ***F***:
- ***F***: another symbol used in the secondary apparatus, for an agreement between ***FJC*** and its close imitator ***FBG***.

The Editions Cited

Five editions of the "Gest" have been cited in the apparatus, to give you some idea of how previous editors saw the text. These five are:

- ***C1***. The text in Child-ESB, Francis James Child's first edition, from volume V of *English and Scottish Ballads* (1858), pp. 42-123. This is so close to Ritson's edition as to almost be a reprint (e.g. it even retains Ritson's use of grave accents on words such as yemàn even though the marks are not in the original and are often obvious from the meter anyway). The two texts are so close that I didn't bother even to cite Ritson (though I mention a few instances where the two differ). Ritson's edition, unlike all the ones listed here, is based entirely on **b**, not **a**, so ***C1*** is cited *only when it differs from* ***b***, not when it differs from the text I print.
- ***FJC***: Francis James Child's second edition, #117 in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. This edition, unlike Child's first, goes back to the sources. It uses **a** as its copy text where it is extant, **b** where **a** fails. Deviations from these texts are very few. The three major editions since (***FBG DT KO***) all largely follow ***FJC***, with ***FBG*** often doing so slavishly.
  Note that ***FJC*** sometimes reverses the vowel/consonant value of "u" and "v" —

that is, it would spell "move" as "moue" and "hour" as "hovr." The prints do not distinguish u and v, so this is just a quirk in ***FJC*** and is not noted in the apparatus. It is not clear what criteria Child used for this — compare 2.4, where he uses modern u/v ("Was never non fou*n*de") with 6.3-4, which reverse them ("Till that I have so*m* bolde baron, Or som vnkouth gest").
Note also that ***FJC*** (like ***C1***) often uses a mark to indicate syllables, though ***FJC*** uses a dieresis (umlaut) rather than a grave accent — so "bootës" to indicate that this word should be pronounced "boot-tes" rather than "boots." These marks are, without exception, Child's interpretation rather than something found in the prints. And they are perhaps not reliable — Child was one of the first to really study Chaucer's language, opening doors to new readings of late Middle English texts, but we've learned a lot since his time, and many of his ideas seem to have been wrong. In any case, the "Gest" is likely somewhat later than Child thought — closer to 1450 than 1400. The language changed dramatically in the fifteenth century. Some of Child's marks are justified, but many probably are not, and I do not try to force you into an unverifiable pronunciation.

- ***FBG***. Francis B. Gummere, *Old English Ballads,* Ginn & Company, 1894, 1897. Now available on Google Books. A very strange edition, it almost always agrees with ***FJC*** (it is self-evident that it took ***FJC*** as its basis and modified it only minimally), and such few differences as it has are almost always toward the late prints. Even though I've cited it, it clearly has no independent value as an edition. One of its stranger traits is that it preserves some, but not all, of Child's uses of the dieresis.
- ***DT***. R. B. Dobson and J. Taylor, *Rymes of Robyn Hood,* University of Pittsburg Press, 1976. The first edition to be published after the discovery of **p** and **q**, which it cites occasionally. It differs more from Child than does ***FBG***, but is still basically derived from ***FJC***. Even more than Child, it explicitly shows where the primary text is **a** or **b**: text based on **a** is in Roman Type; text from **b** is in *italic.* When it departs from the text of its source, it italicizes the text, implicitly indicating editing. Therefore I have noted in the apparatus where the text is edited by saying (***DT in it.***) or simply showing which parts of the text are italicized. Note that DT is somewhat inconsistent in its handling of u/v; the correct usage must be determined by the reader.
- ***KO***. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales,* TEAMS Middle English Texts, Western Michigan University Press, 2000. Thomas Ohlgren has been the busiest of all scholars of the early Robin Hood legend over the last few decades, and this was his chance to work on the poems themselves. The result is in many ways the most useful of the modern editions: the orthography is modernized, the text is glossed, and there are notes on the text and the contents. Yet the text differs relatively little from Child's, and such differences as there are are often idiosyncratic. And although it prints the text in stanzas, it does not number the stanzas; instead it numbers the lines. Thus it is difficult and time-consuming to compare the ***KO*** text to that of the other editions, because there is no way to find cross-reference ***KO*** and ***FJC*** numbers. Moreover, Ohlgren

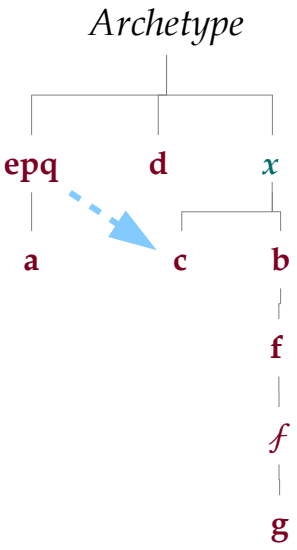
is not very clear about his textual principles. This is a handy edition, but hardly an advance.

The Rules of Criticism Used in this Work

Textual criticism is the attempt to recreate an original based on the corrupt surviving witnesses. Sadly, it is rarely an exact science; there usually isn't enough available data to do it perfectly. Textual critics have to go through the text, word by word and line by line, and evaluate it as best they can to try to determine the original reading. To help them, they have developed "canons of criticism," which are guides to help them determine which readings are more or less likely. These canons are of two sorts: Those pertaining to the witnesses (the study of which is often called "external criticism") and those pertaining to the meaning of the readings themselves (often called "internal criticism"). Both types of evidence are used in this edition.

External Criticism.

The great rule of external evidence is that "manuscripts (or, in this case, printed copies) are to be weighed and not counted." This is why, for instance, a reading supported by **a** deserves as much consideration as one supported by **bfg**; why a reading supported by **ac** deserves more respect than one supported by **bfg**; why one supported by **ad** is better than one supported by **bfg**; why one supported by **ab** deserves vastly more than one supported by **fg**. Think about this in terms of the stemma that we established above. There are two things to think about: to get to the assortment of readings we encounter, which links in the stemma have to be corrupted, and how close are they to the archetype. For instance, to corrupt **bf*f*g** (at a place where **c** does not exist but **a** and **d** do), you need to corrupt only *x* or **b**. That's only *one* corruption.



By contrast, to corrupt **a** and **d** would require two corruptions, one in **d** and one in **epq** or **a**. Thus where **ad** go against **bfg**, the assumption is that **ad** is more likely to represent the archetype than **bfg**: you're looking for the simplest explanation of the textual situation, and *one* corruption is simpler than two independent corruptions. This is also why the combination **fg** has *no weight at all*. If **f** has a reading not in **b**, then that is a corruption lower down the stemma than **b**, and it has no connection to the archetype. One might put this as a series of rules, involving **a**, **b**, **c**, **d** and **epq** (since, however, **a** and **epq** are basically the same text, I'll refer only to **a**). The rules are: **ab**>**c**, **ab**>**d**, **ac**>**b**, **ad**>**b**, **bd**>**a**, **a**=**b**, **a**=**bc**.

This doesn't mean that we will always follow (say) **ad** against **b**. It means that, *if the results of internal criticism do not conflict with this conclusion,* then we'll adopt the reading of **ad**. But internal criticism also has a voice, and this voice is the dominant one when a reading comes down to **a** versus **b** (since we said above that **a**=**b** in terms of weight).

This is really the only rule of external criticism: *know and understand your witnesses* and assess variants based on this knowledge. Child's evaluation was that **a** was so much better than **b** that he followed it everywhere. My assessment is that the balance is much closer to even — which means that we can't just print **a**; we have to choose between **a** and **b** based on internal criticism:

Internal Criticism

External criticism is a powerful tool — the only absolutely repeatable tool, because it's objective — but even in the ideal case where we have three main witnesses and can decide readings on a two-against-one basis, it can only reconstruct the archetype, i.e. the most recent common ancestor of the three And, in the common case where there are only two witnesses — as is often the case in the "Gest" when **a** opposes **b** with no other witnesses to break the tie — external evidence can't even do that; something has to decide between **a** and **b**. In any case, there can be corruptions in the archetype. Or there are certain types of errors which can easily happen in multiple copies. Examples of this *homoioteleuton* errors, where two different copies might lose, say, a line, because consecutive lines end with the same word; and assimilation errors, where some unusual reading is corrected to something more usual (we see a couple of instances in the "Gest" where the oath "by him that died on (the) rood" seems to have been changed to "by him that died on (a) tree," because the latter reading is more commonly used and familiar).

So we need tools to decide between readings with equal attestation, and to detect the relatively small number of cases where there were "primitive errors" between the autograph and the archetype, or where similar errors occur in multiple branches of the stemma. This is the province of internal criticism.

Internal criticism ultimately boils down to one rule: "That reading is best which best explains the others."

Of course, figuring out which reading best explains the others can be more than a little tricky. Critics have come up with all sorts of ideas over the years for how to implement this rule. The ones I've used here include the following:

- *The reading that sounds less like London English is best.* So, for instance, I prefer **b**'s regular use of "ony" over **a**'s "any" because "any" became the standard London spelling. This rule, however, applies mostly to minor variants. This is a specific case of some old rules, "The reading which seems to preserve an ungrammatical form is best" and "The reading which contains unfamiliar words is best."
- *That reading which gives a more metrical line is best.* I used this a lot, but with care, because a scribe might just as easily conform a line to metrical rules as mess it up. An example of its use is 5.1 ("Then bespake [hym] Lytell Johan"), where **a** has "bespake" and **b** has "bespake him." The standard first line of a stanza has seven or eight syllables; **a**'s version has only six. Including "hym" gives a more metrical line.
- *The harder reading is best*. That is, a reading which is easy to understand is less likely to be correct than one which requires a lot of thinking about. A well-known critical rule ("Difficilior lectio potior") that must be tempered by the fact that some readings are simply nonsense. In the case of the "Gest," I have typically used this to decide between verb forms — basically, "prefer the verb tense that is

unexpected." The first example where I applied this criterion is different, though: in 4.3 I chose **a**'s reading "none (ynche)" over **b**'s "no (ynche)" because **a**'s reading sounds a bit odd.

- *The middle reading is best*. Most errors are small and easy to understand. It's easy to understand how "and" might convert to "an" or vice versa. It's not easy to see how "and" would convert to "were." But if you have three readings, "and," "are," and "were," it's easy to see how "are" could exchange with "and," and how "are" could exchange with "were." To get from "are" to "and" is one step; to get from "are" to "were" is one step; to get from "and" to "were" takes two steps. So "are" is the middle reading, and hence original. An example is in 5.2. **a** reads (modernizing the other words) "Master, **and** you would dine betyme." The **bfg** group reads variations on "Master, **if** you would dine betyme." I conjecture that the line should be "Master, **an** you would dine betyme." "An" means "if," so it's easy to see how it could have been converted to "if"; also, "an" looks like "and," so it's easy to see how it could have been converted to "and." Hence "an" is the middle reading, and preferred. (I would add, in light of the next rule, that I very rarely use "middle reading" as a justification for conjectures, but I did it here partly as an example.)
- *The reading that admits of multiple interpretations is best.* In other words, if a reading is ambiguous, scribes will be tempted to correct it. We already saw an example of this in 6.2. **a** reads "noo"; **bfg** read "no"; I have adopted the reading of **a** because it permits multiple interpretations ("no" or "now" or perhaps others) and so would tempt a typsetter to misread it or to clarify it.
- *The reading that is less familiar is best.* I already mentioned an example of this: "by him that died on (the) rood" being changed to "by him that died on (a) tree." Another example is in 28.4, where **ab** say "teares... fell downe by his lere.""Lere" was a rare word even in Middle English; little surprise that **c** converted it to "ere" ="ear," which makes perfect sense and is much more familiar. We also have a lot of examples in the "Gest" of the phrase "by dere worthi God." If a case came up where any of these words were altered, a typesetter might well use this version of the phrase even if it's wrong. That's an error called "assimilation of parallels," but that isn't the only case in which this canon is used: if one variant uses a common word and another uses a rare word, we often see the rare word changed to a common word, because it's easier to remember or perhaps because the typesetter doesn't know what the rare word means.
- A universal rule about conjectures: A conjecture must be *clearly superior* to the best stemmatic reading (that is, the reading that emerges after the stemma is assessed), and the stemmatic reading must show clear signs of corruption. It is not sufficient for the emendation to be as good as the stemmatic reading, and it is not sufficient to be clever, and it is not sufficient to meet one's idea of what the poem should say. An example of an editor violating this rule is stanza 369, line 1. The line reads "And I wyll be your ledes man." This makes perfectly good sense: no one has any trouble understanding it. It is metrically correct if "ledes man" is pronounced as three syllables, "ledës man," and is not too bad metrically even if "ledes man" is

pronounced as two syllables. Yet Knight/Ohlgren emend to "bedesman," "beadman," one who works the rosary beads. This reading *absolutely* violates this important criterion. It is *not clearly superior* to the stemmatic reading, and the stemmatic reading *shows no signs of corruption.* In my text, I don't even show this point of variation as uncertain, because this was a bad conjecture. This conjecture so violates the rules for conjectures that it actually makes me angry.

I have proposed dozens of conjectures to the "Gest." Except in a few places where the text of the Gest was absent, I have adopted almost none. Even when I think my conjecture superior to the stemmatic text (which is true in a lot of cases), I don't go around sticking random readings into the text!

abfg

(no heading)] The First Fytte *DT KO*

1 *Lithe* and lysten, gentylmen, [373] — *attend, listen (imperat. of "lythen")*
That be of *frebore* blode; — *free-born*
I shall you tell of a good *yeman*, [375] — *yeoman*
His name was Robyn Hode.

2 Robyn was a *proude* outlawe, [376] — *proud*
Whyles he walked on grounde
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one [377]
Was never none y-founde.

3 Robyn stode in Bernysdale, [378]
And lened hym to a tree;
And by hym stode Lytell Johan, [380]
A good yeman was he.

4 And also dyde good **Scathelock**, [382] *[169]*
And Much, the myller's sone; [383] *[170]*
There was **none** ynche of his body
But it was worthe a *grome*. — *probably groom, i.e. man, servant, but possibly "un-free man," "non-yeoman"*

- **1.2** of frebore (**b** of fre bore)] of freborne **f** (of fre borne **g**^{vid})
- **2.2** whyles... grounde **bf**] *omit (h.t., omitting outlaw... 2.3 outlawe)* **a** ***[FJC] (DT in it.)***; whilst... on the ground **g**
- **2.3** So... outlawe] *omit (h.t.; cf. 2.2)* **a** ***[FJC] (DT in it.)***
- **2.4** y-founde (**b** y founde) (**f** ***C1 FBG*** yfounde) (**g** yfound)] founde **a** ***FJC DT KO***
- **3.1** Bernysdale **b**] Bernesdale **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Bernisdale **f**, Bernsdale **g**
- **3.2** lened hym to (lenyd **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***) **b**] lened u pon f; leaned upon **g**
- **3.3** stode] *omit* **fg**
- **4.1** good **bfg** ***DT***] gode ***FJC FBG KO*** (gooe **a**) • Scathelock **b** (Scathelocke **f**) (Scathlock **g**) ***C1*** *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **4.2** Much] Muche **f** • myller's (**b** myllers) ***DT***] milſers=milsers **a**, mylners **f**, milners **g**, miller's ***FJC FBG***, millers ***C1 KO***
- **4.3** none **a**] no **bfg** • ynche **b** ***DT C1***] yuch **a** *(ex inv.)*, enche **f**, inch **g**, ynch ***FJC FBG KO***

1.1 lythe and listin a ***M****, lythe and lysten f, lythe and listen g; gentilmen a* ***M****, gentyllmen f, gentlemen g • 1.2 blood g • 1.3 tel af* ***M****; a gode a* ***M****; agood b; yeoman g, yemàn C1 • 1.4 hys f • 2.1 þudeout law=prude outlaw a* ***M****, proud out-law g • 2.3 courteise g; out-law g • 2.4 nevere KO (ex err?); non a* ***M*** *• 3.1 stood g • 3.2 tre a* ***M*** *• 3.3 bi a* ***M****; him fg • 3.4 gode af* ***M****; yeoman g; hee f • 4.1 alsoo a* ***M****; dyd af* ***M****, did g • 4.2 son a* ***M****; sonne fg • 4.3 hys f; bodi a* ***M*** *• 4.4 worth ag* ***M***

abfg

5 Then bespake **hym** Lytell Johan
All unto Robyn Hode:
Mayster, ***an*** **ye** wolde dyne betyme *[170]* *if*
It wolde do you moch good. [385] 20

6 Than **bespake** good Robyn;
'To dyne **have I noo** lust,
Tyll **that** I have some bolde baron,
Or some *unketh gest.* [385] *strange or unexpected visitor*

7 **....** *[170]* 25
'That may paye for the best,
Or some knyght or some squyere *[171]*
That dwelleth here by west.' [386]

8 A good maner than had Robyn;
In londe where that he were, 30
Every daye *or* he wolde dyne *ere, i.e. before*
Thre *messes* wolde he here. [386] *masses*

- **5.1** bespake hym (**b** be spake hym) (**f** bespak e *(sic.))* (him **g**) ***C1***] bespake **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **5.3** an ye ***RBW*** *cj.*] and ye **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, yf ye **b**, if ye **f**, if you **g**
- **6.1** bespake (**b** be spake) **fg**] bespake hym **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • Robyn] Robin hood **g**
- **6.2** have I **a**] I have **bfg** • noo *(i.e. probably* no, *but perhaps* now) **a**] no **bfg** • lust] lest *(sic.)* ***C1***
- **6.3** that **a**] *omit* **bfg**
- **6.4** some (som (**a**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] sone *(sic.)* **f** • unketh **bfg** ***C1 DT*** (cf. 18.3)] unkoutg **a**, unkouth (***FJC*** *cj.)* ***FBG KO***
- **7.1** (line absent from **abfg**)] Here shall come a lord or sire ***KO*** *cj.*, Till that I have som bolde baron (***DT in it.*** *cj.)*, Or els some byshop or abbot ***C1*** *ex Ritson cj.*, We shall await some bold abbot ***RBW*** *cj.*, We shall await King Edwarde's (?) men ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **7.3** knyght] knygot *(sic.)* **b** (**g** knight) • some[2] **bfg** (***FJC*** [som] *(sic.), ex cj.)* (***DT in it.***)] *omit* **a** ***KO*** • squyere **b**] squyer **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, squire **g**
- **8.3** or *(i.e. probably* ere) **abf**] ere **g** • wolde] would **g**, woulde ***C1***
- **8.4** thre **bf** (three **g**)] .iij., i.e. 3 **a**

5.1 than af • 5.2 untoo a ***M*** *• 5.3 Maister ag* ***M****; would fg; dene (sic.) f, dine g; betime g • 5.4 would fg; doo a* ***M****, doe g; moche gode a* ***M****; muche good f, much good g • 6.1 then g; gode a* ***M*** *• 6.2 dine g • 6.3 till ag* ***M****; Ihave f; sōboldebarō, i.e. someboldbaron a; som* ***M****; bould g; barὸn* ***C1*** *• 6.4 som a* ***M*** *• 7.2 pay ag* ***M****, payy f • 7.3 som (1) a* ***M****; knight g • 7.4 heere g; bi a* ***M*** *• 8.1 gode a* ***M****; manner g; then fg • 8.2 laude (i.e. lande, ex inv.) f, land g • 8.3 day ag* ***M****; wold af* ***M****, would g; dine g • 8.4 messis a* ***M****, masses fg; woulde f, would g; heere g*

abfg

9 The one in the worshyp of the Fader,
The other of the Holy Goost,
The thyrde **was** of our dere Lady, [386]
That he loved ***allther*** *moste*. — *most of all, above all others*

10 Robyn loved our dere Lady;
For *doute of dedely synne,* [387] — *risk/fear of deadly sin*
Wolde he never do company harme
That ony woman was ynne. [387]

11 'Mayster,' than sayd Lytell Johan [389]
'And we our borde shall sprede,
Tell us whether **that** we shall **gone**
And what lyfe **we** shall lede.

12 'Where we shall take, where we shall leve,
Where we shall abyde behynde;
Where we shall robbe, where we shall *reve*, — *reave: raid, devastate*
Where we shall bete and bynde?'

- **9.2** the other **bfg**] and another **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • Goost **b**] Gost **a** ***FJC FBG KO***; Ghoste **f**; Ghost **g** ***DT*** *(ex err.?)*
- **9.3** thyrde **bf**] .iij. **a**; third **g**, thirde ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • was **bfg** ***FBG***] *omit* **a** ***FJC DT KO***
- **9.4** allther] all ther **a**, all other **b**, of all other **fg** ***C1*** • *whole line*] Her that he loved the most(e) ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **10.1** loved] he loved **g**
- **10.2** dedely **b**] dydly **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, dedly **f**, deadly **g**
- **10.4** ony **b**] any **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • ynne **b**] in **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **11.2** And] An ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **11.3** whether **b**] wheder (=whe͛per *ex inv.?*) **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO,*** whcih *(sic.)* **f**, what way **g** • that **a**] *omit* **bfg** • shall gone **bfg**] shal go **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **11.4** lyfe we **bf** (**g** life we) ***C1***] life that we **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***

N.B. ***a*** *shifts from continuous text to setting in poetic lines after 12.4.*

9.1 worship ag ***M****; fad͛ = fader a, father fg • 9.3 deere g, derë* ***FJC****; ladye f • 9.4 most g • 10.1 oure a* ***M****; deere g, derë* ***FJC****; ladye f • 10.2 dout a* ***M****, doubte f, doubt g; sinne g 10.3 woulde f, would g; doe g; compani a* ***M*** *• 11.1 maistar a* ***M*** *maister fg; then fg; sayde af* ***M****, said g • 11.2 oure f; boord g; shal a* ***M****; spread g • 11.4 life ag* ***M****; lead g • 12.1 shall... shal f; leave g • 12.2 abide behynde a* ***M****; abide behinde g, abide behynde* ***C1*** *• 12.3 shall...shal (sic.) a* ***M****; rob g; reave g • 12.4 shal a* ***M****, sball (ex. err.) f[rid]; beate f, beat g; binde g*

abfg

13 '*Thereof no fors,*' **than** sayd Robyn; [389] *no matter*
'We shall do well *ynough*; *enough* 50
But loke ye do no *housbonde* harme, *husbandman: farmer or smallholder*
That **tylleth** with his plough.

14 'No more ye shall no good yeman
That walketh by grene wode *shawe*; *copse, thicket*
Ne no knyght ne no squyer 55
That **wolde** be a good felawe. [389]

15 'These bysshoppes and **these** archebysshoppes, [390]
Ye shall them bete and bynde; [391]
The hye sheryfe of Notynghame, [391]
Hym holde **ye** in your mynde.'

16 'This worde shall be holde,' sayd Lytell Johan
'And this lesson **shall we** *lere*; *learn*
It is *ferre dayes;* God sende us a gest, *far into the day, i.e. the day is far along*
That we were at our dynere!'

- **13.1** than **a**] omit **bfg** • Robyn **abf**] Robn **g** (which usually has "Robin")
- **13.2** ynough (y nough **b**) **f** ***C1***] I nowe **a** ***FJC FBG DT*** (inowe ***KO***), enough **g**
- **13.3** ye] you **g** • housbonde **b**] husbonde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, husbandeman **f** husbandman **g**
- **13.4** **tylleth** **bf** ***DT***] tillet **a**, tilleth **g** ***FJC FBG KO*** • his] the **fg**
- **14.1** ye] you **g**
- **14.4** **wolde** **b** (would **fg**)] wol **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **15.1** These[1]] *omit* **g** • these[2]] thyse (=this?) **b**
- **15.3** Notyinghame **b**] Notyingham **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Notyngham **f**, Nottinge am *(sic.)* **g**
- **15.4** ye **a**] *omit* **bfg** ***C1*** • mynde **bf**] mynge **a** *(ex inv.?);* minde **g**
- **16.1** shall be holde] shalbe holde **a** ***FJC DT*** (***FBG KO*** shall be holde), shall beholde **b**, shal beholde **f**, shall hold **g** • Johan ***RBW*** *cj.* (Johnn **a**, John **fg**)] Jhoan *(sic.)* **b**
- **16.2** shall we **bfg**] we shall **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **16.3** ferre **b**] fer **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, farre **fg** • gest **abf**] guest **g**
- **16.4** were] weer *(sic.)* **f** • our **bfg** ***FBG***] oure (=our? hour?) **a** ***FJC DT KO***

13.1 Ther of b, thereo f (sic.) g; noforce a, no force fg ***M****; sayde af* ***M****, said g • 13.2 doe g • 13.3 look g; doe g • 13.4 ploughe a* ***M*** *• 14.1 nomore ag; gode a* ***M****; yeoman g, yemàn* ***C1*** *• 14.2 grene wodeshawe a, green wood shawe f, greene wod shaw g, grenë-wode* ***FJC****, grene-wode* ***FBG KO*** *• 14.3 knight g; squire g, squyèr* ***C1*** *• 14.4 gode a* ***M****; felowe f, fellow g • 15.1 bisshopꝑ=bisshopes a, bishops g, bishoppes* ***M****; archebisshopꝑ=archebisshopes a, archbishops g, archebishoppes* ***M*** *• 15.2 shal f; beate fg; binde g • 15.3 high g, hyë* ***FJC****; sherif a* ***M****, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 15.4 him g; hold g • 16.1 thys f; word g; hold g; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 16.3 daies g; send g; guest g • 16. 4 dinnere g*

abfg

17 ‘Take thy good bowe in thy hande,’ sayd Robyn;
‘*Lete* Moche *wende* with the; *let; go, travel* 65
And so shall Wyllyam **Scathelocke** ***[171]***
And no man abyde with me. [396]

18 ‘And walke up to the **Sayles**,
And so to Watlynge Strete [397] 70
And wayte after some ***unketh*** *gest*, *strange or unexpected visitor*
Up chaunce ye **may them** mete. *Upon chance, i.e. by chance*

19 ‘Be he *erle*, or *ony* baron, [398] *earl; any*
Abbot, or *ony* knyght, *any*
Brynge hym to lodge to me; 75
His dyner shall be *dyght*.’ *ready*

20 They wente up to the **Sayles**, [399]
These **yemen** all thre;
They loked est, they loked west;
They myght no man see. 80

- **17.1** Robyn] Rob **a**^{vid} (Rob[yn] ***FJC***; *page cut off)* • Sayd Robyn] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **17.2** Moche **b**] Much (Latemuch *for* Lete Much **a**) **g** ***FJC FBG DT KO,*** Muche **f** • wende] goe **g** • **17.3** Wyllyam **bf** ***C1***] Willyam **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO,*** William **g** • Scathelocke **bf** (Scathlock **g**) *(cf.* **d** *ad* 293)] Scarlo[.] *(*=Scarlok?) **a**^{vid} *(photo reads* Scarlo *but the page is cut off),* Scarlok ***FJC FBG KO***, Scarloke ***DT***
- **18.1** And... Sayles **b** (Saylis **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] Now walke ye up unto the Sayle **f** (**g** …the shore !)
- **18.2** Watlynge **b**] Watlinge **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Watlyng **f**, Watling **g** • Strete] Stret **a**^{vid} *(page cut off)* (Stret[e] ***FJC***) ***FBG*** (strete ***DT***) ***KO***, street (Watling-street **g**)
- **18.3** unketh **bf** (***DT in it.)***] unknuth **a**, uncouth **g**, unkuth *(ex cj.)* ***FJC FBG KO***, unkent ***RBW*** *cj.* (cf. 6.4)
- **18.4** Up] By **fg** • chaunce] chance **g** • ye may them **a**] ye mowe them **b** ***C1***, some may ye **fg**, ye may him (*or* hem) ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **19.1** erle] eearle *(sic.)* **f**, earle **g** • ony **b**] ani **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***; any **fg**
- **19.2** ony **b**] ani **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***; any **fg** • **19.3** brynge **b** (bryng **f**, bring **g**)] bringhe (=bring? bring he? bring ye?) **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • hym] hym then **f** (him then **g**)
- **20.1** up to **a**] unto **b**, anone unto **f** (**g** anon unto) • the Sayles **bg**] the Saylis (thesaylis **a**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***] the Sailes **f**
- **20.2** yemen **bf** (yeoman **g**)] yeman **a** ***FJC FBG DO KO*** • **20.3** loked (2) (looked **g**)] loke **a** (loke[d] ***FJC***)

17.1 gode a ***M****; honde a* ***M****, hand g; sayde a* ***M****, said fg* ***C1*** • *17.2 late a* ***M****, let fg; wyth f; thee g* • *17.3 shal a* ***M*** • *17.4 noman a; abide g; wyth f* • *18.3 wait g; guest g* • *18.4 meet g* • *19.1 barὸn* ***C1*** • *19.2 knighti (sic.) g* • *19.4 hys f* ***C1****; dinner g; shallbe f; dight ag* ***M*** • *20.1 went f* • *20.2 three fg* ***FBG*** • *20.3 looked (1) g; east fg; looked (2) g; weest a* ***M*** • *20.4 might g*

abfg

21 But as they loked **in** Barnysdale,
By a *derne* strete, [399] *hidden, secret (OE derne)*
Then came a knyght rydynge; [400]
Full sone they gan hym mete.

22 All drery **was** his semblaunte,
And lytell was his pryde;
His one fote in the sterope stode,
That other **wavyd** besyde.

23 His hode **hangynge** in his *eyen* two; *eyes*
He rode in symple aray;
A soryer man than he was one
Rode never in somer's day.

24 Lytell Johan was **full** curteyse, [400]
And set hym on his kne:
'Welcome be ye, gentyll knyght,
Welcome are you to me.

- **21.1** in **bfg** *C1*] in to **a** *FJC FBG DT KO* • Barnysdale **b**] Bernysdale **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, Bernisdale **f**, Bernesdale **g**
- **21.2** a derne **ab** (dernë *FJC FBG*)] a deme *(sic.)* **g** (**f**^{vid} aderne *or perhaps* ademe)
- **21.3** Then **bfg** *DT*] Than **a** *FJC FBG KO* • came **a**] came there **bfg** • rydinge **b** (rydyng **f**, riding **g**)] rydinghe **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*
- **22.1** drery **b**] dreri **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, drousli *(sic.)* **f**, drouſlye=drouslye **g** (*FJC reads this as* drouflye) • was **ag**] then was all **b**, then was **f** *C1* • semblaunte **b**] semblaunce **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, semblaunt **f**, semblant **g**
- **22.3** in] on **g**
- **22.4** that other **bf** (That othere **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*)] the other **g** • wavyd **a**] waved **bfg**
- **23.1** hangynge **b** *C1*] hanged **ag** (**f** hāged=hanged) *FJC FBG DT KO* • in **a**] over **bfg** • eyen **b**] iyn **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, eyes **fg**
- **23.4** in] on **fg** • somer's day (somers day **b**, sommers day **f**, summers day **g**)] somer day **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, somers-day *C1*
- **24.1** full **a**] *omit* **bfg** *C1* • curteyse **bf** *C1*] curteyes **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, courteous **g**
- **24.4** welcome are you **bg** (welcomeare you **f**)] welcom ar ye **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*

21.1 looked g • 21.2 bi a ***M****; strate f, street g • 21.3 kny ght a, knight g • 21.4 soone fg, him meet g • 22.2 lytle f, little g; hys f; pride g • 22.3 hys f; foote f, foot g; styropstode a; styrrope stode f, stirrop stood g, styrop stode* ***M*** *• 22.4 waved g; beside ag* ***M*** *• 23.1 hys f; hood g • 23.2 simple g; a ray b, array g • 23.3 soriar a* ***M****, sorrier g; then g • 24.1 lettel f • 24.2 sette a* ***M****; him g; knee fg • 24.3 welcom a* ***M****; gentyl f, gentle g; knight g*

ab(c)fg

25 ‘Welcome be thou to grene wode,
Hende knyght and fre; *probably gracious, courteous, noble; possibly close, nearby*
My mayster hath abyden you fastynge, Syr [400]
All these *oures* thre.’ *hours* 100

26 ‘Who is **your** mayster?’ sayd the knyght;
Johan sayd, ‘Robyn Hode.’
‘He is a good yeman,’ sayd the knyght,
‘Of hym I have herde moch good.’

27 ‘I *graunte*,’ he sayd, ‘with you to *wende*, [400] *grant, consent (see note); go* 105
My bretherne, **all *in fere***; *[171] a company, so “in fere” idiomatically=”all together”*
My purpose was to have dyned to day
At Blythe or Dancastere.’ [400]

28 Forthe than went this gentyll knyght,
With a *carefull chere*; *care-filled/worried expression* 110
The *teres* out of his *eyen* ran, *tears; eyen=eyes*
And fell downe by his *lere*. *probably “face”; sometimes refers to “flesh”*

- **25.3** you] *omit* **fg**
- **25.3/4** Syr *on line 3* ***RBW*** *cj.*] at start of line 4 **abfg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **26.1** your **bfg**] thy **a** ***FJC FBJ DT KO*** • **26.2** Robyn] Rabyn *(sic.)* **b**
- **26.3** a] omit **a** ***KO*** (***FJC*** [a]; ***DT*** *a*) • yeman **b**] yoman **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, yeoman **fg**
- **26.4** I have] have I **fg** • herde] harde **f**, heard **g** • moch **b**] moche **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, myche **c**; muche **f**, much **g**
- **27.1** graunte **abc**] graunt the **f**, grant **g** • wende **abc**] wynde **f**, wend **g**
- **27.2** bretherne **ac**] brethern **b**, brethren **f** ***C1***; bretheren **g** • all in fere **ac** (all in-fere ***C1***)] all thre **b** (all three **fg**)
- **27.3** dyned **acf**] deyned **b** ***C1***, dined **g**
- **27.4** blythe **bf**, bly the *(with a space)* **c**] blith **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, blithe **g** • dancastere **ac**] dankastere **b** ***C1***, dancastre **fg**
- **28.1** Forthe **bc**] Furth **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Forth **fg** • this **ac** ***C1***] that **bfg**
- **28.3** eyen **bc**] iyen **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, eyes **fg**
- **28.4** by] be **f**; fro(m) ***RBW*** *cj.* • lere **ab** (leere **fg**)] ere (i.e. ear) **c**

N.B. c begins with 26.4.

25.1 welcom a ***M****; gr ene wode a, greene wood f; greene-wood g, grenë wode* ***F*** *• 25.2 hend g, hendë* ***F****; knight fg; free fg • 25.3 my maister ag* ***M****, mymaister f; abiden ag* ***M****, a byden b; fastinge a* ***M****, fastyng f, fasting g • 25.3/4 sir g • 25.4 al a* ***M****; houres f, howers g, hourës* ***FJC****; three fg • 26.1 maister ag* ***M****, master f; sayde a* ***C1*** ***M****, said g; knight g • 26.2 sayde af* ***M****, said g • 26.3 gode a* ***M****; sayde a* ***M****, said g; knight g • 26.4 him g; gode a* ***M*** *• 27.1 sayde a* ***M****, said g • 27.3 purpos a* ***M****; to day a • 28.1 then fg; gentyl a* ***M****, gentle g; knight ag* ***M*** *• 28.2 carefullchere a; care full b; cheere g • 28.3 teris a* ***M****, teares fg; oute a* ***M****; rane f, rann g*

abcfg

29 They brought hym **to** the lodge dore; [401]
Whan Robyn **hym gan** se,
Full curteysly dyd of his hode [401]
And set hym on his kne.

30 'Welcome, syr knyght,' then sayd Robyn
'Welcome **arte thou** to me;
I have **abyde you** fastynge, syr,
All these houres thre.'

31 Then answered the gentyll knyght,
With wordes fayre and fre,
'God the save, good Robyn,
And all thy fayre *meyne*.' *company, band, gang*

32 They wasshed togyder and wyped bothe, [401]
And set **tyll** theyr dynere;
Brede and wyne they had **ryght** ynough,
And *noumbles* of the dere. [402] *organ meat*

- **29.1** hym] him **g** ***FBG*** • to **ac**] unto **bfg** • lodge dore (lodgedore **c**, lodge doore **g**)] lodgë-dore ***FJC FBG***
- **29.2** hym gan **ac**] gan hym **bf** (gan him **g**) ***FBG*** • se **bc**] see **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **29.3** dyd **ac**] dyde **b**, ded **f**, he did **g**
- **29.4** on] downe on **fg**
- **30.1** then **bcg**] than **af** ***FJG FBG DT KO*** • sayd **bf**] sayde **a**, seyd **c**, said **g** ***C1***
- **30.2** arte thou **c**] art thou **a** ***FJG FBG DT KO***, thou arte **b** ***C1***, thou art **fg**
- **30.3** abyde you **b** (a byde you **c**)] abyden you **a** ***FJG FBG DT KO***, abydden (*omitting* you) **f**[vid], abyden (*omitting* you) **g**
- **30.4** houres **bfg**] ouris **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, oures **c**
- **31.1** Then **bcg**] Than **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • gentyll] g ntyll *(sic.)* **c**; gentle **g**
- **31.3** God] Ggd *(sic.)* **f** • Robyn] Rodyn *(sic.)* **f**
- **31.4** meyne] menye *(sic.)* **fg;** meynè ***C1***, meynë ***FJC FBG***, menyé ***KO***
- **32.1** wasshed] wesshe **c**; washed **g** ***C1*** • togyder **b** (to gyder **c**)] togeder **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, to gether **f** (together **g**) • wyped] wypped **c**; wiped **g**
- **32.2** set **bfg**] sette **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, sat **c** • tyll **bc**] to **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • theyr] there **c**; their **g** • dynere] dyner **c**, dinnere **g**
- **32.3** ryght **c** (right **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] *omit* **bfg** • ynough **bf**] ynought (*sic.*) **a**, Inough **c**, enough **g**, ynoughe ***FJC FBG DT KO*** *(ex cj.)*
- **32.4** noumbles **ac**] nombles **bf**, numbles **g**

29.1 broughthym a • 29.2 when g • 29.3 curtesly a ***M****; courteysle f, courteously g; off g; hoode f, hood g • 29.4 sette a* ***M****; him g; knee afg* ***M*** *• 30.1 sir knight ag* ***M****; than af* ***M****; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 30.3 fastinge a* ***M*** *fastying f, fasting g; sir ag* ***M*** *• 30.4 three fg • 31.1 knight ag* ***M*** *• 31.2 wordës* ***FJC****, words g; faire g; free fg • 31.3 thee g; goode a* ***M*** *• 31.4 al f; faire g • 32.1 both g • 32.3 bread fg; wine g • 32.4 deere g*

abcfg

33 Swannes and *fesauntes* they had full good, *pheasants*
And foules of the revere;
There fayled **non** so lytell a byrde
That ever was bred on brere.

34 'Do gladly, syr knyght,' sayd Robyn;
'*Gramercy*, syr,' sayd he; *Thanks*
'Suche a dynere had I **nat**
Of all these wekes thre. [402]

35 'If I come ageyne, Robyn,
Here by this countre,
As good a dyner I shall the make
As **that** thou **haest** made to me.'

36 '*Gramercy*, knyght,' sayd Robyn; *Thanks*
'My dyner whan **that I have**,
I was never so gredy, by dere worthy God,
My dyner for to crave.

- **33.1** fesauntes **bc** (***DT in it.***)] felsauntes **a**, fesaunt es **f**, fesants **g**, fessauntes ***FJC FBG KO*** *(ex cj.)*
- **33.3** fayled] fayleth **f** (faileth **g**) • non **c**] none **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, never **bfg**
- **33.4** bred **abc**] spred **f** (spread **g**) • brere **bcf**] bryre **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, bryer **g**
- **34.2** Gramercy **bfg**] Gramarcy **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Garmercy *(sic.)* **c**
- **34.3** Suche (Such **g** ***KO***)] Syche **c** • nat **a**] not **bfg** (**c** Inot *for* I not)
- **34.4** these wekes **bf**] these wekys **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, this wekes **c**, these weekes **g**
- **35.1** ageyne **ac**] agayne **bf**, againe **g**
- **35.2** by] be **f** • countre **bcf**] contre **a** ***DT*** (contré ***KO***), countrie **g**, countrè ***C1***, contrë ***FJC FBG***
- **35.4** that **a**] *omit* **bcfg** • haest **a**] hast **bfg**; haste **c**
- **36.1** Gramercy **bc**] Gramarcy **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, I thank the **f** (**g** I thanke thee) • sayd **bc** (sayde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] then said **fg**
- **36.2** that **ac**] *omit* **bfg** ***FBG*** • I have **bcfg** ***FBG***] I it have **a** ***FJC DT KO***
- **36.3** I was... worthy God **ab** (**c** der *for* dere; ***FBG*** worthi *for* worthy)] By god I was never so gredy **f** (greedy **g**)

33.1 swans g; hadfull ag; gode a ***M*** *• 33.2 ryvere af* ***M****, river g • 33.3 ther c; litell a* ***M****, lytle f, little g; abirde a, abyrde f, a bird g, a birde* ***M*** *• 34.1 doe g; sir knight ag* ***M****, syr knyngt (sic.) f; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 34.2 sir sayde a* ***M****, syrsayd b, sir said g • 34.3 dinere had a* ***M****, dynerehad b, dyner had f, dinner had g • 34.4 three fg • 35.1 yf cf • 35.2 heere g; thys a* ***M*** *• 35.3 gode a* ***M****; dynerI c, dinner I g; thee g • 36.1 knight g • 36.2 dener c, dinner g; when fg • 36.3 bi a* ***M*** *• 36.4 dinner g*

37 ‘But pay *or ye wende*,’ sayd Robyn; [403] *ere you go*
‘Me thynketh it is *good ryght*; *correct privilege, i.e. the proper thing*
It was never the maner, by dere worthy God,
A **yoman** to pay for a knyght.’

38 ‘I have nought in my cofers,’ sayd the knyght,
‘That I may profer for shame.’
‘Lytell Johan, go loke,’ sayd **Robyn**, [403]
‘Ne *let* not for no blame. *be hindered, delay*

39 ‘Tell me *trouth*,’ **than** sayd Robyn, *truth, fidelity, on your honour*
So God *have parte of the*.’ *take your part, i.e. protect you*
I have no more but **ten shelynges**,’ sayd the knyght, *[171]*
So God *have parte of me*.’ *take my part, i.e. protect me*

40 ‘Yf thou **have** no more,’ sayd Robyn,
I wyll not one peny;
And yf thou **have** nede of *ony* more, *any*
More shall I **lend** the.’

- **37.1** or ye] ere you **g** • wende] wened *(sic.)* **a**; wend **g**
- **37.2** thynketh **abf**] thynke **c**, thinke **g** • it] *omit* **g**
- **37.3** dere **ab**] der **c**; *omit* **fg**
- **37.4** yoman **ac**] yeman **bf**, yeoman **g** • to **acfg** ***C1***] omit **b** • knyght **bcf**] knyhht **a** ***FJC DT KO FBG***; knight **g**
- **38.3** Lytell **b** ***DT***] Ly tell **c**, Lyttel **f,** Lyttel ***FJC*** *cj.* ***FBG KO***, Little **g,** Late **a** *(i.e.* let John go look) • Robyn **ac** ***C1***] Robyn Hode **b** (Hoode **f**, Hood **g**)
- **39.1** trouth than] truth than (truththan **a**) ***FJC DT KO FBG***, trouth (*omitting* than/then) **b**, treuthe then **c**, truthe **f**, truth **g**
- **39.2** have] of **a** • the (thee **fg**)] me **a**
- **39.3** no more] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*, omit *no* **f** • but ten shelynges sayd] but .xx.shelinges sayde, *i.e.* 20 shelinges said **a**, but.x.s.sayd, *i.e.* but ten shillings said **bc**, but.x.s.sayde **f**; but x. s. said **g**; *cf. 41.1*
- **39.4** God **bcfg**] gode **a** • parte] part **g** ***KO***
- **40.1** have **bcfg** ***FBG***] hast **a** ***FJC DT KO***
- **40.2** wyll **bcf**] woll **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, will **g** • not] nat **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • peny] penλ *(i.e.* peny *with y inverted)* **c**
- **40.3** have **afbg**] had **c** • ony] any **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **40.4** more shall I **ab** (**c** Moreshall I)] more I shall **fg** • lend **ag** (**f** lende)] len **bc**

37.1 sayde af ***M***, *said g • 37.2 gode a* ***M***; *ryghte f*[vid], *right g • 37.3 manner g; worthi a* ***M*** *• 37.4 yeman f, yeoman g; paye f • 38.1 mi c; coffers ag* ***M***; *saide a* ***M***, *said g; knyghte f, knight g • 38.2 proferfor a, proffer for g • 38.3 goe looke g; sayde a* ***M***, *seyd c, said g • 38.4 lat FBG; nat a* ***M*** *• 39.1 tel af* ***M***; *saide a* ***M***, *said g • 39.2 part g; thee fg • 39.3 Ihave c*[vid]; *knight g • 39.4 mee f • 40.1 If afg* ***M***; *nomore c; sayde a* ***M***, *said g • 40.2 will g • 40.3 if g; need g • 40.4 thee g*

41 ‘Go now forth, Lyttell Johan,
The trouthe tell thou me; [403]
Yf there be no more but **ten** shelynges, *[171]*
Not one peny that I se.’

42 Lytell Johan spred downe his mantell [403]
Full fayre upon the grounde,
And there he founde in the knyghtes cofer
But even halfe a pounde.

43 Lytell Johan lete it lye full styll, [405]
And went to his mayster **full** lowe;
‘What **tydynge**, Johan?’ sayd Robyn;
‘Syr, the knyght is trewe *inough*.’ [405] *enough*

44 ‘Fyll of the best wyne,’ sayd Robyn,
‘The knyght shall begynne;
Moch wonder thynketh me
Thy clothynge is so thynne.

- **41.1** now **bcg** ***DT*** **]** nowne *(sic.)* **a**, nowe **f** ***FJC FBG KO*** • forth **bf**] furth **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, forthe **c,** foorth **g**
- **41.2** trouthe **b**] truth **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, truthe **cf**
- **41.3** no more] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.* • but ten shelynges] but .xx. selinges, *i.e.* 20 shillings **a** (cf. 39.3), but .x.s. (as in 39.3) **b**, qnt.x.s *(sic.; ex inversion)* **c**, but ten shyllynges **f**, but ten shillings **g** ***C1***, but ten shelinges ***FJC FBG (DT*** ten shelings ***in it.) KO***
- **41.4** Not one **bc**] No **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, not any **fg** • that] shall ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **42.1** spred **bfg**] sprede **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***; spored *(sic.)* **c** • his **bfg**] hys **a**, is *(sic.)* **c**
- **42.3** he founde **bcf**] he fonde (hefonde **a**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***; he found **g**
- **42.4** a] *omit* **a** ***KO*** ([a] ***FJC; DT in it.***) • **43.2** full] *omit* **a** ***KO*** ([full] ***FJC, DT in it.***)
- **43.3** tydynge **bc**] tidynges **a** (***FJC*** tydingës) ***FBG DT KO***; t ydynges *(sic.)* **f**, tidings **g** • Robyn] Robyn Hode ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **43.4** Syr] Maister ***RBW*** *cj.* • trewe **bc**] true **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • inough ***C1*** (I nough **b**)] inowe **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO,*** Inowe **c**, *omit* **fg**
- **44.3** Moch **b** ***C1***] Moche **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Myche **c**, Much **fg** • thynketh **bf**] thinketh **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO,*** thyket *(sic.)* **c**
- **44.4** clothynge **bc** (clothyn **f**, clothing **g**)] clotynge **a** (clot[h]ynge ***FJC***, clot*h*ynge ***DT***) ***FBG KO*** • thynne **bcf**] thine **a**, thin **g** ***KO***, thinne (thin[n]e ***FJC***, thin*n*e ***DT***) ***FBG***

41.1 goe g • 41.3 if afg ***M*** *• 41.4 penny f; see g • 42.1 lyttell a, little g; hys a* ***M****; mantle g, mantèll* ***C1*** *• 42.2 faire g; up on b; th e (sic.) c; ground g • 42.2 knights g, knightës* ***FJC*** *• 42.4 pound g • 43.1 littell a, little g; let afg* ***M****; stell f, still g • 43.2 hys maysteer a* ***M****, his master f, his maister g • 43.3 sayde a* ***M****, said g • 43.4 sir ag* ***M****; knight g • 44.1 fill g; wine ag* ***M****; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 44.2 knight g; beginne g*

abcfg

45 ‘Tell me one worde,’ sayd Robyn,
‘And counsell shall it be;
I *trowe* thou **werte** made a knyght *of forse* [405] *know, realize; by force, i.e. by distraint*
Or elles of yemanry.

46 ‘Or elles thou hast ben a sory husband,
And leved in stroke and stryfe; *(with) strokes, i.e. by the sword*
And *okerer*, or elles a *lechoure*,’ sayd Robyn, *usurer, taker of illegal loans; lecher*
‘With wronge hast **led thy** lyfe.’

47 ‘I am none of **those**,’ sayd the knyght,
‘By God that made me;
An hundred wynter here before [406]
My ancestres knyghtes have be.

48 ‘But ofte it hath befal, Robyn,
A man hath be dysgrate; [408]
But God that syteth in heven above
May amende his state.

- **45.1** one] *omit* **a** ([one] ***FJC***; ***DT in it.***) • **45.3** werte ***RBW*** *cj.*] warte **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, were **bcf**, wert **g** • a] *omit* **fg** • forse **bc**] force **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **45.4** elles **bc**] ellys **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** (cf. 46.1, 46.3), els **f**, else **g**
- **46.1** elles **bc**] ellys **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, yls els *(sic.)* **f**, else **g**; • hast **abg**] haste **cf** • ben **b**] bene **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, be **cg**, by *(sic.)* **f** • husband **cg**] husbande **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, housband **b**
- **46.2** leved **bc**] lyved **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, lived **g** • stroke (***DT in it.***)] strocte *(sic.)* **a**
- **46.3** And **abc**] An **fg** ***FJC FBG (DT in it.) KO*** • elles] ellis **a** ***FJC FBJ DT KO***, els **f**, else **g** • sayd Robin] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **46.4** wronge] wros *(sic.)* **f**; whores **g** • led thy **ac**] thou lede thy **b** (**f** ledde) (**g** led)
- **47.1** none] nene **c** • those **a**] them **bf**, tho **c**, these **g**
- **47.2** made] mage *(sic.)* **g**, hath made ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **47.3** An hundred] and hundred **a**, an.C. (i.e. an 100) **b**, An.c. **c**, an hundreth **fg** • wynter] winters **g** • here] heare **g** • **47.4** my **bc**] myn **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** (**f** ***C1*** myne; **g** mine) • ancestres *cj.*] auncetres **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, aunsetters **b**, aunsetteres **c**, aunsetiers **f**, ancestors **g** • be] bene **a**
- **48.1** ofte **bc** (oft **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] of **g**
- **48.2** hath] hat **f** • dysgrate **bc**] disgrate **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, disgrast **g**
- **48.3** that syteth **b**] thatsitteth **a**, that syt **c**, that sytteth **f**, that sitteth **g**, that sitteth ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • **48.4** state] estate **g**

45.1 word g; sayde af ***M****, said g • 45.2 counsel a* ***M****, consayil f, counsaile g; shal ac* ***M*** *• 45.3 trow g; knight g • 45.4 yemanre f, yeomanry g • 46.1 sori a* ***M****, sorry g • 46.2 strife g* ***FBG*** *• 46.3 alechoure sayde a* ***M****, a lechouresayd c, a lechour sayde f, a letcher said g • 46.4 wyth a* ***M****; life g • 47.1 sayde a* ***M****, said g; knygt c, knght (sic.) f, knight g • 47.2 madë* ***F*** *• 47.3 be fore b, bef o re c; knightes f, knights g • 48.1 befall cfg • 48.3 heven a bove a, heve na bove c, heaven above fg • 48.4 a mend b, amend g*

abcfg

49 ‘Within this two yere, Robyn,’ he sayd,
My neyghbores well it **knowe**, *[171]*
Foure hondreth pounde of good money [408]
Full well than myght I **spende**. *[171]*

50 ‘Now have I no good,’ sayd the knyght,
••‘God hath **shapen** such an ende,
••But my chyldren and my wyfe, *[171]*
Tyll God **it may amende**.’

51 ‘In what maner,’ **sayd** Robyn,
‘Hast thou ***lorne*** thy ryches?’ *been deprived of, made forlorn, i.e. lost*
‘For my grete foly,’ he sayd,
‘And for my kyndenesse.

52 ‘I had a sone, forsoth, Robyn, [410]
That sholde have ben myn *eyre*, *heir*
When he was twenty wynter olde,
In felde wolde ***iuste*** full feyre. *perhaps “joust,” but the meaning is disputed*

- **49.1** within **bcfg**] withyn **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • this two **ac**] two or thre **b** (twoo or three **f**) (2. or 3. **g**) • yere] yerers **f**, yeares **g** • he sayd **bc** (he sayde **af**)] said he **g**
- **49.2** *(omit line* **fg**) • it] *omit* **c** • knowe] wende ***KO*** *cj.*, kende ***C1*** *cj.* (cf. 49.4)
- **49.3** hondreth **b**] hundred **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hondred **c**, hundreth **fg**
- **49.4** spende (spend **g**)] go/goe *or* sow ***RBW*** *cj. (to rhyme wit*h knowe *in 49.2)*
- **50.2-3** lines 2-3 ***FJC*** *cj.* ***FBG*** *(**DT** in it)* ***KO***] in the order 3, 2 **abcfg** • hath] had **a** • shapen **(b)(c)g** ***FBG*** (shopen **f**)] shaped **a** ***FJC DT KO*** • **50.3** and] an **g**
- **50.4** it may amende **c** (yt may amende **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO;*** it may a mende **b**)] it amende **f** (amend **g**); may amende my lyfe ***C1*** *ex cj.*, amende this lyfe (to rhyme with “wyfe” in 50.2 if lines 2 and 3 not reversed) ***RBW*** *cj.* • *(whole line)*] Tyll god may amend my life ***C1***
- **51.1** maner] manner **g** ***DT*** *(ex err.?)* • hast] haste **c** • sayd **bc** (saede **f**, said **g**)] than sayde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **51.2** lorne **a**] lore **bc**, lost **f**^{vid}**g** • ryches **bcf**] rychesse **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, riches **g**
- **51.4** kyndenesse **bc** (kynd[ë]nesse ***FJC***) ***FBG KO***] kyndnesse **a** ***DT***, kyndenes **f**; kindnes **g**, kindeness ***C1*** • **52.1** had **abcfg**] hade *(sic.)* ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **52.2** have] hau *(i.e. probably* hav) **a** (hau[e] ***FJC***, have ***DT***) • eyre **bc**] ayre **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, heyre **f**, heire **g** • **52.3** wynter] wenters **f**, winters **g**
- **52.4** Iuste **bc** (Juste ***C1***)] iust, *i.e. probably* just **afg** ***FJC FBG DT*** (just ***KO)***

*49.1 Robyne a **M**; sayde af **M** • 49.2 neghbours a **M** • 49.3 pound fg; gode a **M**; meney (sic.) c • 49.4 Ful well a **M**, full wel b, Fbll well (sic.) c; then fg; might g • 50.1 nowe a **M**; gode a **M**; saide a **M**, said g; knight fg • 50.2 hathshapen c; shapensuch b; suche cf; end g • 50.3 children g; wife g • 50.4 till g • 51.1 said g • 51.2 richès **C1** • 51.3 greate a **M**, great fg; folly fg; sayde af **M**, said g • 52.1 sonne fg; for soth b, forsothe cf, forsooth g; Robye (sic) f^{mid} • 52.2 shulde a **M**, should fg; bene myne c, bene my f, beene mine g, ben my **C1** • 52.3 Whanne a **M**; twentye f; old fg • 52.4 fyelde f, field g; would g; fayre af **M**, faire g*

ab(c)fg

53 ‘He slewe a knyght of **Lancastshyre**, [412] *[171]*
And a squyre bolde; [411]
For to save hym in his ryght [413]
My goodes both sette and solde. *[172]*

54 ‘My londes **both** *sette to wedde*, Robyn, *[172]* *pledged as collateral*
Untyll a certayne daye,
To a ryche abbot here besyde
Of Saynt Mary Abbay.’ [413]

55 ‘What is the somme?’ sayd Robyn;
‘Trouthe than tell thou me;’
‘Syr,’ he sayd, ‘foure hondred pounde; [414]
The abbot *tolde* it to me.’ *(here perhaps understand as “paid to”)*

56 ‘Nowe and thou *lese* thy londe,’ sayd Robyn, *lose*
‘What **shall** *fall* of the?’ *befall, come of*
‘Hastely I wyll me *buske*,’ sayd the knyght, *hurry, travel*
‘Over the salte see. [416]

- **53.1** Lancastshyre **bf**] Lancaster **a** ***FJC DT KO***, Lancasesshyre **c**, Lancashire **g** ***FBG***
- **53.4** both **abfg**] beth **c** *(ex 54.1?)* ***FBG KO*** *(ex err?)* • sette **abc** (set **fg**)] seurte (“surety”) ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **54.1** londes] landes **fg** • both sette **a**] beth sette **b** ***FBG KO***, bothe sette **c**, beset **f**; be set **g**
- **54.2** Untyll (untill **g**) (***DT in it.***)] Uutyll **a** *(ex inv.)*
- **55.3** hondred **bc**] hundred **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hundreth **fg**
- **55.4** to] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **56.1** nowe **a** ([..]we **c**)] now **bfg** • and] an ***RBW*** *cj.* • lese **abc**] lose **f**[vid], loose **g**
- **56.2** shall **bcfg** ***FBG***] woll **a** ***FJC DT KO***
- **56.3** wyll **bcf** (will **g**)] wol **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • sayd the knyght **abcf** (said... **g**) (sayde... ***KO*** *ex cj.?*)] [sayd the knyght] *(in square brackets)* ***FBG***
- **56.4** salte see **abcf** (saltë ***FJC FBG***)] salte sea **f**, salt sea **g**

N.B. c has all these lines, but the first 1-3 letters of many lines, especially of stanza 54, are lost

53.1 knight g • 53.2 asquyer af, a squire g, a squyer ***M****; bold cg • 53.3 him fg; right g • 53.4 godes a* ***M****, gooddes cf, goods g; sold g • 54.1 weddRobyn f, wed Robin g • 54.2 certayn a* ***M****, sartayn f, certaine g; day acfg* ***M*** *• 53.4 rich g; heere beside g • 54.4 seynt a* ***M****, saint g; mari a* ***M****; abbey a* ***M****; ab bay c • 55.1 som sayde a* ***M****; sommesayd b, some sayd f, summe said g • 55.2 trouth a* ***M****, [..]outhe c, truth fg; then fg • 55.3 sir ag* ***M****; sayde ac* ***M****, said g; pound fg • 55.4 told g* ***M****; mee f • 56.1 lond a, land f*[vid]*g; sayde af*[vid] ***M****, said g; knight g • 56.2 thee fg • 56.3 hastly f, hastily g; knight g • 56.4 sea fg*

ab(c)fg

57 ‘And se **where** Cryste *was quycke* and dede, *was alive, lived*
On the mounte of Calvere; [416]
Farewell, frende, and have good daye; [420]
It may **not** better be.‘

58 *Teeres* fell out of hys *eyen* two; *Tears; eyen=eyes*
He wolde have gone his waye:
‘Farewell, frende, and have good daye;
I **ne have no** more to pay.’

59 ‘Where be thy frendes?’ sayd Robyn. [420]
‘Syr, never one **wyll me knowe**;
Whyle I was ryche inowe at home
Grete bost then wolde they blowe.

60 ‘And now they renne away fro me, [420]
As *bestes* on a **rowe**; *beasts*
They take no more *hede* of me *heed*
Then they **had** me never **sawe**.’

- **57.1** where **ab** (w[h]ere ***FJC***, w*h*ere ***DT) FBG KO***] wher **c** • cryste **c**] cryst **b**, criste **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Christ **fg** • dede **ac**] deed **b**, deade **f**, dead **g**
- **57.2** calvere **acfg**] calvare **b**, Calverë ***FJC FBG***, Calveré ***KO***, Calvarè ***C1***
- **57.4** may] ma **af** • not **b** ***FBG***, no **afg** ***FJC DT KO***, noo **c** ***C1***
- **58.1** eyen **b** ***FBG***] iyen **a** ***FJC DT KO***, eyes **fg**, omit **c** *(ex err.; cf. 58.2)*
- **58.2** waye **bf** (way **ag**)] ey en way **c** *(sic., ex err., with* eyen *falling down from 58.1)*
- **58.3** frende **ac**] frendes **bf** (friends **g**) ***FBG***, friendes ***C1***
- **58.4** ne have no **a**] ne have **b**; ne have noo **c**; have no **fg** ***FBG*** • more] nother **c**
- **59.1** thy] the **c** • Robyn] good Robyn ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **59.2** one] a one **g** • wyll **bcf** (will **g**)] wol **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • me knowe **ac**] knowe me **bg** (mee **f**) (know **g**)
- **59.3** whyle **b**] while **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, whyles **f**, whiles **g** • inowe] ynowe **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, I now **b** (inow ***C1***), Inowe **c**, ynow **f**, enough **g** • at **acfg**] a **b** • home] whom (*sic.*) **f**
- **59.4** then **bcg**] than **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, that *(sic.)* **f**
- **60.1** they **acfg**] thy **b** • fro] from **g**
- **60.2 a** rowe (arowe **f**)] a rawe ***RBW*** *cj.* (cf. 60.4) • hede] heed **g** ***C1***
- **60.4** had **a**] *omit* **bfg** ***FBG*** • me never] never me **f** • sawe (saw **g**)] knowe ***RBW*** *cj.*

N.B. c ends with 60.3, and some of the surviving lines lack one or two initial letters.

57.1 see g; quyke a ***M****, qucke f, quick g • 57.2 mount afg* ***M*** *• 57.3 fare welfrende a, fare well frende bc, farewell friend g, fare wel frende* ***M****; godeday a; gode* ***M****; day cfg* ***M*** *• 57.4 bee f • 58.1 teris a* ***M****, teares fg; oute f; his cfg; twoo f • 58.2 would fg; hys a* ***M*** *• 58.3 farewel a* ***M****, fare well bc; gode day a* ***M****, good day cfg* ***C1*** *• 59.1 friends g* ***C1****, frendës* ***FJC****; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 59.2 sir g • 59.3 riche f, rich g • 59.4 great afg; boste acf* ***M****, boast g; would fg; blow fg • 60.1 nowe a* ***M****; runne f*[bid]*, run g; a waye b, away g; mee f • 60.2 bestis a* ***M****, beastes f, beasts g • 60.4 thanne a* ***M****, than fg*

abfg

61 For *ruthe* then wepte Lytell Johan *pity*
Scathelock and Much **in fere**. [421] *[172]* *fere: company, i.e. "in fere"=together*
'Fyll of the best wyne,' sayd Robyn,
'For here is a symple chere. [421]

62 'Hast thou ony **frendes**,' sayd Robyn, 245
'**The** ***borowes*** that **wyll** be?' *[172]* *guarantors, securities, suppliers of collateral*
'I have none,' then sayd the knyght,
'But God that dyed **on a** tree.' [421]

63 'Do waye thy *japes*,' sayd Robyn, *japes, i.e. jokes, jests*
'Thereof wyll I right none; 250
Wenest thou I **wyll** have God to *borowe*, *(If) you think; supply a guarantee/collateral*
Peter, Poule, or Johan?' [421]

64 'Nay, by hym that me made,
And *shope* both sonne and mone, *shaped*
Fynde **me** a better *borowe*,' sayd Robyn, *guarantor, suppliers of collateral* 255
'Or mony getest thou none.'

- **61.1** ruthe then wepte **b** (thanne wept **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***) (than **f**)] ruthe they went *(sic.)* **g**
- **61.2** Scathelock **b** (Scathelocke **f**, Scathlocke **g**) *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • Much **b**] Muche **af** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO*** • in fere **a** ***C1***] also **bfg**; all in fere ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **62.1** ony **b**] any **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • frendes **bf** (friends **g**, frends ***FBG***)] frende **a** ***FJC DT KO*** *(cf.* **a***'s singular* borowe *in 62.2)*
- **62.2** The **b**] Thy **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • borowes **bfg** ***FBG***] borowe **a** ***FJC DT KO*** *(cf.* ***a****'s singular* frende *above)* • wyll **bf** (will **g**) ***FBG***] wolde **a** ***FJC DT KO*** *(cf. 63.3)*
- **62.3** then **b** (than **a**)] *omit* **fg**
- **62.4** on a **bfg**] on **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **63.1** waye **b**] away **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • iapes *(i.e. probably* japes) **bf**] iapis **a** ***FJC FBG DT*** (japis ***KO***), iest/jest **g** • sayd **b(fg)**] than sayde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **63.2** wyll I **bf**] wol I **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, I will **g**
- **63.3** wyll **b** (will **g**)] wolde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** *(cf. 62.3)*, omit **f** • have] *omit* **g**
- **63.4** Poule] Paule **f** (Paul **g**) • Johan **b**] Johnn **a**, John **fg** *(thus all witnesses use the same spelling as they use for Little John)*
- **64.1** me made **ab**] made me **fg** ***FBG***
- **64.2** both] doth **g**
- **64.3** me **a**] *omit* **bfg**
- **64.4** getest thou (gettest thou **g**)] gettest ethou *(sic.)* **f**

61.1 wept a • 61.3 fyl a ***M****, fill g; wine g; sayde af* ***M****, said g • 61.4 asymple a; simple cheere g • 62.1 friends g; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 62.3 sayde a* ***M****; said g; knight g • 63.1 doo g, sayde a* ***M****, said g • 63.2 will g; ryght f • 63.3 weenest g; borrow g • 64.1 him f*$^{\text{mid}}$*g • 64.2 sunne f, sun g; moone fg • 64.3 finde g; borrow g; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 64.4 money ag* ***M***

abfg

65 ‘I have none other,’ sayd the knyght,
‘The *sothe* for to say, *truth*
But yf it be our dere Lady; [421]
She fayled me never or this day.’

66 ‘By dere worthy God,’ sayd Robyn,
‘To seche all Englond thorowe,
Yet founde I never to my pay
A moch better *borowe*. *guarantor, security, supplier of collateral*

67 ‘Come nowe forthe, Lytell Johan
And goo to my *tresoure*, *(to be read as “treasurë, “treasury,” not “treasure”)*
And brynge me foure hondred pounde,
And loke **well tolde it** be.’ [423]

68 Forthe then wente Lytell Johan
And **Scathelocke** went before; *[172]*
He tolde oute foure houndred pounde
By **eyghtene-and-two** score. [423] *[172]*

- **65.3** yf **ab**] *omit* **fg**
- **65.4** fayled **ab**] fayleth **f** (faileth **g**)
- **66.2** Englond **b** (Englonde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, England **g**)] Endland **f**
- **66.3** founde **b**] fonde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, found **fg** • my] may **a**
- **67.2** tresoure **ab**] treasoure **f**[vid], treasure **g**, tresourè ***C1***, tresourë ***FJC FBG***, tresouré ***KO***
- **67.3** me foure hondred **b**] mefoure hundered **a**, me iiii houndreth **f**, me foure hundreth **g**, me four hundered ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **67.4** well tolde it **a**] that it well tolde **b**, it well tolde **fg**
- **68.2** Scathelocke **bfg** *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **68.3** oute (out **f**)] forthe **g** • houndred **b**] hundred (**a** foure|hundred *(sic.)*) ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hundreth **fg**
- **68.4** By (***DT in it.***)] Bo **a** • eyghtene-and-two ***RBW*** *ex cj.* (cf. ***KO*** eighteene and two *ex cj.)*] .xxviij. **a**, eyghtene **b** (eyghten **f**, eighteene **g**), eight and twenty ***FJC FBG*** (***DT*** eight *and* twenty), counting twenty ***RBW*** *cj.*

65.1 sayde a ***M****, said g; knight g • 65.2 sooth g; saye f • 65.3 yt a* ***M****; derelady a; deare f*[vid]*, deere g, derë* ***FJC*** *• 65.4 thys a* ***M*** *• 66.1 deere g; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 66.2 seech g • 66.4 moche a* ***M****, muche f, much g • 67.1 now fg; furth a* ***M****, forth g • 67.2 go af* ***M****, goe g • 67.3 bringe a* ***M****, bring fg; pound ag* ***M*** *• 67.4 looke g • 68.1 furth a* ***M****, forth fg; than af* ***M****; went afg* ***M*** *• 68.3 pound fg*

69 ‘Is this well tolde?’ sayd **lytell** Much; [423] *[173]*
Johan sayd, ‘What greveth the?
It is *almes* to helpe a gentyll knyght, *alms, i.e. charity* 275
That is fall in poverte.

70 ‘Mayster,’ than sayd Lytell Johan
‘His clothynge is full thynne;
Ye must gyve the knyght a lyveray [423]
To **helpe** his body therin. *[173]* 280

71 ‘For ye have *scarlet* and grene, mayster, [423] *probably refers to scarlet-type cloth*
And many a ryche aray;
There is no marchaunt in mery Englonde [425]
So ryche, I dare well saye.’

72 ‘Take hym thre yerdes of every coloure, 285
And loke ***well mete*** **that** it be.’ *well-measured, i.e. fit, suitable*
Lytell Johan toke none other mesure
But his bowe-tre. [425]

- **69.1** lytell **b** ***(DT in it.)***] *omit* **a**, lyttell **f**, little **g** ([litell] ***FJC,*** littell ***KO*** *ex err?*)
- **69.2** greveth **bf**[vid] (gre[ve]th ***FJC***)] greth *(sic.)* **a**, grieved **g**
- **69.3** almes **bfg**] almus **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **69.4** fal in] fallen in **g**
- **70.1** Johan] John **a** ***FBG*** *(n.b.* **a** *usually spells as* John̄=Johnn)
- **70.4** helpe **ab**] wrappe **f** (wrap **g**), lappe ***C1 FJC*** *ex cj.* ***FBG DT KO***
- **71.1** and grene (ande greene **g**)] of graine ***KO*** *cj.*, of grene ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **71.2** many a **b**] man a **a**, muche **f** (much **g**) (man[y] a ***FJC; DT*** many a) • ryche **bf**] riche **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, rich **g**
- **72.1** coloure **b** (colour **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] colours *(sic.)* **f**
- **72.2** well mete that **a**] it well mete **b**, that well mete **f** ***C1***, that well ymet **g**
- **72.4** his] his long (or “his own,” or other additional syllable) ***RBW*** *cj.*

69.1 thys ag ***M****; told f; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 69.2 Johnnsayde a; said g, sayde* ***M****; thee fg • 69.3 help g; gentyllknyght a; gentyl f*[vid]*, gentle g; knight f*[vid]*g • 69.4 fal a* ***M****; povertie fg, povertè* ***C1****, povertë* ***F****, poverté* ***KO*** *• 70.1 master a* ***M****, maister fg; then g; sayde a* ***M****, saide f, said g* ***C1*** *• 70.2 clothinge a* ***M****, clothing fg, thinne g • 70.3 geve f, give g; knight ag* ***M****; l[y]very f*[vid]*, livery g • 70.4 ther in b* ***C1****, therein g • 71.1 yehave a; maister f*[vid]*g • 71.2 riche a* ***M****, rich g; araye f • 71.3 ther a* ***M****; marchant g; Englond a* ***M****, Englande f, England g, Englònde* ***C1*** *• 71.4 rich g; say afg* ***M*** *• 72.1 him fg; three yeards g • 72.2 looke g • 72.3 tooke g; mesur e (with a space) f, measure g • 72.4 bowe tree ag, bowe tre bf, bowë-tree* ***F***

abfg

73 And **of** every handfull that he met
He **leped** fotes thre;
'What ***devylkins*** draper,' sayd lytell Much, [426] *little devil's, small demon's*
'Thynkest thou **for** to be?'

74 **Scathelocke** stoode full styll and *lough*, *[173]* *laughed*
And sayd, 'By God Allmyght,
Johan may gyve hym **the better** mesure,
Bygod it cost hym but lyght.' *[173]*

75 'Mayster,' than sayd Lytell Johan
To gentill Robyn Hode, *[173]*
'Ye must gyve **that** knight **an** hors, [426]
To lede home **al this** good.'

76 'Take hym a gray courser,' sayd Robyn, [426]
'And a sadell newe;
He is Our Ladye's messengere;
God **leve** that he be trewe.' *[173]*

- **73.1** of **bfg**] at **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **73.2** leped **a** (lepëd ***FJC***)] lept over **bf** (leped over **g**) ***FBG*** • fotes **b** ***FBG***] footes **af** (footës ***FJC***) ***DT KO***, foots **g**
- **73.3** devylkyns **b**] devylles **a** (devyllës ***FJC***) ***FBG DT KO***, the devils **f**, divels **g** • draper **bfg**] drapar **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • Much **bg**] Muche **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **73.4** for **a**] *omit* **bfg**
- **74.1** Scathelocke **bfg** *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • full] *omit* **g** • lough **b**] loughe **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, laught **fg**
- **74.3** the better **bfg**] gode **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **74.4** Bygod it cost hym **b** (By god it cost him **fg** ***C1***)] For it costeth hym **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **75.1** than **a**] *omit* **bfg** • Johan **b**] Johñ (=Johnn) **a** *(as always)*, Jahn *(sic.)* **f**, John **g**
- **75.2** To gentill **a**] All unto **bfg** ***FBG***
- **75.3** that (**b**^{vid} $\overset{t}{y}$) **f**] the **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • knight] knigt *(sic.)* **a** (knig[h]t ***FJC***, knig*h*t ***DT***) • an **bfg**] a **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **75.4** al this (*or* al thus *(so Ohlgren)*; **b** "al th^{9}") **f** ***FBG***] this **a** ***FJC DT KO***, all his **g**
- **76.4** leve **b**] graunt **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, lende **f** (lend **g**), lene ***C1***, give ***RBW*** *cj.* • he] it **fg**

73.1 e very a • 73.2 three ag ***M*** *• 73.3 drapersaid g; draper f; sayid a* ***M****, said fg; litell a C1* ***M****, lietel f, little g • 73.4 thinkeste f, thinkest g • 74.1 stode af*^{mid} ***M****, stood g; stil af* ***M****, still g • 74.2 said g; almyght af* ***M****; all myght b, almight g • 74.3 geve f, give g; him fg; measure g • 74.4 light fg • 75.1 maister fg; said ag* ***M****, saide f • 75.3 give ag, geve f; horse fg • 75.4 al f; gode a* ***M*** *• 76.1 him fg; coursar a* ***M****, couerser f; sayde a* ***M****, said fg • 76.2 saydle a* ***M****, sadle f, saddle g; new g • 76.3 oure a* ***M****, ladies fg; messangere a* ***M****, messenger fg • 76.4 betrewe f; true ag* ***M***

abfg

77 ‘And a good pallfraye,’ sayd lytell **Moch**, [426] 305
‘To mayntayne hym in his ryght;’
‘And a payre of botes,’ sayd **Scathelocke**, *[173]*
‘For he is a gentyll knyght.’

78 ‘What shalt thou gyve hym, Lytel Johan?’ sayd Robyn.
‘Syr, a payre of gylte *spores* **clere**, *[173]* *spurs* 310
To praye for all this company;
God brynge hym out of ***tene***.’ *tene (teyn, tyne): suffering, sorrow*

79 ‘Whan shall my *day* be,’ sayd the knyght, *due date, day to repay the loan*
‘Syr, and your wyll be?’
‘This day twelve moneth,’ sayd Robyn, 315
‘Under this grene wode tree.

80 ‘It were grete shame,’ sayd Robyn,
‘A knyght alone to ryde, [427]
Without squyer, yeman, or page,
To walke by his syde. 320

- **77.1** Moch **b**] Much **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Muche **f**
- **77.3** botes **bf** (botës ***FJC***)] betes **a**, boots **g** • Scathelocke **bfg** *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **78.1** shalt **abg**] shal **f** • Johan **b**] John (i.e. not “Johnn”) **a** • sayd Robin] *(omit)* [***FBG*** *ex cj.]*
- **78.2** spores **bf**] sporis **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, spurres **g** • clere **ab**] clene **f**^{vid}**g** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, fyne ***RBW*** *cj. (to better rhyme with “tene” in 78.4)*
- **78.4** hym] them **g** • out] *omit* **f** • tene] fear ***RBW*** *cj. (to better rhyme with “clere” in 78.2)*
- **79.3** twelve] .xij. (i.e. 12) **a** • moneth] months **g**
- **79.4** this] the **fg**

77.1 agood g; gode a ***M****; palfray afg* ***C1 M****; sayde a* ***M****, said g; little g • 77.2 mayntene a* ***M****, mayntayn f, maintaine g; him fg; right afg* ***M*** *• 77.3 peyre a* ***M****, paire g; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 77.4 gentil f*^{vid}*, gentle g; knight afg* ***M*** *• 78.1 give fg; him afg; said afg* ***M*** *• 78.2 Sir ag* ***M****; peyre a* ***M****, paire g; gilt a* ***M****, gilte f*^{vid}*g • 78.3 pray afg* ***M****; al a • 78.4 bringe a* ***M****, bring f*^{vid}*g; oute a* ***M*** *• 79.1 when g; shal a* ***M****; mi af*^{vid} ***M****; daye f; said ag* ***M****; knight ag* ***M*** *• 79.2 sir ag* ***M****; wyllbe a, will be g • 79.3 saide a* ***M****, said g • 79.4 grene wode tre a, grene wodetre f, greene wood tree g, grenë-wode tree* ***FJC****; grene wode tre* ***FBG DT****, grene-wode tre* ***KO*** *• 80.1 greate a* ***M****, great fg; shamë* ***FJC****; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 80.2 knight ag* ***M****; a lone b, ride g • 80.3 withoute a* ***DT KO****, withoutë* ***F****; squyre af*^{vid} ***M****, squire g; yoman a* ***M****, yeoman fg • 80.4 walkë* ***F****; hys f; side g*

(a)bfg

81 'I shall the ***lene*** Lytyll Johan, my man, [427] *lend, grant the service of*
For he shall be thy knave,
In a yeman's *steed* he may the stonde *stead*
Yf thou grete nede have.

THE SECONDE FYTTE **Seconde] Second g *DT*; Fitte g**

82 Nowe is the knyght **gone** on his way; 325
This game **hym** thought full good;
When he loked on Bernysdale
He **blyssed** Robyn Hode.

83 And whan he thought on Bernysdale,
On **Scathelock**, Much, and Johan, *[174]* 330
He blyssed them for the best company
That ever he in come.

84 Then spake that gentyll knyght
To Lytel Johan gan he saye, [427]
'To-morrowe I must to Yorke toune, 335
To Saynt Mary abbay.

- **81.1** the lene **b**] the lende **af**^{vid} ***FJC FBG DT KO***, thee lend **g**] • Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a**, Johnn ***FBG*** *(ex cj.?)*
- **81.3** yeman's ***FBG DT KO***] yemans **b**, yemas **a** (yema[n]'s ***FJC***), yeman **f**, yeomans **g** • steed **b**] stede **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, sted **g** • the] *omit* **fg**
- **82.1** gone **af** (gon **g**)] went **b**
- **82.2** hym **a** ***C1***] he **bfg**
- **82.3** Bernysdale **b** ***DT***] Bernedt ale *(sic.)* **a**, Bernisdale **fg** Bernesdale ***FJC FBG KO***
- **82.4** blyssed **b**] blessyd **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, blessed **fg**
- **83.1** he thought] be thought **b** • Bernysdale **ab**] Bernisdale **fg**
- **83.2** Scathelock **b** (Scathelocke **fg**) *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • Much **abg**] Muche **f**
- **83.3** blyssed **b** ***FJC FBG DT KO***] blyssyd **a**, blessed **fg** • the] he **a**
- **83.4** come **b**] came **fg**
- **84.1** that **b**] the **fg**
- **84.2** Johan (***FJC*** *cj.?)* (Iohan **b**; *cf. 3.3)*] Johnn **fg** ***DT***
- **84.3** To-morrowe] To morowe **bf**, tomorrow **g**, To-morowe ***DT***
- **84.3** upon] *omit* **g**

N.B. a breaks off with 83.3, resuming in stanza 118.

*81.1 shall **FBG** • 81.2 heshall b; shalbe a **𝓜** • 81.3 stande a **𝓜**, stanbe (sic.) f, stand g • 81.4 if afg **𝓜**; greate a **𝓜**, great fg; need g, nedë **𝓕** • 82.1 now ag **𝓜**; knight ag **𝓜** • 82.2 gode a **𝓜** • 82.3 whanne a **𝓜**, looked g • 83.1 whanne a **𝓜**, when fg • 84.1 gentle knight g • 84.2 say g • 84.3 towne fg • 84.4 saint g*

bfg

85 ‘And to the abbot of that place
Foure hondred pounde I must pay;
And *but* I be there upon this nyght — *unless*
My londe is lost *for ay.*’ — *indeed, i.e. forever*

86 The abbot sayd to his *covent*, — *convent, people of the monastery*
There he stode on grounde,
‘This day twelfe moneth came there a knyght
And borowed foure hondred pounde.

87 **....** *[174]*
Upon all his londe fre;
But he come this *ylke* day — *Unless; every, i.e. very*
Dysheryte shall he be.’

88 ‘It is full erely,’ sayd the *pryoure*, [428] — *prior*
‘The day is not yet ferre gone;
I had *lever* to pay an hondred pounde, — *liefer, i.e. sooner, rather*
And lay downe anone. *[174]*

- **85.2** hondred **b**] hondreth **fg**; hundred ***FBG***
- **85.3** upon] *omit* **g**
- **86.3** twelfe moneth **b**] .xii.monethes **f,** xii.months **g** • there] *omit* **g** ***FBG***
- **86.4** borowed] borrowed **g** ***DT KO*** • hondred **b**] hundreth **fg**
- **87.1** ***(line absent from*** **bfg**)] He borowed foure hondred pounde ***[C1] [FJC]*** *ex cj.* ***[FBG] DT*** (***KO*** borrowed), He borowed it a yere ago ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **87.2** all] *omit* **g** • londe fre **b**] lande (land **g**, londe ***FBG***) and fee **fg** ***FBG***
- **87.3** ylke **bf**] ilke **g**; ylkë ***FJC FBG***
- **87.4** Dysherte **b**] Disherited **fg** ***FBG***
- **88.3** yet] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **88.3** an hondred] an hondrde *(sic.)* **b**, an hundreth **f**, a hundreth **g**, an hondred ***FBG***
- **88.4** lay downe] lay it downe **fg** ***FBG*** • And... downe] That he wil yet come ***RBW*** *cj.*

*85.2 pound g • 85.3 thys f; night g • 85.4 lande (or possibly “laude” by inversion) f[vid], land g; loste f, for aye fg • 86,1 sayde f, said g; covente f[vid] • 86.2 stood on ground g • 86.3 knight fg • 86.4 four[l] (sic.) g[vid]; pound g • 87.2 londë **FJC** • 87.3 thys f • 88.1 early fg; said g; pryour f, priour g • 88.2 farre fg • 88.3 pound g • 88.4 a none b* ***F***

bfg

89 ‘The knyght is ferre beyonde the see,
In Englonde **he is** ryght, [428] *[174]*
And suffreth honger and colde,
And many a sory nyght.

90 ‘It were grete *pyte*,’ sayd the *pryoure*, *pity; prior*
‘So to have his londe;
And ye be so lyght of your consyence,
Ye do to hym moch wronge.’

91 ‘Thou arte ever in my berde,’ sayd the abbot,
‘By God and Saynt *Rycharde*.‘ [429] *[174]* *probably Richard Scrope of York*
With that cam in a fat-heded monke, [432]
The heygh *selerer*. *cellarer, i.e. gatherer of provisions*

92 ‘He is dede or hanged,’ sayd the monke,
‘By God that bought me dere,
And we shall have to spende in this place
Foure hondred pounde by yere.’ [432]

- **89.1** is ferre **b**] is fare **f** *(n.b. these readings could be read as* is far *or as* is far[ing]/ traveling), is farre **g**
- **89.2** **he is** **b** ***DT***^{txt}] is his **fg** ***C1 FJC FBG DT***^{marg}, *omit* ***KO*** *(ex cj.)* • Englonde... ryght] Englonde’s cause to fyght ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **89.4** sory **b**] sore **fg**
- **90.1** the] rhe *(sic.)* **g**
- **90.4** Ye do to hym] You doe him **g** • moch] much **f**, much **g**
- **91.2** Rycharde **b**] Richarde **f**, Richad *(sic.)* **g**, Rychere ***KO*** *(ex cj.)*
- **91.3** cam] came **fg**
- **92.3** and] ind *(sic.)* **g** • to spende] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **92.4** hondred **b**] hundreth **fg** • pounde] poundes **f**, pounds **g**

89.1 knight g ***C1*** *(but not Ritson); be yonde b, beyond g; sea fg* • *89.2 Englande f, England g; right fg* • *89.3 suffereth fg; hunger fg; cold g* • *89.4 night g* • *90.1 great pitie f, great pittie g, grete pytè* ***C1****, grete pytë* ***F****, grete pyté* ***KO****; sayde f; priour g* • *90.2 hys f; lande f, land g* • *90.3 beso (sic.) f; light g; conscience fg, conseyence* ***C1*** • *90.4 him* ***C1****; wrong g* • *91.1 art fg; sayde f, said g* • *91.2 saint g* • *91.3 came fg; a fatheded b; a fatte headed f, a fat headed g; monk f, muncke g* • *91.4 hygh f, high g; selelerere (sic.) f , sellerere g* • *92.1 dead fg; said g; muncke g* • *92.2 deere g* • *92.3 shal f; spend fg* • *92.4 yeere g*

93 The abbot and the hy *selerer* [432] — *cellarer, i.e. gatherer of provisions*
Sterte forthe full bolde,
The **justyce** of Englonde [433] *[175]*
The abbot there dyde holde. — *hold in service, have at his bidding*

94 The hye justyce and many mo
Had take into they *honde* — *hand*
Holy all the knyghtes *det*, — *wholly; debt*
To put that knyght to wronge.

95 They *demed* the knyght wonder sore, — *judged, regarded, deemed*
The abbot and his *meyne*: — *band of followers, company*
'But he come this *ylke* day — *every, i.e. very*
Dysheryte shall he be.'

96 'He wyll not come yet,' sayd the justyce,
'I dare well undertake.'
But in sorowe tyme for them all
The knyght came to the gate.

- **93.1** the] *omit* **g** • hy **b**] heygh **f**, high **g**, *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **93.3** justyce **b** ***DT KO***] [hye] justyce ***FJC*** *(ex cj.),* highe justyce **f** ***FBG***, high justice **g** • Englonde **b** (Englande **f**, England **g**)] the foreste ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **94.1** hye justyce **b**] high justice **fg**, hyë justyce ***FJC***
- **94.2** take **b**] taken **fg** ***FBG*** • they **b** ***DT***] their **fg** ***C1***, theyr (***FJC*** they[r]) ***FBG KO***
- **94.3** holy (*i.e. probably* wholly, *but it could mean* holy debt) **bf**] wholly **g**
- **95.3** come] comes **g**
- **95.4** Dysherte] Dysherited **f**, Disherited **g** ***FBG***
- **96.1** not] *omit* **fg**
- **96.3** tyme for] teme to **f**, time to **g**, tymë for ***FJC FBG***

*93.1 sellerere g • 93.2 stert g, stertë **F**; furth f, forth g; ful f • 93.4 did fg • 94.1 manymo f • 94.2 in to b **KO**; hande f, hand g • 94.3 al f; knights g, knightës **FJC** • 94.4 knight g; wrong g • 95.1 knight g; wonderso re (sic.) f • 95.2 hys f; meynye f, meiny g, meynè **C1**, menyë **F**, meyné **KO** • 95.3 ylkë **F** • 96.1 will g; sayde f, said g; justice g • 96.2 under take b • 96.3 sorrow g • 96.4 knight g*

bfg

97 Than bespake that gentyll knyght
Untyll his *meyne*, [437] *company, band, gang*
'Now put on your symple *wedes* *weeds=clothes*
That ye brought fro the see.

98 .... *[176]* [438]
They came to the gates anone;
The porter was redy hymselfe,
And welcomed them *everychone*. *every one*

99 'Welcome, syr knyght,' sayd the porter;
'My lorde to *mete* is he, *meat, i.e. his meal*
And so is many a gentyllman,
For the love of the.' [438]

100 The porter swore a full grete othe,
'By God that made me,
Here be the best *coresed* hors [438] *probably built, muscled, bred*
That ever yet sawe I me. [438]

- **97.1** bespake (be spake **b**)] arryved *(or similar), and omit lines 97.2-98.1(?)* ***RBW*** *cj. (cf. 97.4, 98.1, 98.2)*
- **97.2** meyne **b** (meynè ***C1***, meynë ***FJC FBG***; meyné ***KO***)] menye *(sic.)* **fg**
- **97.4** 97.2-4+98.1] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj. (cf. 97.1, 98.1, 98.2)*
- **98.1** ***(line absent from*** **bfg**)] They put on their symple wedes *(ex cj.)* ***[C1] [FJC] [FBG] (DT in it.) KO***, Than arrived that gentyll knyght *(and omit 97.2-97.4 ?)* ***RBW*** *cj. (cf. 97.1, 97.4, 98.2)*, Johan and the knyght togyder rode ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **98.2** They] And ***C1*** *(ex err?)* • They... anone] And with him Lytell Johnn *(and omit lines 97.2-98.1)* ***RBW*** *cj. (cf. 97.1, 97.2, 98.1)*
- **99.2** mete **b**] meate **f**, meat **g**
- **100.3** coresed **b**] corese **f**, corse **g**, coressed ***KO*** *(ex err?)*
- **100.4** I] *omit* **g**

97.1 then g; gentle knight g • 97.2 untill g; hys f • 97.3 nowe f; simple weeds g • 97.4 thesee b, the sea g • 98.2 anon g • 98.3 hym selfe b, himselfe f[mid]g • 98.4 welcommed g; ever ychone b, every chone f, everie chone g • 99.1 sir knight said g • 99.2 lord g • 99.3 gentylman f, gentleman g, gentyll man ***C1 𝓜*** *• 99.4 thee fg • 100.1 great f[mid]g; oath g • 100.2 madë* ***FJC****, mee f • 100.3 heere g; horse fg • 100.4 saw g*

101 ‘Lede them into the stable,’ he sayd,
‘That eased myght they be.’
‘They shall not come therin,’ sayd the knyght,
‘By God that dyed on a tre.’ [421]

102 Lordes were to *mete i-sette* [438] *set to meat, i.e. at their dinner*
In that abbotes hall;
The knyght went forth and kneled downe
And salued them grete and small. *salu(t)ed, i.e. greeted; cf. Latin “salve”*

103 ‘Do gladly, syr abbot,’ sayd the knyght,
‘I am come to holde my day.’
The fyrst word the abbot spake,
‘Hast thou brought my pay?’ [439]

104 ‘Not one peny,’ sayd the knyght,
‘By God that maked me.’
‘Thou art a shrewed dettour,’ sayd the abbot; [439] *probably wicked or vile*
‘Syr justyce, drynke to me.’

- **101.1** into (in to **b** ***FJC FBG DT***)] to **g**
- **101.3** They shall] the hal *(sic.)* **f** • therein] there **g**
- **102.1** i-sette (Isett *or perhaps* I sette **b**)] ysette **f**, yset **g**
- **102.4** salued] saluted **fg**
- **103.1** sayd the knyght] **g** *puts the words* said the knight *in parentheses; cf. 105.1*
- **103.3** word] word that **f**
- **103.4** brought] brought me **fg** • pay] **g**[vid] *has something, probably a colon but perhaps a question mark, after* pay; cf. 105.2
- **104.2** maked] hath made **fg**
- **104.3** dettour] deter **f**, debtor **g**

*101.1 saide f, said g •101.2 might g • 101.3 said f[vid]g; knight fg • 101.4 tree fg • 102.1 Lords g, Lordës **F**; meate f, meat g • 102.2 abbottes f, abbots g •102.3 knight fg; wentforth b, went foorth g; kneeled d owne (sic.) g • 102.4 great fg • 103.1 doe g; sir g; sayde f, (said the knight) g (n.b. with the parentheses; cf. 105.1) • 103.2 hold g; daye f • 103.3 first fg; worde f • 103.4 paye f • 104.1 penny fg, said g; knight g • 104.3 shrewd f, shrewde g; said fg; abot f • 104.4 syr justice f, sir justice g; drinke fg*

105 ‘What doost thou here,’ sayd the abbot,
‘But thou haddest brought thy pay?’
‘For God,’ than sayd the knyght,
‘To pray of a lenger daye.’ [439]

106 ‘Thy daye is broke,’ sayd the justyce,
‘Londe getest thou none.’
‘Now, good syr justyce, be my frende, [439]
And *fende* me of my *fone*!’ *defend; foes*

107 ‘I am holde with the abbot,’ sayd the justyce,
‘Both with cloth and fee.’ [440]
‘Now, good syr sheryf, be my frende!’
‘Nay, for God,’ sayd he.

108 ‘Now, good syr abbot, be my frende,
For thy curteyse, [377]
And holde my londes in thy honde
Tyll I have made the *gree!* *dignity, obligation, i.e. payment*

- **105.1** sayd the abbot] (said the abbot) *(in parentheses)* **g**; *cf 103.1*
- **105.2** thy] my ***RBW*** *cj.* • pay] **g**^{vid} *has something, perhaps a question mark, after “pay”; cf. 103.4*
- **105.3** sayd (sayde **f**, said **g**)] sayed ***FBG*** *(ex err.?)*
- **105.4** pray] desyre you **f**, desire **g**
- **106.4** fend me of] defend me from **f**, defend me against **g**
- **108.4** the gree **b**] the gre **f**, thee gree **g**

*105.1 dost f, doest g; heere g; said fg • 105.2 hadst g; pai f • 105.3 then g; knight fg • 105.4 longer g; day fg • 106.1 day fg; broake g; said g; justice fg • 106.2 land fg; gettest g • 106.3 nowe f; sir g; justice fg; mi frend f, my friend g • 107.1 hold fg; said fg; justice fg • 107.2 bothe f; cloth f, cloath g • 107.3 sir g; shiryfe f, sheriffe g; friend g • 107.4 godsaydhe b; sayde f, said g • 108.1 sir g; frend f^{vid}, friend g • 108.2 curtesy f^{vid}, curtesie g, curteysè **C1**, curteysë **F**, curteysé **KO** • 108.3 hold g; landes f, lands g, londës **F**; hande f, hand g • 108.4 till g*

109 ‘And I wyll be thy true servaunte,
And trewely serve the, [440]
Tyl ye have foure hondred pounde
Of money good and free.’

110 The abbot sware a full grete othe,
‘By God that dyed on a tree, [421]
Get the londe where thou may,
For thou getest none of me.’

111 ‘By dere worthy God,’ then sayd the knyght,
‘That all this worlde wrought,
‘But I have my londe agayne,
‘Full dere it shall be bought.’

112 God, that was of a mayden borne, [440]
Leve us well to *spede*! [440] *grant, allow; speed, i.e. succeed*
For it is good to assay a frende
Or that a man have nede. [440] *Ere=before*

- **109.2** *omit line* **g**
- **109.3** Tyl **b**] Tyll **f** ***FBG***, till **g** • hondred **b**] hundreth **fg**
- **110.3** the londe (*probably to be understood thee* land) **b** (**f** the lande)] thy land **g**
- **111.1** then **b**] *omit* **fg**
- **112.1** a] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **112.2** Leve **b**] Sende **f**, Send **g**, Lene (i.e. lend=grant?) ***C1***
- **112.3** to assay] a assaye *(sic.)* **f**

*109.1 will fg; servaunt f, servant g • 109.2 truly f; servë **FJC**; thee f • 109.3 pound fg • 110.1 greate f, great g; oath g • 110.2 died g • 110.4 gettest fg; mee f • 111.1 deere g; said g; knight fg • 111.2 world fg, worldë **F** • 111.3 havemy f; lande f, land g; againe g • 111.4 deere g; shal f • 112.1 amayden b, a maiden g • 112.2 speed g • 112.3 friend g • 112.4 need g*

113 The abbot lothely on hym gan loke, [441]
And *vylaynesly* hym gan **call**; *[176]* *villainously* 450
'Out,' he sayd, 'thou false knyght,
Spede the out of my hall!' [441]

114 'Thou lyest,' then sayd the gentyll knyght,
'Abbot, in thy hal;
False knyght was I never, [441] 455
By God that made us all.'

115 Up then stode that gentyll knyght,
To the abbot sayd he,
'To suffre a knyght to knele so longe,
Thou canst no curteysye. [377] 460

116 'In joustes and in tournement [441]
Full ferre than have I be,
And put my selfe *as ferre in prees* *as far in press, i.e. the armed crowd*
As ony that ever I se.

- **113.1** lothely **b**] lothly **f**^{vid}, loathly **g** • hym] then **f**, them **g**
- **113.2** And... call ***C1 FJC*** *(ex Ritson cj.)* ***FBG DT KO***] and vylayneslyhym gan loke **b** (*i.e. reading* loke, *from line 113.1, for* call); *omit line* **fg** *(by h.t. from loke...loke?)*
- **113.4** Spede the] Step thee **g** • my] the **g**
- **114.2** hal] hall **fg** ***KO***
- **115.4** no] not **f**
- **116.1** joustes (**b** ioustes)] iustes (i.e. justes = jousts? justice?) **f**, justs *(sic.)* **g** • tournement] tournaments **g** ***FBG***
- **116.2** ferre] farre **fg** • than] that **g**
- **116.3** my selfe] myself ***FBG*** • ferre] farre **fg** • prees **b**] prese **f**, presse **g**, press ***KO*** *(ex. err?)*
- **116.4** ony that **b**] anythat *(no space)* **f**, any that **g** • se] see **fg** ***FBG***

113.1 looke g • 113.3 sayde f, said g; knight g • 113.4 oute f • 114.1 liest g; than f; said g; gentle g; knight fg •114.3 knight g; Inever f • 115.1 stood g; gentle knight g • 115.2 sayde f, said g • 115.3 suffer fg, knight g; kneele g; long fg • 115.4 curteysy f^{vid}*, curtesie g • 116.1 ioustës,* i.e. *joustës* ***FJC*** *• 116.2 then f*^{vid}

117 ‘What wyll ye gyve more,’ sayd the justyce, 465
‘*And* the knyght shall make a releyse? [441] *an, i.e. if*
And elles dare I *safly* swere *safely*
Ye holde never your londe in pees.’

118 ‘An hondred pounde,’ sayd the abbot;
The justyce sayd, ‘Gyve hym two.’ 470
‘Nay, be God,’ sayd the knyght,
‘Yet **gete** ye it not soo.

119 ‘Though ye wolde gyve a thousande more,
Yet were **ye** never *the nere;* *the nearer, i.e. nearer to success*
Shall there never be myn ***eyre*** *heir? or perhaps eyre=visitation, so an overseeing* 475
Abbot, justyse, ne frere.’

120 He sterte hym to a *borde* anone, *table, sideboard*
Tyll a table rounde,
And there he shoke out of a bagge
Even foure hondred pounde. [442] 480

- **117.2** a] *omit* **g**
- **117.3** and] or **g**; an ***RBW*** *cj.* • dare I] I dare ***DT*** *(ex err?)* • swere **b** (sweare **f**)] say **g**
- **118.1** hondred **b**] hundreth **fg**
- **118.3** be **b**] by **fg**, fore ***RBW*** *cj.* • *(whole line)*] Nay, by dere worthi God ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **118.4** Yet **b**] Yit **a** ***FJC DT KO***, Ye **fg** ***FBG*** • gete **a**] grete *(sic.)* **b**, get **fg** ***FBG*** • ye it not] not my land **g** ***FBG***
- **119.1** thousande **bf**] .M., i.e. 1000 **a**, thousand pound **g**, thousand ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **119.2** ye *(perhaps should be* þe=the(e) or þ̊e=thee) **a** ***C1***] thou **bfg**
- **119.3** eyre **b**] heyre **af**[vid] ***FJC FBG DT KO***, heire **g**
- **120.3** of] *omit* **f**
- **120.4** foure hondred **b**] .cccc., i.e. 400 **a**, foure hundreth **fg**, four hundred ***FJC FBG DT KO***

N.B. a resumes at 118.4, though the leaf Is torn; the damage does not affect the text on this page

*117.1 wyl f, will g; give g; sayd¦the b; said fg **C1**; justis f[vid], justice g • 117.2 knight g; meke (sic.) f; relese f, release g • 117.3 else g; safelie f, safely g • 117.4 hold g; lande f[vid], land g; peace fg • 118.1 pound g; said g **C1** • 118.2 justise f, justice g; said g; give him g; twoo f[vid] • 118.3 sayde f, said g; knight g • 118.4 so ag **M** • 119.1 would fg; geve f[vid], give g • 119.2 neere g • 119.3 myne f[vid], mine g • 119.4 justice a, justise f; nefrere a, ne fryer g • 120.1 stert a **M**; him fg; bourde f, bourd g; a none b, anon g • 120.2 till g; round g • 120.3 heshoke b; shooke g; oute a **M**; bag g • 120.4; pound ag **M***

121 ‘Have here thy golde, syr abbot,’ sayd the knyght, [442]
‘Which that thou lentest me;
Hadst thou ben *curteys* at my comynge, [442] *courteous*
Rewarde sholdest thou have be.’

122 The abbot sat styll, and ete no more,
For all his *ryall* ***chere***; [443] *[176]* *royal; cheer*
He cast his hede on his sholder,
And fast began to stare.

123 ‘Take me my golde agayne,’ sayd the abbot,
‘Syr Justyce, that I toke the.’ [443]
‘Not a peny,’ sayd the justyce,
‘By God that dyed **on tree**.’ [421]

124 ‘Syr abbot, and ye men of lawe,
Now have I holde my daye;
Now shall I have my londe agayne, [442]
For ought that you can saye.’

- **121.1** sayd the knyght] *omit **RBW** cj.*
- **121.2** that] *omit* **g** • thou] thon **a** *(ex inv.)*
- **121.3** Hadst *(**RBW** cj.)* **g**] Had **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Haddest **bf**
- **121.4** Rewarde... be **b** (rewarded shuldest thou havebe **a** (***FJC DT KO*** have be))] I would have rewarded thee **fg** ***FBG***
- **122.2** ryall chere **b**] ryallfare **a** (ryall fare ***FJC FBG DT KO***), royall chere **f**, royall cheere **g**; ryall care ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **122.4** began **ab**] gan **fg**
- **123.1** me **abf**] omit **g**
- **123.2** the] to thee **g**
- **123.4** God that dyed] Go[d, that dy]ed ***FJC*** (**a** goḍ..ḥ..ḍyed) (***DT*** G*od, that dy*ed)) • tree **a**] a tree **b** (**f** tre) **g**
- **124.1** abbot and ye men (yemen **b**[vid], you men **g**) **f** (***DT in it.***)] [abbot and ye me]n ***FJC*** (**a** [.....]n̤ oflawe)
- **124.2** holde] held **g**
- **124.3** shall] I shall **f**

N.B. a damaged for 123.4-124.1 (torn leaf), and then breaks off until 127.4.

*121.1 heere g; thi af **M**; gold g; sir ag **M**; saide a **M**, said fg; knight afg **M** • 121.3 bene fg; curtes a **M**, curteis f, curtise g, commynge f, comming g • 122.1 sate f; still g; eteno a, eate no f, eat no g • 122.3 head fg; shulder af **M**, shoulder g, sholdèr **C1** • 123.1 gold fg; again f, againe g; saide a **M**, said g • 123.2 sir ag; justice afg **M**; tooke g; thee f • 123.3 peni a **M**, penny fg; said ag **M**; justice afg **M** • 123.4 bi a **M** • 124.1 Sir ag **M** • 124.2 hold f; day fg • 124.3 londe a gayne b; land eagayne (i.e. lande agayne) f, land again g • 124.4 say fg*

125 The knyght stert out of the dore,
Awaye was all his care,
And on he put his good clothynge,
The other he lefte there. [444]

126 He wente hym forth full mery syngynge,
As men have tolde in tale;
His lady met hym at the gate,
And home in **Verysdale**. [444] *[177]*

127 'Welcome, my lorde,' sayd his lady;
'Syr, lost is all your good?'
'Be mery, dame,' sayd the knyght,
'And praye for Robyn Hode.

128 'That ever his soule be in blysse;
He *holpe* me out of ***tene***; *helped; trouble, sorrow, suffering*
Ne had **not be** his kyndenesse, *[177]*
Beggers had we ben. [445]

- **125.4** The] And the **g**
- **126.4** And] At **f** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO*** • Verysdale **bf** (**g** Verisdale)] Uterysdale ***C1*** *(ex err?)*, Wierysdale ***Ritson*** *ex cj.*, Ayredale ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **128.2** He (***DT in it.***)] Ha *(sic.)* **a** • holpe **abg**] holde **f** *(ex inv.?)* • tene **afg**] my tene **b**
- **128.3** had not be **bf** (**g** bee)] had be **a** ***FJC FBG KO***, had he ***DT*** *(ex. err?)*

N.B. a resumes at 127.4

*125.1 knight g; start g • 125.2 a waye b[vid], away fg; al f • 125.3 clothinge f, clothing g • 125.4 left fg • 126.1 went fg; him fg; forthe f **C1**; ful fg; meri f; singing fg • 126.2 told g **FBG** •126.3 him fg • 127.1 lord g; said g • 127.2 sir g; al f • 127.3 merry g; said g; knight fg • 127.4 pray afg **𝓜** • 128.1 soulë **FJC**; blisse g •128.3 kyndnesse f, kindnes g, kyndënesse **𝓕** • 128.4 bene a **𝓜**, beene g*

abfg

129 'The abbot and I acordyd ben,
He is served of his pay;
The good yeman lent it me,
As I came by the way.'

130 This knyght than dwelled fayre at home, [445]
The soth for to say,
Tyll he had **gete** foure hondreth pounde
All redy for too paye.

131 He purveyed hym an hondred bowes [445]
The strenges well *dyght*, *prepared, fitted*
An hondred shefe of arowes good,
The hedes burnyshed full bryght;

132 And every arowe an *elle* longe, [445] *ell: 45 inches, the "cloth yard"*
With *pecocke* well *ydyght*, [446] *peacock (feathers); prepared, fitted*
I-nocked all with whyte sylver; [446] *[177] nocked: having a nock (groove) of; see note*
It was a *semly* syght. *seemly, i.e. beautiful, suitable*

- **129.2** is] *omit* **fg** • served] ƥved (*or* ƥued) **a** (ƥ *is such a rare symbol that I don't think we can know what the typesetter meant — or where he found such a symbol!)*
- **129.3** good] god **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • **129.4** by] on **g**
- **130.1** home] **f** *drops* "home" *to the end of 130.2 without marking a continuation*
- **130.3** gete **a**] got **bfg** ***FBG*** • foure hondreth pounde **b**] .cccc.li. (i.e. 400 pounds) **a**[vid] (**a** gete.cccc.li, *with the right margin trimmed at* li), four hundrethpoūd, i.e. four hundrethpound **f**, four hundreth pound **g**, four hundred pound ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **131.1** hondred **b**] C. *(i.e.* 100) **a**, hundreth **fg**, hundred ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **131.2** strenges **b**] strynges **a** ***FBG DT KO***, stringes were **f**, strings were **g**, stryngës ***FJC***, strenges [were] ***Ritson*** • dyght **bf** (dight **g**)] y dyght **a**, ydight ***FJC FBG DT KO***, [y-]dyght ***C1***
- **131.3** hondred **b**] .C. *(i.e.* 100) **a**, hundreth **fg**, hundred ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • arowes **bf** (***DT in it.***)] aros we *(sic.)* **a**, arrowes **g**, arowës ***FJC***
- **132.1** elle **b** (***DT in it.***)] ille **a**, ell **fg**, ellë ***FJC FBG***
- **132.2** ydight] Idyght **a**, y dight **b**, I dighte **f**, ydight **g**, idyght ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **132.3** I-nocked] I nocked **b**, nocked **a**, And nocked the (they **g**) were **fg**, Inocked ***FJC FBG KO***, worked ***DT*** *(ex. cj.? ex err?)* • all] *omit* **fg** • sylver **b** (silver **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, sylvèr ***C1***)] silk **f**

129.1 Iaccorded a, I accorded fg ***M****; beene g* • *129.2 hys f* • *129.3 yoman a* ***M****, yeoman g* • *129.4 cam a* ***M****; waye f* • *130.1 knight afg* ***M****; then g; faire g* • *130.2 sothe af* ***M****, sooth g; saye af* ***M*** • *130.3 til f, till g* • *130.4 al a; ready g; topay a, to paye f, to pay g* ***M*** • *131.1 purvaied f, purvaide g; him afg* ***M*** • *131.3 sheafe g; gode a* ***M*** • *131.4 hedys a* ***M****, heads g; burneshed a, burnisht g; bright g* • *132.1 arrow g; long g* • *132.2 pecok a* ***M****, peacocke g; wel a* ***M*** • *132.3 white fg* • *132.4 se mely a, semely f* ***M****, seemely g; sight g*

(a)bfg

133 He purveyed hym an hondreth men [446]
Well harneysed in that stede,
And hymselfe in that same sete,
And clothed in whyte and rede. [447]

134 He bare a *launsgay* in his honde, *light lance*
And a man ledde his *male*, *trunk, equipment, baggage*
And reden with a lyght songe
Unto Bernysdale.

- **133.1** purveyed **bf** (purvaiyed **g**)] purneyed *(sic., ex inv.)* **a** • hondreth men **b** (***DT in it.)***] hundreth men **fg**, [hundreth men] ***FJC*** (**a** He purveyed hym a̩n̩ [...]),
- **133.2** harneysed in that stede **b**] harnessed in that stede (harness[ed in that stede] ***FJC***) ***FBG*** (***DT*** Harness*ed in that stede)* ***KO*** (**a** harn̩e̩s̩s̩[...] *with the rest torn off; the* r *is almost certain, the* n *very probable, the others mostly lost but few other letters fit)*
- **133.3** sete **b**] sute **f**, suite **g** ***FBG***
- **134.1** a launsgay (i.e. a light lance) ***FJC*** *cj.*] a launs gay **b** (*so, perhaps,* a gay lance *rather than* a light lance), alaunce gay **f**, a launce gay **g**
- **134.3** reden] rode **fg**
- **134.4** Bernysale **b**] Bernisdale **fg**

N.B. a is torn for 133.1-2 and ends after 133.2, resuming at 136.4. Based on a's standard of 33 lines per page and the 20 lines on this page for which at least one complete letter exists, this is a gap of 13 lines, the number of lines found in b for the missing text. However, a usually has at least two double lines per page, raising the likely total to 14 lines (Ohlgren/Matheson in fact state the gap as 14 lines), meaning that it is likely (not certain, but likely) that a had one more line than b now has — presumably one of the missing lines in stanzas 135-135A. It is even possible — if there were two double lines and not just one — that it had two lines now missing in b.

131.1 him g •133.2 harnased g; stead g • 133.3 hym selfe b ***M****, himselfe fg • 133.4 cloathed g; white and red g • 134.1 hande f, hand g • 134.2 led g • 134.3 light song fg*

135 **But as he went at a brydge**
Ther was a wrastelyng, [447] *[177]*
....
....

135A **....**
And there *taryed* was he, *tarried=delayed*
And there was all the best yemen
Of all the west countree. [448] 540

136 A full fayre game there was up set,
A whyte bulle **up *i-pyght***, *placed, offered as a prize*
A grete courser, with sadle and brydil,
With golde burneyshed full bryght.

- **135.1** But... brydge **b** ***FJC DT*** *(except 135.1-2 are printed as one line)*] As he went by (up **g**) a bridg (bridge **g**) **fg**, But at Wentbrydge ***FJC*** *cj.* (***FBG*** [But at Wentbrydge]) ***KO***; *(cf. next 2 lines and note that* ***a*** *probably has at least one more line in this section),* As he went at a brydge ***Ritson***, As he went at brydge ***C1***
- **135.1-2** But... wrastelying as two lines ***RBW*** *cj.*] *print as one line* **bfg** ***FJC (FBG) (DT*** wrastle-lyng) ***(KO)*** *(cf. preceding and next line)*
- **135.2** Ther **b**] *omit* **fg**; there ***FBG***
- **135.3, 4, 135A.1** lines 135.3-135A.1 missing ***RBW*** *cj.*] *combine stanzas 135 and 135A* **bfg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **135.3** (omit line **bfg**)] With many men gathered there ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **135.4** (omit line **bfg**)] To win the garland of spring ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **135A.1** (omit line **bfg**)] And many fought to win the prize ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **135A.3** yemen] yeman **f**, yeomen **g**, yemèn ***C1***
- **135A.4** west] north ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **136.1** *(omit lines 136.1-2)* **g**
- **136.2** *(omit lines 136.1-2)* **g** • up i-pyght (up ipyght ***C1***) ***FJC*** *cj.* ***FBG KO***] I up pyght **b** ***DT***, up ypyght **f** (omit line **g**)
- **136.3** sadle] a saddle **g**
- **136.4** gold] gould **g** • burneyshed] burnyssht **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***; burnisshed **f**, burnisht **g**

N.B. ***a*** ***resumes at 136.4 after breaking off at 133.4. This is a gap of 13 lines; see note on previous page.***

135.2 wrastling fg • 135A.2 taried g • 135A.4 countrey f, cuntrie g • 136.1 ther f; upset f ***C1*** *• 136.2 white f; bull f • 136.3 great fg; brydle f, bridle g • 136.4 bright g*

abfg

137 A payre of gloves, a rede golde rynge, [447] 545
A pype of wyne, in **good fay**; *[177]*
What man **that** bereth hym best i-wys
The pryce shall bere away.

138 There was a yeman in that place,
And best worthy was he, 550
And for he was ferre and frembde bested, [448] *[177]* *far from home and friend?*
I-slayne he sholde have be.

139 The knyght had *reuthe of* this yeman, *pity for*
In place **where that** he stode;
He sayd that yoman sholde have no harme, 555
For love of Robyn Hode.

140 The knyght presed into the place,
An hondred folowed hym **in fee** [448] *[178]*
With bowes bent and arowes sharpe,
For to *shende* that company. *break up, destroy* 560

- **137.2** good fay **bfg**] fay **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **137.3** that **a**] *omit* **bfg** • i-wys (I wys **ab**)] ywys **f**, ywis **g**
- **137.4** pryce **ab**] prece **f**, prize **g** • shall (shal **f**)] sholde ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **138.2** And] Bnd *(sic.)* **a**
- **138.3** ferre] fayre **f**, farre **g** • frembde **a**] frend **bf**, friend **g** • bested **ag**] besrad (bestad?) **b**[vid] *(Ohlgren reads as* bestrad, *but the text is definitely* bes[.]ad *– six letters)*, bestad **f** ***C1*** • *whole line*] ferre from home and frend *(or similar)* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **138.4** I-slayne **]** I slayne **b,** Slayne **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, yslayne **f**, yslaine **g**
- **139.2** where that **bg** (where the he *(sic.)* **f**)] where **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** *(note Child's reading* placë *to make the syllable count correct)*
- **139.3** that yoman **ab**] the yeman **f** (the yeoman **g**)
- **139.4** love **ab**] the love **fg**
- **140.1** knyght] knvght **a**[vid] *(broken letter?)*, knight **g** • the place] place **f**
- **140.2** hondred **b**] hundreth **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • in fee ***RBW*** *cj. (to rhyme with* company *in 140.4)*] *omit* **a**, in fere *(i.e.* in company) **bf** ***KO***, in feare **g**, free ***C1 [FJC]*** *(ex cj.)* ***FBG DT***
- **140.4** shende (shend **fg**)] shield ***RBW*** *cj.; see next note* • company] knyght there ***RBW*** *cj.; (to rhyme with "fere" in 140.2 if that reading is accepted)*

137.1 paire g; read f, red g; gold ring g • 137.2 pipe g; wine g • 137.3 beareth g; him fg • 137.4 beare fg; a way b • 138.1 yoman a ***M****, yeoman g • 138.4 shulde a* ***M****, should fg • 139.1 knight ag* ***M****; ruthe a* ***M****, ruth fg; yoman a* ***M****, yeoman g, yemàn* ***C1*** *• 139.2 placë* ***FJC****; stood g • 139.3 sayde a* ***M****, said f, said g; shulde a* ***M****, shold f, should g; harm g • 140.1 preased g, pressed* ***FBG****; in to a* ***M*** *• 140.2 followed g; him fg • 140.3 bowës* ***FJC****; arrowes g, arowës* ***FJC*** *• 140.4 companye af* ***M***

abfg

141 They *sholderd* all and made hym rome, — *nudged, shouldered; read "gathered"*
To *wete* what he wolde say; — *know*
He toke the yeman by the honde,
And gave hym all the *playe*. — *prize*

142 He gave hym *fyve marke* for his wyne, [448] — *5 marks=3⅔ pounds* — 565
There it laye on the *molde*, — *ground*
And bad it *sholde be sette a broche*, — *(a barrel) should be tapped/broached*
Drynke who so wolde.

143 Thus longe taryed this gentyll knyght,
Tyll that playe was done; — 570
So longe abode Robyn fastynge,
Thre houres after the none. [385]

The Thyrde Fytte — **Thyrde bf *C1*] Thirde a *FJC FBG KO*, Third g *DT*; fitte g**

144 *Lyth* and lysten, gentyllmen, [448] — *attend, listen (imperat. of "lythen")*
All that now be here;
Of Lytell Johan, that was the knyghtes man, — 575
Good myrthe ye shall here.

- **141.1** sholderd all **b** (shulderd **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] shouldreth (*omitting* "all") **f** (shouldred **g**) • rome (i.e. "room") **ab** (**g** roome)] come **f**
- **141.2** wete] wit **g**
- **141.4** hym **bf** (him **g**)] hm̄ = hym **a** (ꝑ *is probably an out-of-sorts* y, *but I can't be sure)*
- **142.1** marke **ab**] mark **f**, markes **g** • wyne *(i.e. either* win *or* wine) **ab**] win **f**, wine **g**
- **142.2** laye **b** (lay **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] laye than **f**, lay then **g** • molde **ab**] modle *(sic.)* **f**, mould **g**
- **142.4** Drynke] And drynke that **f**, And drinke **g**, drynkë ***FJC FBG***; Drynke it ***RBW*** *cj*
- **143.1** longe **b** (**fg** long) (***DT in it.***)] louge **a** *(sic.; ex inv.)*
- **143.2** playe **bf** (play **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] the play **g** • done **bf** (***DT in it.***)] doue **a** *(ex inv.),* doone **g**
- **143.3** that was] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.* • **143.4** after the none **ab**] ofter none **f**, after noon **g**

141.1 him g • 141.2 would fg • 141.3 tooke g; yemānbi=yemanbi a, yeoman by g, yeman bi ***M****; hande af* ***M****, hand g • 141.4 al a* ***M****; play ag* ***M*** *• 142.1 him fg; five fg • 142.2 lay ag* ***M*** *• 142.3 shulde a* ***M****, should fg; be set ag* ***M****, beset f; abroche f, abroach g • 142.4 would fg • 143.1 taried afg* ***M****; gentil knight f, gentle knight g • 143.2 till g • 143.3 solonge b, so long g; a bode b; fastinge a* ***M****, fastyng f, fasting g • 143.4 three g; hourës* ***FJC****; noone g • 144.1 lythe g; lystyn a* ***M****, listen g; gentilmen a* ***M****; gentyll men bf* ***C1****, gentlemen g • 144.2 al f; nowe af; heere g • 144.3 knightes af* ***M****, knights g • 144.4 goode a* ***M****; myrth a* ***M****, mirth g; heare fg*

abfg

145 It was upon a mery day
That yonge men wolde go ***shete***; *shoot*
Lytell Johan *fet* his bowe anone, [449] *probably "fetched"; possibly "fitted"*
And sayd he wolde them mete.

146 Thre tymes Lytell Johan ***shet*** a bout, [449] *shot*
And alway he ***sleste*** the wande; [449] *sliced (or slit; see textual note)*
The proude sheryf of Notyngham
By the markes **gan** stande.

147 The sheryf swore a full grete othe:
'By hym that dyed on a tree, [421]
This man is the best archere
That **ever** yet **sawe I me**. *[178]*

148 'Say me now, *wyght* yonge man, *strong or bold*
What is now thy name?
In what countre were thou born,
And where is thy *wonnynge wan*?' *living won, i.e. where do you live?*

- **145.2** shete (*to rhyme with* mete *in 145.4*) **a**] shote **b**, shute **f**, shoote **g**
- **145.4** mete] mnete *(sic.)* **g**
- **146.1** shet (cf. 145.2) **a**] shot **bfg** • a bout **b**] aboute **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, about **fg** *C1*
- **146.2** alway **bfg** *FBG*] alwey **a** *FJC DT KO* • he] *omit* **fg** *FBG* • sleste *(i.e. probably* sliced) **b**] slet *(i.e. probably* slit) **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, cleft **f** *C1*, clave **g**
- **146.4** gan **bfg** *FBG*] can **a** *FJC DT KO*
- **147.2** a tree **bg** (atre **a**, a tre *FJC FBG DT KO*)] tree *(omitting* a) **f**
- **147.4** ever] *omit* **b** • yet] *omit* **fg** • sawe I me **b** (*FJC* sawe I [me]) *KO (cf. 169.4)*] sawe I **a**, I dyd (did **g**) see **fg** *FBG*, sa we *DT* (*ex cj.? ex err.?*), saw mine ee *RBW cj.*
- **148.2** now **b** (nowe **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*)] thou **fg**
- **148.3** were thou **ab**] thou wast **f**, wast thou **g**
- **148.4** wonnynge **b** (wonynge **a** *FJC FBJ DT KO*)] winnig *(sic.)* **f**, wonning **g** • wan **b**] wane **afg** *C1 FJC FBJ DT KO*

145.1 merry g • 145.2 yong g, would fg, goe g • 145.3 a none b, anon g • 145.4 sayde af ***M****, said g; would fg • 146.1 three times g • 146.2 wand g • 146.3 proud g, proudë* ***FJC****; sherif a* ***M****, shyryfe f, sheriffe g; notingham af* ***M****, nottingham g • 146.4 markës* ***FJC****; stand g • 147.1 sherif a* ***M****, shirife f, sheriffe g; greate a* ***M****, great fg; oath g • 147.2 him fg; dyede a* ***M****, died g • 147.3 arschere a FBG DT KO, archer g, arschére* ***FJC*** *• 148.1 nowe a* ***M****; wight afg* ***M****; yong g • 148.3 countrei f, countrie g, countré* ***KO****; borne afg* ***M***

abfg

149 In Holdernesse, **sir**, I was **borne**, [449] *[178]*
I-wys all of my dame;
Men call me Reynolde Grenelefe [451]
Whan I am at **hame**.' [451]

150 'Saye me, **Reynolde** Grenelefe, *[178]*
Wolte thou dwell with me?
And every yere I wyll the gyve
Twenty marke to thy fee.' [452] *20 marks=13⅓ pounds*

151 'I have a mayster,' sayd Lytell Johan
'A curteys knyght is he;
May ye **gete leve** of hym,
The better may it bee.'

152 The sheryfe *gate* Lytell Johan *got, i.e. received the service of*
Twelve monethes of the knyght; [453]
Therfore he gave hym ryght anone
A good hors and a *wyght*. [453] *strong*

- **149.1** Holdernesse **bf**] Holdernes **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Holdernes **g** • sir **a**] *omit* **bfg** • borne] bore **b**
- **149.2** I-wys (I wys **ab** ***C1***)] ywys **f**[vid]**g**, iwys ***KO*** • all **b** (al **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] *omit* **g**
- **149.3** Reynolde **ab**] Renold **f**, Reinald **g** • Grenelefe **bf**] Grenelef **a** (***FJC*** Grenëlef) ***FBG DT KO*** *(here but not in 150.1)*, Greene-leafe **g**
- **149.4** hame **b** ***KO***] home **afg** ***FJC FBG DT***
- **150.1** Reynolde (*cj.* ex 149.3)] Reynode **a** (Reyno[l]de ***FJC***), Reynaud **b** (***DT in it.)***, Reynold **f**, Reinald **g** • Grenelefe **abf** (Grenëlefe ***FJC***) ***FBG DT KO***] Greene-leafe **g**
- **150.2** Wolte **b**] Wolde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Wylt **f**, Wilt **g**
- **150.3** wyll **bf** (will **g**)] woll **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **150.4** to] tho *(sic.)* **a**
- **151.3** gete leve **bf** (get leave **g**)] leve gete **a** (***FJC FBG*** levë) ***DT KO***
- **152.1** gate] gat **fg** • Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a**
- **152.3** hym ryght **b** (hym right **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] to him **fg** • anone] anon **g**

149.3 cal a ***M*** • *149.4 when g* • *150.1 sey a* ***M****, say fg* • *150.3 yeare g; thee give g* • *151.1 maister ag* ***M****; sayde a* ***M****, said fg* • *151.2 curteis f, courteous g; knight afg* • *151.3 him g* • *151.4 be afg* ***M*** • *152.1 sherif a* ***M****, shyryfe f, sheriffe g* • *152.1 gat g* • *152.2 monthes g, monethës* ***FJC****; knight ag* ***M*** • *152.3 therefore g* ***FBG****; a none b, anon g* • *152.4 gode a; horse fg; wight ag* ***M***

abfg

153 Nowe is Lytel Johan the sheryffes man,
God lende us well to spede! [440]
But allway thought Lytell Johan
To *quyte* hym wele his *mede*. *quit, acquit, repay; reward, thing earned, just deserts*

154 'Now so God me helpe,' sayd Lytell Johan,
'And **be** my true *lewte*, *loyalty*
I shall be the worste servaunte to hym
That ever yet had he.'

155 It **befell** upon a Wednesday
The sheryfe on hontynge was gone, [453]
And Lytel Johan lay in his bed,
And was *foryete* at home. *forgotten, left behind*

156 Therfore he was fastynge
Tyl it was past the none;
'Good syr *stuarde*, I pray **to** the, *steward*
Gyve **me to dyne**,' sayd Lytell Johan. [454] *[178]*

- **153.1** Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a** (also **fg**)
- **153.2** God lende **a**] Ge gyve *(sic.)* **b**, He geve **f** (give **g**), God gyve ***C1***
- **153.3** Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a** (also **fg**)
- **154.1** me] *omit* **fg** • Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a** (also **fg**)
- **154.2** be **bf**] by **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **154.4** yet had he **ab**] he had yet **fg** *(evidently thinking* lewte *was pronounced as one syllable,* lewt, *not two syllables,* lewtë; *compare the variant in 169.4)*
- **155.1** befell **bfg**] fell **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **155.2** hontynge **b**] huutynge **a** *(ex inv.?),* huntyng **f**, hunting **g**, huntynge ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **153.3** Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a** (also **fg**)
- **155.4** foryete (**b** for yete)] foriete **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, forget **f**, forgot **g**
- **156.2** the none **ab** (thenoone **f**)] noone *(omitting* the) **g**
- **156.3** Good (Gode **a** ***FJC FBG DT***)] God ***KO*** *(ex err?)* • to **a**] omit **bfg**
- **156.4** me to dyne **b**] me my dynere **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, me meate (meat **g**) **fg** • Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a** (also **fg**)

*153.1 now fg; sherifes a **FBG DT KO**, sheryfes f, sheriffes g, sheriffës **FJC** • 153.2 wel f; speed g • 153.3 alwey a **M**; all way b, alway fg **C1** • 153.4 quete f, quite g; him fg; wel f, well g **C1**; meed g • 154.1 noweso a; nowe **M**; helpë **FJC**; sayde a **M**, said g • 154.2 trueleutye a; trwe (sic.) lewte f; trewe lewtè **C1**, true leutye **M** • 154.3 shal f; worst afg **M**; servaunt af **M**, servant g; him fg • 155.2 sherif a **M**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 156.1 therefore g; fastinge a **M**, fastyng f, fasting g • 156.2 til a **M**, till g • 156.3 sir ag **M**; steward fg, stuard **C1**; thee fg • 156.4 geve f **C1**; saide a **M**, said g; Lytel **C1***

abfg

157 'It is longe for Grenelefe
Fastynge **thus for** to be;
Therfore I pray the, **sir** stuarde,
My dyner **gyve thou** me.' *[179]*

158 'Shalt thou never ete ne drynke,' sayd the stuarde,
'Tyll my lorde be come to towne.'
'I make myn avowe to God,' sayd Lytell Johan, [454]
'I had *lever* to cracke thy crowne.' *liefer, i.e. would be happier to*

159 The butler was full uncurteys, [454]
There he stode on flore;
He sterte to **the** *buttery* *buttery=i.e. kitchen, food store*
And shet fast the dore.

160 Lytell Johan gave the buteler suche a **tap** *[179]*
His backe ***yede*** **nygh in two**; *[179]* *yielded? ȝede=went? clearly to be read "broke"*
Tho he lived an hondreth **wynter**, *[179]*
The wors he sholde go.

- **157.1** longe (long **g**)] to long **f** ***C1*** (to longe ***FBG***)
- **157.2** thus for **a**] so long **bfg**
- **157.3** sir **a**] *omit* **bfg**
- **157.4** gyve thou (give ÿ **b**, geve thou **f**, give thou **g**, gif thou ***FBG KO***)] gif **a** ***FJC DT***
- **158.1** Shalt...drynke (eat… drink **f**)] Shalt neither eat nor drinke **g** • saide the stuarde (stnarde **b** *ex inv.*, ste / ward *with a line break* **f**, steward **g**)] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **158.2** be come] benome *(sic.)* **f**
- **158.3** Johan **b**] John (i.e. not "Johnn") **a** (also **fg**)
- **158.4** lever] lere **f**
- **159.1** full] *omit* **g** • uncurteys] uncurties **f**, uncourteous **g** • **159.2** on] on the **g**
- **159.3** sterte **b** (stert **f**)] start **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • to] on **g** • the] *omit* **b**
- **160.1** tap **a**] rap **b**, rappe **fg**
- **160.2** yede **bfg**] went **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • nygh **bf** (**g** nigh)] nere **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • in two **ag**] on two **b**, into **f**
- **160.3** Tho **bf**] Thougt *(sic.)* **a**, though **g** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • lived] lyveth **f** (liveth **g** ***FBG***) • an hondreth ***C1***] an C (i.e. 100) **a**, an.c. (i.e. 100) **b**, an.hundretth **f**, an hundreth **g**, an hundred ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • wynter **bf** ***FBG***] winters **g**, ier *(i.e.* year) **a** ***FJC DT KO***
- **160.4** wors he sholde **b** (worse he should **f**; he shuld ***DT in it.***)] worſshuld he *(i.e.* wors shuld he) **a** ***FJC KO***, he still shall **g** ***FBG*** • go **bf**] be go **a**, goe **g** ***FBG***

*157.1 longefor a; grene lefe bf, greene-leafe g, grenëlefe **FJC** • 157.2 fastinge a **𝓜**, fasting g • 157.3 therfor a **𝓜**, therefore g; thee g; stewarde f, steward g • 157.4 mi a **𝓜**, dinner g; mee f • 158.1 saide a **𝓕 KO**, sayde f, said g **DT** • 158.2 tyl f, till g; lord fg; ōme (=come ?) f; town f • 158.3 mine fg; a vowe b, avow fg; saide a **𝓜**, said fg • 158.4 crake a **𝓜**, crack fg; crown f • 159.1 boteler a **𝓜**, buttler f, butler g; ful f • 159.2 stood g; floore g • 159.3 botery a **𝓜** • 159.4 shut g; fastthe f; doore fg • 160.1 boteler a **𝓜**, butler fg; such **DT** • 160.4 worse g*

161 He *sporned* the dore with his fote; *spurned: kicked, disdained, struck*
It went **ope** wel and fyne; *[179]*
And there he made **large** *lyveray*, *livery, hence presumably "servant's portion"*
Both of ale and **of** wyne.

162 'Syth ye wyll nat dyne,' sayd Lytell Johan
'I shall gyve you to drynke;
And though ye lyve an hondred wynter
On Lytell Johan ye shall thynk.'

163 Lytel Johan ete, and Lytell Johan dronke,
The whyle **that he wolde**; *[179]*
The sheryfe had in his kechyn a *coke*, [454] *cook*
A stoute man and a bolde.

164 'I make myn avowe to God,' sayd the coke, [454]
'Thou arte a *shrewde* ***hynde*** [454] *[179]* *wicked, cursed; probably hyne, servant*
In **ani hous for** to dwel,
For to ask thus to dyne.'

- **161.2** ope ***RBW*** *cj.* **g**] opē, i.e. open **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, up **bf**
- **161.3** there] therfore **a** (therefore ***DT***) • large **a**] a large **bfg** ***C1*** • lyveray (livery **g**)] lyberty ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **161.4** ale] all (!) **f** • of wyne **a**] wyne **bf** (wine **g**)
- **162.1** ye **a**] yr *(sic.)* **b**, yew **f**, you **g** • wyll **b** (will **g**)] wol **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, yl (sic.) **f** • nat **a**] not **bfg** • Johan **b**] John *(i.e. not* Johnn) **a** (*also* **fg**)
- **162.2** gyve (geve **f**, give **g**) (***DT in it.***)] gyne **a** *(ex inv.)*
- **162.3** ye] you **g** • an] this **fg** • hondred **b**] hundred **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hundreth **fg** • **162.4** ye shall] shall ye **fg**
- **163.1** Johan (1) **b**] John *(i.e. not* Johnn) **a** (also **fg**) • ete] eat **fg** • Lytel Johan (2)] Litel John *(i.e not* Johnn) **a** ***[C1] FJC DT KO***] Lytell *(sic., omitting* Johan*)* **b**, also *(omitting* Little John (2), *i.e. read line* Little John eat and also dronke (drunke **g**)) **fg** • dronke **bf**] drank **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, drunke **g**
- **163.2** that **afg**] *omit* **b** • wolde] wol be *(sic., ex inv.?)* **a** ***DT***
- **163.3** his] the **g**
- **164.1** myn (mine **f**)] my **g** • **164.2** hynde **ab**] hyne **f** (hine **g**) ***FJC^{marg} FBG***
- **164.3** ani hous **a**] an householde **bf** (housholde **f**, hous-hold **g**), ani householde *(cj.?)* ***FBG*** • for **ag**] *omit* **bf**
- **164.4** to dyne] for to dyne **f**

161.1 spurned fg; doore g; foote g • 161.2 well fg; fine g •161.4 bothe a ***M*** *• 162.1 sith ag* ***M****; dine g; sayde a* ***M****, said g; Lytel* ***C1*** *• 162.2 Ishall f, drinke ag* ***M*** *• 162.3 thogh g; live fg ; winter fg • 162.4 Onlyttel f; thinke ag* ***M****, thenke f • 163.2 while ag* ***DT KO****, whilë* ***F****; would fg • 163.3 sherife a* ***M****, shyrife f, sheriffe g; kechin f, kitchin g; cooke g • 163.4 stout g; bold g • 164.1 mak f; a vowe b, a vow f, avow g; saide a* ***M****, said g; cooke g • 164.2 art fg; shrewed f, shrewd g • 164.3 dwell fg • 164.4 aske afg* ***FBG DT****, askë* ***FJC****; thꝫ (for "thus") a; dine g*

165 And there he *lent* Lytell Johan — *gave*
Good strokes thre;
'I make myn **avowe**,' sayd Lytell Johan, [454] *[179]*
'These strokes lyketh well **me**.'

166 'Thou arte a bolde man and **an** hardy,
And so thynketh me;
And *or* I passe *fro* this place — *ere, i.e. before; from*
Asayed better shalt thou be.' — *Assayed, i.e. tested*

167 Lytell Johan drewe a **full** good swerde,
The *coke* toke another in honde; — *cook*
They thought nothynge for to fle,
But styfly for to stonde.

168 There they fought sore togyder
Two myle way and **well** more; — *time needed to walk two miles: 30-45 minutes*
Myght neyther other harme done
The *mountenaunce* of an houre. [454] — *remainder*

- **165.1** Johan **b**] John *(i.e. not* Johnn) **a** *(also* **fg**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **165.2** Good **bfg** (***DT in it.***)] God **a**, gode ***FBG KO*** (God[ë] ***FJC***)
- **165.3** avowe (**bf** a vowe) (**g** avow) ***FBG***] anowe to God (**a** *ex inv.*), avowe to God *(cf. 158.3, 164.1, etc).* ***FJC (DT*** *avowe* to God***) KO***
- **165.4** lyketh **b**] lyked **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, do lyke **f** (doe like **g**) • me **afg** ***C1***] *omit* **b**
- **166.1** an hardy **b**] hardy **a** ***FJC DT KO***, a hardy **f** (a hardie **g**) ***FBG***
- **166.3** or] ere **fg** • fro] from **g**
- **167.1** full good ***RBW*** *cj.* (**a** fulgode)] good (*omitting* full) **bfg**, ful gode ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • swerde **b**] sworde **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, sword **g**
- **167.2** toke] *omit* **g**
- **167.3** for] *omit* **fg**
- **168.2** well **a**] *omit* **bfg** ***FBG***
- **168.4** mountenaunce **b**] mountnauuce **a** *(ex inv.),* mountnaunce ***FJC FBG DT KO***, mountenance **fg**

*165.1 Lytel **C1**; • 165.2 strokis a **M**; three fg • 165.3 myne f, mine g; sayde a **M**, said fg • 165.4 strokis a **M**; wel f • 166.1 art fg; bold fg • 166.2 thinketh afg **M** • 166.3 pas a **M** • 166.4 assayed a **M**, asayde f, assaied g • 167.1 drew a **M** • 167.2 cooke fg; a nother abf, an other g; hande af **M**, hand g • 167.3 no thyngefor a, nothyng f, nothing g, no thynge **M**; flee fg • 167.4 stifly afg **M**; stande af **M**, stand g • 168.1 faught a **M**; togedere a **M**, to gyder b, together f, togethre g • 168.2 mile fg, mylë **F** • 168.3 might fg; neither g • 168.4 owre a **M***

169 ‘I make myn avowe to God,’ sayd Lytell Johan, [454]
‘And by my trewe *lewte*, *loyalty*
Thou art one of the best swerde-men
That ever **yet sawe I me**. *[179]*

170 ‘Cowdest thou shote as well in a bowe,
To grene wode thou sholdest with me,
And two tymes in the yere thy clothynge
I-chaunged sholde be. [455]

171 ‘And every yere of Robyn Hode
Twenty marke to thy *fee*:’ [455] *20 marks=13⅓ pounds; fee: wages*
‘Put up thy swerde,’ sayd the *coke*, *cook*
‘And felowes wyll we be.’

172 Then he *fette* to Lytell Johan *fetched, brought*
The *numbles* of a ***doo***, *sweetbreads, organ meats; doe*
Good brede, and full good wyne;
They ete and dranke thereto.

- **169.2** by] be **b**
- **169.4** yet sawe I me **bf**] yit saw I **a**, I saw yet **g** (*evidently thinking* lewte *was pronounced as one syllable,* lewt, *not two syllables,* lewtë; *compare the variant in 154.4)* **g**, yit sa we ***DT***, yit sawe I me (***FJC*** [me]) ***FBG KO*** *(cf. 147.4)*
- **170.3** two tymes **b** (two times **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] .ii.tymes **f**
- **170.4** I-chaunged (I chaunged **b**)] Chaunged **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Chaunged it **f**, changed it **g**, ichaunged ***C1*** • sholde be **b**] shulde be **a** ***DT KO***, should be **fg**, shuldë be ***FJC FBG***, shoulde it be ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **171.4** wyll we **b** (wyl we **f**)] woll we **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, we will **g**
- **172.1** fette **b**] fet **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, sette (ſette *instead of* fette) ***RBW*** *cj.* (**f**[vid] set)
- **172.3** wyne **b** (wyn e *(sic.)* **a**) (wine **g**)] wyde *(sic.)* **f**
- **172.4** ete] ate **f**, eat **g**

169.1 myne f, mine g; avow g; sayde a ***M****; said fg* • *169.2 true ag* ***M****; lewtè* ***C1****; lewtë* ***F****, lewté* ***KO*** • *169.3 sworde men a* ***DT****; swerde men b. swordemen f* ***KO****, sword-men g, sworde-men* ***FJC FBG*** • *170.1 couldest f, couldst g, coowdest (sic.)* ***C1****; shoote g; wel f; bow g* • *170.2 grene wood f* ***C1 KO****, greene-wood g, grenë wode* ***FJC****; shuldest a* ***M****, shouldeste f, shouldst g* • *170.3 yeare g; clothinge a* ***M****, clothing fg* • *170.4 shulde a* ***M*** • *171.1 yeare g; Robynhode f* • *171.2 merketo a, merke to* ***M****; fe a* ***M*** • *171.3 sworde f, sword g; saide a* ***M****, said g; cooke g* • *171.4 fellowes g, felowës* ***FJC*** • *172.1 thanne a* ***M****, than f* • *172.2 nowmbles a* ***M****, nombles f; do af* ***M****, doe g* • *172.3 gode (x2) a* ***M****; bread fg; ful f* • *172.4 drank a* ***M****; there too a, theretoo* ***M***

abfg

173 And whan they had dronken well,
Ther *trouthes togyder they plyght* — *troth together they plighted: pledged fidelity* — 690
That they wolde be with Robyn
That *ylke* same nyght. — *every, i.e. very*

174 They dyde them to the tresure hous,
As fast as they myght gone;
The lockes, that were of full good stele, [455] — 695
They brake them *everychone*. — *every one*

175 They toke awaye the sylver vessell,
And all that they myght get;
Peces, masars, **ne** spones, — *dishes, plate; cups*
Wolde **they none** forgete. — 700

176 Also **they** toke the good *pence [180]* — *pence or coin*
Thre hondred pounde and more,
And dyde **them** strayt to Robyn Hode
Under the grene wode ***hore***. [456] *[180]* — *hoar: ancient, majestic, hoary; see note*

- **173.2** Ther *(*="their"? "there"?) **b**] Theyre **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, their **fg** • they] the **f**
- **173.3** wolde] wode **a** (wo[l]de ***FJC***) • Robyn] Robyn Hode ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **173.4** same (samë ***FJC FBG***)] *omit* **g** • nyght **a**] day **b**, day at nyght **fg** ***C1***
- **174.1** They] The **f** • dyde **b** (dyd **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] hyed **f**, hied **g**, dyde ***C1***
- **174.2** myght] could **g** • **174.3** of full **a**] *omit* **b**, of **fg**
- **174.4** everychone (every chone **b**)] everichone **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, evry chone **f**, every one **g**
- **175.1** the] *omit* **fg** • **175.2** myght] migt **a**, might **g** (mig[h]t ***FJC***, myght ***DT***) ***FBG KO***
- **175.3** masars **b**] wasars **a** *(ex inv.)*, masers **fg** • ne **a**] and **bfg**
- **175.4** they none **bg** (non **f** ***C1***)] thei not **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **176.1** they] *omit* **a** ([they] ***FJC***) (***DT in it.***)
- **176.2** hondred **b**] hundred **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hundreth **fg** • more **ab**] three **fg** ***C1***
  (perhaps to rhyme with "tree" in 176.4 and perhaps to conform with the total given in 179.4)
- **176.3** dyde **b**] did **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hyed **f**, hied **g** • them **afg** ***C1***] hym **b** • strayt **b** (streyght **f**)] steyte *(sic.)* **a**, *omit* **g**, streyte (***FJC*** st[r]eyte) ***FBG*** (***DT*** streyte) ***KO***
- **176.4** grene wode hore **a** (grenë ***FJC***)] grene wode tre **b**, grene wodetree **f**, greene-wood tree **g** *(perhaps to rhyme with "three" in 176.2)*

173.1 when ag ***M***; *dronkyn a* ***M***, *drunken g* • *173.2 truthes g, trouthës* ***FJC***; *togeder a* ***M***, *to gyder b, together fg; plight ag* ***M*** • *173.3 would fg* • *173.4 ylkë* ***F*** • *174.1 tresourehows a, treasor house f, treasure-house g, treasoure-hows* ***F***, *tresoure hows a* ***DT KO*** • *174.3 lokkes a* ***FBG DT KO***, *lokkës* ***FJC***; *gode a* ***M***; *steele g* • *175.1 tooke g; away afg* ***C1 M***; *a waye b; silver ag* ***M***; *vessel f* • *175.2 thei a* ***M*** • *175.3 Pecis a* ***M***, *peeces g; sponis a* ***M***, *spoones g* • *175.4 would fg; forget afg* ***M***; *for gete b* • *176.1 tooke g; gode pens a* ***FBJ DT KO***, *godë pens* ***FJC*** • *176.2 three g* ***KO***; *pound g*

abfg

177 ‘God the save, my dere mayster,
And Cryst the save and se.’
And than sayd Robyn to Lytell Johan,
‘Welcome myght thou be.

178 ‘**And also** be that fayre yeman
Thou bryngest there with the;
What tydynges fro Notyngham?
Lytell Johan, tell thou me.’

179 ‘Well the greteth the proude sheryfe,
And sende the here by me *[180]*
His *coke* and his sylver vessell, *cook*
And thre hondred pounde and thre.’

180 ‘I make myne avowe to God,’ sayd Robyn, [454]
‘And to the Trenyte, [456]
It was never by his good wyll
This good is come to me.’

- **177.3** than **b**] thanne **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, thau f *(ex inv.)* thou **g** (*i.e.* ‘And thou,’ sayd Robyn)
- **177.4** myght thou be **ab**] thou art to me **fg**
- **178.1** And also **b**] Also **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, And so **fg** • be that fayre **ab**] is that good **fg**
- **178.2** *(whole line)*] That thou hast brought wyth the **f** (...with thee **g**)
- **178.3** fro **ab**] from **fg** • Notyngham **bf**] Notygham *(sic.)* **a** (Noty[n]gham ***FJC***, Noty*n*gham ***DT***), Notiengham *(sic.)* **g**
- **179.2** And sende the **ab** ***KO*** *(perhaps read* And sendethe, *i.e.* And sends ?)] He hath send the **f**, He hath sent thee **g**, And sendeth the (***FJC*** sende[th] the *ex cj.*) ***FBG DT***, And sent the ***FJC*** *cj.*
- **179.3** coke **ab**] cope **f**, cup **g**
- **179.4** hondred **b**] hundred **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hundreth **f**, hondreth **g** • and thre] money ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **180.1** avowe (a vowe **b**) (***DT in it.***)] Abowe *(sic.)* **a**, advow **f**, avow **g** • sayd (sayde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, said **g**)] sad **f**
- **180.2** to] by **g**
- **180.4** come] cone *(sic.)* **b**

*177.1 deere g, derë **FJC**; maister g, maystèr **C1** • 177.2 Criste a **𝓜**, Chryst f, Christ g; thesave a, thee save g; see g • 177.3 sayde a **𝓜**, said g • 178.1 yeoman g, yemàn **C1** • 178.3 tydings fg, tydyngës **FJC** • 179.1 thee g; gretith a **𝓜**, greeteth g; proudë **FJC**; sheryf a **𝓜**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 179.2 heere g • 179.3 silver ag **𝓜**; vessel **DT** (ex err?) • 179.4 three g; pound fg; three g • 180.1 mine fg • 180.2 andto f; trynete f, trinity g, trenytè **C1**, trenytë **𝓕**, trenyté **KO** • 180.3 gode a **𝓜**; will g • 180.4 gode a **𝓜***

abfg

181 Lytell Johan **hym there** bethought [457]
On a *shrewed* ***whyle***; [457] *clever? wicked?; wyle: wile, trick (whence "wily")*
Fyve myle in the forest he ran,
Hym *happed* ***all*** *his wyll.* *all his wish/plan/wile came true*

182 Than he met the proud sheryf,
Huntynge with hounde and horne;
Lytell Johan coude **of** curteysye, [457]
And kneled hym beforne.

183 'God the save, my dere mayster,
And Cryst the save and see.'
'Raynolde Grenelefe,' sayd the sheryfe, *[180]*
'Where hast thou nowe be?'

184 'I have be in this forest;
A fayre syght can I se;
It was one of the fayrest **syght**
That ever yet sawe I me.

- **181.1** hym there **b**] there hym **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, hym **f**, him **g**
- **181.2** shrewed **bf**] shrewde **ag** *FJC FBG DT KO* • whyle **b**] wyle **af** *C1 FJC FBG DT KO*, wile **g**
- **181.3** Fyve myle] v myle *(i.e.* 5 mile) **a**, .v.myle **f**, 5.mile **g** • he ran (heran **a**)] *omit* **g**
- **181.4** happed] happened **g** • all **a**] at **bfg**
- **182.2** Huntynge **bf** (*DT in it.*)] Hnntynge **a** *(ex inv.)*, hunting **g** • hounde **b**] houndes **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, hound **fg**
- **182.3** coude of **a**] coud his **b**, coulde his **f**, could his **g**
- **183.1** the save] save thee **g** • my] me **f**
- **183.2** the *(i.e.* thee)] you **g**
- **183.3** Raynolde **b** (cf. 189.3) (*DT in it.*)] Rrynolde **a**, Reynold **f**, Reinald **g,** Reynolde *FJC ex cj. FBG KO* • sheryfe **b**] shryef **a** *FJC DT*, shyryfe **f**, shyref *FBG KO (ex cj.) (cf. 187.1)*, sheriffe **g**, sheryfe *C1*
- **183.4** hast thou] have you **g**
- **184.1** have] have nowe **f** (have now **g**) • this] the **g**
- **184.3** syght **b**] syghtes **a** *C1 FJC FBG DT KO*, sightes **f**, sights **g**

181.1 be thought b • 181.3 forrest g • 181.4 him g; will g • 182.1 then g; hemetthe a; proude afg FBG DT KO, proudë FJC; sheref a 𝓜, shyrfe f, sheriffe g • 182.3 curteyse a 𝓜, courtesie g • 182.4 knelyd a 𝓜, kneeled g; him g • 183.1 deere g, derë FJC; maister g, maystèr C1 • 183.2 criste a 𝓜, chryst f, christ g; se af 𝓜 • 183.3 Greene-leafe g, Grenëlefe FJC; sayde a 𝓜, said g • 183.4 now g • 184.1 forrest g • 184.2 faire g; sight g; see g • 184.3 fairest g; 184.4 saw g

185 ‘Yonder I **se** a ryght fayre hart,
His coloure is of grene; [457]
Seven score of dere upon an herde
Be with hym all bedene. *usually “together”; possibly a variant of “biding”* 740

186 ‘**Their *tyndes*** are so sharp, mayster, *[180]* *tines (of the antlers)*
Of sexty, and well *mo*, *more*
That I durst not shote for drede [458]
Lest they wolde me *sloo.*’ *slay*

187 ‘I make myn avowe to God,’ sayd the sheryf, [454] 745
‘That syght wolde I fayn se.’ [458]
‘*Buske* you thyderwarde, my dere mayster, *hurry, travel*
Anone, and *wende* with me.’ *go, travel*

188 The sheryfe rode, and Lytell Johan
Of fote he was full smarte, 750
And whan they came **afore** Robyn,
‘Lo, **sir**, here is the mayster hart!’ [458]

- **185.1** se **bf** (see **g**)] sawe **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **185.2** of grene] full shene *Allingham cj.* • his coloure... grene] standyng in the grene ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **185.3** Seven score **bf**] vij.score *(i.e.* 7 score) **a**, seaven score **g** • of] *omit* **fg** • an herde **b**] a herde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, a yerde **f**, a heard **g**
- **186.1** Their tyndes **a** (tyndës ***FJC***)] His tynde **b**, hys tyndes **f**, his tindes **g** • are] be **fg**
- **186.4** lest] least *(sic.)* **g** • me] mė **f**[vid], *possibly to be read* mē=men • sloo **b**] slo **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **187.1** myn] myne **f**, my **g** • shyref **b**] shyrel *(sic.)* **a**, shyryfe **f**, sheriffe **g**
- **187.3** you] the **f**, thee **g**
- **188.2** Of fote] A foote **g**
- **188.3** afore **bfg**] before **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **188.4** sir **a**] *omit* **bfg** ***FBG*** • mayster hart **b**] mayster herte **a** (***FJC FBG KO*** mayster-herte) ***DT***, maister harte **f** ***C1***, maister hart **g**, mayster harte ***C1***

*185.1 ryghtfayre a, right faire g; harte af **M** • 185.2 hys f; colour g; greene g • 185.3 deere g • 185.4 wyth f; him g; bydene a **M**; be dene b, by dene f, by deene g • 186.1 sharpe afg **FJC DT KO**; maister ag **M** • 186.2 syxty f, sixty g • 186.3 shoote g; dread g • 186.4 would g • 187.1 a vowe b, avow g; sayde a **M**, said g • 187.2 syghte f, sight g; would fg; fayne af **M**, faine g; see g • 187.3 thyder warde a, thitherward g; mi a **M**; deere g, derë **FJC**; maister g, maystèr **C1** • 187.4 a none b, anon g; wend g • 188.1.sherif a **M**; shirife f, sheriffe g • 188.2 offote a; full smerte a **M**, full smart fg • 188.3 whane a **M**, when g • 188.4 loe g; heere g*

189 Styll stode the proude sheryf,
A sory man was he;
'Wo the worthe, Raynolde Grenelefe, [458] *you are worth of woe* 755
Thou hast **betrayed nowe** me.'

190 'I make myn avowe to God,' sayd Lytell Johan, [454]
'Mayster, ye be to blame;
I was mysserved of my dynere
Whan I was with you at hame.' 760

191 Soone he was to *super* sette, *supper*
And served **well** with sylver whyte, *[180]*
And whan the sheryf **se** his vessell [459]
For sorowe he myght not ete.

192 'Make **glad** chere,' sayd Robyn Hode, 765
'Sheryfe, for charyte,
And for the love of Lytell Johan
Thy lyfe **is graunted** to the.' [459] *[181]*

- **189.3** the worthe **ab**] worthe the **f** ***C1***, worth thee **g** • Raynolde **ab** (cf. 183.3)] Reynolde **f**, Reinald **g**
- **189.4** betrayed nowe **a**] now be trayed **b**, now betrayed **f** ***C1***, betrayed (*omitting* now*)* **g** ***FGB***
- **190.1** lytell **b** (litell **a**, Lyttel **f** ***C1***)] *omit* **g**
- **190.4** hame **b**] home **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **191.1** super sette **b**] souper sette **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, souperse *(sic.)* **f**, supper set **g**
- **191.2** well **a**] omit **bfg** ***FBG***
- **191.3** whan] **g** when ***FBG*** • se **b**] sawe **af** (saw **g**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **191.4** not **bfg**] nat **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • ete **ab**] eat e *(sic.)* **f**, eat **g**
- **192.1** glad **a**] gode **b** (good **fg**)
- **192.2** for] of **g**
- **192.4** is graunted **bfg**] I graunt **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***

*188.1 still ag **M**, styl f; stood g; proud **C1**, proudë **FJC**; sherief a **M**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 189.2 sorry g • 189.3 woe g; greenleafe g • 190.1 mine fg; a vowe b, avow g; godsayd b; sayde a **M**, said g; saidlyttel f • 190.2 maister fg • 190.3 misserved g; dyner f, dinner g • 190.4 when g **FBG** • 191.1 sone a **M** • 191.2 silver ag **M**; white ag **M**, whyt f • 191.3 sherif a **M**, shirife f, sheriffe g • 191.4 sorrow g; might fg • 192.1 chere sayde a **M**; cher esayd f; cheere said g • 192.2 sherif a **M**, shirife f, sheriffe g; charite a **DT**, charitie f, charity g, charyté **C1**, charitë **F**, charité **KO** • 192.3 lyt ell f • 192.4 life g; thee g*

abfg

193 Whan they had supped well,
The day was **al a-gone**;
Robyn **commaunde** Lytell Johan *[181]*
To drawe of his hosen and his *shone*; *shoon, i.e. shoes*

194 His *kyrtell*, and his cote of *pye*, *tunic; pie-coloured, i.e. parti-coloured*
That was furred well **fyne**,
And **to** hym a grene mantell, *[181]*
To *lappe* his body therin. *wrap*

195 Robyn commaunded his *wyght* yonge men, *strong and/or bold*
Under the grene wode tre,
They **shall lay** in that same *sote*, *probably sute=suit, i.e. clothing, outfit*
That the sheryf myght them se.

196 All nyght **laye that** proud sheryf
In his breche and in his sherte;
No wonder it was, in grene wode,
Tho his sydes **gan to** smerte.

- **193.1** had] had all **g**
- **193.2** al agone (a gone **b**)] al gone **af** (all **g**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **193.3** Robyn] Roben *(sic.)* **f** • commaunde **a**] commaunded **bf** (commaunde[d] ***FJC***) ***FBG*** (***DT*** commaunde*d*) ***KO***, commanded **g**
- **193.4** hosen and his shone] hose and shoone **g**, hose and shone ***FBG***
- **194.1** of] a **bfg** ***FBG*** (*hence* cote-a-pye ***C1***) • pye **bf** ***FBG***] pie **ag** ***FJC DT KO***
- **194.2** fyne **b**] and fine **ag** (and fyne **f**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **194.3** to **a**] toke **b** (tooke **g**) (to[ke] ***FJC***) ***FBG*** (***DT*** toke *(sic.)*) ***KO***, take **f** ***C1***
- **195.1** yonge men **a**] yongmen **b**, yemen **f**, yeomen **g**
- **195.3** They] That they **g** • shall lay **b**] shulde lye **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, shall lye **f**, shall lie **g** • same] *omit* **fg** • sote **b**] sute **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, sorte **fg** ***C1***
- **196.1** laye **b**] lay **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • that **bfg**] the **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **196.2** in] n *(sic.)* **b** • sherte **bf**] chert **a**, shirt **g**, schert ([s]chert ***FJC***) ***FBG*** (***DT*** schert) ***KO***
- **196.4** Tho **bf**] Though **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • sydes] sides **g** • gan to **a**] do **bf** (doe **g**) • smerte **ab**] smarte **f**; smart **g**

*193.1 when fg **C1**; souped a **𝓜** • 193.4 drawofhis a; draw off g • 194.1 kirtell a **𝓜**, kirtel f, kertle g; coate g • 194.2 fured a **𝓜** • 194.3 him fg **C1**; greene g; mantel a **𝓜**, mantle g, mantèll **C1** • 194.4 lap ag **𝓜**; therein **DT** ex err? • 195.1 commaundyd a **𝓜**, commannded f, commanded g; wight afg **𝓜** • 195.2 grenewood f, greenewood g, grenë-wode **FJC**; tree afg **𝓜** • 195.3 sute a • 195.4 sherif a **𝓜**, shirife f, sheriffe g; might fg; see afg **𝓜** • 196.1 al f; night g; proude a **FBG**, proudë **FJC**; sherif a **𝓜**, shirife f, sheriffe g • 196.2 breech g • 196.3 Now onder (sic.) g; grene wood f, greene-wood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 196.4 sydës **FJC***

abfg

197 ‘Make glad chere,’ sayd Robyn Hode, 785
‘Sheryfe, for charyte;
For this is our order i-wys,
Under the grene wode tre.’

198 ‘This is harder order,’ sayd the sheryfe,
‘Than ony *anker* or frere; [459] *anchorite* 790
For all the golde in mery Englonde
I wolde not longe dwell here.’

199 ‘All **this** twelve monethes,’ sayd Robyn,
‘Thou shalte dwell with me;
I shall the teche, proud sheryfe, 795
An outlawe for to be.’

200 ‘Or I be here another nyght,’ sayd the sheryfe,
‘Robyn, nowe **pray I** the,
Smyte of my hede rather **to-morne**, [459]
And I forgyve it the. 800

- **197.1** chere] *omit* **fg**
- **197.3** order **bg**] ordre **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***] ordery (*sic.*) **f** • i-wys] I wys **ab** ***DT***, ywys **f**, ywis **g**, iwys ***KO***
- **198.2** ony **b**] any **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • anker **b**] ankir **a** ***FGC FBG DT KO***, ancre **fg**
- **198.3** Englonde **a**] Eeglonde *(sic.)* **b**, Englande **f** (**g** …in merryEngland *with no space*)
- **198.4** not **bfg**] nat **a** ***FJC DBG DT KO*** • longe dwell] dwel longe **f** (dwell long **g**)
- **199.1** this **a**] these **bfg** • twelve] xij. (i.e. 12) **a** • Robyn] Robin **a** (which usually reads “Robyn”)
- **200.1** be here another nyght **a**] here another nyght *(sic.)* **b**, here another nyght lye **f** ***C1***, heere an other night lie **g**, , here another nyght lie ***FBG*** • sayd... sheryfe *omit* **g**
- **200.2** pray I **a**] I praye **b**, I pray **fg**
- **200.3** smyte] smite **g**, smythe ***KO*** *(ex. err?)* • my **bfg**] mijn **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • to-morne (to morne **b**, tomorne **fg**)] to morowe **a** (to-morowe ***FJC FBG DT KO***)
- **200.4** *(whole line)*] *move after 201.1 (see note there)* **g**

*197.1 glade a **M**; sayde a **M**, said g • 197.2 sheref a **M**, shyryfe f, shieriffe g; charite a **DT**, charitie f, charity g, charytè **C1**, charitë **F**, charité **KO** • 197.4 grene wode ab, grene wood f, græne-wood g[vid], grenë-wood **FJC**; tree afg **M** • 198.1 ordersayd b; sayde a **M**, said fg; sherief a **M**, shirife f, sheriffe g • 198.2 then g • 198.3 al f **C1**; gold g • 198.4 would fg • her a **M**, heere g • 199.1 monthes ag **M**; sayde a **M**, said g • 199.2 shalt afg **M**; dwel wyth f • 199.3 thee g; teache f, teach g, techë **FJC**; proude afg **FBG DT**, proudë **FJC**; sherif a **M**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 199.4 out lawe b, out-law g, outlawë **FJC** • 200.1 sayde a **M**; sherif a **M**, shyryfe f • 200.2 now g; thee g • 200.3 off g; head fg • 200.4 for gyve b, forgeve f, forgive g; thee fg*

abfg

201 'Lete me go,' then sayd the sheryf,
'For *saynt* charyte, [459] *holy?*
And I wyll be thy best frende *[181]*
That **ever** yet had ye.'

202 'Thou shalte swere me an othe,' sayd Robyn,
'On my bryght *bronde*; [459] *brand=sword*
Shalt thou never awayte me *scathe*, *harm, i.e. await me scathe=plot me harm*
By water ne by *londe*. *land*

203 'And yf thou fynde ony of my men,
By nyght or **by** day *[181]*
Upon thyne othe thou shalt swere
To helpe them that thou may.'

204 Now **have** the sheryf **sworne** his othe, [460]
And home he began to gone;
He was as full of grene wode
As ever was *hepe* of stone. [460] *heap? perhaps hip, as e.g. in rose hip; see note*

- **201.1(a)** *after* sherif *add 200.4,* and I forgive it thee **g**
- **201.3** wyll **b**] woll **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, wyl **f**, will **g** • thy **ab**] the **fg** ***FJC FBG*** • best **abfg**] best[ë] ***FJC*** *(ex cj.)*
- **201.4** ever yet had ye **afg** ***C1***] yet had the **b**
- **202.2** my] me **f**
- **202.3** Shalt thou] Thou shalt **bfg** • awayte] wayte **f**, wait **g** • scathe **b**] scade **a** *(ex* scaðe?), skathe **f**, scath **g**
- **202.4** ne] nor **fg** • londe **b**] lande **af** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, land **g**
- **203.1** ony **b**] any **afg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **203.2** by day **bf** ([by] day ***FJC***)] day **a** ***DT***, else by day **g**
- **203.4** that] tha **a** (tha[t] ***FJC***, tha*t* ***DT***)
- **204.1** have **b**] hathe **a** (hath **fg**) ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO*** • sworne (**a** sherifsworne **a**) **g**] I swore (*i.e.* i-swore) **b**, swore **f**
- **204.2** he] *omit* **fg** • began **af** (be gan **b**)] againe **g**
- **204.3** as] *omit* **g**
- **204.4** hepe of stone **ab**] any man **fg**

*201.1 lat a **M**, let fg; goe g; than af **M**; sayde a **M**, said g; sherif a **M**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 201.2 saynte a **DT KO**, saint g, sayntë **F**; charite a **DT**, charitie f, chaiity (sic.) g, Charytè **C1**, charitë **F**, charité **KO** • 201.3 bestfrende f; friend g • 202.1 shalt afg **M**; sweare fg; oath g; sayde a **M**, said fg • 202.2 bright afg **M**; brande f, brand g • 202.3 a wayte b • 202.4 lande af **M**, land g • 203.1 if afg **C1 M**; finde g • 203.2 night g; daye f • 203.3 uppon g; thyn a **M**, thine fg; oath g, othë **FJC**; shalte f; shaltswere a; sweare g • 204.1 Nowe a **FJC FBG KO**; sherif a **M**, shirife f, sheriffe g; oth f, oath g • 204.3 ful f; grene wood f, greene-wood g, grenë wode **FJC***

THE FOURTH FYTTE

fytte] fitte g

205 The sheryf dwelled in Notynghame;
He was fayne **he was gone**;
And Robyn and his mery men [461]
Went to wode anone.

206 'Go we to dyner?' sayd Lyttell Johan
Robyn Hode sayd, 'Nay,
For I drede Our Lady be wroth with me,
For she sent me not my **pay**.' [461] *[181]*

207 'Have no dout, mayster,' sayd Lytell Johan
'Yet is not the sonne **at** rest;
For I dare say, and savfly swere,
The knyght is trewe and **truste**.' [461]

208 'Take thy bowe in thy hande,' sayd Robyn,
'Let Moch wende with the,
And so shall Wyllyam **Scathelock**, *[181]*
And no man abyde with me. [461]

- **205.1** dwelled] dwelt **g** • Notynghame **b**] Notingham **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Notingham **f**, Nottingham **g**
- **205.2** he **a**] that he **bfg** • gone **bf** (gon **g**)] agone **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **205.3** and his] had his **b** • **205.4** went] go ***RBW*** *cj.* (*if* had *is adopted in 205.3)*
- **206.2** Robyn (Roben **f**)] But Robin **g** • Hode] omit **fg**
- **206.3** wroth] wrath **g**
- **206.4** not **bfg** ***FBG***] nat **a** ***FJC DT KO*** • pay (***DT in it.***)] pray **a** *(i.e. perhaps* prey; *cf. 330.2)*
- **207.2** not **bfg** ***FBG***] nat **a** ***FJC DT KO*** • at rest **afg**] not at rest **b**
- **207.3** say] sweare **g** • savfly (saufly **ab**, *which might be saufly or savfly)*] safely **fg**
- **207.4** truste **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***] trusty **b**, trust **fg** ***C1***
- **208.2** Let] Late **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • Moch **b**] Much **ag** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Muche **f** ***C1***
- **208.3** Wyllyam **b**] Wylly am *(sic.)* **a**, Willyam **f**, William **g** • Scathelock **b** (Scathelock **f**) (Scathlock **g**) *(cf.* **d** *ad 293)*] Scarlok **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***

N.B. ***a*** ***breaks off after 208.3, to resume at 314.2.***

205.1 sherif a ***M****, sherife f, sheriffe g* • *205.2 faine g* • *205.3 merry g* • *205.4 wood fg; anon g* • *206.1 goe g; dinner g; sayde af* ***M****, said g* • *206.2 sayde af* ***M****, said g* • *206.3 dread g; ladi f* • *207.1 doute a* ***M****, doubt fg, maister afg* ***M****; sayde a* ***M****, said fg* • *207.2 sunne fg* • *207.3 sweare g* • *207.4 knight a; true afg* ***M*** • *208.1 bow f; hand g; sayde a* ***M****, said g* • *208.2 wend g; thee fg* • *208.3 shal a* ***M*** • *208.4 a byde b, abide g*

209 ‘And walke up under the Sayles,
And to Watlynge Strete, [397]
And wayte after such *unketh gest*; [181] *strange or unexpected visitor*
Up chaunce ye may them mete.

210 ‘Whether he be messengere, [462]
Or a man that myrthes **can**,
•• **Of my good he shall have some,**
•• **Or yf he be a pore man.**’ [181]

211 Forth then stert Lytel Johan
Half in *tray* and *tene*, *anger, misery, feeling betrayed; sorrow, vexation*
And gyrde hym with a full good swerde,
Under a mantel of grene.

212 They went up to the Sayles,
These yemen all thre;
They loked est, they loked west,
They myght no man se. [462]

- **209.1** walke] omit **fg** • under] into **fg** ***C1***
- **209.2** to] so to *or* up to ***RBW*** *cj.* • watlynge] watlyng **f**, watling **g**
- **209.3** wayte after **b**] loke (looke **g**) for **fg** • such **b** ***DT KO***] some **fg** ***C1 FJC FBG*** *(cf. 18.3)* • unketh] straunge **f**, strange **g**, unkent ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **209.4** Up chaunce **b**] by chaunce **f** (by chance **g**), up-chaunce ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • ye] you **fg**
- **210.1** whether] whither **g**^{vid}
- **210.2** a] *omit* **fg** • that myrthes can] of myrthe and song ***RBW*** *cj. (to improve the rhyme at 210.4 if 210.3 and 210.4 are not reversed)*
- **210.3** (line 210.4 in **bfg**; *lines 210.3 and 210.4 appear to be out of order)*: *(whole line): exchange 210.3 and 210.4* (***FJC*** *cj.* ***FBG KO*** *omit* “or”)] Or yf (if **fg**) he be a pore (poore **g**) man **bfg** ***C1 DT***
- **210.4** (210.3 in **bfg)** *(whole line)* ***FJC*** *cj.* ***FBG KO*** *(exchanging 210.3 and 210.4; see note on 210.3)*] Of my good (goods **g**) he shall (shal **f**) have some **bfg** ***C1 DT***
- **211.2** tray **b**] fraye **f**, a fray **g**
- **211.3** gyrde **b**] gyrd **f**, girt **g** • swerde (swerbe **b**^{vid}) **f**] sword **g**
- **212.1** up to] than (then **g**) unto **fg**

*209.2 Watlynge-strete **M**; street g • 209.3 guest g • 209.4 meet g • 210.1 messenger g • 210.2 myrthës **F**, mirths g • 211.1 than f; foorth g; sterte f, start g • 211.2 halfe fg; teene g • 211.3 him g • 211.4 mantell f, mantle g; greene g • 212.2 yeomen g; three fg • 212.3 looked (twice) g; east fg • 212.4 thei f; might fg; see fg*

bfg

213 But as **he** loked in Bernysdale *[182]*
By the hye waye, [462] 850
Than were they *ware* of two *blacke monkes*, [462] *aware; Benedictines*
Eche on a good palferay. [463]

214 Then bespake Lytell Johan
To Much he gan say,
'I dare lay my lyfe to wedde, 855
That monkes have brought our pay. [463] *[182]*

215 'Make glad chere,' sayd Lytell Johan
'And ***frese*** **our** bowes of *ewe*, [463] *[182]* *aim? prepare? meaning unknown; yew*
And loke your hertes be *seker* and *sad*, *sure (see Seker in glossary); steadfast*
Your strynges trusty and trewe. 860

216 'The monke hath **two and fifty**, *[182]*
And seven *somers* full stronge; [463] *sumpters=baggage horses*
There rydeth no bysshop in this londe
So ryally, I understond.

- **213.1** he **bf** ***C1***] they **g** ***Ritson*** (***FJC*** [t]he[y]) ***FBG DT KO*** *(cf. 21.1; also 213.3)* • Bernysdale **b**] Barnisdale **f**, Bernisdale **g**
- **213.3** Than were they ware] They were ware **g**
- **214.2** Much] Muche **f** • gan] can **f**
- **214.4** That **b**] That these **f** ***C1*** ([these] ***FJC***) ***FBG (DT in it.)***, These **g**, The ***KO*** *(ex cj.)*, Those ***RBW*** *cj.*, That monk has *for* That monkes have ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **215.2** frese **b**] bende we **f** (bend we **g**), leese ***FJC*** *cj.*, dress ***FJC*** *cj.*, drese ***KO*** *(cj. ex **FJC**)* • our **bfg**] your ***FJC*** *(ex cj.)*
- **215.3** loke your] looke our **g** • hertes **b**] harte **f**, hearts **g**
- **216.1** hath] hath but **fg** • two and fifty ***FJC FBG DT KO***] .lii. *(i.e. 52)* **bf**, fifty and two **g**; fifty two ***C1*** • fifty *(or whatever word ends the line)* **b** ***KO***] fifty men *(i.e. add* men) **f** ([men] ***C1 FJC***) ***FBG (DT in it.)***, two man *(sic.)* **g**
- **216.4** ryally] royall **fg**

*213.1 looked g • 213.2 hyewaye f, high way g, hyë way **F** • 213.3 black g • 213.4 each g; palfray fg • 214.1 than f; be spake b • 214.2 saye f • 214.3 life to wed g •215.1 cheere g; sayde f, said g • 215.3 syker fg • 215.4 strings g; true g • 216.2 seoven g; sommers fg; strong g • 216.3 rideth g; byshop fg; lande f, land g • 216.4 understande f, understand g*

217 ‘Brethern,’ sayd Lytell Johan,
‘Here are no more but we thre;
But we brynge them to dyner,
Our mayster dare we not se.

218 ‘Bende your bowes,’ sayd Lytell Johan
‘Make all **yon** *prese* to stonde; *[183]*
The formost monke, his lyfe and his deth,
Is closed in my honde.

219 ‘Abyde, *chorle* monke!’ sayd Lytell Johan [464]
‘No ferther that thou gone;
Yf thou doost, by dere worthy God,
Thy deth is in my honde.

220 ‘And evyll *thryfte* on thy hede’ sayd Lytell Johan
‘Ryght under thy hattes *bonde*;
For thou hast made our mayster wroth,
He is fastynge so longe.’

Unless, i.e. But unless
press=crowd
churl
luck, fate
band

- **217.1** Brethern] Bretherne **f**, Bretheren **g**
- **218.2** all yon ***FJC*** *cj.*] all you **b** *(ex inv.?)*, you yonder **f** (you youder *ex inv.* **g**[vid]) • prese] preste **f**, priest **g**
- **220.1** And evyll] An evell **f**, An evyll **g** • Lytell] Litell ***KO*** *(ex. err?)*
- **220.2** thy **bq**] the **fg** • bonde] band **g**
- **220.3** hast **bfg**] haste **q** • wroth **bfq**] wrath **g**

N.B. epq (here cited as q) begins at 220.1.

*217.1 said g • 217.1 heere g; three g • 217.3 bryng f, bring g, bryngë **FJC**; dinner g • 217.4 master f, maister g; see g • 218.1 bend g; said g • 218.2 stande f, stand g • 218.3 formostmonke f; monk g; life g; death g • 218.4 cloased (sic.) g; hande f, hand g • 219.1 abide g; churle g; said g • 219.2 farther g; gon g • 219.3 if fg; doest fg; deere g • 219.4 death fg; hande f, hand g • 220.1 evell f, evill gq; thryft f, thrift g; head fg; said g, saide q • 220.2 right gq; hattës **FJC** • 220.3 oure q; maister fg • 220.4 fastying f, fasting g, fastinge q; long g*

221 ‘Who is your mayster?’ sayd the monke;
Lytell Johan sayd, ‘Robyn Hode.’ *[183]*
‘He is a stronge thefe;’ sayd the monke,
‘Of hym herd I never good.’ [464]

222 ‘Thou lyest,’ than sayd Lytell Johan
‘And that shall rewe the;
He is a yeman of the forest [464]
To dyne he hath *bode* the.’ *bidden*

223 Much was redy with a bolte, [464] *[183]*
Redly and anone, *[183]* *probably readily/promptly, but cf.* **q**
He set the monke to-fore the brest,
To the grounde that he can gone.

224 Of **two and fifty *wyght*** yemen *[183]* *strong, bold*
There abode nat one,
Saf a lytell page and a *grome*, [464] *groom*
To lede the *somers* with **Lytel** Johan. *sumpters=baggage horses*

- **221.1** Who is **bq**] What hyght **f** (What hight **g**)
- **221.2** Lytell **bfg**] *omit* **q**
- **222.2** rewe **b** (reu **q**), rewë ***FJC***] sore rewe **f** (sore rue **g**)
- **223.1** Much **bgq**] Muche **f** • bolte **bq**] bowe **fg**
- **223.2** Redly **b**] Rapely **q**, Redy **f**, Ready **g**
- **223.3** to-fore (**bg** to fore) (**f** tofore) **g**] on **q**
- **223.4** the] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.* • grounde that he **bq**] ground he **fg** • can **bq**] gan **fg**
- **224.1** two and fifty **q**] .lii. (i.e. 52) **b**, twoo and fifty **f,** two and fiftie **g**, fyfty two ***C1*** • wyght yemen **f** (wight yeomen **g**) (wyght yomen **q**)] wyght yonge yemen **b** ***FJC FBG DT KO***; wight yonge men ***C1*** *ex cj.*
- **224.2** nat **q**] not **b** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, but **fg**
- **224.4** the **bfg**] these **q** • Lytel **bfg**] *omit* **q** ***C1*** *(ex cj.?)*

*221.1 maister fg, master q; said g, saide q • 221.2 said g, sayde q • 221.3 strong fg; theefe g; said g, saide q • 221.4 him fg; heard g, herde q; gode q • 222.1 liest g; then g; said g, saide q • 222.2 thee fg • 222.3 yeoman g, yoman q; forrest fg, forèst **C1** • 222.4 dine gq; bodë **F**; thee fg • 223.1 ready fg • 223.2 a none bf • 223.3 sette q; monk q • 224.2 a bode b • 224.3 save fgq; lytel f, little g, litell q; a groome g, agrome q • 224.4 leade g; sommers g*

225 They brought the monke to the lodge dore, [464]
Whether he were *loth* or *lefe*, *loath, i.e. unwilling; preferred, (gave) leave, was willing*
For to speke with Robyn Hode,
Maugre in theyr tethe. *displeasure, ill-will, i.e. they came unwillingly* 900

226 Robyn dyde adowne his hode,
The monke whan that he se;
The monke was nat so curteyse,
His hode then let he be. [465]

227 'He is a *chorle*, mayster, by dere worthy God,' [464] *churl* 905
Than sayd Lytell Johan:
'Thereof *no force*,' sayd Robyn, [464] *no matter*
'For curteysy can he none.

228 'How many men,' **than** sayd Robyn,' *[183]*
'Had **nowe** this monke, Johan?' *[183]* 910
'**Fyfty and two** whan that we met,
But many of them be gone.'

- **225.1** lodge door **bg** (lodgë-door ***FJC***, lodge-door ***FBG***)] looge dore *(sic.)* **f**, loge dore **q**
- **225.2** whether **b**] whyther **f**, whither **g**, wheder **q**
- **225.3** Hode (**f**, *contrary to its usual practice, spells the name* Hod)] *omit* **g**
- **226.1** adowne **q** (a downe **b** ***FBG***)] downe **fg**
- **226.2** that he] he did **fg**
- **226.3** monke] m[..]nke **f** *(illegible, but there appear to be two letters; Ohlgren suggests* mbunke) • nat **q**] not **bfg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **226.4** he] it **g**
- **227.3** Thereof no force *(for this phrase cf. 13.1)* (**b** there of) **fg**] No force thereof **q**
- **228.1** than sayd (**p** saide)] sayd **bf** (said **g**) ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **228.2** Had nowe **p**] Had **bfg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **228.3** Fyfty and two **bf** (fifty and two **g** ***C1***)] Two and fifty **p** *(the* editio princeps *likely read* .lii.)

N.B. epq contains this entire section, but shifts from a q leaf to a p leaf between 227.3 and 227.4

*225.1 monk gq • 225.2 lothe f; leefe g • 225.3 speake g; wyth f • 225.4 mauger f, maugré **KO**; their fg; teth f, teeth g • 226.1 dyd fq, did g; hood g • 226.2 monk q; when g; see gq • 226.3 curteyse f, curteise g, curteys q, curtëyse **FJC** • 226.4 hood g; than fq • 227.1 churl f, churle gq; maister fgq; deere g; worthi f • 227.2 then g; said g **C1**, saide q • 227.3 said g, saide q • 227.4 curteysye f, curtesie g, curtesy p, curtyse (ex err?) **DT**; non f • 228.1 howe p • 228.3 when g • 228.4 begon f, be gon g*

229 ‘Let blowe a horne,’ sayd Robyn,
‘That felaushyp may us knowe;’
Seven score of ***wyght*** **yemen** [465] *[184]* *strong, bold* 915
Came *pryckynge* on a rowe. *hastening forward*

230 And **everych** of them a good mantell
Of scarlet and of *raye*; [465] *meaning uncertain; perhaps striped cloth*
All they came to good Robyn,
To *wyte* what he wolde say. *know* 920

231 They made the **monke** to wasshe and wype, [401] *[184]*
And syt at his denere,
Robyn Hode and Lytell Johan
They served them both in *fere*. *company*

232 ‘Do gladly, monke,’ sayd Robyn, 925
‘Gramercy, Syr,’ sayd he.
‘Where is your abbay, whan ye are at home,
And *who is your avowe?*’ *to whom are you vowed?*

- **229.1** blowe] blowe we **fg** • a horne **bg**] an horne **fp**
- **229.3** wyght yemen **bf** (wight yeomen **g**)] wight yonge men **p**
- **230.1** everych **b**] every he **f**, everich **g**, every eche **p**
- **230.2** scarlet and of raye] scarlet and ryche arraye ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **230.4** wyte **b**] wete **fgp**
- **231.1** They] The **f** • monke] monkes **p**
- **231.4** them **bf**] him **g** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO***
- **232.3** ye] you **g**
- **232.4** *insert stanzas 253-257 (about the monk going to London) between 232 and 233 Clawson cj.*

N.B. epq (here represented by p) breaks off in the middle of line 231.1 (“monkes to w...”), to resume at 243.3

229.1 late p; said g, saide p • 229.2 felowshyppe f, fellowship g, felawshepe p • 229.4 prickynge f, pricking g, prekinge p • 230.1 gode p, mantel f, mantèll ***C1*** *•230.2 ray p • 230.3 gode p • 230.4 would fg; saye f, saie g • 231.1 monk f; wash g; wipe g • 231.2 sit g; dynere f, diner g • 231.4 bothe f • 232.1 doo g; said g • 232.2 gramarcy f; sir g; said hee g, said he* ***C1*** *• 232.3 when fg • 232.4 a vowe b, avowè* ***C1****, avowë* ***F****, avowé* ***KO***

233 ‘Saynt Mary Abbay,’ sayd the monke,
‘Though I be symple here.’
‘In what offyce?’ sayd Robyn.
‘Syr, the hye *selerer*.’ [465] *cellarer, i.e. gatherer of provisions*

234 ‘Ye be the more welcome,’ sayd Robyn,
‘So ever *mote* I the. *must, i.e. Robin must welcome the guest*
Fyll of the best wyne,’ sayd Robyn,
‘This monke shall drynke to me.

235 ‘But I have grete mervayle,’ sayd Robyn,
‘Of all this longe day;
I drede Our Lady be wroth with me,
She sent me not my pay.’ [461]

236 ‘Have no doute, mayster,’ sayd Lytell Johan,
‘Ye have no nede, I saye;
This monke it hath brought, I dare well swere,
For he is of her abbay.’ [463]

- **233.2** symple **b**] semple **f**, simple **g**
- **233.3** offyce **b**] affyce **f**, office **g**
- **234.2** *(whole line)*] So mote I thryve or the **f** (so mote I thrive of thee **g**)
- **235.3** wroth **bf**] wrath **g**
- **236.1** doute **b**] dought **f**, dout **g**
- **236.2** *(whole line)*] You nede not so to saye **f** (You neede not so to say **g**)
- **236.3** it hath brought] hath brought it **fg**

*233.1 saint g; said fg • 233.3 said g **FBG** • 233.4 sir g; hie g; selerere f, sellerere g • 234.1 sayde f, said g • 234.3 fill g; wine g; said g • 234.4 drinke fg • 235.1 great f; marvel f, marvaile g; said fg • 235.2 long fg, longë **F** • 235.3 dread g; ladye f • 236.1 maister fg; said g • 236.3 monk g; wel f*

237 ‘And she was a *borowe*,’ sayd Robyn, *guarantor, supplier of collateral* 945
‘Betwene a knyght and me,
Of a lytell money that I hym lent, [466]
Under the grene wode tree.

238 ‘And yf thou hast that sylver i-brought,
I praye the let me se; 950
And I shall helpe the *eftsones*, *thereafter, immediately after*
Yf thou have nede to me.

239 The monke swore a full grete othe,
With a sory chere,
‘Of the borowehode thou spekest to me 955
Herde I never ere.’ [466]

240 ‘I make myn avowe to God,’ sayd Robyn, [454]
‘Monke, thou art to blame;
For God is holde a rightwys man, [466]
And so is his dame. *[184]* 960

- **237.1** And] *omit* **fg** • borowe **b**] borawe **f**, borrowe **g**
- **238.1** that sylver] the mony **g** • i-brought (I brought **b**)] broughte **f**, brought **g**, ibrought ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO***
- **238.3** eftsones] eft agayne **f** (eft againe **g**)
- **238.4** nede] need **g** • to] of **fg** ***C1***
- **240.1** myn **b** (mine **f**)] my **g**
- **240.2** to] too **g**
- **240.3** God] God’s son ***RBW*** *cj.* • rightwys man (ryghtwysman **b**) *(meaning* righteous ?)] right wise man **fg**
- **240.4** dame **fg** ***C1***] name **b**

*237.1 said g • 237.2 be twene b, betweene f, betweene g; knight fg • 237.3 alyttel b; lytel f, little g; him g • 237.4 grene wood f, greene wood g, grënewode **FJC** • 238.1 if fg • 238.2 pray fg **M**; thee g; see g • 238.3 helpë **F**; thee g • 238.4 if fg • 239.1 great fg; oath g • 239.2 wytha f, sorry cheere g • 239.3 borow hode f, borrowhood g; speakest g • 239.4 heard g • 240.1 avow fg; said fg • 240.2 too g • 240.3 hold g*

241 ‘Thou toldest with thyn owne tonge,
Thou may not say nay,
How thou arte her servaunt,
And servest her every day.

242 ‘And thou art made her messengere, 965
My money for to pay; [463]
Therfore I **can** the more thanke
Thou arte come at thy day.

243 ‘What is in your cofers?’ sayd Robyn, [466]
‘**Trewe** than tell thou me:’ 970
‘Syr,’ he sayd, ‘*twenty marke,* [466] *20 marks=13⅓ pounds*
Also *mote* I the.’ *must*

244 ‘Yf there be no more,’ sayd Robyn,
‘I wyll nat one peny;
Yf thou hast *myster* of ony more, *need* 975
Syr, more **shall I** lende **the**. *[184]*

- **241.2** may] mayest **f**, maist **g** • not say nay] it not denay **g**^{vid}; not say me (*or* it) nay ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **242.1** made ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO*** *ex* ***Ritson*** *cj.*] nade *(sic.)* **b**, omit **fg**
- **242.3** can the more *cj.*] cun *(sic.)* the more **b** (***FJC FBG*** cun the morë) ***DT KO***] do the **f** (doe thee **g**)
- **242.4** arte] art **fg** ***DT***
- **243.2** Trewe **b** (true **f**)] The truthe **p**, Truth **g**
- **243.3** twenty marke **bfg**] .xx. marke **p**
- **243.4** Also **bp**] So **fg**, Al so ***C1 DT*** • mote I the **bp**] mote I thryve or the **f**, mought I thrive and thee **g**
- **244.2** wyll **b** (wyl **f**, will **g**)] woll **p** • nat **p**] not **b** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, not ont (=not out ? not [w]ont ?) **f**, not take **g**
- **244.3** myster of **b** (mistereof **p**)] nede of **f** (need of **g**) • ony **b**] any **fgp**
- **244.4** shall I **fgp**] I shall **b** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • the (thee **fg**) **p**] to the **b** ***FJC FBG DT KO***

N.B. ***epq*** ***(here represented by*** ***p****) resumes at 243.2.*

241.1 thine fg; ownë ***FJC****; tongue g* • *241.3 art fg; servant g* • *242.1 messenger f*^{vid}*g* • *242.3 therefore fg* ***FBG*** • *242.4 art fg* • *243.1 coffers g; said g* • *243.2 then g* • *243.3 Sir gp; said g, saide p* • *244.1 if fgp; nomore p; said g, saide p* • *244.2 penny fg* • *244.3 If gp* • *244.4 Sir gp; lend g*

bfgp

245 'And yf I fynde **more,' sayd** Robyn, *[184]*
'I-wys thou shalte it for gone;
For of thy spendynge-sylver, monke,
Thereof wyll I ryght none.

246 'Go nowe forthe, Lytell Johan,
And **the** trouth tell thou me;
If there be no more but *twenty marke,* *20 marks=13⅓ pounds*
No peny that I se.'

247 Lytell Johan spred his mantell downe,
As he had done before, [467]
And he tolde out of the monkes *male* *baggage*
Eyght **hondreth** pounde and more. [467] *[184]*

248 Lytell Johan let it lye full styll, [467]
And went to his mayster in hast;
'Syr,' he sayd, 'the **monke** is trewe ynowe, [467] *[184]*
Our Lady hath doubled your cast.'

- **245.1** fynde] fyne **f**, finde **g** • more, sayd **fg** (more, said **p**) ([more, said] ***C1 FJC*** *(ex cj.))* ***FBG (DT in it.) KO***] *omit* **b**
- **245.2** I-wys] i wys **bp** ***DT***, ywys **f**, ywis **g**, iwys ***KO***
- **245.3** spendynge-sylver (spendynge sylver **bf** ***DT KO***, spendynge silver **p**)] spending money **g**
- **245.4** wyll I ryght **b** (woll I right **p**)] I wyll (will **g**) have **fg**
- **246.2** the] *omit* **p** • trouthe **b** (trouth **p**)] trnthe *(sic. i.e. probably* truthe *ex inv.*) **f**, truth **g**
- **246.3** twenty marke **bg** (twēti mark=twenti mark **f**)] .xx.marke **p**
- **246.4** No] not one ***RBW*** *cj.* • peny that I **b** (penny that I **f**)] penny let me **g** (**p** *damaged* [.....]at I see); peny of that ***RBW*** *cj.* • that] shall ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **247.1** spred **bp**] layd **f**, laid **g** • **247.2** he **bp**] *omit* **fg**
- **247.3** he] *omit* **f** • monkes **bp** (monkës ***FJC***)] mynkes *(sic.)* **f**, mankes *(sic.)* **g**
- **247.4** eyght hondreth (Eyght.C. **p**)] Eyght (*omitting* hundred) **b**, eyght hondreth **f**, eight hundreth **g** ***C1***, eight hondred (***FJC*** [hondred]) ***FBG (DT*** Eyght *hondred*), eyght hundred ***KO*** • pounde **bp** (pound **g**)] poundes **f**
- **248.3** monke **bfg**] knyght **p** • trewe ynowe **b**] trueynowe **f**^{vid}, true now **g**, true ynough **p**
- **248.4** cast **b** (caste **p**)] cost **fg** ***C1***

*245.1 if fgp; said g, saide p • 245.2 shalt fp; forgone fgp **C1** • 245.3 monk f **C1** • 245.4 There of p • 246.1 goe g; forth fp, now g; foorth g • 246.3 ther f • 246.4 see fg • 247.1 mantel f, mantle g; down f • 247.2 be fore b • 247.3 told g; oute p • 248.1 John̄ [.....]ull styll p; lie g; styl f, still g • 248.2 maister fg; haste p • 249.3 Sir p; sayde f, said g, saide p*

249 ‘I make myn avowe to God,’ sayd Robyn. [454]
‘Monke, **that** tolde I the: *[184]*
Our Lady is the trewest woman
That ever yet founde I me.

250 ‘By dere worthy God,’ sayd Robyn,
‘To *seche* all Englond thorowe, *search, seek*
Yet founde I never to my pay
A moche better *borowe*. *guarantor, supplier of collateral*

251 ‘Fyll of the best wyne, and do hym drynke,’ **sayd Robyn**, *[184]*
‘And grete well thy lady *hende*, *courteous, gracious; also fair*
And yf she have nede to Robyn Hode,
A frende she shall hym fynde. [468]

252 ‘And yf she nedeth ony more sylver, [468]
Come thou agayne to me,
And, by this token she hath me sent,
She shall have such thre.’

- **249.2** that **fgp** *(i.e. reading this line as the preface to a declarative statement)*] what **b** *(i.e. read as a question:* Monk, what told I thee?) ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **249.3** trewest **b** (truest **gp**)] trust **f** (**p** *defective for* our lady)
- **249.4** founde **bf** (found **g**)] fonde **p** (**p** *defective for* that ever)
- **250.1** sayd Robyn **bf** (said Robin **g**)] *omit* **p**
- **250.2** seche **bfp**] seeke **g**
- **251.1** and] *omit* ***C1*** • do] to **g** • sayd Robyn] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.* (perhaps a transfer from 250.1?)
- **251.2** grete **b**] greate **f**, greet **g**
- **251.3** to **b**] of **fg** ***C1*** • Hode] Hod **f**
- **252.1** she nedeth] she have nede (need **g**) of **fg** • ony **b**] any **fg**
- **252.4** thre **bf** (three **g**)] fre ***RBW*** *cj.*

N.B. epq (here represented by p) breaks off at 250.4, to resume at 312.4, and is defective for the first words of 249.1-2

*249.1 myne f, mine g; avow g; said g, saide p • 249.2 told g; thee g • 249.3 th e (sic.) f; womàn **C1** • 250.1 deere g; said g **C1** • 250.2 england fg **C1**, englonde p; throwe f, thorow g • 250.3 found gp • 250.4 muche f, much g; borrow g • 251.1 fil f, fill g; wine fg; him f^mid^g; drinke fg; said g • 251.2 ladye f, lady g; hend g • 251.3 if fg • 251.4 friend g; him finde g • 252.1 if g; silver g, sylvèr **C1** • 252.2 againe g • 252.4 suche f*

253 The monke was goynge to London ward,
There to holde grete *mote*, *mote: moot, i.e. meeting, great gathering*
The knyght that rode so hye on hors,
To brynge hym under fote. [468]

254 'Whether be ye away?' sayd Robyn:
'Syr, to *maners* in this londe, *probably, in light of the next line, "manors"*
Too reken with our *reves*, [468] *reeves: managers, bailiffs*
That have done moch wronge.'

255 'Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And harken to my tale;
A better yemen I knowe none, [468]
To *seke* a monkes *male*.' *search; probably baggage; perhaps "mail" as in mail coat*

256 'How moch is in yonder other corser?' sayd Robyn, [469] *[185]*
'The soth must we see:'
'By Our Lady,' than sayd the monke,
'That were no curteysye. [469]

- **253.1** London ward **bf**] Londonward **g**, London-ward ***KO*** • *Stanzas 252-258 in this order] place 253-257 after 231 or 232 Clawson cj.*
- **254.1** whether **bf**] whither (**g**^{vid} whit[.]er) • maners *(i.e.* manors ?) **b**] manars **f**, manners **g**
- **254.3** reves (=reeves) **bg**] revers (=reavers?, *i.e.* bandits, robbers) **f**
- **256.1** How...corser] And what is on the other courser **f**, And what is in the other coffer **g** • in] on ***RBW*** *cj.* • yonder] yon ***RBW*** *cj.* • corser] cofer ***C1*** *ex cj.*, forcer Kittredge *cj.* • sayd Robyn] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **256.2** soth **b**] sothe **f**, soothe **g** • must we **b**] we must **fg**
- **256.3** than **b**] *omit* **fg**

253.1 monk fg; going fg ***C1*** *• 253.2 hold g; great fg • 253.3 knight g; hy f, hie g; horse fg • 254.4 bringe f, bring g; him fg; foot g • 254.1 said g • 254.2 sir g; lande f, land g • 254.3 to fg; reckon g • 254.4 muche f, much g; wrong fg • 255.1 nowe f; forthe f, foorth g • 255.2 herken f, hearken g • 255.3 yeoman g; know g • 255.4 seeke g; monkës* ***F*** *• 256.1 said g • 256.2 se f • 256.3 said g; monk g • 256.4 curtesye f*^{bid}*, curtesie g*

257 ‘To bydde a man to dyner,
And *syth* hym bete and bynde.’ [469]
‘It is our olde maner,’ sayd Robyn,
‘To leve but lytell behynde.’ [469]

then, therafter

258 The monke toke the hors with *spore*,
No lenger wolde he abyde:
‘Aske to drynke,’ than sayd Robyn,
‘Or that ye forther ryde.’

spur

259 ‘Nay, for God,’ than sayd the monke,
‘Me reweth I cam so nere;
For better chepe I myght have dyned [469]
In Blythe or in Dankestere.’ [469]

260 ‘Grete well your abbot,’ sayd Robyn,
‘And your pryour, I you pray,
And byd hym send me such a monke
To dyner every day.’

- **258.2** he] *omit* **fg**
- **259.1** than] *omit* **g** *(which also omits the spaces around the word, i.e.* Godsaid)
- **259.4** Blythe **bf**] Blithe **g** • in] *omit* **fg** ***(RBW** cj.)* • Dankestere] Dancastere **f**^{vid}, Dancaster **g**

*257.1 bid g; dinner g • 257.2 sythe f, sith g; him g; beate g; binde g • 257.3 ; oldë **FJC**; manner (f illegible) g; said g • 257.4 leave g; litell f^{vid}, little g; be hynde b, behinde g • 258.1 monk g; tooke g; horse fg; sporre f^{vid}, spurre g • 258.2 longer g; would f; a byde b, abide g • 258.3 drinke g; then g; said g • 258.4 farther fg; ride g • 259.1 said g; monk g • 259.2 rueth fg; came fg; neere g • 259.3 might g; dined g • 260.1 greet g; said g • 260.2 priour g; praye f^{vid} • 260.3 bid g; him fg; suche f^{vid}; monk g • 260.4 dinner g; daye f*

261 Now lete we that monke be styll,
And speke we of that knyght:
Yet he came to holde his day,
Whyle that it was lyght.

262 He dyde him streyt to Bernysdale,
Under the grene wode tre,
And he founde there Robyn Hode,
And all **the** mery meyne. *[185]*

263 The knyght lyght doune of his good palfray, [469]
Robyn whan he gan see,
So curteysly he dyde adoune his hode, [469]
And set hym on his knee.

264 'God the save, Robyn Hode,
And all this company:'
'Welcome be thou, gentyll knyght,
And ryght welcome to me.'

265 Then bespake hym Robyn Hode,
To that knyght so fre:
'What nede dryveth the to grene wode?
I praye the, syr knyght, tell me. [469]

- **262.3** he founde there] founde he there ***RBW*** *cj. (for metrical reasons)*
- **262.4** the ***KO*** *(ex cj.)*] thy **b**, his **fg** ***FJC DT FBG***
- **263.1** lyght doune of **b**] light fro (from **g**) **fg**
- **263.2** gan **b**] can **fg**
- **263.3** So] Right **fg** • adoune (a doune **b**) (a downe **f**)] down **g**
- **264.1** Robyn **b**] good Robyn **f** (good Robin **g**) ***C1***
- **265.1**• hym **b** (him **f**)] *omit* **g** • Robyn] good Robin **fg** • Hode] *omit* **g**

*261.1 let fg; monk g; still g • 261.2 speake g; knight g • 261.4 while g; light g • 262.1 did f; streyghte f[pid], straight g; Bernisdale f[pid], Bernesdale g • 262.2 grene wood f, greenwood g, grenë-wode **FJC**; tree fg • 262.3 found g; Robynhode f • 262.4 merry g; menie g, meynè **C1**, meynë **F**, meyné **KO** • 263.1 knight fg; palfrey g, palfráy **C1** • 263.2 when g • 263.3 curteously g; did f[pid]g; hood g • 263.4 him fg; kne f • 264.1 thee g; savë **FJC** • 264.2 al f; thys f • 264.3 gentyl f, gentle g; knight g • 264.4 right g • 265.1 than f • 265.2 knight fg; free g • 265.3 need g, nedë **FJC**; driveth fg; thee g; grenewode b, greene woode f, greene-wood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 265.4 pray fg; thee g; sir knight g*

bfg

266 ‘And welcome be thou, gentyll knyght.
Why hast thou be so longe?’
‘For the abbot and the hye justyce [470]
Wolde have had my londe.’

267 ‘Hast thou thy londe **agayne**?’ sayd Robyn; 1065
‘Treuth than tell thou me;'
‘Ye, for God,’ sayd the knyght,
‘And that thanke I God and the.

268 ‘But take not a grefe,’ sayd the knyght, [470] *[185]*
That I have be so longe; [1070]
For as I came to grene wode
There I dyd tarry longe.

268A **‘For as I passed Wentebrydge** [470]
I came by a wrastlelynge [1070]
And there I holpe a pore yeman,
With wronge was put behynde.’

- **266.1** gentyll (gentyl **f**, gentle **g**)] getyll *(sic.)* **b** (ge[n]tyll ***FJC***)
- **266.3** For] *omit* **g**
- **266.4** Wolde] They would **fg**
- **267.1** agayne **f** (againe **g**) ***C1*** ([a]gayne ***FJC***) (a gayne ***DT***)] gayne **b**; gayned ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **267.3** Ye **bf** (yea **g**)] aye ***RBW*** *cj.* • sayd **b**] than sayd **f**, then said **g**
- **267.4** that] *omit* **fg**
- **268.1** not a grefe] no grefe **f** ***FJC***, no griefe **g**, a-grefe Kittredge *cj.* • sayd...knyght (said the knight **fg**)] *omit* ***C1 FBG KO*** *(ex cj.)*
- **268.3** For as... wode ***RBW*** *cj.*] *omit (combining stanzas 268-268A)* **bfg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **268.4** Ther... long ***RBW*** *cj.] omit line (combining stanzas 268-268A)* **bfg** ***FJC FBG DT KO,*** I stopped to rite a wrong ***RBW*** *cj.*, I met a yeman strong ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **268A.1** For as... Wentebrydge ***RBW*** *cj.*] *omit (combining stanzas 268-268A)* **bfg** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **268A.3** I holpe] I dyd helpe **f**, did I helpe **g**, I dyd holpe ***C1*** *(ex cj.?)*
- **268A.4** was put] they put **g**

*266.1 knight g • 266.2 long g • 266.3 ayd (for “and”) f[bid]; high g, hyë **FJC**; justice g • 266.4 lande f, land g • 267.1 land fg • 267.1 said g • 267.2 truthe f, truth g; then g • 267.3 knight fg • 267.4 thee g • 268.2 long g • 268A.1 awrstlynge f, a wrastling g • 268A.3 poore fg, porë **FJC**; yeoman g, yemàn **C1** g • 268A.4 wrong g; behinde g*

269 ‘Nay, for God,’ sayd Robyn,
‘Syr knyght, that thanke I the;
What man that helpeth a good yeman,
His frende than wyll I be.’

270 ‘Have here foure hondred pounde,’ **than** sayd the knyght,
‘The whiche ye lent to me;
And here is also *twenty marke* [470] *20 marks=13⅓ pounds*
For your curteysy.’

271 ‘Nay, for God,’ than sayd Robyn,
‘Thou *broke* it well for ay; [470] *brook, i.e. accept? enjoy its use?*
For Our Lady, by her *selerer* *[186]* *cellarer, i.e. gatherer of provisions*
Hath sent to me my pay. [470]

272 ‘And yf I toke it i-twyse,
A shame it were to me; [470]
But trewely, gentyll knyght,
Welcom arte thou to me.’

- **269.1** Nay, for God] Now, by my truthe than (truth then **g**) **fg**
- **269.2** Syr knyght, that] For that, knight **fg**
- **269.3** helpeth] help ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **270.1** four hondred **b**] .cccc. **f**, cccc. **g** • pounde (pound **g**)] poundes **f** • than (then **f**)] *omit* **g** ***FBG (RBW*** *cj.)*
- **270.3** here] there **fg** • also] *omit* **g** • twenty **b**] .xx. **fg**
- **270.3-4** *N.B.*And here is also... curteysy *ιστ printed as one line in* **bfg** *(cf. stanza 268)*
- **271.1** than] *omit* **fg**
- **271.2** broke **bf**] brooke **g**
- **271.3** selerer **b** ***KO***] high selerere **f** (***DT*** *high* selerer), hie sellerer **g**, hye selerer (***FJC*** [hyë] selerer *ex cj.*) ***FBG***
- **272.1** yf I] I should **fg** • toke] take **fg** • i-twyse (I twyse **b**) (i twyse ***DT***)] twyse **f** ***C1***, twice **g**
- **272.3** to] for **g**
- **272.4** arte thou **b**] thou art **fg**

*269.1 said g • 269.2 thee g • 269.3 yeoman g, yemàn **C1** • 269.4 friend g; then g; will g • 270.1 heere g; said fg; knight fg • 270.2 which fg • 270.4 curtesye f, curtesie g • 272.1 fore g; said g • 271.2 aye f • 271.3 ladyby f • 271.4 paye f • 272.3 truely fg; gentyl f, gentle g; knyghte f, knight g • 272.4 welcome fg*

273 Whan Robyn had tolde his tale,
He *leugh* and had good chere; *laughed* 1090
'By my trouthe,' then sayd the knyght,
'Your money is redy here.'

274 '*Broke* it well,' sayd Robyn, [471] *brook, i.e. accept? enjoy its use?*
'Thou gentyll knyght so fre,
And welcome be thou, gentyll knyght, 1095
Under my trystell tre. [456]

275 'But what shall these bowes do?' sayd Robyn,
'And these arowes *i-fedred* fre?' *feathered*
'By God,' than sayd the knyght,
'A pore present to the.' 1100

276 'Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And go to my *treasure*, [471] *[186]* *treasure: read "tresurë," treasury*
And brynge me there foure hondred pounde;
The monke over-tolde it me.

- **273.1** Whan] And whan **f** (and when **g**) • tale] take **f**
- **273.2** leugh and had] laughed and made **fg**
- **273.3** trouthe **b**] truthe **f**, troth **g**
- **273.4** money] mony **g**
- **274.1** broke] brooke **g**
- **274.3** gentyll (ge[n]tyll ***FJC***)] getyll *(sic.)* **b**, gentyl **f** ***C1***, gentle **g** • so] and ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **274.4** my] the **f**, this **g** • trystell tre **b** ***DT***] trusty tre **f** (trusty tree **g**), trystell tree ***C1***
- **275.1** sayd Robyn] he said **g**
- **275.2** i-fedred (I fedred **b**, ifedred ***FJG FBG KO***)] fethered **fg** (***DT in it.)***, ifedered ***C1***
- **275.3** knyght **b**] gentyl knyght **f** (gentle knight **g**)
- **276.2** *(whole line)*] My wyll (will **g**) done (doone **g**) that it be **fg**
- **276.3** *(whole line)*] Go and fetch to me foure hundrethe poundes **f** (go and fetch me foure hundreth pounds **g**)

*273.2 cheere g • 273.3 than f; said g; knight fg • 273.4 ready fg; heere g • 274.1 said g • 274.2 gentill f, gentle g; knight fg; free fg • 274.3 knighte f, knight g • 275.1 bowës **FJC**; sayde f • 275.2 arrowes g, arowës **FJC**; free fg • 275.3 then g; sayde f, said g • 275.4 poore fg, porë **FJC**; tothe (=to the) b; thee fg • 276.1 foorth g • 276.2 treasurè **C1**, treasurë **F**, treasuré **KO** • 276.4 monk g; over tolde bfg*

277 ‘Have here foure hondred pounde,
Thou gentyll knyght and trewe,
And bye hors and harnes good,
And gylte thy *spores* all newe. *spurs*

278 ‘And yf thou fayle ony spendynge,
Com to Robyn Hode,
And by my trouth thou shalt none fayle,
The whyles I have any good.

279 ‘And broke well thy foure hondred pounde, [471] *here probably broker, trade*
Whiche I lent to the,
And make thy selfe no more so bare,
By the counsell of me.’

280 Thus than holpe hym good Robyn,
The knyght all of this care:
God, that syt in heven hye,
Graunte us well to fare!

[471]

- **277.1** hondred **b**] hondreth **f**, hundreth **g** • pounde **b** (pound **g**)] poundes **f**
- **277.3** bye **b**] bye the **f** (buye thee **g**; bye thee ***FBG***) • hors (horse **g**)] a horse **f**
- **277.4** thy] the **f**
- **278.1** yf **b**] i *(sic.)* **f**, if **g** • ony **b**] any **fg**
- **278.3** trouth **b**] truth **f**, troth **g** • none] not **g** • fayle] faile **fg**
- **278.4** The whyles] Whilste **g**
- **279.1** broke **bf**] brook **g** • thy] omit **g** • thy foure hondred pounde] thy.cccc.li *(i.e. thy 400 pounds)* **b**, thy.iiii.hondred pound **f**, for thy hundreth pound **g**, thy four hundred pound ***C1***
- **279.2** lent] dyd lende **f**, did send *(sic.;* ſ for l) **g**
- **280.1** holpe **bfg**] [..]lp **d** *(the second letter is probably an a, so* halp)
- **280.2** all of **bd**] of all **fg** • this **bd**] his **fg** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO***
- **280.3** syt **bd**] sytteth **f** ***C1***, sitteth **g**

N.B. d begins at 280.1, extending to 287.3, but every line of the first page has damage at the start of the line, usually of four to eight letters.

278.1 heere g • 277.2 gentyl f, gentle g; knight g; true fg • 277.4 gylt f, gilt g; spoures f, spurres g; alln ewe (sic.) b • 278.1 faile g; spendeng f, spending g • 278.2 come fg • 279.1 wel f • 279.2 whyche f, which g; thee g • 279.4 counsayl f, counsaile g • 280.1 then g; him fg; gode d • 280.2 knight g • 280.3 hevyn d, heaven fg; hie g • 280.4 graunt fg; wel f

THE FYFTH FYTTE Fyfth] .v. d, fefth f, fift g Fifth *DT*; fitte g

281 Now hath the knyght his leve i-take,
And went hym on his way;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
Dwelled styll full many a day. [471]

282 *Lyth* and lysten, gentil men, [471] *attend, listen (imperat. of "lythen")*
And herken what I shall say,
How the proude sheryfe of Notyngham [471] *[186]*
Dyde crye a full fayre play;

283 That all the best archers of the north
Sholde come upon a day,
And **that** shoteth **all ther** best *[186]*
The game shall bere away.

284 'He that shoteth **all theyre** best,
Furthest fayre and lowe,
At a payre of *fynly* buttes, *fine*
Under the grene wode *shawe*, *copse, thicket*

- **281.1** i-take (I take **bd** *DT*; itake **f** *C1*)] take **g**
- **281.2** went **bd**] wente **f**, wend **g** • way] waye **df**[vid]
- **281.4** dwelled] dwell **g** • styll full **bf** (still full **g**)] full styll **d**; *omit* still *RBW cj.*
- **282.2** herken (hearken **g**)] [...]keneth, *i.e. probably* herkeneth/hearkeneth **d**
- **282.3** proude **dfg**] proud **b** (proud[ë] *FJC*)
- **283.3** that **b** *KO*] they that **fg,** he that *C1* ([he] that *FJC*) *FBG* (*DT they* that), [.....]hat **d** • shoteth] shote **f**, shoote **g** • all ther **b** (altherbest *C1*)] all thee **d**, al of the **f** (all of the **g**), allther *FJC ex cj. FBG DT*, alder *(sic.) Ritson*
- **283.4** game] best (!) **fg**
- **284.1** all theyre **b**] all there **d** (altherbest *C1*), all of the **fg**, allther *FJC ex cj. FBG DT KO*, alder *(sic.) Ritson* • best] beste **d**
- **284.3** payre (paire **g**)] pair *DT* • fynly **b** (fynely **d**)] goodly **fg**

N.B. d has damage at the start of every line on this page, usually of four to eight letters.

281.1 [.]owe, i.e. Nowe d; knight g; leave g • 281.2 him fg • 281.3 Ro byn (sic.) f; merry g • 282.1 lythe g; listen g; gentylmen d, gentyl men f, gentlemen g, gentilmen C1 • 282.2 saye f • 282.3 proud g C1; sheryf d, shyrife f, sheriffe g; Notingham f, Nottingham g • 282.4 dyd f, did g; crie g; f ayre d, fayr f, faire g; playe f • 283.1 beste d; archyrs f; ofthe g; northe d • 283.2 should f; shouldcome g; daye f • 283.3 [t]hatshoteth d[vid]; beste d • 283.4 beare g; a way bd, awaye f • 284.1 shooteth g; beste d • 284.2 faire g; low g •284.4 grene wodeshaw b, grenewode shaw d, grene wood shawe f, greene wood shawe g

285 ‘A ryght good arowe he shall have,
The shaft of sylver whyte,
The hede and the feders of ryche rede golde, [472]
In Englond is none lyke.’ 1140

286 This than herde good Robyn,
Under his trystell tre; [456]
‘Make you redy, ye wyght yonge men; [472]
That shotynge wyll I se.

287 ‘Buske you, my mery yonge men, [472] *hurry, travel* 1145
Ye shall go with me;
And I wyll *wete* the shryves fayth, *wete (wst, wote): know, i.e. test*
Trewe and yf he be.’ [473]

288 Whan they had theyr bowes i-bent,
Theyr *takles fedred* fre, *tackle: gear, hence probably arrows; feathered* 1150
Seven score of wyght yonge men [465]
Stode by Robyn’s kne.

- **285.1** shall **bdf**] should **g**
- **285.3** the feders **bd**] the fethers **f**, the feathers **g**, feders (*omitting* the) ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **285.4** lyke] the like **g**
- **286.1** trystell tre **bd** ***DT*** (trystell-tre ***FJC FBG KO***)] trusty tree **fg**
- **286.3** you] ye **g** • ye **b**] *omit* **dg**, you **f** ***DT*** • yonge men] yemen **f**, yeomen **g**
- **287.1** yonge men **bd**^{vid}] yemen **f**, yeomen **g**
- **287.3** wyll wete **b** ([.]yll wete **d**)] shall knowe (know **g**) **fg**
- **288.1** i-bent (Ibent **b**, ibent ***C1***, i bent ***DT***)] ybende **f**, ybend **g**
- **288.2** takles] arowes **f** (arrowes **g**) • fedred **b**] fethere **f**, fethered **g**
- **288.3** of] *omit* **g** • yonge men (yongemen **b**)] yemen **f**, yeomen **g**

N.B. d is defective at the beginning of every line from 285.1 to 287.3, is wholly lacking for 287.4-288.3, resumes at 288.4 and then is intact until 296.3

*285.1 aryght f, a right g; arrow g • 285.2 [...]fte (i.e. probably “shafte”) d; silver white g • 285.3 head fg; riche f, rich g; redergolde d^{vid}, red gold fg • 285.4 [...]londę (for “Englond”) d^{vid}, Englande f, England g • 286.1 then fg **C1**; heard g • 286.3 ready fg; wight g • 286.4 shotyng f. shooting; wyl f, will g; I s e (sic.) d; I see fg •287.1 merry g • 287.2 [.]oo (i.e. probably “goo”) d, goe g • 287.3 sheryffes d, shyrifes f, sheriffes g, shryvës **F**; faythe f, faith g • 287.4 true fg; if fg • 288.1 when fg; their fg • 288.2 their g; free fg • 288.3 sevnscore f, seavenscore g; wight g • 288.4 stod f, stood g; knee fg*

289 Whan they cam to Notyngham,
The buttes were fayre and longe;
Many was the bolde archere
That shoted with bowes stronge.

290 'There shall but syx shote with me;
The other shall kepe my hede *[186]*
And stande with good bowes bent,
That I be not desceyved.'

291 The fourth outlawe his bowe gan bende,
And that was Robyn Hode,
And that behelde the proud sheryfe; *[186]*
All by the but **he** stode. *[187]*

292 Thryes Robyn shot a bout,
And alway **they slist** the wand, [473] *[187]*
And so dyde good Gylberte
Wyth the whyte hande. [474]

- **289.1-2** i*n this order* **bfg**] *in the order 289.2, 289.1 (violating the rhyme scheme)* **d**
- **289.3** was **bdf**] were **g** • archere **bd**] archers **fg**
- **289.4** shoted **bd**] shot **fg** ***FBG KO***
- **290.2** hede **bd** ***DT KO***] heade **f**, head **g**, he[ve]de ***FJC*** *(ex cj.)* ***FBG***
- **290.3** bent] Ibent *(i.e.* i-bent) **d**
- **291.1** fourth **b** (fourthe **d**)] forth **f**, first **g** • gan **bg**] can **df**
- **291.2** Robyn] roben **f** *(which usually has* Robyn *or sometimes* Robin)
- **291.3** proud **b** ***FBG DT KO***] proude **dfg** (***FJC*** proud[ë])
- **291.4** but **bd** (butte **f**)] buttes **g** • he **b** ***DT***] as he **df** ([as] ***FJC***) ***FBG KO***, where he **g** • stode (stood **g**)] stoce *(sic.)* **f**
- **292.1** shot] shet **d** • a bout **bf** ***KO*** *(cf. 294.1)* (a boute **d**)] about **g** ***C1 FJC FBG DT***
- **292.2** they *(referring presumably to Robin's shots)* **bd**] he **fg** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO*** • slist **b**] clyst **d** *(read as* clyft, *rather than* clyſt=clyst, *by Child)*, clefte **f**, clave **g**
- **292.3** Gylberte **b**] Gylbert **df**, Gilbert **g**
- **292.4** whyte] lylly white **f**, lilly-white **g**

289.1 when fg; came dg; Notingham f, Nottingham g • 289.2 faire g; long g • 289.3 bold g • 289.4 bowës ***F****; strong g • 290.1 sixe g; shoote g • 290.2 shalkepe b, shall kepe df, shall keepe g • 290.3 stand fg, standë* ***FJC****; gode d; bowës* ***FJC*** *• 290.4 deceyued df, deceived g • 291.1 out lawe b, out-law g; bow f; bend fg • 291.3 be helde b, beheld g; sheryf d, shirife f, sheriffe g • 292.1 thrise f, thrice g, thryës* ***F*** *• 292.2 alwey d; wande df • 292.3 dyd df, did g; gode d • 292.4 with dg* ***C1****; whytë* ***F****; hand g*

b(d)fg

293 Lytell Johan and good **Scatheloke** ***[187]***
Were archers good and fre; 1170
Lytell Much and good Reynolde, [475]
The worst wolde they not be.

294 Whan they had shot aboute,
These archours fayre and good,
Ever more was the best, 1175
For soth, Robyn Hode.

295 Hym was delyvered the good arowe,
For best worthy was he;
He toke the *yeft* so curteysly, [377] *ȝeft=gift, i.e. prize*
To grene wode wolde he. 1180

296 They cryed out on Robyn Hode, [476]
And grete hornes gan they blowe,
'Wo *worth* the, treason!' sayd Robyn, [476] *come to pass, i.e. be upon*
'Full evyl thou art to knowe.

- **293.1** Scatheloke **b**] Scathelocke **d**, Stathelocke *(sic.)* **f**, Scathlock **g** *(cf.* **a**'s Scarlock *in stanza 4, etc.)*
- **293.2** archers **df**] acchers *(sic.)* **b** • and fre **b** (and free **fg**)] in fere **d**
- **293.3** Much **bg**] Muche **df** • Reynolde] Reinald **g**
- **293.4** wolde they (would they **f**)] they would **g**
- **294.1** they] that they **f** • shot (shote **f**)] sbot *(sic.)* **g** • aboute **b** (about **fg**)] a boute **d** ***KO*** *(cf. 292.1)*
- **294.2** archours **b**] archers **dfg**
- **294.3** was] than was **f**, then was **g**
- **294.4** Robyn] good Robin **f**
- **295.1** Hym **bd**] To him **fg**
- **295.3** yeft **b** (yefte **d**)] gyft **f**, guift **g** • so] full **fg**
- **295.4** wolde **b**] th[.]n wolde, *i.e.* then/than wolde **d**, than would **f**, then would **g** • he] he be ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **296.2** and grete (great **f**) hornes (hornës ***FJC***)] a great horne **g** • gan] can **d** • they] the **f**, he **g**
- **296.3** worth (worthe **f**)] wythe *or* with *or* wyre ***RBW*** *cj.* • the] *omit* **d**
- **296.4** full] for **g** • thou] tohu *(sic.)* **g**

N.B. ***d*** ***breaks off from 296.3, resuming (with defects) at 297.4.***

293.3 lytel f, little g; Muche df • 293.4 worste f • 294.1 when g • 294.2 faire g • 294.3 evermore fg ***C1*** *𝓜 • 294.4 forsothe d, forsoth f* ***C1****, for sooth g • 295.1 delivered g; arow f, arrow g, arȯw* ***C1*** *• 295.3 tooke g; curteously g • 295.4 grenewode d, green wood f, greene-wood g, grenë wode* ***FJC*** *• 296.1 cried g • 296.2 blow g • 296.3 woe g; thee g; said g • 296.4 evill g; know g*

b(d)fg

297 ‘And wo be thou, thou proude sheryf, 1185
Thus *gladdynge* thy gest; *making glad, pleasing*
Other wyse thou *behote* me *behote (also hote): promised*
In yonder wylde forest.

298 ‘But had I the in grene wode,
Under my trystell tre, [456] 1190
Thou sholdest leve me a better *wedde* *pledge*
Than thy trewe *lewte*.’ *loyalty*

299 Full many a bowe there was bent
And arowes let they glyde;
Many a *kyrtell* there was rent, *tunic* 1195
And hurt many a syde.

300 The outlawes shot was so stronge
That no man myght them dryve,
And the proud sheryfes men, *[187]*
They fled away full *blyve*. *quickly, hastily* 1200

- **297.1** thou] to thee **g** • **297.2** gladdynge **b**] chering **f**, cheering **g**
- **297.3** *(whole line)*] Another (An other **g**) promyse (promise **g**) thou (tho u **f**) made (madest **g**) to me **fg**
- **297.4** In yonder **b**] Within the **fg**. *N.B.* **d** *is defective for the reading but probably doesn't have room for either of these; perhaps* in yon ? • wylde] greene **g**
- **298.1** But **b**] But and **fg**. *N.B.* **d** *does not have room for more than about three letters* • had I **b** (**d** [...] I)] I had **fg** • the **bdf**] thee **g** • in grene wode] in the grne *(sic.)* forest **f**, there againe **g**
- **298.2** my **bdf**] the **g** • trystell tre **b** (trystyll tre **d**)] trusty tree **fg**
- **298.3** leve me **bd**] me leve **f**, give me **g** • wedde **bd**] wed **fg**
- **298.4** Than **bf**] [....]e *(i.e.* “thane”? “above”?) **d**, then **g**
- **299.1** bent **dfg**] beut **b** *(ex inv.)*
- **299.3** rent **bdf**] torne **g**
- **299.4** many **bdfg**] was many ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **300.3** proud **b**] proude **dfg** (proud[ë] ***FJC***)
- **300.4** away] a way **bf** • full blyve **bd**] belyve **f**, belive **g**

N.B. d resumes at 297.4, but with extensive defects, typically four or five letters, at the beginning of each line.

*297.1 woe g; proud f; shirife f, sheriffe g • 297.2 guest g • 297.3 behotë **FJC** • 297.4 forrest g • 298.1 ingreene b; grenewode d • 298.3 shuldest f, shouldest g • 298.4 true g; lewtè **C1**; lewtë **F**, lewté **KO** • 299.1 bowë **F** • 299.2 arwowes (sic.) f, arrowes g, arowës **FJC**; lete d; glide g • 299.3 kyrtel f, kirtle g • 299.4 [..]rte (hurte?) d, hurte f; side g • 300.1 [.]utlaws (for “outlawes”) d, out-lawes g; shote f; wasso d; strong fg • 300.2 might g; drive g • 300.3 proude f; shirifes f, sheriffes g*

301 Robyn sawe the *busshement* to broke, [476] *ambush*
In grene wode he wolde have be;
Many an arowe there was shot,
Amonge that company.

302 Lytell Johan was hurte full sore,
With an arowe in his kne, [476]
That he myght neyther go **nor** ryde;
It was full grete pyte.

303 'Mayster,' then sayd Lytell Johan,
'If ever thou lovest me, *[187]*
And for that *ylke* Lordes love *every, i.e. very*
That dyed upon a tre, [421]

304 'And for the *medes* of my servyce, *rewards*
That I have served the,
Lete never the proude sheryf
Alyve now fynde me. [476]

- **301.1** to broke **bf** (to brok **d**[vid]; to-broke ***C1 FJC KO***)] broke **g**
- **301.4** that] the **fg**
- **302.1** was hurte] he was hort *(sic.)* **f**, he was hurt **g**
- **302.2** in **bf**] on **dg** • his **bd**] the **fg**
- **302.3** nor] ne **d**
- **303.2** thou] you **g** • lovest **bd** ***DT KO***] loves **f**, loved **g**, lovedest (love[d]st ***FJC*** *ex cj.)* ***FBG***
- **303.3** that] tha **d**
- **304.1** medes (meeds **g**)] meddes *(sic.)* **d**
- **304.4** fynde **bd** (finde **g**, fyndë ***FJC FBG***)] to fynde (**f** to ſynde=to synde *(sic.; probably a type-sorting error)*)

N.B. d has extensive defects, typically four or five letters, at the beginning of each line.

*301.1 saw g; bushment fg • 301.2 [...]newode (for "green wode") d, grene wod f, greene-wood g, grenë wode **FJC**; woulde f, would g • 301.3 arrow g; ther f; shote d • 301.4 among g • 302.1 ful f • 302.2 wyth f; arrow g; knee fg • 302.3 might fg; neither g; goe g; ride g • 302.4 great fg; pitie f, pitty g, pytè **C1**, pytë **F**, pyté **KO** • 303.1 maister g; said g • 303.3 ylkë **F**; lords g • 303.4 died g; tree dfg • 304.1 servyes f, service g • 304.2 thee g • 304.3 let fg; proud g, proudë **FJC**; shirife f, sheriffe g • 304.4 alive g; noew f*

b(d)fg

305 'But take out thy browne swerde, [477]
And smyte all of my hede,
And gyve me woundes depe and wyde;
No lyfe on me be lefte.' *[187]*

306 'I wolde not that,' sayd Robyn,
'Johan, that thou were slawe,
For all the golde in mery Englonde,
Though it lay now on a *rawe*.'

307 'God forbede,' sayd lytell Much,
'That dyed on a tre, [421]
That thou sholdest, Lytell Johan,
Parte our company.'

308 Up he toke hym on his backe,
And bare hym well a myle;
Many a tyme he layd hym downe,
And shot another whyle.

- **305.1** out] all out **d**
- **305.2** all] thou **fg** • of] off **g**
- **305.3** depe **d**] dede **b** *(ex inv.),* so wyde (wide **g**) **fg** • wyde] longe **f**, long **g**
- **305.4** (whole line) **bd**^{vid}] That I after eate no breade **f** (that I after eat no bread **g**)
- **306.1** that] *omit* **fg** • Robyn] Robyn Hode ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **306.2** were] wert **g** • slawe **b**] slayne **f**, slaine **g**
- **306.4** now **b**] *omit* (**d**^{vid} *defective but appears to lacks space)* ***RBW*** *cj.* • rawe] rowe **d**^{vid} • *(whole line)* **bd**^{vid}] Though I had it all by me **fg**
- **307.1** forbede **d** (for bede **b**)] forbyd (forbid **g**) that **fg** • Much **b** (Muche **d**)] Much then **fg**
- **307.2** on] upon **d**
- **307.4** Parte] Departe **f**, Depart **g**
- **308.3** layd hym **b** (layde hym **d**) (laydehim **f**)] set him **g**
- **308.4** shot **bg**] shote **df** • whyle (while **g**)] a whyle *(sic.)* **f**

N.B. d has defects, typically four or five letters, at the beginning lines 305.1-4 (having just enough of 305.4 to show that it has something like b's reading of that line), is defective for 306.1-3, resumes at 306.4 (although the top is cut off so that only "on a rowe" is legible and even that is a little uncertain) and thereafter is intact through 314.4.

*305.1 b[.]oune (for "browne") d, brownë **FJC**; sworde f, sword g • 305.2 smite fg; head fg • 305.3 give g; wounds g, woundës **F** • 306.1 would fg; said g • 306.3 gold g; merry g; England fg • 307.1 said g; lytel f, little g • 307.2 died g; tree dfg • 307.3 shouldest f; shouldst g • 308.1 tooke g; him fg; back g • 308.2 him g; mile g • 308.3 atyme f, a time g; • 308.4 a nother bd*

309 Then was there a fayre castell,
A lytell within the wode;
Double-dyched it was about,
And walled, by the *rode*. [478]

rood=cross

310 And there dwelled that gentyll knyght,
Syr Rychard at the Lee, [478]
That Robyn had lent his good,
Under the grene wode tree.

311 In he toke good Robyn,
And all his company;
'Welcome be thou, Robyn Hode,
Welcome arte thou to me.

312 'And moche thanke the of thy confort, *[187]*
And of thy curteysye, [377]
And of thy grete kyndenesse,
Under the grene wode tre.

- **310.1** dwelled **bd** (dweled **f**)] dwelt **g**
- **310.2** Rychard **bf**] Rycharde **d**, Richard **g** • at] of **g**
- **310.3** had] hode *(i.e.* Hode*)* **d**, Hode had ***RBW*** *cj.* • lent] lente **d**
- **311.1** Robyn] Robyn Hode ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **311.3** be thou] *omit* **g**
- **311.4** to **bdg** ([to] ***Ritson*** *ex err?)*] *omit* **f** ***C1*** *(ex err?)*
- **312.1** And moche **b**] And myche **d**, I do the (thee **g**) **fg**, And moche I *ex cj.* (***C1 FJC*** [I]) ***FBG DT KO*** • thanke the of thy **b**] thanke t he of the *(i.e.* thanke the of the?) **d**, thankes for thy **f**, thanke for thy **g** • confort **b**] comforte **d**, comfort **fg** ***C1 FBG***
- **312.2** of] for **fg**
- **312.3** of] for **fg** • thy] the **d**
- **312.4** the] thy ***RBW*** *cj.*

N.B. epq, here represented by p, resumes at 312.4 continuing to 316.1

309.1 faire g, castle g, castèll ***C1*** • *309.2 lytile f*$^{\text{ed}}$*, little g; with in b; wood fg* • *309.3 double dyched bdf, double ditched g; a bout b, a boute d, aboute f* • *309.4 rood fg* • *310.1; gentylknyght f, gentle knight g* • *310.2 sir g* • *310.4 grene wood f, greenewood g, grenë-wode* ***FJC*** • *tooke g* • *311.2 hys f* • *311.4 art fg* • *312.2 curteyse d, curtesye f, curtesie g* • *312.3 great fg, kindnes f, kindenes g* • *312.4 grenewode dp, grene wood f, greene wood g, grenë-wode* ***FJC****; tree dfgp* ***F***

313 ‘I love no man in all this worlde
So moch as I do the;
For all the proud sheryf of Notyngham, *[188]*
Ryght here shalt thou be.

314 ‘Shyt the gates, and drawe the brydge,
And let no man com in,
And arme you well, and make you redy,
And to the **walle** ye *wynne*. *go*

315 ‘For one thynge, Robyn, I the *behote*; *behote (also hote): promise*
I swere by Saynt Quyntyn, [480]
These **twelve** dayes thou *wonest* with me, *[188]* *go, i.e. in this case, dwell*
To suppe, ete, and dyne.’

316 Bordes were layed, and clothes **were** spredde, [481]
Reddely and anone;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
To *mete* gan they gone. *meat, i.e. a meal*

- **313.1** this] the **fg**
- **313.3** proud **bfg** ***FBG DT KO***] proude (**d** proudesheryf) **p**, proud[ë] ***FJC***
- **314.1** Shyt **bd**] Schet **p**, Shutte **f** ***FBG***, shut **g**
- **314.4** walle **bd**] walles **ap** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, wall **fg**
- **315.1** behote] hote **f**, hite **g**
- **315.2** I] And **g** • Quyntyn **b**] Quyntyne **ap** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Quintine **fg**
- **315.3** These **abp**] Thou shalt these **fg** • twelve **bg** (**f**^{vid} .xij.=12)] .xl.=40 **ap** *(cf. Genesis 7:12, Matthew 4:2, etc),* forty ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • thou wonest **b** (wonnest **ap** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] abide **fg** • me **bfgp** (***DT in it.***)] men **a**
- **315.4** suppe **bf**] soupe **ap** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, sup **g** • and] a **f**
- **316.1** were spredde **ap** (spred **df**, spread **g**)] spredde (*omitting* were) **b**
- **316.2** Reddely (Redely **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] Redye **f,** Ready **g**
- **316.4** gan **bfg**] can **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** (**d** defective) • gone] all gone ***RBW*** *cj.*

N.B. a resumes at 314.2. d breaks off after 314.4, resuming at 315.4 “dyne,” with lacunae of 8-10 letters at the beginning of lines thereafter. The p fragment of epq ends after 316.1, resuming at 319.1

*313.1 al f; world fg • 313.2 moche d, muche f, much g **C1** **M**; doo g; thee fg • 313.3 shyryfe f, sheriffe g, shyref p; Notingham fg • 313.4 right fg; heere g; shalte dp • 314.1 draw g; bridge g **C1** • 314.2 come adfgp **M** • 314.3 ready g • 314.4 win g • 315.1 thyng f, thing g; thee g; thebehote p; be hote b • 315.2 sweare g; saint g • 315.3 daies g • 315.4 eate f, eat g; dine f^{vid}g • 316.1 boordes g; layde ap **M**; layd d, laid fg; cloathes g • 316.2 a none bd, anon g • 316.3 merry g **DT** (ex err?) • 316.4 meate f, meat g, metë **FJC**; gon g*

THE VI FYTTE VI] .vi. ab, .vi d, syxte f *C1*, sixt g, Sixth *FBG DT KO*; fitte g

317 Lythe and lysten, gentylmen, [481] *attend, listen (imperat. of "lythen")* 1265
And herken **to** your songe;
How the proud sheryf of Notyngham,
And men of **armes** stronge

318 Full fast came to the hye sheryfe, [481] *[188]*
The countre up to *rout*, *arouse, raise* 1270
And they beset the knyghtes castell,
The walles all about.

319 The proude sheryf loud gan crye,
And sayd, 'Thou traytour knyght, [482]
Thou kepeste here the kynges **enemye**, 1275
Agaynst the lawes and ryght.'

320 'Syr, I wyll avowe that I have done,
The dedys **thou** here be *dyght*, *prepared, fitted, i.e. "the deeds you accuse me of"*
Upon all the londes that I have,
As I am a trewe knyght.' [482] 1280

- **317.2** herken **bf**] herkyn **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, herkeneth **d**, hearken **g** • to **ad**] unto **bfg** • your] the **fg**; our *RBW cj.*
- **317.3** how (howe **af** *FJC FBG DT KO*)] of *RBW cj.* • of Notyngham] began **fg**
- **317.4** And] Called *or* Brought *RBW cj.* • armes **bdfg**] armys **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*
- **318.1** to] *omit RBW cj.* • **319.1** gan] can **f**
- **319.3** here] there **fg** • enemye **b** (enmye **d**)] enemys **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, enemies **fg**
- **319.4** Agaynst **aqf** (against **g**)] Agayne **b** *C1* • the] all **g** • lawes **bfq** (**d** [.]awes)] lawe **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, law **g**
- **320.1** that] what **g**
- **320.2** thou **b** (**d** [..]ou)] that **afgq** *C1 FJC FBG DT KO* • **320.4** a] *omit* **fg**

N.B. epq, here represented by q, resumes at 319.4, continuing to 327.2. d is defective for 4-12 (usually 8-12) letters at the beginning of each line.

317.1 listen g; gentyl men f, gentlemen g • 317.2 song g • 317.3 proude af ([...]ude d) FBG DT KO, proudë FJC; shyref a M, shirife f, sheriffe g • 317.4 strong g • 318.1 cam a M; hie g, hyë FJC; shyref a M, shirife f, sheriffe g • 318.2 contre a M,, countrey f, countrie g, countrë F, countré KO; route adf M • 318.3 besette a M; knyghtes ¦ eastell (sic.) d; knightes f, knights g, knyghtës FJC; castle g; castèll C1 • 318.4 walls g, wallës F; aboute af M, a boute d • 319.1 proud g, proudë FJC; sheryfloude d; shyref a M, shirife f, sheriffe g; loude a(d)fg M; crie g • 319.2 sayde a M, said g; traytoure df, traytor g; knight ag M • 319.3 kepest af M, keepest g; kinges f, kings g • 319.4 right ag • 320.1 sir g; will g; a vowe b, avow fg; doone g • 320.2 dedes f, deeds g; heere g; dight g • 320.3 up on b • 320.3 landes aq DT KO, laudes f[mid] (ex inv.), lands g, landës F • 320.4 [..]eue, (i.e. "trueue"?) d, true fg, trewë FJC; knight g

321 ‘*Wende* forthe, syrs, on your waye, *go, travel*
And **do** no more to me
Tyll ye *wytte* oure kynges **wyll**, [483] *wyt/wytte=wat, know*
What he woll say to the.’

322 The sheref thus had his answere, 1285
Without ony *leasynge*; [483] *probably a lie or falsehood; other meanings known*
Forthe he *yede* to London toune *yede/ȝede: gaed, went, hastened*
All for to tel our kynge.

323 There he **tolde hem** of that knyght, *[188]*
And *eke* of Robyn Hode, *also* 1290
And also of the bolde archeres,
That noble were and good. *[188]*

324 ‘He **wolde** avowe that he **had** done,
To mayntayne the outlawes stronge;
He **wolde** be lorde, and set you at nought, [483] 1295
In all the north londe.’

- **321.2** do **aq**] doth **b** ***Ritson***, do ye **f** (doe ye **g**), doth do *for* do no ***C1*** • to] unto **f**
- **321.3** ye wytte oure **b** (**aq** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** wyt *for* wytte) ([.....]e our **d**)] you wete our **f**, you wit your **g** • wyll **bd** ***DT***] welle **a** (welle/ *(sic.)* **q**), wyl **f**, will **g**, wille ***FJC DT KO***
- **321.4** woll **b**] wyll **aq** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, wyl **f**, will **g**
- **322.2** ony **b**] any **afgq** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **322.3** Forthe **b**] [...]th **a**, Furth **q** ([Fu]rth ***FJC***) ***(DT in it.) KO***, Forth **fg** ***FBG*** • yede (**a**[vid] e yede *for* he yede) **q**] yode **b**, went **fg**
- **323.1** tolde **b** (told **fg**)] telde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** ([...[de **d**) • hem [=them?] **b**] him **afg** (hym **dq** ***C1***) ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **323.4** That noble were **bfg**] That were so noble **q** (soo noble **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)
- **324.1** wolde **bf** (would **g**)] wyll **aq** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • had **bfg**] hath **aq** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **324.3** wolde **bd** (wold **f**, would **g**)] wyll **aq** ***FJC FBG DT KO***

N.B. d has defects, typically 8-12 letters, at the start of lines 321.1-323.2, is defective for 323.3-324.2, resumes at 324.3 and runs through 332.2 with a few losses at the right margin.

321.1 wend g; furth aq ***M****, forth f, foorth g; sirs ag* ***M****; syrson d; way adfgq* ***M*** *• 321.3 till g; kings g, kyngës* ***F*** *• 321.4 thee g • 322.1 shyref aq* ***M****, shirife f, sheriffe g; answer f • 322.2 with out b; any afgq* ***M****; lesynge adq* ***M****, lesyng f, leasing g • 322.3 towne adfq* ***M****, town g • 322.4 tell fgq; kinge a* ***M****, king g • 323.1 Ther a* ***M****; knight afg* ***M*** *• 323.3 bold g; archars afq* ***M****, archers g • 323.4 gode aq* ***M*** *• 324.1 a vowe b, avow fg • 324.2 mayntenethe outla wes a; maintaine g, manytene q, mayntene* ***M****; out lawes f, out-lawes g; strong fg • 324.3 belorde q; lord fg; naught g • 324.4 northe adq* ***M****; lande f, land g*

abdfg(p)(q)

325 'I woll be at Notyngham,' sayd **the** kynge, [483]
'Within this fourtynyght,
And take I wyll Robyn Hode,
And so I wyll that knyght. 1300

326 '**Go home, thou proud sheryf** *[189]*
'And do as **I byd the**;
And ordayne good archeres *inowe*, *enough*
Of all the wyde countree.'

327 The sheryf had his leve i-take, 1305
And went hym on his way,
And Robyn Hode to grene wode,
Upon a certayn day.

328 And Lytell Johan was *hole* of the arowe *healed/whole*
That shote was in his kne, 1310
And dyde hym strayte to Robyn Hode,
Under the grene wode tre.

- **325.1** woll **bd**] wyl **a** ***KO***, wyll **fq**, will **g**, wil ***FJC FBG DT*** *(ex err.?)* • the **bfg**] our **adq** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **325.2** fourtynyght **b**] fourteenyght **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, fourtenyght **dq**, fourte night **f**, fortnight **g**
- **325.4** I wyll] will I **g**
- **326.1** Go... proud sheryf **b** (goo... proude sheryf **d**) (go... proude sheryfe **f**) (goe... proude sheriffe **g**)] 'Go nowe home, shyref,' sayde our kynge **aq** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **326.2** I byd the **a** (I byd | the *with the vertical bar* **q**) I bydde the ***C1***)] I the bydde **bdf**; I you bid **g**
- **326.4** wyde (wide **g**, wydë ***FJC***)] wyld ***RBW*** *cj.*; north ***RBW*** *cj.* • wyde countre (contre **adq** ***FBG DT***, countre **f**, contré ***KO***, wide country **g**, wydë contrë ***FJC***)] countre wyde ***RBW*** *cj. (to rhyme with* bydde *if* I the bydde *be accepted in 326.2)*
- **327.3** Hode **abfg**] Hode wente **p** • wode] wode [went] ***C1*** *ex Ritson cj.*
- **327.4** a certayn **bf** (a certen **ap** ***FJC FBG DT KO***) (a sertayne **d**) (a certaine **g**)] the twelfthe ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **328.2** shote was **b** (shot was **adfp** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] was shot **g**

N.B. d runs through 332.2 with a few losses at the right margin. epq is represented by q through 327.2, by p from 327.3 on.

325.1 Notingham f, Nottingham g; saide a ***M****, said g, sayde q; king fg • 325.3 will g • 325.4 will f; knight afg* ***M*** *• 326.2 doo d, doe g • 326.3 ordeyn aq* ***M****, ordeyne df, ordaine g; gode aq* ***M****; archers afgq* ***M****, archer s d; ynowe aq* ***M****, I nowe bd, ynow f, enough g • 327.1 shyref aq* ***M****, shyryfe f, sheriffe g; leave g; I take abdq* ***DT****, ytake fg, itake* ***C1*** *• 327.2 him fg • 327.3 Robynn (sic.) f; grenewode d, greene-wood g, grenë wode* ***FJC*** *• 327.4 daye f • 328.1 arrow g • 328.2 knee g • 328.3 dyd hym aq* ***M****, did him fg; streyght afp* ***M****, streyte d, strait g • 328.4 grene wood df, greene-wood g, grenë-wode* ***FJC****; tree afp* ***M***

329 Robyn Hode walked in the foreste,
Under the leves grene;
The proud sheryfe of Notyngham
Therfore he had grete *tene*.

330 The sheryfe there fayled of Robyn Hode, *[189]*
He myght not have his *pray*;
Then he awayted this gentyll knyght,
Bothe by nyght **and** day.

331 Ever he **awayted this** gentyll knyght,
Syr **Rychard** at the Lee,
As he went on haukynge by the ryver syde, [483]
And let his haukes flee. *[189]*

332 Toke he there this gentyll knyght,
With men of armes stronge,
And lad hym **home** to Notyngham warde, *[189]*
Bounde both **fote and hande**. *[189]*

tene (teyn, tyne): suffering, sorrow

probably to be read "prey"

- **329.4** Therfore **bdf** (therefore **g**)] There of **a**, Ther of **p** (Thereof ***FJC FBG DT KO***) • he] *omit* **g** • tene] teene **g**
- **330.1** fayled **bd**] fayles **ap**, he fayled **f** (he failed **g**) • **330.3** this **ab** (thys **d**)] that **fg**
- **330.4** and **apg**] and by **bf**
- **331.1** he] omit **g** • awayted (a wayted **b**) **f**] wayted **adp** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, awaited **g** • this **dp**] the **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, that **bfg**
- **331.2** Rychard **b**] Richarde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, Rycharde **d**, Richard **pfg** • at] of **g**
- **331.3** ryver] ryner *(sic.)* **a** *(ex inv.)*, river **fg**
- **331.4** his **abdfg** (***FJC*** [his] ***DT in it.***)] *omit* ***KO*** (***FJC KO*** *incorrectly say* **a** *omits*) • let] lete **adp** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • haukes **abp**] hauke **fg** • flee **abg**] flye **fp** (**d** *defective*)
- **332.1** Toke he there **abd**] To be there **f**, to betray **g**, [....]e there **p**
- **332.2** armes **bdfg**] armys **ap** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **332.3** lad] led **agp** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • home **bfg**] *omit* **ap** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **332.4** bounde **ap**] i bonde **b**, ybound **fg**, Ibonde ***C1*** • fote and hande **a** (foote and hande **f**) (foote and hand **g**)] honde and fote **b**, fote and honde ***C1*** *cj.* • *(whole line)*] Bounde in irons stronge (*or* longe) ***RBW*** *cj.*

N.B. ***d*** ***has a few losses at the right margin, then breaks off at 332.2, resuming at 333.3.*** ***epq*** ***is represented by*** ***p*****, *which has occasional minor defects at each margin.***

329.1 forest af ***M****, forrest g (p def.)* • *329.2 levys ap* ***M****, leaves g; greene g* • *329.3 proude adfp* ***FBG DT KO****, proudë* ***FJC****; shyref a* ***M****, sheryf d, shirife f, sheriffe g, sheyref p; Notingham f, Nottingham g* • *329.4 great fg* • *330.1 shyref ap* ***M****, sheryf d, shirife f, sheriffe g; ther f* • *330.2 might fg; havehis g; praye f* • *330.3 than ap* ***M****; a wayted b, awaited g; gentell d*[vid]*, gentyl f, gentle g; knyghte f, knight g* ***KO*** • *330.4 both g; night g;* • *331.1 gentyl f, gentle g; knight g* • *331.2 Sir g* • *331.3 wente d; hauking fg; ryve[.....] d, ryver-syde* ***DT KO****; side fg;* • *331.4 haukës* ***F*** • *332.1 ge[.]ţell d, gentil f, gentle g; knight afgp* ***M*** • *332.2 strong g* • *332.3 him fg; Notingham f; Notingham-ward g, Notinghamwarde* ***FBG*** • *332.4 bothe ap* ***M***

abdfg(p)

333 The sheryf swore a full grete othe
By hym that dyed on *rode*, [421] *rood=cross* 1330
He had *lever* than an hondred pounde *liefer, i.e. rather*
That he had Robyn Hode.

334 This **herde** the knyghtes wyfe, *[189]*
A fayre lady and **fre**;
She set her on a good palfray, 1335
To grene wode anone rode she.

335 Whan she came **in** the forest,
Under the grene wode tre,
Founde she there Robyn Hode,
And all his fayre *meyne*. *company, band, gang* 1340

336 'God the save, good Robyn,
And all thy company;
For our dere **Lady love**, [484]
A *bone* graunte thou me. *boon*

- **333.2** rode **ap**] a tre **b** (a tree **fg**) *(as in 62.4, 101.4, 110.2, 123.4 etc., but cf. line 4)*
- **333.3** lever] rather **g** • an] a **g** • hondred pounde **bd**] .C. li (i.e. 100 pound[s]) **p** (.C.li **a**), hundreth pounde **f** (pound **g**), hundred pound ***FJC FBG DT KO***, hondrede pounde ***C1***
- **333.4** he had Robyn Hode **abd**[vid]] Robin Hode had he **f (g** hood… hee) *(cf. line 2)* ***C1***
- **334.1** this herde **p** (this harde **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] this lady **b**; then the lady **fg** ***C1***
- **334.2** fre **b** (free **fg**)] a free **adp** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • *(whole line)*] a ladye fayre and fre ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **334.3** a] *omit* **d** • **335.1** in **adp**] to **bfg** • **335.2** tre (tree *(sic.)* ***KO)***] tre tre (sic.) **b**
- **335.3** Founde she there (fonde she there **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] There found she **fg**
- **335.4** fayre] merry **g** • meyne **bd** (meynè ***C1***)] mene **a** ***(FJC FBG*** menë) ***DT*** (mené ***KO***) meyny **f**, menye **g**
- **336.1** save **afg** (**d** [...]e *but has space)* (savë ***FJC***)] *omit (sic.)* **b** • Robyn] Robyn Hode **f** ***C1 RBW*** *cj. (for metrical reasons)*
- **336.3** Lady love **b** (ladye love **d**)] Ladyes sake **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, ladyes love **f** (ladies **g**) ***C1***

N.B. d resumes at 333.3, but has defects, typically 8-12 letters, for all lines on this page. epq is represented by p, which ends at 335.1, resuming (as e) at 435.4.

*333.1 sheref a **M**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g, shyref p (and defective for "the"); sware ap **M**; great fg, oath g • 333.2 bi a **M**; him fg **FBG**; died fg • 333.3 then fg • 333.4 hee g • 334.1 knightes f, knights g, knightës **F**; wife fg • 334.2 fayr ap **M**, faire g • 334.3 hir ap **M**; gode palfrey ap **M**; palfrày **C1** • 334.4 grenewood f, greene-wood g, grenewode p, grenë wode **FJC**; a non bd; shee fg • 335.1 Whanne a **M**, when fg; cam ap **M**; forrest g, forèst **C1** • 335.2 und̈=under(?) a; grene wood f, greene-wood g, grenë-wode **FJC**; tree afg **M** • 335.4 al a **M** • 336.1 thee g; gode a **FBG DT KO**, godë **FJC** • 336.3 deere g, derë **FJC** • 336.4 abone f; boon g, bonë **FJC**; [...]te=graunte d, graunt f, grant g*

337 ‘**Late thou** never my wedded lorde
Shamefully **i-slayne** be;
He is fast **i-bounde** to Notyngham warde,
For the love of the.’

338 Anone then sayd good Robyn
To that lady **fre**,
What man hath your lorde **i-take**?
.... *[189]*

339 **....** *[189]*
‘For soth as I the say;
He is nat yet thre myles [484]
Passed on **your** waye.

- **337.1** Late thou **b** (Let thou **fg** ***C1***)] Late **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **337.2** Shamefully **ag** (shamfully **f** ***C1***)] Shamly *(sic.)* **b** • i-slayne (I slayne **b**)] slayne **af** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO***, slaine **g** ([...] slayne **d**) • be] to be **f** ***C1***
- **337.3** i-bounde (I bounde **b**, Ị bounde **d**^{vid}; ibounde ***C1***)] bowne **a** ***FJC DT KO***, bound **fg** ***FBG***
- **338.2** fre **bf** (**dg** free)] so fre **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **338.3** your] thy **g** • i-take (I take **bd**, ytake **fg** ***FBG***, itake ***C1***, [i-]take ***FJC***)] take **a**
- **338.4** *(whole line)*] *omit* **abd** ***FJC***, The proude shirife than sayd she **f** (The proud sheriffe then said she **g**) ***C1 FBG DT KO***; from your company ***FBG*** *cj.*
- **339.1** *(whole line)*] *omit* **abdfg**] ’The proude sheryfe hath hym itake [***C1***], ‘The proude shirife,’ than sayd she ***FBG DT*** *(cf.* **f** *in v. 338)*, ‘The shirife hath him take,’ she sayd ***KO*** *(ex. cj.),* The shirife hatt hym take she sayd *Dixon-Kennedy cj.*
- **339.2** *(whole line)*] *omit* **fg**
- **339.3** nat **a**] not **bfg** ***DT*** • yet] yet passed **fg**
- **339.4** your **bd**^{vid}] his **a** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO*** • *(whole line)*] You may them overtake **fg** (to rhyme with 338.3?)

N.B. ***d*** ***has defects, typically 8-12 letters, at the beginning of all lines on this page.***

337.1 lord g • 337.3 Notingham af ***M****; Nottingham-ward g, Notinghamwarde* ***FBG*** *• 337.4 thelove a; ofthe b; thee g • 338.1 a none b, anon g; than af; saide a* ***M****, said g; goode a* ***M*** *• 338.3 manhath a • 339.2 forsoth* ***C1*** *• 339.3 three g; myeles a, miles g, mylës* ***F*** *• 339.4 way a ([.]ay d)* ***M***

340 Up then sterte good Robyn,
As man that had **ben** *wode*; *wode (wud): mad, crazed, furious, berserk*
'Buske you, my **mery yonge men**, *[189]*
For hym that dyed on *rode*. [421] *rood: cross* 1360

341 'And he that this sorowe forsaketh,
By hym that dyed on tre,
Shall he never in grene wode **be**
Nor lenger dwell with me.'

342 Sone there were good bowes i-bent, 1365
Mo than seven score; [465]
Hedge ne dyche **spare** they none
That was them before.

343 'I make myn avowe to God,' sayd Robyn, [454]
'The **sherif** wolde I fayne se; *[189]* 1370
And yf I may hym take,
I-quyt **than shall** it be.'

- **340.2** man **a**] a man **bfg** • ben **a** (beene **g**)] be **bdf** • wode] wake **g**
- **340.3** you] ye **g** • mery yonge men (**b** mery yongemen) **d**] mery men **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, mery yemen **f** (merry yeomen **g**), mery young men *C1*
- **340.4** rode **ad**] a rode **b**, a tree **fg** *(as in 62.4, 101.4, 110.2, 123.4 333.2, etc.)*
- **341.2** by] and by **g** • tre **a**] a tre **b** (a tree **fg**)
- **341.3** wode be **b**] wode *(omitting* be) **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*, [..]dde, i.e. wodde **d** • *(whole line)*] And by him that al thinges maketh **f** (…all things… **g**) *C1*
- **341.4** Nor **b**] No **afg** *C1 FJC FBG DT KO*; Ne *RBW cj.* • dwell (dwel **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*)] shall dwell **fg**
- **342.1** i-bent (I bent **b**, ybente **f**, ybent **g**, ibent *C1*)] bent **a** *FJC FBG DT KO*
- **342.2** Mo] More **g**
- **342.3** spare they **b]** spared they **af** *C1 FJC FBG DT KO*, they spared **g**
- **343.2** sherif **a** (sheryf **d**^{vid} *C1*)] knyght **b** (knight **fg**) • wolde] would **fg**
- **343.3** I] ye he *(sic.)* **f**, ye **g** • take] overtake **g**
- **343.4** I-quyt (I quyt **b**) *FBG*] I-quyte (I quyte **ag**) ([...]yte **d**) *FJC DT KO*, yquyte **f**, yquight **g**, Iquyt *C1* • than shall **bf** (**dg** *FBG* then shall)] shall **a** *FJC DT KO* • it] he **fg** *C1 FBG*, I *RBW cj.*

N.B. d has defects, typically 8-12 letters, at the beginning of lines 340.1-341.4 and lacks all of stanza 342, resuming with 343.1, with many defencts.

340.1 than a ***M****; starte f, start g; gode a* ***M*** *• 340.2 w ode d • 340.4 him g • 341.1 sorrow g • 341.2 him g • 341.3 grené wode FJC • 342.1 soone fg; ther f; gode a* ***M****; bowës* ***F*** *• 342.3 then g • 342.3 dytche f, ditche g • 343.1 mine fg; a vowe bd*^{vid}*, avow g; godsayd b; sayde a* ***M****, said g • 343.2 faine g; see afg* ***M*** *• 343.3 if ag* ***M****; him fg FBG • 343.4 bee C1*

abdfg

344 And whan they came to Notyngham,
They walked in the strete;
And with the proud sheryf i-wys
Sone **can** they mete.

345 'Abyde, thou proud sheryf,' he sayd,
'Abyde, and speke with me;
Of some tydinges of our kynge [485]
I wolde fayne here of the.

346 'This seven yere, by dere worthy God,
Ne *yede* I **so** fast on fote; [485] *ȝede: gaed, went, hastened*
I make myn avowe to God, thou proud sheryfe, [454]
It is not for thy good.'

347 Robyn bent a **full** good bowe,
An arowe he drewe at **wyll**;
He hyt so the proud sheryf
Upon the grounde he lay full styll.

348 And or he myght up aryse, [485]
On his fete to stonde,
He smote of the sheryves hede
With his brighte *bronde*. *[190]* *brand=sword*

- **344.3** i-wys] I wys **abd** ***C1***, ywys **f**, ywis **g**, iwys ***KO***
- **344.4** can **ad**] gan **bfg** • they] the **f**
- **346.1** seven (seaven **g**)] .vii. **d** • **346.2** so **bdfg**] this **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***
- **346.3** thou proud] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **346.4** It **ad** ***Ritson***] At *(sic.)* **b**, That **fg** ***C1*** • not **bdfg**] nat **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • good (gode **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***) **bdf**] boote *(sic.)* **g**
- **347.1** full **ad**] *omit* **bfg** • good **bfg** (goode **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] godd *(sic.)* **d**
- **347.2** drewe **bd** (drew **fg**)] drowe **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • wyll **ad**] his wyll **bf** (will **g**)
- **348.1** or] ere **g**, or that ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **348.4** brighte **b** (bright[ë] ***FJC***)] bright **afg** ***DT***, bryght **d** ***C1*** • bronde] brand **g**

*344.1 when g **FBG**; Notingham af **M**, Nottingham g • 344.2 street g • 344.3 proude adf **FBG DT KO**, proudë **FJC**; sherif a **M**, shirife f, sheriffe g • 344.4 soone f, soon g, sonë **F**; meet g • 345.1 A byde b, abide g; proude af **FBG DT KO**, proudë **FJC**; sherif a **M** shyryfe f, sheriffe g; sayde a **M**, said g • 345.2 A byde b, abide g; speake fg **C1** • 345.3 tidinges a **M**, tydynges d, tidings g; oure a **M**; kinge af **M**, king g • 345.4 would faine heare of thee g •346.1 thys f; yeere g; deere g; worrthy f • 346.2 N eyede (sic.) d; faste d; foot g • 346.3 myne f, mine g; a vowe bd, avow g; proude afg **C1 FBG DT KO**, proudë **FJC**, prou[....] d; sherif a **M**, shirife f, sheriffe g • 347.1 bente f • 347.2 arrowe a **M**, arow f, arrow g; drew fg; • 347.3 hit ag **M**; proude adf **FBG DT KO**, proudë **FJC**; sherife a **M**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 347.4 ground g; still ag **M** • 348.1 might fg; a ryse d, arise g • 348.2 feet g; stande f, stand g • 348.3 sherifs a **M**, sheryffes d, shyryfes f, sheriffes g; head fg • 348.4 hys f*

349 ‘Lye thou there, thou proud sheryf
Evyll mote thou ***cheve***! *control, bring about, so “may you meet an evil end”*
There myght no man to the trust *[190]* 1395
The whyles thou were alyve.’

350 His men drewe out theyr bryght swerdes,
That were so sharpe and kene,
And layde on the sheryves men,
And dryved them downe *bydene*. *together* 1400

351 Robyn stert to that knyght,
And cut a two his **hoode**, *[190]*
And toke hym in his hand a bowe,
And bad hym by hym stonde.

352 ‘Leve thy hors the behynde, 1405
And lerne for to renne;
Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
Through myre, mosse, and fenne.

- **349.1** thou] the **g** • proud (proude **adf** ***C1 FBG DT KO***, proudë ***FJC***)] prouq (*ex. inv.?*) **g**
- **349.2** mote] may **fg** • cheve **a**] thryve **bd**^{vid}**f** ***FBG*** (thrive **g**)
- **349.3** the] thy **a**, thee **fg** • trust (truste **a** ***FJC FBG DT KO***)] struste *(sic.)* **d**
- **349.4** were] wast **f**
- **350.1** theyr] there *(i.e.* their ? there ?) **f**, their **g**
- **350.2** so] bothe **d**
- **350.3** layde (layd **d**)] laid it **g**
- **350.4** dryved] drive **g** • bydene] by dene **bf** (by dene *or* by dem **d**^{vid}), by deene **g**
- **351.2** a two] into **f**, in twe **g** • hoode **b** ***DT***] bande **f** (band **g**), bonde ***C1 FJC*** *(ex cj. to rhyme with* stonde *in line 4)* ***FBG KO*** • *whole line*] and cut his bondes by honde ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **351.4** by hym stonde] to grene wode *(to rhyme with* hoode *in 351.2)* ***RBW*** *cj.*

N.B. a ends with 349.3. d ends with 350.4 and has defects in most of lines 349.1-350.4, especially at the beginnings of lines.

*349.1 sherife a **M**, shyryfe f, sheriffe g • 349.2 evill g • 349.3 might fg • 349.4 whiles g; a lyve b **M**, alive g • 350.1 drew fg, bright swordes fg • 350.2 sharp d^{vid}; keene g • 350.3 sheryffe[.] d, shyryfes f, sheriffes g • 351.1 start fg; knight fg • 351.2 his f • 351.3 tooke g; him fg; hande f • 351.4 bade f; him...him fg; stande f, stand g • 352.1 leave g; horse fg; thee g; be hynde b, behinde g • 352.2 learne f, learn g • 352.3 greene wood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 352.4 mire g, myrë **FJC**; fene f, feene g*

353 ‘Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
Without ony *leasynge*, [483] *probably a lie or falsehood; other meanings known* 1410
Tyll that I have gete us grace
Of Edwarde, our comly kynge.’

THE VII FYTTE **VII] .vii. bfg, Seventh *C1 FBG DT KO* • fytte] fitte g**

354 The kynge came to Notynghame,
With knyghtes in grete araye,
For to take that gentyll knyght 1415
And Robyn Hode, and yf he may.

355 He asked men of that countre
After Robyn Hode,
And after that gentyll knyght,
That was so bolde and **stout**. *[190]* 1420

356 Whan they had tolde hym the case
Our kynge understonde ther tale,
And *seased* in his honde [489] *seized* or *took seisin*
The knyghtes londes all.

- **353.2** ony] any **fg** • leasynge] leasind *(sic.)* **g**
- **353.4** Edwarde **b**] Edward **fg**
- **354.4** and yf **b**] if **fg**
- **355.1** men] them **fg**
- **355.4** stout **bg** (stoute **f**)] good ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **356.2** understonde (under stonde **b**)] understode **f** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, understood **g**
- **356.3** seased (*meaning perhaps* seised=took seisin) **bg**] ceased **f** • in] all in ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **356.4** The knyghtes londes (londës ***FJC FBG***) all **b** (The knightes landes all **f**)] All the knights land **g**

*353.1 greenewood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 353.2 with out b, wythout f • 353.3 till g; get fg • 353.4 comely fg; king g • 354.1 kyng f, king g; Notingham f, Nottingham g • 354.2 knightes f, knights g, knyghtës **FJC**; great fg, aray g • 354.3 gentle g; knight fg • 355.1 countrei f, country g, countré **C1**, countrë **F** • 355.3 gentle knight g • 355.4 boulde g • 356.1 when g; him fg • 356.2 king g; their fg • 356.3 hande f, hand g*

bfg

357 All the passe of Lancasshyre *[190]* 1425
He went both ferre and nere,
Tyll he came to Plomton Parke;
He *faylyd* many of his dere. [489] *failed to find*

358 There our kynge was wont to se
Herdes many one, 1430
He coud *unneth* fynde one dere, *unneð: scarcely, hardly, with difficulty*
That bare ony good horne.

359 The kynge was wonder wroth withall, [492]
And swore by the Trynyte, [493]
'I wolde I had Robyn Hode, 1435
With *eyen* I myght hym se. *eyen, een: eyes*

360 'And he that wolde smyte of the knyghtes hede,
And brynge it to me,
He shall have the knyghtes londes, [493]
Syr Rycharde at the Le. 1440

- **357.1** All] *omit* **g** • passe of **b**] compasse of of *(sic.)* **f**, compasse of **g** ***KO***, parke of *or* parkes of ***RBW*** *cj.* • Lancasshyre **b**] Lankestshire **f**, Lankashire **g**
- **357.2** went] wend **fg**
- **357.3** Plomton **bf**] Plumpton **g**
- **358.1** our] the **g**
- **358.2** one] a one **fg**
- **358.3** one] any **fg**
- **358.4** ony] any **fg**
- **359.1** withall *(without a space)* **fg** ***FJC DT KO***] with all **b** ***FBG***
- **359.4** eyen] eyes **fg**
- **360.2** to me] to mee **f**, unto mee **g**
- **360.3** shall] should **fg**
- **360.4** Rycharde **b**] Rychard **f**, Richard **g** • at] of **g** • the **bg**] they *(sic.)* **f** • Le] Lee **g**

357.2 farre fg; neere g • 357.3 tyl f, till g • 357.4 fayled fg; deere g • 358.1 ther f; king g; see g • 358.2 heards g, herdës ***F*** *• 358.3 could fg; finde g; deere g • 359.1 kyng f, king g; wrothe f • 359.2 trinitie fg, trynytè* ***C1****, trynytë* ***F****, Trynyté* ***KO*** *• 359.3 would fg • 359.4 wyth f; might him see fg • 360.1 would fg; smite fg; knightes f, knights g, knyghtës* ***F****; heade f, head g • 360.2 bring g • 360.3 knights g, knyghtës* ***F****; landes f, lands g • 360.4 Sir g*

361 ‘I gyve it hym with my charter,
And sele it **by** my honde, [493] *[191]*
To have and holde for ever more,
In all mery Englonde.’

362 Than bespake a fayre olde knyght,
That was treue in his fay;
‘A, my leege lorde the kynge,
One worde I shall you say.

363. ‘There is no man in this countre
May have the knyghtes londes,
Whyle Robyn Hode may ryde or gone, [493]
And bere a bowe in his hondes,

364 ‘That he ne shall lese his hede,
That is the best ball in his hode: [493]
Gyve it to no man, my lorde the kynge,
That ye wyll any good.’

- **361.2** by ***RBW*** *cj.*] *omit* **b** ***KO***; with **fg** ***C1*** ([with] ***FJC***) ***FBG (DT in it.)***
- **362.3** A] O **g**
- **363.2** have] hane **b** *(prob. ex inv., though “han” can be an archaic form of “have”)*
- **363.3** gone] go ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **364.1** ne shall] neshall *(without a space)* **b** • lese **b**] lose **fg**
- **364.2** the best] his best **g** • *(whole line)*] at (the) honde of Robyn Hode ***RBW*** *cj.*; though he hyde in a hode ***RBW*** *cj.*; that is the best bell in his hode ***RBW*** *cj.*

*361.1 geve f, give g; him g; chartèr **C1** • 361.2 seale fg; hande f, hand g • 361.3 evermore g, ever-more **C1** • 361.4 al f **KO** (ex err.?); merry g; Englande f, England g • 362.1 faire g; old f; knight g • 362.2 true fg • 362.3 lege fg **C1**, leegë **F**; lord fg; king g • 362.4 word g; yousay b • 363.1 countrey f, country g, countrè **C1**, countrë **FJC**, countré **KO** • 363.2 knights g, knyghtës **F**; landes f, lands g • 363.3 while g; ride fg; gon f • 363.4 beare fg; handes f, hands g • 364.1 heade f, head g • 364.2 hoode f, hood g • 364.3 give fg; lord fg, king g • 364.4 will g*

365 Halfe a yere dwelled our comly kynge
In Notyngham, and well more; [493]
Coude he not here of Robyn Hode,
In what countre that he were.

366 But alway went good Robyn
By *halke* and *eke* by hyll, *halke: from an OE word for corner, hence nook; also*
And alway slewe the kynges dere,
And *welt* them at his wyll. *wielded, possessed, hence used*

367 Than bespake a proude *fostere*, [494] *(probably) forester* 1465
That stode by our kynges kne:
'Yf ye wyll se good Robyn,
Ye must do after me.

368 'Take fyve of the best knyghtes
That be in your lede, 1470
And **walke** downe by **your** abbay, [495] *[191]*
And gete you monkes *wede*. [494] *weed(s)= clothing*

- **365.3** he] hy *(sic.)* **f**
- **366.1** alway **bf**] allway **g**, alwey ***KO*** *(ex err?)* • good] god **f**
- **366.2** halke] halte **f**, halt **g**
- **366.3** alway **bg**] all way **f** • slewe] he slew **g**
- **366.4** welt] used **fg**
- **367.1** fostere (foster **g**)] forster ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **367.3** Robyn] Rabyn *(sic.)* **b**
- **367.4** ye] you **fg**
- **368.2** That be **b**] That we be **f**, That now be **g**
- **368.3** walke **g** (***FJC*** *cj.)* (walk ***C1***)] walked **bf**, walketh *(i.e.* walkeð?) ***FJC*** *cj.* • your **bfg**] yon ***C1 FJC*** *(ex cj.)* ***FBG DT KO***
- **368.4** monkes] a monks **g**

366.1 comely g; kyng f, king g • 365.2 Notingham f, Nottingham g • 365.3 could fg; heare g • 365.4 country g, countrë ***F****, countré* ***KO*** *• 366.2 hill g • 366.3 kings g, kingës* ***F*** *• 366.4 hys f; will g • 367.1 proud g • 367.2 stood g; kings g, kyngës* ***F****; knee g • 367.3 if fg; will see g • 367.4 mee g • 368.1 five fg; knights g • 368.4 get fg; monkës* ***F***

369 ‘And I wyll be your ledes-man, [496] *[191]*
And lede you the way,
And or ye come to Notyngham,
Myn hede then dare I lay,

370 ‘That ye shall mete with good Robyn,
On lyve yf that he be;
Or ye come to Notyngham,
With *eyen* ye shall hym se.’

371 Full hastly our kynge was *dyght*, *[191]*
So were his knyghtes fyve,
Everych of them in monkes *wede*,
And hasted them thyder **blyth**. *[191]*

372 Our kynge was grete above his *cole*,
A brode hat on his crowne,
Ryght as he were abbot-lyke,
They rode up into the towne.

alive

eyen, een: eyes

prepared, i.e. here “dressed”

every one; clothing

cowl

- **369.1** ledes-man (ledes man **b** ***C1***; ledës-man ***FJC***)] lodes man **f**, lodesman **g**, bedesman (=beadman) ***KO*** *(ex cj.)*
- **369.2** the] on the **fg**
- **369.3** or] ere **g** • ye] you **g** • to] at **g**
- **369.4** myn] my **fg** • lay] saye **f**
- **370.1** Robyn (Robin **f**)] Rodin *(sic.)* **g**
- **370.2** lyve] life **g**
- **370.4** eyen] eyes **fg**
- **371.1** hastly **b** ***KO***] hastely **f** (hast[ë]ly ***FJC***) ***FBG DT***, hastily **g**
- **371.3** Everych of them] They were all **fg** • monkes wede **bf** (monkës wede ***FJC FBG***)] monks weeds **g**
- **371.4** thyder] thyther **f**, thither **g** • blyth **b**] blythe **f**, blithe **g**, blyve ***C1 FJC*** *(ex cj.)* ***FBG (DT in it.) KO***
- **372.1** [stanza #372: labelled #373 ***DT*** *ex err.]* • cole (coule **g**)] cote ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **372.4** into (in-to ***C1*** etc.)] in **g**

*369.1 wyl f, will g • 369.2 lead g; waye f • 369.3 Notnigham (sic.) f, Notingham g • 369.4 heade f, head g • 370.1 meet g • 370.2 if g • 370.3 Notingham f, Nottingham g • 370.4 him see fg • 371.1 kyng f, king g; dight g • 371.2 knightes f, knights g, knyghtës **F**; five g • 372.1 king g; great fg; a bove b • 372.2 broad g • 372.3 right fg; abbot lyke b, a bbot lyke f, abbot like g • 372.4 in to b*

373 Styf botes our kynge had on,
Forsoth as I you say; [496]
He rode syngynge to grene wode, [496]
The *covent* was clothed in graye. [496]

374 His *male*-hors and his grete somers
Folowed our kynge behynde,
Tyll they came to grene wode,
A myle under the *lynde*.

375 There they met with good Robyn,
Stondynge on the waye,
And so dyde many a bolde archere,
For soth as I you say. [496]

376 Robyn toke the kynges hors,
Hastely in that *stede*,
And sayd, 'Syr abbot, by your leve,
A whyle ye must abyde.

group of monks; convent

personal items; sumpters=baggage horses

linden-tree, hence tree (or trees) in general

stede=?stead, i.e. place

- **373.1** on] one **f**
- **374.1** somers] samers *(sic.)* **f**, sommer **g**
- **374.3** Tyll] Untill **g**
- **375.2** on] by **fg**
- **376.1** toke **b** (tooke **g**)] *omit* **f**
- **376.3** sayd **b** (saed **f**)] *omit* **g**
- **376.4** ye] you **fg**

*373.1 styffe f, stiffe g; bootes g, botës **FJC**; king fg • 373.2 forsothe f, forsooth g, saye f • 373.3 syngyng f, singing g; grene wood f, green-wood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 373.4 gray fg • 374.1 male hors b **C1 DT**, male horse fg; great g, gretë **FJC**; somèrs **C1** • 374.2 followed g; kyng f, king g; be hynde b, behinde g • 374.3 tyl f; grenewood f, greenwood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 374.4 mile fg; linde g • 375.2 standinge f, standing g; way g • 375.3 dyd f, did g; archer g • 375.4 forsothe f, forsooth g; saye f • 376.1 kings g, kyngës **F**; horse fg • 376.2 hastëly **FJC** • 376.3 sir g; leave g • 376.4 while g; abide g*

377 ‘We be yemen of this foreste,
Under the grene wode tre;
We lyve by our kynges dere, [496]
.... *[191]*

378 ‘And ye have chyrches and rentes both,
And gold full grete plente;
Gyve us some of your spendynge
For saynt charyte.’ [497] *[192]*

379 Than bespake our cumly kynge,
Anone than sayd he;
‘I brought no more to grene wode [497]
But forty pounde with me.

380 ‘I have layne at Notyngham
This fourtynyght with our kynge, [497]
And spent I have full moche good,
On many a grete lordynge.

- **377.4** *whole line*] Under the grene-wode tre *(from line 2)* **b** ***KO***, Other shyft have not we **f** ***C1 [FJC] FBG (DT in it.)***, other shift have not wee **g**, My mery men and me ***RBW*** *cj.*, My wight yonge men and me ***RBW*** *cj.*, And all my yemen fre(e) ***RBW*** *cj.*, And ye this soon shall see ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **378.2** gold] good **fg**
- **378.4** saynt **bf** ***FBG KO DT***] saynte **f**, saint **g**, ***FJC*** saynt[ë] • charyte **b**] charite **f**, charitie **g**, Charytè ***C1***, charytë ***FJC FBG***, charyté ***KO***
- **380.2** fourtynyght **b**] fourtnight **f**, fortnight **g**
- **380.3** spent **bg**] spend **f** • full] *omit* **fg**

*377.1 yeomen g; forest f, forrest g • 377.3 greenewood g, grenë-wode **FJC**; tree fg • 377.3 leve f, live g; kings deere g, kingës dere **F** • 378.1 churches fg; rents g, rentës **F** • 378.2 great fg; plenty g, plentè **C1**, plentë **F**, plenté **KO** • 378.3 geve f, give g; spendyng f, spending g • 379.1 then g; be spake b; comely fg; kyng f, king g • 379.2 anon g; then g; said g • 379.3 greenwood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 379.4 four ty f, pound fg • 380.1 laine g; Notingham f, Nottingham g • 380.2 kyng f, king g • 380.3 muche f, much g • 380.4 great fg; lordyng f, lording g*

bfg

381 ‘And I have but forty pounde,
No more than have I me;
But yf I had an hondred pounde,
I vouch it halfe on the.’ [497] *[192]*

382 Robyn toke the forty pounde, [497]
And departed it in two partye;
Halfendell he gave his mery men, [498] *probably “half of it all,” but see note*
And bad them mery to be.

383 Full curteysly Robyn gan say;
‘Syr, have this for your spendyng;
We shall mete another day.’ [498]
‘Gramercy,’ than sayd our kynge.

384 ‘But well the greteth Edwarde, our kynge, [498]
And sent to the his seale,
And byddeth the com to Notyingham,
Both to mete and mele.’

- **381.1** I] *omit* **g**
- **381.3** an] a **fg** • hondred] hundreth **fg**
- **381.4** I vouch it halfe on the **b** ***KO***] I would geve it to the **f** ***C1*** (I would give it to thee **g** ***FBG***), I wolde vouch it safe on the ***FJC*** *(ex cj.)* ***DT***, I vouch halfe on thee ***RBW*** *cj.*, I would vouch half on thee ***RBW*** *cj.*, I vouch it halfe (*or* safe) with the ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **382.2** And departed it in two partye] And devyde (devided **g**) it than (then **g**) did he **fg**
- **382.4** Halfendell he gave (half endell **b**)] Halfe he gave to **fg**, halfe it all he gave ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **383.2** Syr] *omit* **g**
- **384.1** Edwarde] Edward **fg**
- **384.2** And] He hath **fg**
- **384.3** to] *omit* **f**
- **384.4** mele (meale **g**)] to mele **f**

*381.1 fourty f; pound g •381.2 then g; mee g • 381.3 if fg **FBG**; pound g • 382.1 tooke g; fourty f; pound g • 382.3 merry g • 382.4 merry g • 383.1 curteosly f, curteously g • 383.2 spending g • 383.3 meet g; a nother b, an other f • 383.4 then g; said g; kyng f, king g • 384.1 thee g; greeteth g; kyng f, king g • 384.2 thee g; saele (sic.) f • 384.3 biddeth fg; thee g; come fg; Notingham f, Nottingham g • 384.4 meate f, meat g*

385 He toke out the brode **targe**, [499] *[192]* — *shield, target*
And sone he lete hym se;
Robyn coud his courteysy,
And set hym on his kne. 1540

386 'I love no man in all the worlde
So well as I do my kynge; [500]
Welcome is my lordes seale;
And monke, for thy tydenge.

387 'Syr abbot, for thy tydynges, 1545
To day thou shalt dyne with me,
For the love of my kynge,
Under my trystell tre.' [456]

388 Forth he lad our comly kynge,
Full fayre by the honde; 1550
Many a dere there was slayne,
And full fast *dyghtande*. — *prepared*

- **385.1** brode] broad **g**, brodë ***FJC*** • targe ***FJC*** *(ex cj.)* ***FBG (DT in it.) KO***] tarpe *(sic.)* **b** ***C1***, seale **fg**, charter ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **385.2** And sone] The seale ***RBW*** *cj.* • hym (him **g**)] me (!) **f**
- **386.3** is] be **g**
- **387.1** tydynges] tyding **g**
- **387.4** my] the **g** • trystell tre (trystell-tre ***KO***)] trusty tree **fg**
- **388.1** forth] for **f** • lad] had **fg**
- **388.4** fast] fast was **f**, was fast **g**

385.1 tooke g • 385.2 soone g; let fg; see g • 385.3 could fg; curteysye f, curtesie g • 385.4 him fg; knee fg • 386.1 world fg • 386.2 doe g; king g • 386.3 lords g, lordës ***F*** *• 386.4 monk g; tydyng f, tyding g • 387.1 sir g • 387.2 dine g; mee g • 387.3 king g • 388.1 foorth g; comely fg; kyng f, king g • 388.2 faire g; hande f, hand g • 388.3 deere g; ther f; slaine g • 384.4 dight and g*

389 Robyn toke a full grete horne,
And loude he gan blowe;
Seven score of *wyght* yonge men [465] *strong and/or bold*
Came redy on a rowe. 1555

390 All they kneled on theyr kne,
Full fayre before Robyn;
The kynge sayd hym selfe untyll,
And swore by Saynt *Austyn*, [500] *probably Saint Augustine (of Canterbury?)* 1560

391 'Here is a wonder semely syght;
Me thynketh, by Goddes *pyne*, *pain? mourning (pining?)*
His men are more at his byddynge
Then my men be at myn.' [501]

392 Full hastly was theyr dyner *i-dyght* *prepared* 1565
And therto gan they gone;
They served our kynge with al theyr myght,
Both Robyn and Lytell Johan. [501]

- **389.2** gan] can it **f**, gan it **g**
- **389.3** yonge men] yemen **f**, yeomen **g**
- **389.4** redy] runnyng **f**, running **g**
- **391.2** pyne] pene **f**, pine g
- **392.1** full hastly **b** ***KO***] fullhastely *(sic.)* **f**^{vid} (full hast[ë]ly ***FJC***, full hastely ***FBG DT***), full hastily **g** • i-dyght (I dyght **b**) (idyght ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO***)] dyght **f**, dight **g**
- **392.2** gan] can **f**^{vid}**g**

*389.1 tooke g; great fg • 389.2 loud g • 389.3 seaven g; wight fg • 389.4 row f • 390.1 kneeled g **C1**; their fg; knee g • 390.2 faire g; be fore b • 390.3 kyng f; king g; said fg; him selfe f, himselfe g; until f, untill g • 390.4 saint Austin fg • 391.1 seemely g; syghte f, sight g • 391.2 thynkethby b, thinketh by g; Gods g, Goddës **F** • 391.3 byddyng f, bidding g • 391.4 than f; mine fg • 392.1 their fg; dinner g • 392.2 thereto g • 392.3 king g; all their might fg*

393 Anone before our kynge was set
The fatte venyson,
The good whyte brede, the good rede wyne,
And therto the fyne ale and browne.

394 'Make good chere,' sayd Robyn,
'Abbot, for charyte;
And for this *ylke* tydynge,
Blyssed mote thou be.

395 'Now shalte thou se what lyfe we lede,
Or thou hens *wende*;
Than thou may enfourme our kynge,
Whan ye togyder *lende*.'

396 Up they sterte all in hast,
Theyr bowes were smartly bent;
Our kynge was never so sore agast [501]
He *wende* to have be *shent*.

every, i.e. very

go, travel

come together or dwell together

usually "go, travel," but here probably "expected"; shente: usually "put to shame," but here probably "slain"

- **392.3** al] all ***FBG***
- **393.4** fyne ale and **b**] fyne ale **f** ***C1*** good ale **g**
- **394.4** blyssed **b**] blessed **fg** • mote] may **fg**
- **395.1** we] I **g**
- **395.2** Or] Or that **fg**
- **395.3** may] maiest **f**, maist **g**
- **395.4** togyder (to gyder **b**)] together **fg** • lende] by lente **f**, be lend **g**
- **396.4** wende] went **g** • be **b**] ben **f**, beene **g** • shent **bg**] shente **f** ***FJC FBG KO***

*393.1 a none b anon g; kyng f, king g • 393.2 fat venison g, fattë venyson **F** • 393.3 whytebrede b, whit bread f, white bread g; red win f, red wine g • 393.4 thereto g • 394.1 goodcheere g; said g **M** • 394.2 charitie fg, charytè **C1**, charytë **F**, charyté **KO** • 394.3 ylkë **F**, tiding g • 395.1 nowe f; shalt fg; thouse f, thou see g; life g; lead g • 395.2 hence fg; wend g • 395.3 then g; enfourm f, enforme g; kyng f, king g • 395.4 when g • 396.1 start g, stertë **FJC**; allin'hast b, all in haste g • 396.2 their fg; bowës **FJC**; smartely f; bente f • 396.3 kyng f, king g*

bfg

397 Two yerdes there were up set,
Thereto gan they gange;
By fyfty *pase*, our kynge sayd,
The merkes were to longe.

398 On every syde a rose garlonde, [501]
They shot under the *lyne*;
'Who so fayleth of the rose garlonde,' sayd Robyn,
'His *takyll* he shall *tyne*.

399 'And yelde it to his mayster,
Be it never so fyne;
For no man wyll I spare,
So drynke I ale or wyne: *[192]*

400 'And bere a buffet on his hede,
I-wys ryght all bare:' *[192]*
And all that fell in Robyn's lote,
He smote them *wonder sare*.

paces

perhaps "linden," i.e. trees, but possibly "line"

gear, so probably arrows; be separated from

wondrous sore

- **397.1** were] werd *(sic.)* **f**
- **397.2** gan] can **fg** • they] the **f**
- **397.3** pase] space **f**, pace **g**
- **397.4** merkes **b**] markes **fg**, merkës ***FJC FBG***
- **398.4** his] hes *(sic.)* **f**
- **398.2** They] The **f** • under] by ***RBW*** *cj.* • lyne **bf**] line **g**, lynde ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **398.3** fayleth ***FJC FBG KO DT*** (faileth **fg**)] ſayleth *(i.e.* sayleth) **b** • rose] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **400.1** *(whole line)*] A good buffet on his head bare (beare **g**) **fg**
- **400.2** I-wys ***FJC*** *ex cj.* (I wys ***DT***) (iwys ***KO***)] A wys **b** • *(whole line)*] For that shalbe his fyne **f**, For this shall be his fine **g**
- **400.3** And all **b**] And those **f** (Andthose **g**) • in] to **fg**

*397.1 yardes g, yerdës **FJC** • 397.2 there to b **C1**, therto f; gang g • 397.3 fifty f, fiftye g; kyng f, king g; sayde f, said g • 397.4 too long g • 398.1 side g; garlande f, garland g • 398.3 garland fg; said fg • 398.4 tackle g; shal f; tine g • 399.1 yeeld g; maister fg • 399.2 fine g • 399.3 will g; Ispare b • 399.4 drink g; wine g • 400.3 lot fg*

401 Twyse Robyn shot a boute, *[193]*
And ever he cleved the wande,
And so dyde good Gylberte
With the good whyte hande. *[193]*

402 Lytell Johan and good Scathelocke, [501]
For nothynge wolde they spare;
Whan they fayled of the garlonde,
Robyn smote them full sore. [501]

403 At the last shot that Robyn shot,
For all his *frendes fare,* *relatives' success, i.e. probably the others' success*
Yet he fayled of the garlonde
Thre fyngers and mare.

404 Than bespake good Gylberte,
And thus he gan say;
'Mayster,' he sayd, 'your takyll is lost,
Stande forth and take your pay.'

- **401.1** a boute **b**[vid] *(there is some space between* a *and* bout, *although it doesn't look like a full space)* ***KO*** (a bout **f**)] aboute (about **g**) ***C1 FJC FBG DT***
- **401.2** cleved] clave **g**
- **401.3** Gylberte] Gilbert **fg**
- **401.4** good whyte **b** ***DT***] lilly white **fg**, Whyte ***C1*** *(ex cj.)* (Whytë ***FJC FBG***) ***KO***
- **402.1** Scathelock **bf**] Scathlock **g**; *cf.* **a**'s Scarlock *in 4.1, etc.*
- **402.4** sore **b**] sare **fg** ***C1*** *(cf. 400.4, which uses "sare")*
- **403.1** shot that (shot/that (*sic.*) **b**) **f**] shoote that **g**
- **403.2** For] Fore **g** • frendes fare] freends faire **g**, frendës fare ***FJC FBG***
- **403.3** of] *omit* **fg**
- **403.4** mare] more **fg**
- **404.1** Than bespake (Thanbe spake **b**) **f**] Then bespake **g** • Gylberte] Gilberte **f**, Gilbert **g**
- **404.2** thus] than **f**, then **g**

401.1 twice g • 401.2 wand g • 401.3 did fg • 401.4 hand g • 402.2 nothing would fg • 402.3 when g; failed g; garland fg • 403.3 failed g; garlande f, garland g • 403.4 three fingers g • 404.2 gansay b • 404.3 Maister f, Master g; said fg; tackill f, tackle g • 404.4 stand foorth g

405 ‘If it be so,’ sayd Robyn,
‘That may no better be,
Syr abbot, I delyver the myn arowe,
I pray the, syr, serve thou me.’ [501]

406 ‘It falleth not for myn ordre,’ sayd our kynge,
‘Robyn, by thy leve,
For to smyte no good yeman, [502]
For *doute* I sholde hym greve.’ *doubt=fear, belief, i.e. “for doubt”=”In fear that”*

407 ‘Smyte on boldely,’ sayd Robyn,
‘I gyve the *large leve*’: *complete permission*
Anone our kynge, with that worde,
He folde up his sleve,

408 And sych a buffet he gave Robyn,
To grounde he *yede* full nere: [502] *ȝede: gaed, went, hastened, i.e. fell*
‘I make myn avowe to God,’ sayd Robyn, [454]
‘Thou arte a stalworthe frere.

- **405.4** syr] *omit* **fg**
- **406.1** our] the **f** (y̆ **g**)
- **406.2** by] be **g**
- **407.1** on] one *(sic.)* **g**
- **407.2** gyve **b**] geve **f**, give **g** • large] largely **fg**, largë ***FJC FBG***
- **407.4** folde] folded **fg**
- **408.1** sych **b**] suche **f**, such **g** • gave **bg**] geve **f**
- **408.2** he] ye **f**
- **408.4** stalworthe] tall **fg**

*405.1 saide f, said g • 405.3 sir g; deliver g; thee g; mine fg; arrow g • 405.4 thee g • 406.1 mine order fg; saide f, said g; kyng f, king g • 406.2 leave g • 406.3 smite fg; yeoman g, yemàn **C1** • 406.4 doubt f, dout g; should him fg • 407.1 smite g; boldly f; said fg • 407.2 thee g; leave g • 407.3 a none b, anon g; king fg; word g • 408.2 ground fg; neere g • 408.3 mine fg; a vowe b, avow fg; said fg • 408.4 art fg; frier g*

409 ‘There is pith in thyn arme,’ sayd Robyn,
‘I *trowe* thou canst well shote:’ *believe, trust, have confidence*
Thus our kynge and Robyn Hode
Togeder than they met. *[193]*

410 Robyn behelde our comly kynge
Wystly in the face, *knowingly, i.e. with understanding*
So dyde Syr Rycharde at the Le,
And kneled downe in that place.

411 And so dyde all the wylde outlawes,
Whan they se them knele;
‘My lorde the kynge of Englonde,
Now I knowe you well.’ [502]

412 ‘**Mercy then, Robyn’, sayd our kynge,** *[193]*
‘Under your trystyll tre, [456]
Of thy goodnesse and thy grace,
For my men and me!’ [503]

- **409.1** Robyn] Robi **f**^{vid}
- **409.2** canst **b**] can **fg** • shote **bf**] shete ***FJC*** (ex err.?) ***FBG DT KO***, shoot **g**
- **409.4** than they **b**] they gan **f**, gan they **g** ***FJC FBG DT KO*** • met **b**] mete **f** ***FJC FBG DT KO***, meet **g** • *(whole line)*] Did then tak off his cote (*or* hat *or similar – something to cause the king’s face to be revealed)* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **410.2** Wystly] Stedfastly **f**, Stedfast **g**, wysely ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **411.1** wylde **b** (wild **f**)] said **g**
- **411.2** se] sawe **fg**, see ***KO*** *(ex. err?)*
- **410.3** Rycharde] Richarde **f**, Richard **g**
- **411.4** well] wele **f**
- **412.1** *(whole line)* **b**] ‘Mercy then,’ sayd (said **g**) Robin to our king **fg** (‘Mercy,’ then Robyn sayd to our kynge ***C1***) ***FJC***^{2} *(Child changed the text to this reading in vol. V, p. 297)*, ‘Mercy,’ then Robyn said to our kynge ***Ritson***
- **412.2** your] this **fg** ***FJC***^{2} *(Child changed the text to this reading in vol. V, p. 297)*, his ***C1*** • trystyll tre (trystyll-tre ***KO***)] trusty tree **fg**
- **412.4** me] for me **f**, for mee **g**

409.1 ther f; thine fg; said fg • 409.2 trow g; wel f • 409.3 king fg • 409.4 to geder b; together f, togither g • 410.1 beheld g; comely fg; kyng f, king g • 410.3 did fg; Sir fg; Richarde f, Richard g; Lee fg • 410.4 kneeled g • 411.1 did fg; • 411.2 when g, kneele g • 411.3 lord g; king g; Englande f, England g • 411.4 know g • 412.3 goodnes g

bfg

413 ‘Yes, for God,’ sayd Robyn, *[193]*
‘And also God me save,
I aske mercy, my lorde the kynge,
And for my men I crave.’ [504]

414 ‘Yes, for God,’ than sayd our kynge,
‘And therto sent I me,
With that thou leve the grene wode, [505]
And all thy company;

415 ‘And come home, syr, to my courte,
And there dwell with me.’
‘I make myn avowe to God,’ sayd Robyn, [454]
‘And ryght so shall it be.’

416 ‘I wyll come to your courte,
Your servyse for to se,
And brynge with me of my men
Seven score and thre. [505]

- **413.1** *(whole line)*] And yet sayd (said **g**) good Robin **fg**
- **413.2** me save ***FJC FBG DT KO***] mesaue/mesave **b** *(i.e. probably* me save *but perhaps an error for* mesau[r]e=measure ?) • *(whole line)*] As good god (God **g**) do me save **fg**
- **413.3** aske mercy **b**] aske the mercy **f**, aske thee mercy **g**. askë mercy ***FJC***
- **413.4** crave] it crave **fg**
- **414.1** than] *omit* **fg**
- **414.2** *(whole line)*] Thy peticion I graunt the **f** ***C1*** (thy petition I grant thee **g**)
- **414.3** With that thou] So that (ẏ=that **f**) thou wylt (wilt **g**) **fg** • leve] leave **g**
- **415.1** syr] *omit* **fg**
- **415.2** and there dwell] there to dwell **fg**

*413.3 lord g; kyng f, king g; 414.1 said g; king g • 414.3 grene woode f; greenwood g, grenë wide **FJC** • 415.1 homesyr b; court g • 415.2 A nd b • 415.3 mine fg; a vowe b, avow g; godsayd b; Godsaid g • 415.4 right g • 416.1 wyl f, will g; court fg • 416.2 servyce f, service g; see g • 416.3 bryng f, bring g; my:men b • 416.4 sevenscore fg; three fg*

417 ‘*But* me lyke well your servyse, *unless* 1665
I come agayne full soone [505] *[193]*
And shote at the donne dere,
As I am wonte to done.’ [506]

THE VIII FYTTE [506] VIII (.viii, b, .viii. f, viii. g)] Eighth *C1 DT FBG*; fit g

418 ‘Haste thou ony grene cloth,’ sayd our kynge,
‘That thou wylte sell nowe to me?’ [506] 1670
‘Ye, for God,’ sayd Robyn,
‘Thyrty yerdes and thre.’

419 ‘Robyn,’ sayd our kynge,
‘Now pray I the,
Sell me some of that cloth, 1675
To me and my *meyne*.’ *company, band, gang*

420 ‘Yes, for God,’ then sayd Robyn,
‘Or elles I were a fole;
Another day ye wyll me clothe,
I trowe, ayenst the Yole.’ [506] *Yule, the Christmas season,* 1680
when servants gained new livery

- **417.1** me lyke well **b** (lykë ***FJC***)] and I lyke (Ilyke **g**) not **fg**
- **417.2** come **b** ***KO***] wyll come **f** (will come **g**) ([wyll] come ***FJC***) ***FBG (DT in it.)***
- **417.4** am] was **fg** • done] doon **g**
- **418.1** haste] hast **fg** • ony] any **fg**
- **418.2** That] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.* • sell nowe **b**] now sell **f**, sell **g**
- **418.3** Robyn] Robyn Hode ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **419.3** Sell me some (Sell mes ome *or perhaps* sell mesome *(sic.)* **b**)] To sel to me some **f**, To sell me some **g** ***C1***
- **420.1** for God ***C1*** (***FJC*** *cj.)* ***FBG DT KO***] forgod **b**] for good **f**
- **420.3** Another (a nother **b**)] And other **f** • clothe **bg**] cloth **f**
- **420.4** ayenst] agaynst **f**, against **g**

*417.1 servyce f, service g • 417.2 a gayne b, again g; soon g • 417.3 shoot g; dunne fg, donnë **F**; deere g • 417.4 wont fg • 418.1 any fg; green g, grenë **FJC**; said fg; kyng f, king g • 418.2 wilte f, wilt g • 418.3 yea g; sayde f, said g • 418.4 thirtie yardes g, yardës **FJC**; three g • 419.1 /sayd (sic.) b; said g; kyng f, king g • 419.2 thee g • 419.4 meyny f, meynye g, meynè **C1**, menyë **F**, meyné **KO** • 420.1 than f; said fg • 420.2 els fg; foole fg • 420.3 an other g^vid; wyl f, will g • 420.4 Itrowe g; yule g*

421 The kynge kest of his *cole* then, *cowl*
A grene garment he dyde on, [507]
And every knyght **had so, i-wys**,. *[194]*
Another **had** full sone. *[194]*

422 Whan they were clothed in Lyncolne grene, [507] 1685
They *keste* away theyr graye; *cast*
'Now we shall to Notyngham,'
All thus our kynge gan say.

423 **Theyr bowes bente**, and forth they went, *[194]*
Shotynge all in *fere*, *company, so "in fere" idiomatically="all together"* 1690
Towarde the towne of Notyngham,
Outlawes as they were.

424 Our kynge and Robyn rode togyder,
For soth as I you say, [496]
And they shote *plucke-buffet,* [508] *a game of shooting, the loser being hit; see note* 1695
As they went by the way.

- **421.1** kest **b**] cast **fg** • of] off **g** • cole **b** (colë ***FJC***)] cote **fg**
- **421.3** had so, i-wys (Iwys **b**, I wys ***DT***, iwys ***KO***)] had so ywys (y wis **g**) **fg**, also i-wys ***FJC*** *ex cj.*, also, iwys ***FBG***, had so, I wys ***Ritson***, did so, i-wys ***C1***
- **421.4** had] hat ***RBW*** *cj.*, hode ***KO*** (*ex cj.*) • *(whole line)*] They clothed them full soone (soon **g**) **fg** ***C1***
- **422.2** keste **b**] cast **fg** • theyr (ther **f**)] the **g**
- **422.3** we shall] shal we **f** (shall we **g**)
- **422.4** thus] this **fg** • gan] can **fg**
- **423.1** Theyr bowes bente **b** (***DT in it.*** Their *(sic.)* bowes bente *ex err.?)* ***KO***] The (They **g**) bent their bowes **f**, They bente theyr bowes ***FJC*** *(ex cj.)* ***FBG***, Theyr bowes they bente ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **423.4** they] thy **g**
- **424.2** as] and as **f**
- **424.3** And] And all **fg** • shote] shot **fg**
- **424.4** they went] thy went *(sic.)* **g**

*421.1 kyng f[vid], king g; than f • 421.2 green g; dyd f, did g • 421.3 knight fg • 421.4 a nother b; fullsone b • 422.1 when g; Lincoln fg; green g • 422.2 gray fg • 422.3 Notingham g • 422.4 kyng f, king g • 423.2 shotidg (sic.) f, shooting g, in-fere **C1** • 423.3 toward fg; town f; Notingham f, Nottingham g • 423.4 out lawes b • 424.1 kyng f, king g; to gyder b, together f, togither g • 424.2 forsooth g • 424.3 pluckebuffet b, plucke buffet f **DT**, pluck buffet g • 424.4 wente f*

425 And many a buffet our kynge wan
Of Robyn Hode that day,
And nothynge spared good Robyn
Our kynge in his pay. 1700

426 'So God me helpe,' sayd our kynge,
'Thy game is *nought to lere*; *nothing to learn, i.e. easily learned*
I sholde not get a shote of the,
Though I shote all this yere.'

427 All the people of Notyngham
They stode and behelde; 1705
They sawe nothynge but mantels of grene
That covered all the felde.

428 Than every man to other gan say,
'I drede our kynge be *slone*; *slain* 1710
Come Robyn Hode to the towne, i-wys
On lyve he lefte never one.' [511]

- **425.4** in his] whan (when **g**) he did **fg** • pay (paye **f**)] play ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **426.1** our] the **fg**
- **428.1** to other] to the other **f**, togither **g** • gan] can **fg**
- **428.3** i-wys (I wys **b**, I wys ***DT***, iwys ***KO***)] ywis **fg**
- **428.4** lefte never] leaveth not **f** ***C1*** (leaveth not **g**)

*425.1 abuffet f; kyng f, king g • 425.2 daye f • 425.3 nothing g • 425.4 kyng f, king g • 426.1 helpë **F**; said g; kyng f, king g • 426.2 naught g • 426.3 should fg; shot g; thee g • 426.4 shot g; yeere g • 427.1 Notingham f, Nottingham g • 427.2 stood g; be helde b, beheld fg • 427.3 saw g; nothinge f, nothing g; mantles g; greene g • 427.4 field g • 428.1 then g • 428.2 oure f; kyng f, king g • 428.3 town fg • 428.4 live g*

429 Full hastly they began to fle,
Both yemen and knaves,
And olde wyves that myght *evyll* goo, *evil, ill, i.e. they moved only slowly* 1715
They *hypped* on theyr staves. *hopped*

430 The kynge *lughe* full fast, [512] *laughed*
And commaunded theym agayne;
When they se our comly kynge,
I-wys they were full fayne 1720

431 They ete and dranke, and made them glad,
And sange with notes hye; [512]
Than bespake our comly kynge
To Syr Rycharde at the Lee.

432 He gave hym there his londe agayne, 1725
A good man he bad hym be;
Robyn thanked our comly kynge,
And set hym on his kne.

- **429.1** hastly **b** ***DT KO***] hastely **fg** (hast[ë]ly ***FJC***) ***FBG***
- **430.1** lughe **b**] loughe ***C1*** (l[o]ughe ***FJC***) ***FBG DT KO***, lough **fg**
- **430.2** theym agayne (theym a gayne **b**)] them to come agayne **f**, them to come againe **g**
- **430.3** se] sawe **f**, saw **g**
- **430.4** I-wys] I wys **b** ***DT KO***, ywys **fg**
- **431.1** ete **b**] ate **f**, eat **g**
- **431.2** sange **b**] songe **f**, sung **g**^{vid} *(it might be* sang)
- **431.4** Rycharde **b**] Rychard **f**, Richard **g** • at] of **fg** • Lee] Le **f**
- **432.3** Robyn] Robin hode **f**, Robin hood **g**

*429.1 be gan b; flee g • 429.2 yeomen g; knave s (sic.) g • 429.3 wives g; might fg; evill fg; go f, goe g • 429.4 thei f, they g; hipped g; their fg • 430.1 kyng f, king g; ful f • 430.3 whan f; comelykyng f, comely king g • 430.4 faine g • 431.1 drank g • 431.2 notës **F** • 431.3 then g; be spake b; comely fg; kyng f, king g • 431.4 sir g • 432.1 him fg; lande f, land g; a gayne b, again g • 432.2 bade f; him fg • 432.3 comely king fg • 432.4 him fg; knee fg*

b(e)fg

433 Had Robyn dwelled in the kynges courte
But twelve monethes and thre,
That **he hath** spent an hondred pounde [512] *[194]*
And all his mennes *fe*. *fee, i.e. wages*

434 In every place where Robyn came
Ever more he layde downe,
Both for knyghtes and for squyres,
To gete hym grete renowne. [513]

435 By than the yere was all agone [513]
He had no man but twayne,
Lytell Johan and good Scathelocke, [514]
With hym all for to gone.

436 Robyn sawe yonge men shote
Full **ferre** upon a day; [514] *[194]*
'Alas!' than sayd good Robyn,
'My welthe is went away.

- **433.1** Had Robyn **b**] Robin hode **f**, Robin hood **g**, Robyn had ***RBW*** *cj.* • dwelled **bg**] dwelleth **f**
- **433.2** But twelve monethes] But.xii.monethes **b**, Both twelve monethes **f**, but twelve moneths **g**
- **433.3** he hath (*or* he hat) ***RBW*** *cj.*] he had **fg** ***C1*** ([he had] ***FJC***) ***FBG (DT in it.) KO***, *omit* **b** • hondred **b**] hundreth **fg**
- **434.1** Robyn] Robine **f** *(as opposed to its usual* Robin *or* Robyn)
- **434.2** Ever more **b**] Evermore **fg** ***C1*** • layde **b**] lay **f**, laid **g**
- **434.3** and for] and **fg**
- **435.3** Scathelocke] Scathelock g
- **434.4** grete] a great **fg**
- **435.1** agone] gone **fg**
- **435.4** hym] *omit* **g**
- **436.1** yonge (young **g**)] the yonge ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **436.2** ferre **b** ***KO***] fayre **ef** ***C1 FJC DT***, faire **g** ***FBG***
- **436.4** went away (went a way **b**)] gone a way **e**, wendaway **f**, wend away **g**

N.B. epq, here represented by e, resumes with 435.4 "...all for."

*433.1 kinges f, kings g, kyngës **FJC**; court fg • 433.2 three fg • 433.3 pound fg • 433.4 mennesfe b; mens g; fee fg • 434.3 bothe f; knights g, knyghtës **F**; squyers f, squires g • 434.4 get him fg • 435.2 hadde f; twaine g • 435.4 wyth f • 436.1 saw g; young g; shoot g • 436.3 then g; saide e, said fg; gode e • 436.4 wealth g*

437 ‘Somtyme I was an archere good,
A *styffe* and *eke* a stronge; *bold, unyielding, proud, strong; also*
I was **commytted** the best archere [514] *[194]*
That was in mery Englonde.

438 ‘Alas!’ then sayd good Robyn,
‘Alas and well a woo!
Yf I dwele lenger with the kynge,
Sorowe wyll me *sloo*.’ *slay*

439 Forth than went Robyn Hode
Tyll he came to our kynge:
‘My lorde the kynge of Englonde,
Graunte me myn askynge. [515]

440 ‘I made a chapell in Bernysdale, [515]
That semely is to se,
It is of Mary Magdaleyne, [515]
And thereto wolde I be.

- **437.2** styffe] ***(DT in it.,*** *saying* styffe *is supplied from* ***e****, but the word is found in* **b***)*
- **437.3** commytted **b** (committed **e)**] compted ***FJC*** *(ex cj.)* ***FBG DT***, commended for **fg**, comted ***KO*** *(ex cj.)*
- **438.2** and well a woo **b** (and wel awoo **e**) (***DT in it.***, *incorrectly saying the line is supplied from* ***e****, but it is found in* **b***)*] what shall I do (doe **g**) **fg**
- **438.4** wyll **bf**] woll **e**, will **g** • sloo **be**] slo **fg**
- **439.2** tyll he **be**] tell he **f**, tillhe **g**
- **439.4** myn **b**] my **fg**
- **440.1** Bernysdale ([..]rnysdale **e**) (***DT in it.***)] Bernysdade *(sic.)* **b**, Bernisdale **fſg**
- **440.3** Magdaleyne **b** ([.....]ne **e**)] Magdalene **f** ***C1***, Magdalen **ſg**
- **440.4** thereto (there to **b**) wold I be **be**] there would I faene be (fain **ſ**, faine **g**) **fſg**

N.B. epq, here represented by e, has major lacuae in the middle of lines 439.2-440.3; ſ begins at 440.1 but lacks about ten letters at the beginning of each line from 440.1 to 447.4

437.1 sometime fg; archer fg; gode e • 437.2 stiffe g; strong g • 437.3 archer fg • 473.4 merry g; Englande f, England g • 438.1 than ef; saide e, said g; gode e; goodRobyn b • 438.3 if efg; dwelle e, dwell fg; kinge f, king g • 438.4 sorrow g • 439.1 foorth g; then g • 439.2 ourking f; king g • 439.3 lord g; kyng f, king g; Inglonde e (n.b. e has “Englond” in 437.4), Englande f , England g • 439.4 grau[...] e, graunt fg; [.....]ge e, askying f, asking g • 440.2 seemely g; see ſg

441 ‘I myght never in this seven nyght
No tyme to slepe ne wynke,
Nother all these seven dayes
Nother ete ne drynke.

442 ‘Me longeth sore to Bernysdale,
I may not be therfro;
Barefote and *wolwarde* I have *hyght* [516] *wool to the skin; hote: vowed, promised*
Thyder for to go.’

443 ‘Yf it be so,’ than sayd our kynge,
‘It may no better be,
Seven nyght I gyve the leve [517]
No lengre, to dwell fro me.’

444 ‘Gramercy, lorde,’ then sayd Robyn,
And set hym on his kne;
He toke his leve full courteysly, [517] *[195]*
To grene wode then went he.

- **441.1** myght never in **be**] might no time ([.....]ime **ƒ**) **fg** • this seven nyght **b** (this.vii.night **e**)] this seven nightes **f** (this seven nights **ƒ**, this seaven nights **g**)
- **441.2** ne wynke **bef**] ne wink **ƒ**, one winke **g**
- **441.3** Nother **b**] Nor of **e**, neyther **f** (neither **g**) • these] this **fg** ([..]is **ƒ**)
- **441.4** Nother **bfg**] Noutter **e** • ete **b**] eate **f** (eat **g**) • ne **b**] nor **efƒg**
- **442.1** sore] so sore **e** • to] to be in **e** • Bernysdale] Bernisdale **fƒg**
- **442.3** wolwarde **b**] wolward **fg** ([.]olward **ƒ**) • I have **b**] have I **fƒg**
- **442.4** thyder **b**] thether **f**, thither **g**
- **443.3** nyght **b**] nyghtes **f** (nights **g**)
- **443.4** fro **bef**] from **g**
- **444.1** sayd] saide **e**
- **444.3** full] *omit **KO** (ex. err?)* • courteysley **b**] curtely **e**, curteesly **f**, curteously **ƒg**
- **444.4** grene wode **bf**] [..]ene woode **e**, greenwood **g**, grenë wode ***FJC***

N.B. epq, here represented by e, has major lacunae starting with 442.1, with the ends of the lines defective in stanza 442. 443.1-2 seem to be lacking; starting with 443.3 (?), four to sixteen letters are cut off the beginnings of lines. ƒ lacks about ten letters at the start of each line on this page.

*441.2 time fg; [...]ep ƒ, sleepe g • 441.3 seaven g • 441.4 drink ƒ, drinke eg • 442.2 nat e; be ther fro f, [..] there fro ƒ, be there fro g • 442.3 bare fote bf, bare foot g; hight ffg • 442.4 goe g • 443.1 if fg; then g; said ƒg; kyng f, king ƒg • 443.2 beter f • 443.3 geve f, give ƒg; thee ƒg; leave ƒ • 443.4 lenger fg; [.]wel, i.e. dwel ƒ • 444.1 gramarcy g; lord g; than ef; saide e, said ƒg • 444.2 him fg; knee efg • 444.3 tooke g; leave g, levë **FJC**; ful ƒ • 444.4 than ef*

445 Whan he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,
There he herde the notes small
Of byrdes mery syngynge. [517] 1780

446 'It is ferre gone,' sayd Robyn,
'That I was last here;
Me *lyste* a lytell for to shote *wish, desire (related to "lust")*
At the donne dere.'

447 Robyn slewe a full grete harte; [517] 1785
His horne than gan he blow, [517]
That all the outlawes of that forest
That horne coud they knowe. [517]

448 And gadred them togyder,
In a lytell throwe. 1790
Seven score of *wyght* yonge men [465] *strong or bold*
Came redy on a rowe.

- **445.3** herde (heard **g**)] harde **f** • notes **bfg** (notës ***FJC FBG***)] notys **e**
- **445.4** byrdes **bf** (byrdës ***FJC FBG***)] [..]rdis **e**, birds **g** • syngynge **b**] singynge **e**, syngyng **f**, singing ***f*****g**
- **446.1** ferre **b**] fer **e**^{vid}, farre **fg** • gone **be**] gon (**f** gonsayd) **g**
- **446.3** Me lyste a lytell **b** ([....]st a lytell **e**)] I have a lyttell lust (Ihave **f**) ([....ust] ***f***) (little lust **g**)
- **446.4** donne **b** (donnë ***FJC FBG***)] donde **e**, doune **f** *(ex inv.?)*, dunne **g**
- **447.1** grete] greate **e**, great **f*****f*****g** • harte **bf**] herte **e**, hart ***f*****g**
- **447.2** gan **b**] can **efg**
- **447.3** of] in **e**
- **447.4** horne **bg** ([.]orne **e**)] horn e *(sic.)* **f**
- **448.3** of] ot *(sic.)* **f** • yonge men **be**] yemen **f**, yeomen ***f*****g**
- **448.4** came redy **b** ([.....]y **e**)] came runnying (running ***f*****g**) **f**^{vid}***f***^{vid}**g** • on a rowe **b*****f*****g**] in a rowe **e**? (*according to* ***DT***; *Ohlgren reads as* on a rowe), on arowe **f**

N.B. epq, here represented by e, is defective for four to ten letters at the start of all lines in stanzas 445-448. f lacks about ten letters at the start of each line from 445.1 to 447.4.

*445.1 when g; cam e; grenewode e, greenwood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 445.2 mornyng f, [....]ing f, morning g • 446.1 saide e, [.]aid f, said g • 446.2 heer f, heere g • 446.3 shoot g • 446.4 deere g • 447.1 slew fg; hart fg • 447.2 hishorne b; blowe e^{vid}ffg • 447.3 forrest g, forèst **C1** • 447.4 coude e, could fg • 448.1 gathered fg; to gyder b, togeder e, together f, togither g (f* defective) *• 448.2 little fg; throw f • 448.3 seavenscore g; wight efg **C1***

449 And fayre dyde of theyr hodes,
And set them on theyr kne:
'Welcome,' they sayd, 'our **dere** mayster, [518] *[195]* 1795
Under this grene wode tre.'

450 Robyn dwelled in grene wode
Twenty yere and two; [518]
For all drede of Edwarde our kynge,
Agayne wolde he not goo. 1800

451 Yet he was begyled, i-wys, [518]
Through a wycked woman,
The pryoresse of **Kyrkesly**, [519] *[195]*
That nye was of hys kynne.

452 For the love of a knyght, 1805
Syr Roger of **Donkesly**, [521] *[195]*
That was her owne speciall; *beloved, specially beloved person*
Full evyll *mote* they the! *probably "prospered, brought about for"; perhaps "met"*

- **449.1** dyde **b**] dyd **ef**, did ***f*****g** • hodes **bf**] hodys **e**, hoods ***f*****g**
- **449.2** them] [..]eyin **e** *(Ohlgren reads as* [.]eym)
- **449.3** our dere **e** ([derë] ***FJC***)] our **bf*****f*****g** ***FBG DT KO***
- **449.4** this] the **f*****f*****g**
- **450.1** dwelled] dwelleth **f** • **450.2** yere] yeres **f** (yeeres ***f*****g**)
- **450.3** For all **b**] Than for **f** (Then for ***f*****g**), All for ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **450.4** wolde he **b** (would he **fg**)] he would ***f***
- **451.1** i-wys (I wys **b**, i wys ***DT***, iwys ***KO***)] ywys **f**, iwys ***f***, ywis **g**
- **451.3** Kyrkesly **bf** ***DT*** (Kyrkësly ***FJC FBG***)] Kirkesley ***f*****g**, Kyrkely ***KO*** *(cf. stanza 454, where* **b** *has* Kyrkeley*)*
- **452.2** Donkesly **b**] Donkester **f**, Dankastre ***f***^{vid}**g** *(cf. 455, where* **b** *has* Donkester*)*, Donkestèr ***C1***, Donkester ly (i.e. Doncaster Lee) ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **452.3** *(omit line)* **f*****f*****g**
- **452.4** Full] For **f*****f*****g** • mote they **b**] mot thou **f**, mot they ***f*****g** • the] fare ***C1*** *ex cj. (to rhyme with* Donkestere*)*

N.B. epq, here represented by e, ends with line 450.1, and is defective for four to ten letters at the start of all lines. The right margin of f is cut off with occasional loss of text.

*449.1 fair f, faire g; their efg • 449.2 their effg; knee fg • 449.3 saide e, sayde f, said fg; maister effg, maystèr **C1** • 449.4 [...]wode e, grene wood f, green wood f, greenwood g, grenë-wode **FJC**; tree efg • 450.1 grenewode f, green wood f, greenwood g, grenë wode **FJC** • 450.3 dread f, dred g; Edward ffg; kyng f, king g (f defective) • 450.4 a gayne b, again f, againe g; go ff, goe g • 451.1 begiled f, beguiled g • 451.2 wicked ffg; womàn **C1** • 451.3 prioresse fg • 451.4 nie f; his ffg; kin f, kinne g • 452.1 loove f; knight ffg • 452.2 sir fg • 4562.3 ownë **F** • 452.4 evill g; thee fg*

453 They toke togyder theyr counsell
Robyn Hode for to *sle*, *slay* 1810
And how they myght best do that dede,
His *banis* for to be. [522] *banes, causes of death*

454 Than bespake good Robyn,
In **places** where as he stode,
'To morow I muste to **Kyrkeley** [519] *[195]* 1815
Craftely to be leten blode.' [522] *by one of craft/skill*

455 Syr Roger of Donkestere,
By the pryoresse he lay, [522]
And there they betrayed good Robyn Hode [523]
Through theyr false playe. 1820

456 Cryst have mercy on his soule,
That dyed on the *rode*! *rood=cross*
For he was a good outlawe,
And dyde pore men moch god. [523] 1824

- **453.2** sle **b*f***] slee **f**, sley **g**
- **453.3** that] ẏ, i.e. the **f**^{vid} (the photo is unclear enough that it might be ẏ=that)
- **453.4** banis **b**] banes **f*f*g**
- **454.2** places **b**] place **f*f*g** ***C1 FJC FBG DT KO***
- **454.3** Kyrkeley **b** ***KO***] Kyrkesley **f** (Kyrke[s]ly ***C1 FJC FBG***) ***DT***, Kir[.....} ***f***, Kirkesley **g** *(cf. 451.3, where* **b** *has* Kyrkesly, *a better-attested name)*
- **455.1** Donkestere **bf**] Dankester ***f***, Dancastre **g** *(cf. 452.3, where* **b** *has* Donkesley)
- **455.2** pryoresse **b**] pryores **f**, prioris ***f***, prioresse **g**
- **455.3** good] *omit* **g** • Hode] *omit* ***RBW*** *cj.*
- **456.2** rode **b**] roode **f**, rood **g**

N.B.* ***f *ends at 455.4, with the last letters of several lines cut off.***

453.1 tooke g; to gyder b, together f, togither ff g; their fg; counsaill f, counsaile g (f defective) • *453.3 howe f; thei f; might ff g; doe g (f* defective); *deed g (f* defective) • *454.1 then fg; be spake b* • *454.2 whereas g; stood fg* • *454.3 morowe f, morrowe f; morrow g; mnst (ex. inv.) f; must g* • *454.4 letten ff g; bloude f, blood fg* • *455.1 Sir fg* • *455.2 laye f* • *455.3 be trayed b, betraied ff, falsë* ***f*** • *455.4 throu gh (sic.) f*^{vid}*; their ff g; play fg* • *456.1 Christ fg* • *456.2 died g* • *456.3 out lawe b, outlaw g* • *456.4 dyd f, did g; poore fg; muche f, much g; good fg*

Notes on the Text of the "Gest"

As mentioned in the Introduction, there are very many variants among the prints of the "Gest," and some places where the text has been entirely lost. Many scholars have worked on the text, but none of the editions, including this one, can be considered the last word. I think a great deal of additional work needs to be done. This section summarizes most of the major variants, with occasional commentary on why one reading or another might be preferred. I have of course added my own observations where relevant.

The prints are referred to by Child's sigla, **a b c d e f g** (plus ***f*** **p q** for the fragments found since his time which he did not cite). For discussion of these copies, see the section "The Text of the Gest." I will not always cite all (or even some) of the extant prints; always refer to the main apparatus for the full readings of the prints.

As in the notes on the content of the "Gest," references are to Child's stanza numbers and Knight/Ohlgren's line numbers.

❖ **Stanza 4/Line 13** ❧ "Scarlock/Scathelock." There is a variant in the spelling in this verse and in every place where the Pynson and de Worde texts both exist; the Pynson text, here exemplified by **a**, calls him "Scarlock," while de Worde, exemplified by **b** and **f**, use "Scathelock(e)" or minor variants, which **g** simplifies to "Scathlock."

Although this is an **a** versus **b** variant in this stanza, the fragment **d** has "Scathelock" in stanza 293, which is perhaps as close as we can come to a textual "tiebreaker."

If the tradition of the other ballads means anything, "Guy of Gisborne," stanza 13, refers to "Scarlett"; the "Monk" refers to "John and Moch and Wyll Scathlok" in stanza 63.1, and the Percy text of the "Death" has "Will Scarlett" in stanza 2. The parliamentary roll for Winchester in 1432, obviously written by a scribe who didn't take his job entirely seriously, gives a list of participants which has the gag line "Robyn, hode, Inne, Grenewode, Stode, Godeman, was, hee, lytel Joon, Muchette Millerson, Scathelock, Reynold" (Holt, p. 69; cf. Cawthorne, p. 58).

Thus there is good traditional evidence for linking Robin with a man named "Scathelock." Certainly stronger than the evidence for "Scarlock."

We find other names in the later ballads, e.g. the first line of "Robin Hood and the Prince of Aragon" [Child 129] calls him "Will Scadlock." The Forresters manuscript version of "Robin Hood's Delight" [Child 136] corrects the "Scarlock" of the broadsides to "Scathlock," which Knight, p. xvii, declares the more traditional form. There is also an instance in the Forresters book where a later hand has corrected "Will Stutley" to "Will Scathlock" in the title of the ballad "Robin Hood Rescuing Will Stutly" [Child 141] (Knight, pp. xxvi, 92), but the manuscript also has "Scarlett" and (once) "Scarett."

John Bellamy found a Scathlock family in Yorkshire; a monk of that name was expelled from St. Mary's Abbey in 1287 (Phillips/Keatman, p. 102), but there is no reason to link this man to Robin.

There is no obvious reason, based on internal evidence, to prefer either "Scarlock" or "Scathelok." Both have the same basic meaning: they are lock-breakers. Neither of the names, we should point out, appears to be attested as an earlier form of the word "scarlet." If one has to choose a reading, "Scarlock" is the middle reading; both "Scarlet" and "Scathelock" can be derived from it by a single phoneme change. But

while the form "Scarlet" eventually emerged, *it is not found in the "Gest."* It's hardly relevant. On the whole, I consider the weight of **b+d** , plus the use of "Scathlock" in other ballads, to outweigh that of Middle Reading+**a**.

The modern preference for "Scarlet" may be the result of Shakespeare, that great distorter of history, who in 2 Henry IV, V.iii, line 103 in RiversideShakespeare, has Silence sing "And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John." (This is one of three instances of Shakespeare mentioning Robin Hood, according to Cawthorne, pp. 80–81; none of the mentions is substantial enough to tell us anything.)

❖ **Stanza 4/Line 14** ❧ "Much the Miller's Son." In this first instance of his name, there is variation in the prints on whose son Much was; **a** calls him a "milser's" son, **f** and **g** a "mylner's" son. The first is obviously an error (recall that the typesetter of **a** didn't have much English, and in this era, they still used the long s (ſ), and in Textura fonts, an s looked like an f or even an l); the second is probably either an error or a dialect variation (we see "milner" for "miller" in other texts), but it might refer to a milliner. But obviously millers were far more common than milliners — although note Much complaining about John's willingness to give away extra cloth in Stanza 73, and in line 8.1 of the "Monk," the manuscript reads "Moche, þe mylner sun." Still, "miller" seems to be the usual reading in the other instances; it is probably safe to print "miller" here based on **b**. We do find that the prints vary between giving the man's name as "Much" and "Muche" and "Moch" and "Moche," but in this instance at least, **a** and **b** agree. In any case, "Much" is probably the correct modern form of the name.

❖ **Stanza 5/Line 19** ❧ **a** reads "and ye," **b** reads "if ye"; only the latter makes sense. How, then, to explain "And ye"? I have ventured to conjecture "An ye," which is equivalent in meaning to "if ye"; it explains both readings: **a** misunderstood it and **b** clarified it.

❖ **Stanza 7/Line 25** ❧ The line that begins Stanza 7 is lacking in all texts; Child prints it as a lacuna, and I think it safest to do the same. Ritson proposed "Or els some bishop or abbot." Knight/Ohlgren offer as their line 25 the conjecture "Here shal come a lord or sire." They claim that this is similar to lines in other early ballads. The only merit that I can see to the line is that it rhymes with the third line of the stanza — but the first and third lines do not normally rhyme in the "Gest."

Dobson and Taylor's conjecture is "Till that I have som bolde baron," which is rather better but doesn't seem to fit Robin's preoccupations. I doubt we can conjecture the original, but my thought (arrived at without seeing Dobson/Taylor) is, "We shal wait (i.e. await) som bold abbot."

I note that line 6.4 ends with "gest," and 7.2 with "best." I wonder if perhaps 7.1 also ended with a word ending in "-est," which would explain how it got lost. But that doesn't tell us what the line is; it merely suggests that we try to think of lines ending with words like "rest" or "chest" — e.g. "Or [someone] with money in his chest."

Another thought that occurs to me is that this line might be a reference to the King — whether King Henry (IV, V, VI) or the "King Edward" of the last two fits — and that the line was *deliberately* suppressed for political reasons. The archetype of the surviving prints just about had to be from a period when it was not certain that the Wars of the Roses were over, after all (remember, Henry VIII was killing Plantagenets as late as

1541!). I have no justification for this idea except a need for consistency with the end of the "Gest" — not enough reason to conjecture in a line.

❖ **Stanza 7/Line 27** ❧ Child emended the third line of the stanza to read "Or som knyght or [som] squyer," a reading not attested in that exact form in any of the manuscripts; **a** omits "som" before "squyer," while **bfg** read "some," not "som." Knight/Ohlgren omit the second instance of "som(e)." But the line is already too short; if anything, we want to add a word, e.g. "bold knyght." I've included "some," but spelled it the way **b** spells it.

❖ **Stanza 17/Line 66** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 27/Line 106** ❧ **a** (supported by **c**) has "in fere," i.e. "in company" or "all together."; **b** has "all three." Both make sense. "In fere" is slightly better metrically, and occurs also in some or all of the prints at lines 61.2, 140.2, 231.4, 283.2, 423.2. It seems to be a characteristic reading of the "Gest" that sometimes confused the printers. It also has the stronger attestation. So I've adopted it here.

❖ **Stanza 39 (also 41, 42)/Lines 155, 163, 168** ❧ There is a textual variant here regarding the number of shillings. Child in 39.3 and 42.3=Knight/Ohlgren line 155, 163 read "ten." The reading of **a** in both places is xx, i.e. "twenty"; **bc** have .x., i.e. "ten" in both places. Also, we read in 42.4 that Little John found only "half a pound," or ten shillings, not twenty. Obviously either reading is an easy error for the other. Child, followed by Knight/Ohlgren, read "ten shillings" on the basis of Stanza 42, where the knight is found to have wealth totaling half a pound. The reading "ten" also scans better. For these reasons, I also read "ten." But I could make a case for "twenty," a reading that is hard but not impossible; perhaps the knight wanted to claim to have twenty shillings; even in his poverty, he would want to round things up....

❖ **Stanza 49/Lines 194, 196** ❧ Child's text follows the all the prints in reading the final word of the line as "knowe." This does not rhyme with "spende" in the final line of the stanza, and Knight/Ohlgren (without adding a note or explanation) emend the text to read "wende"; Ritson had offered "kende." These are possible emendations, but not sure; we might as well emend the final line of the stanza to end (for instance) "goe." However, it is much more likely that the correction should be to a form of the verb "to ken," i.e. to know. Probably it should be "kende," as Ritson suggested, although "kent" or "kennit" are also reasonable. In any case, were I to amend the stanza, I would amend 49.4, not 49.2. As it is, I am fairly sure there is a corruption in either 49.2 or 49.4, but I don't venture to emend because I really don't know which.

❖ **Stanza 50/Lines 198–199** ❧ The second line of this stanza as given in all the prints does not rhyme with the fourth, and the third line does. This defect occurs in all extant copies of the verse (**abcfg**), so presumably this was the reading of the archetype, but it is probably an error. Child's conjecture, which is reasonable, is that we should swap the second and third lines, although it is possible that we should rewrite the final line to end in a word that rhymes with "wife" (e.g. "lyfe"). Also we should note that both lines have too many syllables to be the second line. There may be more damage here than just a reversal of the lines.

❖ **Stanza 53/Line 209** ❧ Child's text, in line 53.1, says "He slewe a knyght of Lancaster;" so too Knight/Ohlgren and Dobson/Taylor. "Lancaster" is the reading of **a**.

In **bf** we find "Lancastshyre," which **g** cleans up as "Lancashire." **c** has "Lancasesshyre," which presumably comes from the same original as **b**. Child followed **a** presumably on the grounds that he always followed **a**. But the reading which best explains the others is probably "Lancastshyre," as in **b**; anyone confronted with this reading would either convert it to "Lancashire" (as **g** and **c** did in their various ways) or simplify it to "Lancaster." The variant is important, because it affects the dating of the "Gest," and might have a political undertone.

❖ **Stanzas 53–54/Lines 212–213** ❧ Child prints these lines as "My godes both sette and solde / My londes both sette to wede, Robyn." In these lines, **a** reads both.... both; **b** reads both.... beth; **c** reads bothe.... bothe; **f** reads both.... both, **g** reads both.... be. The issue is 54.1. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 153, argue that "both" makes no sense in the second instance, and so adopt "beth" (i.e. "beeth," "bëëth," two syllables: "be" or "will be" or "are") — and then proceed to emend the first instance to read "beth" also, without manuscript support. But, as any ballad student knows, it is not uncommon for short words to be included in a text for reasons of smoothness. "Both" should surely be allowed in stanza 53. Stanza 54 is another matter. I am very tempted by "beth." Were it spelled "beeth," I would adopt it. But given the significant possibility that "beth" is merely an error for "both," I have adopted the latter. For that matter, "both" in the second line might just be there for metrical reasons and as an intensifier; the line is too short without it.

❖ **Stanza 61/Line 241** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 62/Lines 245, 246** ❧ There is a single/plural difference in both these lines; **a** has "frende.... borowe", **bf**(**g**) have "frendes.... borowes". Since the change happens in both lines, it is unlikely to be an accidental omission/deletion; one simply must decide between **a** and **b**. Similarly with "wolde"/"wyll" in the second line of the stanza (and also "dyed on"/"dyed on a" in the fourth line. This stanza shows clear evidence of recensional work, although it is not obvious in which direction it went). The only clue I can think of is that "none" in the third line is considered to be singular and might have attracted the rest to it. This is an extremely weak basis for decision. So I follow the copy text of **b**.

❖ **Stanza 68/Line 270** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 68/Lines 271–272** ❧ Concerning counting out of the loan. None of the witnesses has a reading that comes even close to 400 pounds. Child's text reads that John counted it "by eight and twenty score"; Knight/Ohlgren offer "by eightene and two score." None of the prints actually expresses it this way; **a** reads xxviij score, i.e. 28 score (560 pounds), which is the basis for Child's reading; **bfg** read with variants "eighteen and twenty score" (740 pounds) "Twenty score" of pounds is of course four hundred pounds, but then why the 8/18? Gummere, p. 315, suggests that John was paying out "20 score and more," and indeed he showed such generosity with cloth in stanzas 72–73. But a 40% overpayment in **a**'s text, and even more in **b**'s? Hard to believe — and not stated at all clearly; even saying "twenty score and eight" would make the surplus more obvious. It is worth noting that four hundred pounds is 600 marks, or 30 score of marks; possibly the 28 was supposed to refer to marks rather than pounds. But the best explanation is probably to start from **b**, accepting the Knight/Ohlgren

emendation but reading it as eighteen-and-two score, i.e. twenty score. Or perhaps emend the line to read something like "by counting twenty score." And don't ask me why the poet put it in such a confusing way!

❖ **Stanza 69/Line 273** ❧ The text of **a** reads "sayde Much," but **b** has "sayde lytell Much," followed by **f** and **g** (which uses the modern spelling "little"). We find "little Much" in stanzas 73 and 77 without variant. The meter works better with "little" than without. Child included "lytell" in [square brackets] as dubious; Knight/Ohlgren print it without indication of doubt although they mention the variant in their notes. Given that short words are more typically dropped than added by scribes, "lytell Much" seems the better reading. See also the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 70/Line 277** ❧ **a** and **b** both read "To helpe his body therin." This reading is difficult enough that Child conjectured that the original should be "lappe," i.e. wrap (the latter reading being found in **fg**); the noun "lappe" is found in Chaucer (e.g.) for a fold or hem or pocket (Chaucer/Benson, p. 1262), and the verb lappyn, fold, enclose, cover, swath, occurs in several of the poems in Turville-Petre (cf. p. 238). Whether the emendation is solid enough to go against the testimony of both **a** and **b** must be left for the reader; all the recent editions have followed Child, but I don't think "helpe" is so impossible as to require emendation; it could mean to help keep him warm, or to help identify him.

❖ **Stanza 74/Line 293** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 74/Line 295** ❧ 74.4 **b** gives the line as "Bygod it cost hym"; **a** offers "For it costeth hym." The prints of the Gest are not overly particular about oaths (and the poem clearly used them freely), but when there is a choice between a line which uses an oath and one that doesn't, we much always suspect that the one that doesn't has cleaned up the oath. So although all the other editions agree with **a**, I follow **b**.

❖ **Stanza 75/Line 298** ❧ The text of **a** has Little John speak "To gentill Robyn Hode"; **bfg** have John direct his speech "All unto Robyn Hode." Since Robin was not, at the time the "Gest" was written, considered to be of the gentry, we must suspect that "gentill" is the original text and **bfg** corrected what appeared to be an error of meaning.

❖ **Stanza 76/Line 304** ❧ All the editions follow **a** and Child in reading "God graunt that he [the knight] be true." But **b** has "leve" for "graunt." "Leve" is shorthand for "believe," i.e. "trust." This is difficult enough that **fg** emend it to "lende." But, while difficult, "leve" is not impossible; it might mean "give leave," i.e. permit, allow. It is easy to see how "leve" could be replaced by "graunt," difficult to see how the reverse could come about. "Leve" appears the better reading — and indeed "leve" seems to carry the meaning "grant, allow" in 112.2. I might also conjecture that the original was "give," which would be the middle reading were it attested, but it's not a strong enough conjecture to justify emending **b**'s text.

❖ **Stanza 77/Line 307** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 78/Line 310** ❧ The **a** and **b** texts both have Little John suggest giving the knight a "clere" pair of spurs. Child and Knight/Ohlgren both change this to "clene" on the basis of **f** and **g**, to rhyme with "tene" at the end of the stanza. But this surely is an emendation by **f**. Either we should let the reading stand or we should emend to

something more meaningful — perhaps "fyne," fine, costly. Or we might emend the last line of the stanza, perhaps to "fear" or the like. I let the reading stand.

❖ **Stanza 83/Line 330** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 87/Line 345** ❧ All the extant texts (**bfg**) omit the first line of this stanza. Child suggested repeating ("And borowed four hondred pounde" it from the previous stanza (changing "and" to "he"), on the ground that it might have fallen out because the two lines have the same ending *(homoioteleuton)*. This reasonable emendation is adopted by the more recent editors but is beyond proof, and it's worth noting that the "Gest" very rarely repeats a line. I have listed Child's conjecture, and one of my own, but have not ventured to place one in the text.

❖ **Stanza 88/Lines 351–352** ❧ The last two lines of stanza 88 make nonsense — what is the prior proposing to spend a hundred pounds *for?* — and may be corrupt, but the prints agree on the nonsense text (apart from a minor correction in **g**, "lay it downe" for "lay downe" in 88.4, a reading followed by Gummere), and no good emendation has been suggested; the best I can think of is "that he will yet come." Or perhaps we have lost a whole stanza that would explain what the prior would pay his money to do.

❖ **Stanza 89/Line 354** ❧ Corruption is probable in stanza 88; it is almost certain in the second line of 89 (the two problems are most likely related). **b** reads "In Englonde he is ryght." Child and Gummere both follow **fg** in reading instead "In Englonde is his ryght." This is, however, an utterly obvious conjecture with no real claim to originality. Knight/Ohlgren emend by omitting the words and reading the line "In Englonde ryght" and then use this for a complex argument. I am not convinced by either emendation, and doubt we can draw any sure conclusion based on the line. Once again I've tried to offer a better conjecture, but I am not convinced by it.

❖ **Stanza 91/Line 362** ❧ The abbot swears by "Saint Richard," a reading which bothered a lot of commentators. This even though the previous line has a reference to the Abbot's beard, which rhymes well with "Saint Richard."

I am now convinced that "Richard" is correct, and it is a reference to Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York, martyred by Henry IV in 1405. He was never formally canonized, but people in York thought him a saint. For background on Scrope, see Appendix IV: "By Saint Richard!": Richard Scrope and the Abbot's Oath

However, the editors looked in their catalogs of saints, and didn't find him. To be fair, I hadn't found him at the time of my first edition. But the failure to find a Saint Richard led to a lot of discussion and attempts at emendation. I will leave the discussion of all the possibilities even though I now think it pointless.

Knight/Ohlgren emend "Richard" to "Saint Rychere" for purposes of maintaining the rhyme (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 155), a saint's name perhaps also used in "Gamelyn" (lines 176, 357, 619 in version of the "Tale of Gamelyn" in the Appendix. Sands, p. 161, and Gamelyn/Skeat, p. 8. give the name as "Richer"; Knight/Ohlgren, p. 199, as "Richere" even though Skeat's apparatus offers no evidence for this reading). This "Saint Richer(e)" is not otherwise known. There is little justification for the emendation; there are many instances of bad rhymes in the "Gest," and to replace an unlikely saint with a non-existent saint is not an improvement.

A second possibility is to emend the text more thoroughly, possibly to "Saint Cuthbert," who was a famous Northumbrian saint (the Venerable Bede wrote a life of him, and Douglas, p. 219, calls all England north of the Tees "St. Cuthbert's Land") and whose name rhymes fairly well (particularly if it were written, say, "Saint Cuthbere"). Chaucer, in the Reeve's Tale, has northerners still swearing by "Seynt Cutberd" (Chaucer/Benson, p. 81, line 4127; Pollard, p. 69).

Another possibility (and I emphasize that all of these are just speculations) is that the original was some variant (probably anglicized) on "Saint Roch," or "St. Rochur" (the Latin form of the name, which is obviously very similar in sound to "Richard"), which a copyist converted to "Saint Richard" because Roch is such an un-English name.

Roch, or Rocco, or Roque (c. 1295–1327) was a Frenchman famous for his ability to treat the plague and the patron saint of invalids (DictSaints, p. 213). He was also famous for an association with dogs because, in one tale, a dog fed him while he himself suffered plague (Benet, p. 977), Could the abbot, like Friar Tuck in a later form of the Robin Hood legend, have been a keeper of dogs? Alternately, could the day of the knight's visit have been August 16, Saint Roch's day?

It is true that Roch was not canonized until after the death of Edward II, and hence after the likely date of this incident, but Roch was well known during the plague years of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (and largely forgotten after that); it would be a much more likely name at the time the "Gest" was written than at any time before or since.

I was am tempted by "Saint Robert," referring to Saint Robert of Knaresborough; see the explanatory note on Stanza 91.

There is also Edmund of Abingdon (died 1240), Archbishop of Canterbury, who was called a saint and whose family name was "Rich" (OxfordSaints, p. 162); he was sometimes called "Saint Edmund Rich" — but I don't know of any cases of him being called "Saint Rich." If he were, one could imagine a line like "By Saint Rich, art thou ever in my beard" being changed to "By Saint Richard, thou art ever in my beard." But this would require other emendations to make the rhymes work.

Another possibility, which sounds very vaguely like "Richard" although it doesn't look like it, is "Saint Hubert." Hubert was a noble hunter who saw a vision of a stag bearing a crucifix and renounced the world (DictSaints, p. 115). He is an utterly unsuitable saint for the abbot, but he would be a good saint for Robin — particularly in light of the incident, later on, of John telling the sheriff of the stag with sixty horns.

Finally, there would be a slight irony in the reading "Saint Chad," which is a bad rhyme but an interesting one. Chad, who died in 673, was one of two clerics appointed to be Bishop of York at the same time. In the complex maneuvers which followed, Chad ended up being transferred to the bishopric of Mercia. He was very humble and widely loved — but he was kicked out of York (DictSaints, p. 53). A reflection on the Abbot's potential fate?

All of these emendations are obviously a stretch. I really think Richard Scrope is a better answer.

❖ **Stanza 93/Line 371** ❧ Child's text reads "The [hye] iustyce of Englonde"; Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren omit "hye,", making it the "iustice of Englonde." This is

one of the more significant textual problems of the "Gest." The only witnesses are **bfg**. **b** lacks the word "hye," which is added in **f** (**g** modernizes the spelling to "high"). Ordinarily, of course, a reading supported only by **fg** would not be considered. Presumably Child includes the word because it makes no sense to refer to one man as "the justice of England"; also, the phrase "hye iustice" is found without variation in stanza 94 (and, later, in stanza 266).

Possibly "high" is just a word the poet uses to fill a syllable before an office? The line is a foot short without it. In Stanza 318, that refers to the "hye shyref," and that office doesn't exist either. But why "high"? Given that **f** has no textual authority, we should surely follow **b** and read "justice," not "high justice."

Another possibility, which I have not seen elsewhere, is to emend away the reading "Englonde" rather than "iustice." All our problems would disappear if the text read something like "the iustice of the foreste" — we know exactly what office that was!

❖ **Stanza 98/Line 389** ❧ A line is missing here in all three extant witnesses (**bfg**). Child conjectured the text "They put on their symple wedes" based on the third line of the previous stanza. Child's emendation is probably the best we can do, but the probability is high that more than one line is damaged; the previous stanza does not fit with what has gone before. The knight was alone when he met Robin, which means there should be no one with him except Little John. Instead of inserting a line here, an alternate proposal might be to omit the last three lines of stanza 97 and combine it with the last three lines of 98, or something similar. So possible readings would be something like

Than bespake that gentyll knyght
All unto Lytell Johnn,
Now put on your symple wedes;
They came to the gates anon.
The porter was redy hymselfe,
And welcomed them euerychone.
(emending the second line and omitting the fourth), or
Than arrived that gentyll knyght
They came to the gates anone;
The porter was redy hymselfe,
And welcomed them euerychone.
(emending the first line).

❖ **Stanza 113/Line 450** ❧ **b** is the only witness for this line; it reads "and vylayneously hym gan loke." **acde** are all defective here, **fg** omit the line (very likely by *h.t.* from "loke" in 113.1 to 113.2 in the text of **b**). The problem is, "loke" does not rhyme with "hall" in 113.4; probably **b** repeated it from the previous line. Ritson proposed to ement "loke" to "call," which rhymes. Child and all the more recent editors have followed. Ritson's conjecture is reasonable, but it would be possible to emend the last line, "Spede the out of my hall!" — if we could find an acceptable substitute for "hall" that rhymes with "loke." I have none, to I accept the Ritson/Child conjecture.

❖ **Stanza 122/Line 486** ❧ **a** and the modern editors read that the Abbot was eating "ryall fare," which rhymes perfectly with "stare" in 122.4. But **b** has "ryall chere"

instead of "ryall fare." It's more likely that the imperfect rhyme "chere" would have been corrected to "fare" than vice versa, so I have followed **b**.

❖ **Stanza 126/Line 504** ❧ I am very tempted to read "Ayredale" for "Verysdale"; see the comment on Stanza 126.

❖ **Stanza 128/Line 511** ❧ Child reads "Ne had be his kyndeness" following **a**; **bfg** read "had not be." Although both readings make sense, this is perhaps a typesetting error in one print or the other. But it might be that the Dutch typesetter was confused by a double negative, so I follow **b**.

❖ **Stanza 132/Line 527** ❧ The arrows had silver on them — somewhere. **b** reads "I nocked all with whyte silver," and **a** has "nocked all with whyte silver" — both of which amount to "Nocked all with white silver." **fg** read "And nocked the(y) were with whyte silver." The nock was a groove in the back of an arrow into which the bowstring was placed (see further the explanatory note on Stanza 132). A silver nock would be weaker than one of iron and would not be very visible under the feathers! It would have been more obvious if the arrows were "worked" with silver.

And, indeed, Child's transcription of **a** has "Worked all with whyte silver." I have verified that Child's transcription is wrong; **a** reads "nocked." Still, a case could be made for "worked" — the reading accepted by Dobson/Taylor, p. 88, probably through accepting Child's transcription without verifying it.

❖ **Stanza 135/Line 537** ❧ This section is surely corrupt. Child gives it in full as "But as he went at a brydge ther was a wrastelyng," which is far too long for a single line clumsy as well. This is the reading of **b**; **a** is defective, and **f** and **g** appear to be attempts to correct the reading of **b**. Child suggests "at Wentbrydge" as an emendation for "Went at a brydge" (compare my own emendation at 268A.1); Knight/Ohlgren accept this into the text. This seems logical, since the place near Barnsdale where Watling Street crosses the Went is called, unsurprisingly, "Wentbridge" (Harris, p. 64, citing Hunter). And Wentbridge ("Went-breg") is mentioned in stanza 6 of the "Potter." But we should remember that Child's reading is an emendation.

Dobson/Taylor, p. 88, do not print "Wentbridge," adopting the reading of **b** but suggesting it is a play on or allusion to "Wentbridge" — although they admit on p. 21 that the allusion is vague.

My personal suspicion is that what we have is a case of three lines being lost. The text "But as he went at a brydge ther was a wrastelyng" is actually two lines, with the final two lines of that stanza, and the first line of the next stanza, missing. This is the way I have printed the text, creating a new stanza. 135A, as a result. I have also conjectured three possible missing lines, without putting them in the text.. I do not in fact think it at all likely that the conjectures are correct, but I used them to fill out the modernized version of the text.

❖ **Stanza 137/Line 546** ❧ The text of **a**, followed by all the editions, reads "A pype of wyne, in fay" — metrically sound and perfectly acceptable. **bfg** however read "in *good* fay." This longer version is less smooth, and short words such as "good" can easily be lost. It seems better to include the word.

❖ **Stanza 138/Line 551** ❧ This line is difficult, although the reason for the disturbance is not clear. **a** reads "And for he was ferre and frembde bested," followed by

Child and the other editions; there are a few variants in the other copies, of which the only significant one is that **bf**(**g**) read "frend" for "frembde." This hardly helps. The likely meaning is something like "And he was far from home and friendless," but the line may be corrupt. I've printed the text of **a**, but without enthusiasm.

❖ **Stanza 140/Line 558** ❧ A hundred men followed the knight. But how? **bfg** say they followed him (in) fere (that is, in company); **a** simply says they followed him. Neither of these readings rhymes with "companye" at the end of the stanza. Ritson and Child emended to read that they followed him "free," and most editors have followed this. It is a decent emendation, but I think "in fee" answers the same purpose better: it too rhymes, and it explains their relationship to the knight: they are servants. Another possibility would be to emend the final line of the stanza, e.g. change "companye" to something like "knyght dere" to rhyme with "in fere."

❖ **Stanza 147/Line 588** ❧ There is much uncertainty in the prints; **a** reads "That ever yet saw I," which (since the line is to rhyme with "tre(e)") is possible only if "I" is pronounced "ee." **b** reads "That yet saw I me," which is a proper rhyme but is short a syllable. **fg** read "That yet I did see," which both scans and rhymes, but is a rather modern formation.

Child proposes to emend the line to "That ever yet saw I me" — in effect combining **a** and **b** — a rather otiose reflexive but one which also occurs in stanzas 100 and 184 (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 157). This is probably the best emendation, given the existence of the parallels, but it should be emphasized that this is a conjecture. Another conjecture would be to read "That ever saw I me," or perhaps "That ever yet saw mine ee" (eye).

And it is possible that **a**'s reading is original. Unlikely as it seems, Child has to make the very same emendation in stanza 169, where he gives the last line as "That eyer yit saw I me," to rhyme with "lewte." The fact that the same emendation has to be made twice is an indication that perhaps the text is correct in both cases (which emphasizes the possibility that we should indeed read "I" as "ee." Could this be the result of a residual northernism?).

❖ **Stanza 149/Line 593** ❧ "Sir" is found in **a**, omitted in **b**. I include it to bring the line to eight syllables. I'm a lot less sure about **a**'s "borne" versus **b**'s "bore," but "borne" is better grammar.

❖ **Stanza 150/Line 597** ❧ 'Say me, Reynolde Grenelefe.' What name, exactly, does the Sheriff use for John? Neither **a** nor **b** use "Reynolde," the reading of two lines before. **b** has "Reynaud," which if correct would seem to be an case of the Frenchified sheriff misunderstanding the name. **a** however has "Reynode," which looks like a typical **a**-ish typo for "Reynolde." So I've followed earlier editors in emending to "Reynolde." But I am not at all confident of the reading. Variations in the name "Reynolde" occur in most places where the name is found, though this is the only place **b** uses "Reynaud."

❖ **Stanza 156/Line 624** ❧ A rough line for a rough demand: **a** reads "Give me my dinner, said Little John," while **b** offers "Give me to dine, said Little John" (**fg** have "Give me meat" for "Give me to dine"). Knight/Ohlgren mention a smoother emendation, "Give me my dinner soon," which is also better poetry, but admit that there is no reason to question the text. I've followed **b**, partly because it's my copy text but also because it's a rougher reading. Also, it's a syllable shorter, and the line is too

long. I wonder a little about if we should omit the word "Lytell" to make the line come out to the right length, but there is no textual warrant for this.

❖ **Stanza 157/Line 628** ❧ Child follows **a** in reading "My dyner gif me." **bfg** read, with spelling variations, "My dyner gif thou me." Knight/Ohlgren accept the longer version on metrical grounds, and so do I, but we could just as well emend to "My dyner gif to me."

❖ **Stanza 160/Lines 637–640** ❧ The number of variants in the texts of this verse is astonishing. Such variation is often an indication of a damaged and conjecturally restored text, although Child's text is reasonable at each individual point of variation. The most serious variant is in the first line of the stanza, where **a** says that Little John gave the butler a "tap" while **bfg** says John gave him a "rap." There is really no grounds for preferring either reading. Similarly, in the third line, **a** says that the butler would not feel such a blow in a hundred years, while **bfg** have a hundred winter(s). Interestingly, these two variants occur at the end of the two longest lines of the stanza. Could it be that the manuscript which was the last common ancestor of **a** and **b** was damaged for the right-hand edge of this verse?

In 160.1 I chose **a**'s "tap" mostly because it felt right. In 160.2 I have followed **b** in reading "yede," rather than **a**'s reading "went," because "yede" was falling into disuse and would invite correction; there would be no reason to correct "went." In 160.3 I chose **b**'s "wynter" because it would invite correction to a "proper" plural.

❖ **Stanza 161/Line 642** ❧ I conjecture "ope" as the middle reading that would explain both **a**'s "open" and **b**'s "up"; it appears **g** may have made the same conjecture.

❖ **Stanza 163/Line 650** ❧ Child gives the line as "The while that he wolde," rhyming with "bolde" at the end of the stanze. But **a** reads "The while that he wol be," and **b** has "The while he wolde." Child's reading is from **fg**. Knight/Ohlgren label Child's reading an emendation, which it is not, quite, but this line is quite uncertain and it and the final line of the stanza must both be considered doubtful. I include "that" because the line is short a syllable even with the word, and would be much too short without it; I read "wolde" rather than "wol be" because "wol be" could well be an inversion in **a**.

❖ **Stanza 164/Line 654** ❧ Both **a** and **b** read this line as "Thou arte a shrewede hynde," which would usually be decisive, but **fg** read the last word as "hyne," and Child thinks this may be correct. I frankly don't.

❖ **Stanza 165/Line 659** ❧ Child gives the text of this line as "'I make myn auowe to God,' sayde Lytell John," on the basis of **a** (except that **a**, in one of its frequent typographical inversions, reads "anowe" for "auowe/avowe"). **bfg**, however, omit "to God," and Gummere also leaves out the words. Gummere's text is frequently erratic, but there is much to be said for the short reading in this case; the line is too long if the worsts "to God" are included, and they might have floated in from the many uses of the phrase "avowe to God" (158.3, 164.1, 187.1, 190.1, 343.1, 346.1, etc.; see note on Stanza 158). Therefore I follow the shorter text.

❖ **Stanza 169/Line 675** ❧ Child gives the text as "That euer yit sawe I [me]," to rhyme with "lewte" (loyalty) two lines earlier. But **a** reads "That euer yit saw I." For discussion of the emendation "saw I me," see the note on Stanza 147, where Child made the same emendation. Here, however, "saw I me" is supported by **bfg**, which have

divergent readings in stanza 147. Dobson/Taylor, p. 91, follow **a** in part but split "sawe" into two words and omit "I," yielding "ever yit sa we" — clever, but an emendation at a place where **bfg** have a perfectly good reading, which I follow their testimony.

❖ **Stanza 176/Line 701** ❧ Child reads "Also [they] toke the gode pens" (=pence). "They" is omitted by **a**; **bfg** include it. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 158, call the word "not grammatically essential" but follow Child's lead. Given the ineptitude of **a**, I have inclined to include the word; **a** probably dropped it accidentally.

❖ **Stanza 176/Lines 702, 704** ❧ The variant here is complex and spans two lines. **a** says that Little John and the cook took "Three hundred pounde and more" to Robin Hood "Under the grene wode hore," that is, "under the green wood hoar." **fg** have a different rhyme: The robbers took "Three hundred pounds and three" to Robin "under the green wood tree." **b** has the unlikely, un-rhyming reading "three hundred pounde and more.... under the green wode tre."

Ordinarily, we might prefer the reading of **b** as best explaining the others: **a** corrected "tree" to "hore," and **fg** corrected "more" to "three." In this case, however, it is pretty clear that **b** mistakenly printed "green wode tre" (a common catchphrase) for "green wode hore" (rather obscure), and that **f** desperately emended the second line to make it match the fourth. Although it is interesting that, in stanza 179, we are told that John and the cook did in fact bring three hundred pounds and three; no doubt that is the source of **f**'s emendation.

❖ **Stanza 179/Line 714** ❧ Child emends the line to "And sende[th] the here by me" and offers as a conjecture "sent the" for "sendeth the," citing stanza 384 as a place where the text uses the form "sent." **ab** read "sende the"; **f** gives the line as "And he hath send the here by me," which **g** modernizes as "sent thee… " Child's emendation was intended to make the verb tense match the preceding line. Knight/Ohlgren reject the emendation as unneeded. It should be noted that, although the issue in the prints is whether the reading should be "th" or "thth," in the original manuscript it might have been a single or double letter thorn (i.e. þ or þþ). Copying two instances of a letter as one, or vice versa, is a very common error.

❖ **Stanza 183/Line 731** ❧ Knight/Ohlgren change Child's "shryef" (from **a**) to "shyref," sheriff, but this is a word that all the prints garble periodically. **b**'s reading "sheryfe" is acceptable.

❖ **Stanza 186/Line 741** ❧ Child reads "Their tyndes" (antlers, from the root for "tine"), with **af**; **b** reads "His tynde." Child's reading seems to point to the antlers of the entire herd of deer John is describing; **b**'s refers presumably to the green hart (i.e. Robin Hood) at their head. The next line seems to refer only to the one animal (matching **b** rather than **a**). It is awkward to see **b** refer to the antlers singular ("tynde" rather than "tyndes" — though I wonder if "tynde" might not have been read as a plural), but it is more awkward to see a plural in 186.1 and a singular in 186.2. Although I am tempted by **b**'s reading, the reading of **a** seems more likely to be corrected, so I followed it.

❖ **Stanza 191/Line 763** ❧ Child's text says the Sheriff was served "well." This is the reading of **a**; **bfg** omit. The meter is better with "well" than without. I've adopted it, but it might be an addition for smoothness.

❖ **Stanza 192/Line 768** ❧ According to **a**, Robin says that "I graunt" the sheriff his life; in **bfg**, the verb is a passive, "is graunted." Is a passive more likely to be converted to an active or vice verse? I'd think the former, so I follow **b**.

❖ **Stanza 193/Line 771** ❧ Child's text says Robin "commaunde[d]" Little John. **a** reads "commaunde"; **b** has "commanded"; **f** "commaunded," **g** "commanded." Despite the unanimous opinion of the earlier editors, the present tense is surely the more difficult reading; the text of **a** is probably preferable.

❖ **Stanza 194/Line 775** ❧ Child gives the line as "And to[ke] hym a grene mantel." "Toke" is the reading of **bf** (**g** has "tooke"); **a** has 'to." Knight/Ohlgren accept the reading of **bfg**, but it is hard to imagine why anyone would have changed "toke" to "to," while the reverse change is quite plausible. A good rule of criticism is that a reading that seems like an error at first glance but which makes sense on consideration is to be preferred one that makes immediate sense — and this is exactly that; "to him" makes sense once you thing about it. So I follow **a**'s reading of "to."

❖ **Stanza 201/Line 803** ❧ Child prints the last three words of this line as "the best[e] frende." **ab** read "thy best frende"; **fg** read "the best frende." "Beste," if treated as two syllables, improves the meter, but probably not enough to justify the emendation (although someone reading the line aloud might well say "bestë"). As between "the" and "thy," the latter is both harder and better-attested. Child's decision to read "the" seems like a goof.

❖ **Stanaza 203/Line 810** ❧ Child has "By nyght or [by] day." "By day" is the reading of **bf**; **g** has "else by day"; **a** has simply "day" without "by." The reading of **a** gives us an extremely short line; the reading of **b** is still short and gives us two unstressed syllables. I would follow Child and include "by" on the grounds that no editor would add just that one word; someone playing with the text would add two syllables, as **g** did.

❖ **Stanza 206/Lines 823–824** ❧ Robin fears that the Virgin is "wrothe with me, For she sent me nat my pay." For "pay" **a** reads "pray," but no editor has accepted this — although it would be interesting to read it as "prey," meaning that Robin has not had enough victims to rob. But "pay" makes better sense in light of what follows.

❖ **Stanza 208/Line 831** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4.

❖ **Stanza 209/Line 835** ❧ Child's text reads "And wayte after some vnketh (unknown) gest." Child's reading is a conjecture; **b** reads "And wayte after such vnketh gest," while **fg** have minor variants on "And looke for some strange gest." I agree with Knight/Ohlgren, p. 159, who reject Child's emendation on the grounds that the reading of **b** makes sense, if rather forced sense; Dobson/Taylor, p. 94, also accept the reading of **b** An alternate emendation would be "And wayte after such an vnketh gest." See also the next note; this section shows the signs of having been very corrupt and badly corrected.

❖ **Stanza 210/Lines 838–840** ❧ The **a** text is defective here, and **b** does not rhyme (it gives the verse as "Whether he be messengere, Or a man that myrthes can, Or yf he be a pore man, Of my gode he shall haue some'). Child reverses the last two lines, omitting the "or" before "yf he be." This is a reasonable conjecture, and I follow it (except that I retain "or," though it damages the meter if the lines are in this order) but there may be deeper damage — if we could emend the second line of the stanza to rhyme with

"some," the structure would be more logical. Possibly emend the second line to something like "a man of myrthe and song" — a weak rhyme, but it produces an orderly stanza. Knight/Ohlgren accept Child's conjecture; Dobson/Taylor do not. I would be strongly inclined to emend the second line if I could think of a better conjecture than the one I proposed; I really do think there is some deeper damage.

❖ **Stanza 213/Line 849** ❧ The text of **bf** reads "But as he loked in Bernysdale." For "he" **g** reads "they," which is also the reading of the parallel in stanza 21. Child and the other modern editions, following Ritson, accept this emendation, printing [t]he[y]. The plural accords with the plurals in stanza 212 and in the third line of this stanza. But **g** has no authority; the change is clearly a typesetter's alteration. The reading "he" is clearly the earliest preserved, and it isn't bad enough to require conjectural emendation.

❖ **Stanza 214/Line 856** ❧ Child prints the line "That [these] monkes haue brought our pay." The reading of **b** is "That monkes haue brought our pay." Child's reading follows **fg** — and has too many syllables. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 159, propose instead that the scribe of the ancestor of **b** misread the text; they emend to "The monkes." This at least makes the syllable count right. Another possible emendation would be to read "These monkes" without "That"; this too scans properly. Another possibility is to read "That the monk" (singular). The problem is, all of these conjectures are reasonable, but none is significantly better than the others. In all likelihood one of them is correct, but I think it safest to follow **b** simply because we don't know which one.

❖ **Stanza 215/Line 858** ❧ In Child's text, Little John tells his subordinates to "frese your bowes of ewe (yew)." "Frese" is the verb of **b**, although it says "our bowes" rather than "your bowes." **fg** reads "bend we our" — almost certainly indicating that their exemplar read "frese our" and they did not understand it. Child suggests as emendations "dress" (i.e. "prepare") or "leese" (i.e. "loose.") Dobson/Taylor, p. 94, suggest but do not adopt the emendation "free," i.e. "prepare." Knight/Ohlgren accept the emendation "dress" (spelling it "drese"). Either emendation is possible; neither strikes me as very compelling.

"Frese" could be either of two Middle English words: the verb to freeze (freseth, from Old English freosan; Dickins/Wilson, p. 270; also Sisam under "frese") or the noun "frese/fresse," "danger" (so Sisam under "fresse") or "harm" (Turville-Petre, p. 231). Obviously a verb is required. And "frese" in Middle English would not carry the modern sense "hold still" conveyed by the command "Freeze!" I would be inclined to print "frese" with a notation that the text is corrupt, inviting a better conjecture than those proposed so far. Perhaps we should read "frese" as a noun (with the sense "You're in trouble!") and add a verb, along the lines of "And frese! See our bowes of ewe… "

Gummere, Dobson/Taylor, and Knight/Ohlgren are agreed in reading "our bowes" for Child's emendation "your bowes."

Bottom line, for me: I print the reading of **b** not because I think it right but because any change to it is likely to be worse.

❖ **Stanza 216/Line 861** ❧ In Child's text, the monk had 52 men, with [men] in brackets as questionable. **b** omits 'men' (and writes 52 as lii); the word "men" is found in **f**, while **g** has "man." **a** is defective here. Knight/Ohlgren think "men" can be omitted, and I agree.

❖ **Stanza 218/Line 870** ❧ In **b**, John tells his companions (Much and Scathelock) to make "all you prese to stonde" — that is, to make the approaching press (crowd) to halt. In **f**(**g**), John orders "you yonder preste to stonde." "Preste" means "priest" (and is so spelled in **g**). In the variant "you" versus "you yonder," Child emends to "yon," which is logical. The more significant variant is between "press" and "priest" — a change of only one letter. The problem with "priest," apart from the fact that there is no good evidence for it, is that monks *aren't* priests. All editors appear to read "prese" with **b**, which is of course the best source.

❖ **Stanza 221/Line 882** ❧ **b** and its followers read Lytell Johan; **q** omits "Lytell." Including the word makes the line too long (seven syllables); omitting it makes it too short (five syllables). The reading without "Lytell" sings better, but words are somewhat more likely to be lost than added. The evidence is closely enough balanced that I followed **b** as the copy text, but I am very, very far from certain.

❖ **Stanza 223/Line 889** ❧ The text of **bq** says that Much had a"bolte" ready. **f** (followed, of course, by **g**) amends the line to read "bowe," probably because crossbows fired bolts and longbows arrows, but an arrow could casually be called a bolt; there is no need to emend.

❖ **Stanza 223/Line 890** ❧ The text of **b** here reads *redly and anone,* a reading similar to that in 316.2 (where the surviving texts seem to show no substantive variant, though the word is spelled ""reddely" by **b** and "redely" by **a**). The text of **q** here has "rapely," "quickly," "rapidly," a reading similar to *Gamelyn,* lines 219, 424. "Rapely" is also a characteristic word of the Gawain-poet, but does not appear elsewhere in the "Gest." The reading was not available to Child, but I am a little surprised ***KO*** didn't adopt it, as it as a clearer reading. Either reading might be an inversion error, raply/radly. There is little to choose between the two variants; I decided to go with the parallel to the reading of 316.2, assuming the other to be an assimilation to *Gamelyn* or some such.. But I am not at all certain. Had it not been for the parallel in 316.2, I would have chosen "rapely." Perhaps it's just as well; moderns are likely to misunderstand "rapely."

❖ **Stanza 224/Line 893** ❧ **b** reads "wyght yonge yemen"; **q** omits "yonge" (and spells "yemen" as "yomen"). The reading of **b** overburdens the line; the reading of **q** scans. One suspects that "wyght yonge yemen" conflates a reading here of "wyght yemen" (also found, in the near context, in 229.3) with the memory of the reading elsewhere of "wyght yonge men." Or, possibly, the original, in fact, read "wyght yonge men" (the reading of Child's first edition, which I thought of before I saw that edition) and **b** produced a sort of semi-dittography, converting "men" to "yemen." I am sorely tempted to "wyght yonge men," as the reading that best explains both **b** and **q**, but the reading is not defective enough to justify emendation. So I follow **q** as the better-scanning reading.

❖ **Stanza 228/Line 909-910** ❧ The discovery of **p** offered two readings in these lines that were not known to Child ("*than* sayd Robyn" and "had *nowe* this monke"). Both are longer than the reading of **b**. Both scan better, too. Since it is easier for words to drop out than be added, I have followed **p** in both cases.

❖ **Stanza 229/Line 915** ❧ Here **b** gives us "wyght yemen"; **p** has "wight yonge men" — not the same variant as in 224, but similar. For lack of anything else to let us choose between the two readings, I have chosen the reading more like 224.

❖ **Stanza 231/Line 920** ❧ **b** reads "monke"; **p** reads "monkes." **p**'s reading clearly refers back to the two monks of 213.3. Since the second monk has long since disappeared from the account (fled with the guards, perhaps?), and the next line says "he," not "they," **b**'s reading is probably to be preferred.

❖ **Stanza 240/Lines 959–960** ❧ In 240.3, **b** reads "ryghtywysman," with no space, which presumably is to be taken as "rightwys man," i.e. "righteous man" or "right wise man"; **f** in fact reads "ryght wise man." The next line is more difficult. The reading "dame" In 240.4 is a conjecture based on **fg**; **b** reads "name" (Knight/Ohlgren for some reason claims **b** reads "ame," but this is not correct. The choices is between "name" and a conjecture such as "dame." In this case, I think **f** conjectured correctly.).

❖ **Stanza 244/Line 976** ❧ The reading of **b** is "Syr, more I shall lende **to** the"; **p** omits "to" but also rearranges "Sir, more shall I lend the." The version of **b** is a syllable too long; the version of **p** has the stresses wrong. I am tempted to omit "Sir" and read "More I shall lend to the" or even "More shall I lend to the" (the best-scanning arrangement of those words). I adopted the best available arrangement of syllables, which is **p**'s, but without much confidence.

❖ **Stanza 245/Line 977** ❧ **b** omits "more, sayd" from this line, which is obvious nonsense. Child added the words from **fg**, which was unjustified, but now that we find them in **p**, it is reasonable to insert them (while adopting **fg**'s orthography, which is more like what **b** usually uses).

❖ **Stanza 247/Line 988** ❧ The monk allegedly carried "eyght [hondred] pounde" — eight hundred pounds. So Child's text, anyway; **b** omits the word "hundred"; **f** and **g** read "hundreth." But since Robin and John claim that the monk paid back twice the four hundred pounds borrowed by the knight, the meaning is hardly in doubt. And **p** has the word anyway.

❖ **Stanza 248/Line 991** ❧ All the editions read that the monk is true, following **bfg**. But **p** has the fascinating reading that the *knight* is true. This is perhaps a mistake, but it might be original — with John criticizing Robin for not trusting the knight. But it might also be a correction made because the monk lied about what he had. So I've followed **b**.

❖ **Stanza 249/Line 994** ❧ Child's text is "Monke, what tolde I the," parsed as a question, "Monk, what told I thee?." This is the reading of **b**. However, **fgp** read "that" instead of "what." If parsed as a declarative statement, "Monk, that told I thee" — Robin is declaring to the monk that he told the monk how true Mary is. Given that it is supported by **p**, and that it is probably the slightly more difficult reading, "that" should probably be preferred to "what."

❖ **Stanza 251/Line 1001** ❧ "sayd Robyn" heavily overburdens the line and is hardly necessary for meaning. **p** is defective here, but in stanza 250.1 it omits an instance of "sayd Robin" that is absolutely necessary metrically (indeed, the line is too short even with those words). Is it possible that, in some early ancestor, the words dropped from stanza 250 to stanza 251? There is no textual warrant for omitting them here, so I don't, but it's a curious reading.

❖ **Stanza 256/Line 1021** ❧ The text of **b**, "'How moch is in yonder other corser?' sayd Robyn," has caused problems since the time of **f**, which amends Robin's quote to read, "And what is on the other courser?" **g** goes beyond even that and produces "And what is in the other coffer?" Kittredge suggested emending "corser" to "forcer," another word for "coffer," and Clawson, p. 22, approves of the emendation.

I am not convinced. The line is certainly too long, and far from clear, but, so far, no absolutely convincing emendation has been proposed; perhaps we should mark as a candidate for correction. For example, we might omit "said Robin," which is not needed, or "yonder," which is otiose. Perhaps "yonder" is a garble of "ỹ"="the"?

I also wonder a little about Robin referring to a baggage horse as a "courser." Perhaps it was a particularly poor-looking nag (used perhaps for disguise?), and Robin was being ironic?

❖ **Stanza 262/Line 1048** ❧ The text of **b** reads "And all thy mery meyne," although Child's text prints "And all his mery meyne" based on **fg**. The meyne is clearly Robin's, based on the previous line, so Child's reading "his" makes sense — but Knight/Ohlgren suggest that "thy" (or perhaps ("they") is an error for "the." Since **fg** have no authority,, I've followed Knight/Ohlgren in reading "the," the minimum possible emendation, rather than **fg**'s larger emendation.

❖ **Stanza 268/Line 1069** ❧ "'But take not a grefe,' sayde the knyght, 'That I heue been so longe...." This is the text printed as a single line by Child, despite its excessive length, on the evidence of **b**. But this is hardly evidence: all the prints of the "Gest" sometimes print two lines as one, presumably in error or to save space. Just because something stands as a single line in one of the witnesses does not mean that it is in fact meant to be a single line! **f** prints it as two lines — both of them metrically correct — making up the line count by combining the last two lines of 270. The line as given by **b** is patently too long, as the compositor of **f** recognized. Knight/Ohlgren seek to emend by taking out "sayde the knyght." That emendation is required is clear, but this leaves a line still too long, and there is no reason for why the words would be added. I strongly suspect that what we have is not a case of one line that is too long but of three missing lines. We may also see evidence of this in the first line of 270, which like the first line of 268 is badly overburdened. The original reading was perhaps something like this:

268. 'But take not a grefe,' sayde the knyght,
'That I haue been so long.
For as I came to grene wode
There I dyd tarry longe
(or, "I stopped to rite a wrong," or "I met a yeman strong," or some such).
268A. 'For as I passed Wentebrydge
I came by wrastelyng… '

And so forth, with the lines in red being my conjectures. I have emended on this basis. I have no confidence whatsoever in my lines 268.3, 268.4, and 268A.1, but I strongly suspect that I am right and that 268 is two badly cut-up stanzas rather than one overly long stanza. Sadly, this stanza is in the middle of such a long gap in **a** that line counts cannot help us; **a** has too strong a tendency to combine lines for line count to tell us much.

❖ **Stanza 271/Line 1083** ❧ Child has the line refer to the "[hye] selerer." **b** omits the word "hye"; it is found in **f** (which spells it "high") and **g** ("hie"). Knight/Ohlgren omit, and I agree. The line is already nine syllables; it doesn't need a tenth. Child perhaps adds the word under the influence of stanza 233.

❖ **Stanza 276/Lines 1102-1103** ❧ The text of **b** here reads "And go to my treasure, And brynge me there foure hondred pounde." "Treasure" is supposed to rhyme to "me" in 276.4 — and, of course, in modern English, it doesn't. This seems to have confused the publishers of **f** (followed by **g**), which produced the typically feeble emendation "My wyll done that it be, Go and fetch to me foure hundrethe pounds," rhyming "be" and "me." Possibly the typesetter of **f** could not see how "treasure" rhymed with "me" and tried to fix 276.2 by changing it to the feeble "My wyll done that it be." (In which case, there was no need to change 276.3.) Alternately, these two lines are the last lines of page D2 verso in **b**; perhaps this was an instance of the last two lines being damaged and **f** trying to fix them, as we have seen elsewhere. It hardly matters. **b**'s reading "tresure" should be read "treasurë," which eliminates the problem.

❖ **Stanza 282/Line 1127** ❧ This marks the first of several instances (also stanza 291/line 1163, stanza 300/line 1199, stanza 313/line 1251) where Child prints a text which refers to the "proud[e] sheryf." In each case, the primary text (**b**) prints "proud" rather than "proude." If it weren't for that, this reading would simply land in the second apparatus. Both "proud" and "proude" are found in the "Gest," in roughly equal numbers — but, in Middle English, both forms are correct, and interchangeable; the one which is metrically better is perhaps to be preferred. This is certainly "proude sheriff," since otherwise we have back-to-back stressed syllables. On the other hand, all the instances where it occurs are the third line of a stanza, which is probably the part of the text where the meter is least important. Someone reading the text might well pronounce the word "proude," but it is an open question what we should print. Since **d** has "proude," I've followed it here. Compare the variants in stanzas 291, 300.

❖ **Stanza 283/Line 1131** ❧ Child prints the line "And [he] that shoteth allther best." Of the prints, **fg** read "they" instead of "he." **b** has no pronoun. **d** is partly defective; it has "all thee" but space indicates that it does not have room for "And they that" — but "They that" would fit; so might "And he that." "He that" without "and" might be too short. However, **d** has "all thee" for **b**'s "allther," which perhaps reduced its weight. Knight/Ohlgren would follow **b** against Child. I've done the same. It is quite possible that the line is corrupt.

❖ **Stanza 290/Line 1158** ❧ Child emends the last word of the line "he[ue]de," i.e. "hevede," to rhyme with "desceyued," "deceived," at the end of the stanza. The text of **b**, however, is simply "hede," and the other prints have variations on this. The form "hevede," which means "head," is a legitimate early English form, but does not occur anywhere in the "Gest." While there may be corruption in this verse (note the number of variants in this and the next two stanzas), that surely is not enough reason to emend here. There, is after all, another way to preserve the rhyme: read "desceyved" as "desceyvéd."

❖ **Stanza 291/Line 1163** ❧ For Child's reading "proud[e]" ("proude" being the reading of **dfg**, whereas **b** has "proud") see the textual note on Stanza 282.

❖ **Stanza 291/Line 1164** ❧ Child gives the last line of the stanza as "All by the but [as] he stode." The word "as" is found in **d** but omitted by **b**. Both meanings are sensible; the reading without "as" is better metrically. It is unfortunate that **d** is so short that we cannot firmly assess its text. Short words like "as" are easily lost, and I can see no reason to add it, since the longer reading damages the meter, so I'm by no means confident it shold be omitted.

❖ **Stanza 292/Line1166** ❧ Child makes the text to read that, during the archery contest, "alway he [Robin] slist the wand," meaning that his arrows always touched the wand holding the target. However, instead of "he," **b** reads "they," as does **d** Presumably the **b** text means that either all Robin's archers sliced the wand or, more likely, all his arrows did so. This is unclear enough that **fg** changed it to "he," and Child for some reason went along even though **fg** have no authority. The reading of **bd** is better.

The other question in the verse is just what Robin did to the wand: was it "slist" (sliced), or was it cleft? **b** has sliced; **f** and **g** have "clefte" and "clave," respectively. The reading of **d** is the most interesting; Child's correspondent read it as "clyft" (cleft), but Ohlgren (correctly, to my eye) reads as clyſt, i.e. clyst. Which is fascinating because it's half-way between "slist" and "clyft." Possibly it's the old f/ſ confusion, and **d** intended to read "clyft," but that's conjecture. I follow **b** because it's the copy text and because we can't really be sure what **d** meant.

❖ **Stanza 293/Line 1169** ❧ For Scarlock/Scathelock see the note on Stanza 4. Observe that this is the one place where d testifies to the reading, and it has "Scathelocke." It is on the basis of this reading that I adopted "Scathelock(e)" at all the other points of variation.

❖ **Stanza 300/Line 1199** ❧ For Child's reading "proud[e]" see the textual note on Stanza 282. Here **b** has "proud," **dfg** have "proude."

❖ **Stanza 303/Line 1210** ❧ Child gives the second line of the stanza as "If euer thou loue[d]st me," but **bd** gives the verb as "louest." **f** reads "loues," **g** reads "loued." The reading of **f** is impossible; that of **g** a clear correction. Knight/Ohlgren think, and I agree, that we should read "louest"; the syntax here is complex enough that we need not expect exact verb concord. There is no reason to emend.

❖ **Stanza 305/Line 1220** ❧ For "No lyfe on me be lefte," the reading of **b** (**d** has only the last few words, and even for those, the bottom half is cut off, but what survives is enough to show that it agrees with be at least as regards to "me be lefte"), **fg** read, with minor variants "That after I eate no bread." This is so obviously feeble that it is clear their archetype worked from a copy where the last line of the stanza is illegible or has been torn away. We see another instance of this in stanza 400, where two lines were illegible.

❖ **Stanza 312/Line 1245** ❧ Child's reading is "And moche [I] thank the of thy confort." **b** omits "I"; **f** rephrases as "And moche I do the thankes *(sic.;* **g** reads "thanke") for thy confort." Knight/Ohlgren, p. 162, accepts Child's emendation, as do the other modern editions, but it *is* an emendation. I don't think it is justified; the line has the right number of syllables, and the meaning is clear even if "I" is omitted.

❖ **Stanza 313/Line 1251** ❧ For Child's reading "proud[e]" see the textual note on Stanza 282. Here **bfg** have "proud," **(d)p** have "proude."

❖ **Stanza 315/Lines 1259** ❧ Child reads "forty" days based on the reading "xl" of **a**, but **b** reads "twelue," and **fg** also support the reading "twelve" although they rewrite other parts of the line. **d** is defective. I personally incline to prefer the reading "twelve"; there are just too many Biblical uses of the phrase "forty days," plus forty days was the standard period of sanctuary in a church (Lyon, p. 166). A scribe might naturally think of forty days when thinking of the knight giving sanctuary.... And the two are easily confused in a lot of scripts, since forty is "xl" and twelve is "xii."

❖ **Stanzas 317–318/Lines 1265–1272** ❧ There are several curious textual features in these verses. Stanza 317 ends in mid-sentence. This is unusual although not entirely unknown in the "Gest." The next few lines imply the existence of two sheriffs: the "proud sheryf of Notyngham" cam e"to the hye sheryfe." There is no evidence of textual corruption in the prints; **abd** all agree on the essential words. **fg** make a minor change to 317, but it does not resolve the problem. Emendation seems required.

To make 317 end on a full sentence, several emendations are possible. The simplest would be to change "Howe" at the beginning of the third line to "Of" or similar. Alternately, the first word of the fourth line could be emended from "And" to "Called" or "Brought."

In 318, the simplest emendation would be to omit "to" from the first line; in that case, "hye shyref" becomes simply a synonym for "proude shyref."

There is also the question, in 317.4, of whether the sherif brought men "of armes" (arms) or "of armys." **bd** have the former, **a** has the latter. All the modern editions follow **a**, but you don't summon a whole army to deal with a single knight; I think the reading of **bd** is more likely. To be sure, **a**'s "armys" may simply have been an odd spelling of "armes"; this formation occurs elsewhere in the "Gest."

❖ **Stanza 323/Line 1289** ❧ The text of **b** is "hem"; everything else reads "him." Obviously this is an easy confusion and could have happened accidentally. The reading "him" makes perfect sense; the sherif is telling the King about Sir Richard and Robin. But "hem" is not necessarily a typo. It is an archaic form of "them" — accusative third person plural. In Chaucer, "hem" consistently means "them"; similarly in *Piers Plowman*. By the fifteenth century, usage was changing, and the word is not elsewhere used in the "Gest." Is this a residual reading of **b**'s that was not corrected when the text was modernized, or is it an error for "him" or "them"? We can't tell. If the reading is "hem," then the sherif is telling the people of London and those about the King the tale about Robin. This makes perfect sense if we accept that **b** could have use this archaic form. I've very tentatively followed **b**, partly because the reading is clearly harder, partly because it's the copy text — and partly to alert readers to the problem of the uncertainty of the text.

❖ **Stanza 323/Line 1292** ❧ The text of **q**, followed by **a** and the modern editions, reads "That were so(o) noble and good." **b**, followed by **fg**, reads "That noble were and good." **d** is defective for the entire verse, so we have no "tiebreak." I could make a case for **aq** on the principle of "prefer the harder reading." But the reading of **b** scans better, so I've adopted it.

❖ **Stanza 326/Line 1301** ❧ Here **aq** have "'Go nowe home, shyref,' sayde our kynge." **bdfg** read "'Go home, thou proud sheryf...'" (omitting "sayde our kynge"). The reading of **aq** is too long; that of **bd**, too short. If it were a case of **aq** versus **b** alone, I would probably go with **aq**. But the additional weight of **d** causes me to follow **bd** — very hesitantly; all other editors follow **aq**. I suspect the correct reading might be a combination: "Go nowe home, though proud sheryf."

❖ **Stanza 330/Line 1317** ❧ The text of **a** reads "The shyref there fayles of Robyn Hode." **bdfg** reads "fayled" for "fayles" All editors seem to accept the **b** reading.

❖ **Stanza 331/Line 1324** ❧ This line is given by Child as "And let [his] haukes flee," claiming that **a** omits the word "his." Knight/Ohlgren omit the word on this basis. But **a** in fact has the word, so there is no variant to discuss!

❖ **Stanza 332/Line 1327** ❧ **ap** omit the word "home," found in **bfg**. It's a tough call, since the line has an extra syllable if "home" is included — but it's an extra unstressed syllable in "Notyngham," so omitting "home" doesn't cure the problem; the line actually scans better if "home" is included. So I've included it.

❖ **Stanza 332/Line 1328** ❧ This fourth line of the stanza is supposed to rhyme with "stronge" in the second line. None of the texts do so; **a** offers "Bounde both fote and hande" while **b** has "…honde and fote." Of the two, the reading of **a** is slightly preferable, because, first "hande" (or, better yet, spell it "honde") at least shares the vowel and the "n" sound, and second, assimilation to the familiar is very common, so "fote and hande" would easily become "hande and fote" simply by error of memory. But I think it very likely the line is corrupt; I almost adopted the conjecture "Bounde in irons stronge" (and would emend the line if I could think of a different word that rhymed with "stronge" that better fit the context).

❖ **Stanza 334/Line 1333** ❧ **ap** say that the knight's wife *heard* of his capture; **bfg** have no verb and simply give call the knight's wife a lady. The latter reading is feeble. My guess is that **p**'s word "herde" (mis-printed as "harde" by **a**) fell out of the text before **b**, which conjectured in words to make the line long enough.

❖ **Stanzas 338–339/Lines 1352–1353** ❧ Child leaves blank the last line of stanza 338 and the first stanza of 339, which are lacking in all three of the best witnesses, **abd**. **fg** have, with minor variations, "The proude shirife than sayd he" for the last line of 338 but omit the second line of 339, leaving a two-line fragment. Knight/Ohlgren accept the **f** reading in stanza 338 (since it almost certainly mentioned the sheriff, and had to rhyme with "the"). In stanza 339, they repeat this with a variant, which is possible, but at least two other types of emendation are equally possible, along the lines of: "They taken hym to Nottyngham" (referring to his destination) or "They took him but two hours past" (referring to the time). To fill out the text in my modernized version, I offered "And where may he now be?" in 338 and "The Sheriff hath my lord taken" in 339, although the latter in particular uses language which does not fit. But these are only guesses, so I leave the lines blank in the critical edition.

❖ **Stanza 340/Line 1359** ❧ **bd**'s text "mery yonge men" gives the right number of syllables; **a**'s "mery men" is too short. So I follow **bd**.

❖ **Stanza 343/Line 1370** ❧ The text of Child, following **ad**, says that Robin wishes to see and take (i.e. capture) the Sheriff. But **bfg** say that Robin wishes to see and take (i.e.

rescue) the knight. Both readings have substantial merit. Since there is no real reason to prefer one over the other, we should probably follow **ad** over **b**.

❖ **Stanza 348/Line 1392** ❧ Child gives this line as "With his bright[e] bronde." "Brighte" is the reading of **bdfg**; **a** has "bright." In stanza 202, both **a** and **b** read "bright." We must at least allow for the possibility that the copyist of **a** assimilated this verse to that. "Brighte" is also better metrically. Although Knight/Ohlgren, p. 163, prefer to read "bright," the case for "brighte" appears slightly better. But the difference very likely arose as a mere orthographic variant.

❖ **Stanza 349/Line 1395** ❧ There is no major variant here, but we note that the **a** text, which had several lacunae prior to this point, ends after the third line of this stanza and is lacking for the rest of the poem. The **d** text, which began with stanza 280, ends with stanza 350. Thus for stanza 351 to the end of the poem, except for the few dozen lines of **epq**, we have essentially only one witness, the **b** text and its inferior relatives **fg**. Thus we will no longer be trying to choose between texts; we are simply trying to detect errors which are so bad as to call for conjectural emendation.

❖ **Stanza 351/Line 1402** ❧ In this stanza Robin cuts.... something.... in two to free the knight. What was it? **b** says his "hoode," which is accepted by Dobson/Taylor, p. 104. Child emends this to "bonde," which certainly Robin must have cut at some point and is in any case rhymes better with "stonde" two lines later. The reading "bonde" is accepted by Knight/Ohlgren as well; they note on p. 163 that in stanza 332 the knight was merely bound hand and foot, not hooded. Another possibility might be to emend to "hondes," i.e. Robin cut in two the ropes binding his hands. Nonetheless the **b** reading could be correct; the guards could have tied the knight's hood over his eyes to prevent him from seeing — or they might have used the hood to keep people from realizing who it was. It is the harder reading, and the author might have used it to insult the sheriff: not only did he bind the knight, he wouldn't even let him see. Balancing the evidence, I don't think the need to emend sufficient to override **b**. For that matter, it makes just as much sense to emend the fourth line of the stanza (to end with something like "to grene wode") as to emend the second; the only reason I can see for emending the second line rather than the fourth is that **fg** did so — which is no reason at all.

❖ **Stanza 355/Line 1420** ❧ It is hard to imagine a dialect in which "Hode" (line 2) and "stout" (line 4) rhyme. Possibly we should emend "stout" to "gode," but there is no indication of this in the prints.

❖ **Stanza 357/Line 1425** ❧ Child's text reads "All the passe of Lancasshyre,"on the basis of **b**. Gummere, p. 319, explains "passe" as meaning limits, bounds, extant — i.e. the whole region. This is not the usual meaning of "passe," however. The most suitable meaning in Chaucer, according to Chaucer/Benson p. 1276, is "pace," which is also the meaning that Sisam gives for "pas." Turville-Petrie, p. 245, might suggest "road" as a meaning. None of the noun forms is common, although "pas(s)(e)" is a common verb.

For "passe" **fg** read "compasse," which Knight/Ohlgren, p. 164, accept; they argue that "passe" makes no sense and suggest that "compasse" is original because of its complexity. But a reading of **fg** is really no more than a conjecture. We might just as well conjecture "parke" (or "parkes"), which fits the context. "Landes" would also be a reasonable conjecture, or even "(e)states."

For that matter, Lancashire is surrounded by the Pennines to the east and by other hills to the north and south. These are not high hills, but they are rough enough that travelers tended to use the passes between the peaks (it was considered an amazing accomplishment when William the Conqueror managed to take an army through the Pennines in winter; Douglas, p. 221). Or it might be a mis-reading of "pathes." I would incline to leave the reading alone and let it suggest *all* these meanings, but if we are going to emend, we should emend to "parkes."

❖ **Stanza 361/Line 1442** ❧ Child says that the King offers a charter which he seals "[with] my honde"; the word "with" is omitted by **b** although found in **fg**. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 165, argue that it can be omitted in accord with Middle English usage. An instrumental without a preposition is a very early form — too early, I think, to still be in use — plus the line scans better with some short word such as "with." Short words are easily lost by scribes. If our only choices are add/omit "with," then on purely internal grounds, the reading with "with" might be better, but the external evidence is so strong that we should probably omit the word. But I think the line is uncertain enough to permit conjecture, so I conjectured "by" rather than "with."

❖ **Stanza 368/Line 1471** ❧ The line as given by b ("and walked down by your abbay") has several problems: a past tense when describing a potential future action, plus "your abbay" when the abbey would presumably be considered God's. The first problem is bad enough that I have accepted Child's emendation to "walke" — but I don't think "your abbay" is impossible. It's more like a bit of flattery to the king. So I do not use Child's emendation "yon abbay."

❖ **Stanza 369/Line 1473** ❧ The forester offers to be the king's ledes-man, i.e. guide, leader, in **bf** (**g** spells it "lodesman"), but Knight/Ohlgren emend this to "bedesman" (a "beads-man," hence "one who prays" or uses the rosary; Langland/Schmidt, p. 516). Knight/Ohlgen, p. 137, would extend it to mean "one who leads in prayer." They argue (p. 165) that "ledesman" is an assimilation to the previous stanza and that "bedesman" heightens the sense of disguise. It is a clever emendation, and is not impossible, but "bedesman" is a rare word and the line as given makes sense and emendation is not required. Certainly "bedesman" is not a good enough conjecture to be absolutely convincing.

❖ **Stanza 371/Line 1481** ❧ Child reads the line "hastely" on the basis of **f** (**g** has "hastily"), but **b** reads "hastly," which Knight/Olhgren consider to be correct. I certainly don't think **b**'s reading bad enough to emend.

❖ **Stanza 371/Line 1484** ❧ Child has this line read "And hasted them thyder blyve," i.e. "hastened them there swiftly," but **b** has "blyth," not "blyve," and **f** and **g** also have "blythe," although with different spellings. It might be argued that hasted.... blyve is a more reasonable combination (although it is also redundant) — but the reading of **b** is perfectly sensible. Although Knight/Ohlgren and Dobson/Taylor follow Child's emendation without comment, I really don't think there are sufficient grounds for changing the text.

❖ **Stanza 377/Line 1508** ❧ The line Child prints here, "Other shyft haue not wee," is lacking in **b**; he takes it from **fg**. **b** instead repeats the text of the second line of the stanza, "Vnder the grene-wode tre." Knight/Ohlgren, p. 166, accept that the poet meant

to repeat the line, but this seems highly dubious — he could surely have produced some sort of variant. The fourth line is probably lost forever; we must either conjecture it or accept the **fg** reading (which is itself probably a conjecture because the compositor of **f**, unlike Knight/Ohlgren, felt a different line was needed. It is one of the few conjectures in **f** that is competent, but a conjecture it almost certainly is). An alternate emendation might be something like "My menye and me" or "My mery men and me." An alternate conjecture, "And all my yemen fre(e)" would perhaps explain the loss of the line, by an eye-skip from "And" in 377.4 to "And" in 378.1. Perhaps we might conjecture a line which makes the haplography more likely, e.g. "And ye this soon shall see."

❖ **Stanza 378/Line 1512** ❧ Child emends **b**'s reading "saynt charity" to "saynte charyte"; Knight/Ohlgren and Dobson/Taylor accept the reading of **b**. Child's reading perhaps makes it more clear that the reference is not to a particular saint — the "Gest" seems to prefer the spelling "Saynt" for a saint (stanzas 84, 91, 315, 390). But it's really just an orthographic change, and it's worth remembering that Child had a different system for terminal -e in Middle English than is now thought correct.

❖ **Stanza 381/Line 1524** ❧ Child's text is "I wolde vouch it safe on the." The reading of **b** is, however, "I vouch it halfe on the." This confused **f** enough that it converted it to "I would give it to thee." Knight/Ohlgren, p. 166, argues that the text of **b** is sensible enough to be retained. The reading of **b** is indeed strange and possibly corrupt, but Child's emendation does not explain how it came to be corrupt; it is probably better to retain the reading of **b** until someone proposes a better reading. Personally, I think we should just drop "it," or give the line as "I wold vouch halfe on thee." This gives a fully meaningful, metrically correct line. But the line as given is not sufficient corrupt as to justify emendation.

❖ **Stanza 385/Lines 1537–1540** ❧ The reading of the first line is a crux. The text of **b** says that the king showed his broad "tarpe." There seems to be no such word in Middle English. Certainly it confused the compositors of **fg**, who change it to "seale." Child, who was more facile with an emendation, instead proposed "targe," followed by most modern editors — but this is not a great help. A reading such as "charter" or "letter" would fit better, but it is harder to explain the error of **b** in that case. A possible suggestion would be to emend the second line of 385, replacing "And sone" with "The seale" (or at least some reading that ends with "seale"). Then the "targe" becomes a letter showing the king's shield and livery (so it can be seen at a distance) and sealed with his seal (for detailed examination). This would explain a lot — if only it weren't pure conjecture. I've adopted Child's reading "targe" because it's the minimum possible conjecture that makes some sense — but I don't really believe it.

❖ **Stanza 399/Line 1596** ❧ "So drynke I ale or wyne." This looks like one of the inept corrections we see too many of in **fg**, but it is in **b**. I still suspect corruption, but cannot think of a good conjecture.

❖ **Stanza 400/Lines 1597–1598** ❧ For Child's text, in which Robin tells outlaws who miss the rose garland that, in addition to losing their gear, "And bere a buffet on his hede, I-wys right all bare,'" **f** and **g** read "A good buffet on his head bare, For that shal be his fine," which does not even rhyme with the last word of the stanza. Here again it seems likely that the copy used by the compositor of **f** was defective, and he made up

two lines (missing his line count, so that he made a rhyme on 399.4 rather than 400.4), and **g** followed. We see a similar instance of a lost line in Stanza 305.

❖ **Stanza 401/Line 1601** ❧ **Stanza 401/line 1601**. The text of **b** has that Robin shot "a boute." Should this be read as two word, "a bout," or one word, "about"? Either makes sense, and **b** is sufficiently inconsistent about spacing that. frankly, its testimony doesn't tell us much — the space between "a" and "bout" seems smaller than usual, almost as if the typesetter is taunting us. Child and most of the editors since him have read it as "about"; Knight/Ohlgren read as "a bout." I incline to think the latter makes more sense, and have followed it.

❖ **Stanza 401/Line 1604** ❧ The text of **b** says that Gilbert had a "good whyte hande'; **fg** have "lilly" for "good." Child however prints simply "whyte hande" — a reading which is metrical if one pronounces "whyte" as two syllables but which might well be an assimilation to stanza 292. Dobson/Taylor follow **b**, but both Knight/Ohlgren and Gummere accept Child's emendation — Knight/Ohlgren (whose textual notes seem to get fewer as we approach the end of the poem) don't even comment on it.

❖ **Stanza 409/Lines 1635–1636** ❧ Child reads these lines "Thus our kynge and Robyn Hode, Togeder gan they mete," the latter to rhyme with "shete." Child's line, however, is derived partly from **f**, partly, believe it or nor, from **g**. Thus it has no authority at all. I follow **b**'s "Togeder than they met," Still, it's a sufficiently incompetent line that I rather suspect corruption in the prints. The point is surely that Robin sees the king's face. But no one has suggested a conjecture that fits, so I followed the text of **b**.

❖ **Stanza 412/Lines 1645–1646** ❧ Note that Child had two versions of these two lines. In his original edition, he followed **b** and printed

'Mercy then, Robyn,' sayd our kynge,
'Vnder your trystyll-tre,

In a correction (volume V, p. 297 in the Dover edition) he amended this to follow **fg**:

'Mercy,' then said Robyn to our kynge,
'Vnder this trystyll-tre.'

If the reading of **fg** were in **a**, we might perhaps consider it. But a reading of **fg** against **b** has no value — clearly the transcriber of **f** was bothered by this reading, presumably because it made the King show fear, and corrected it to an easier reading, in order to make it appear that Robin, not the King, is asking mercy. This is all the more so because we know that **f** was having a hard time reading its exemplar here (see the note on Stanzas 412–414). Child was right the first time, and Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren both follow the text of **b**.

❖ **Stanzas 412–414/Lines 1645–1656** ❧ It appears that the exemplar used by **f** was very badly damaged for stanzas 412–414; about half the text of these stanzas is rewritten, usually very badly, as is typical of **f** when it cannot read its exemplar. And, as usual, **g** follows **f** with some stylistic improvements. The most noteworthy change is that described in the previous note, but there are some other smaller alterations.

❖ **Stanza 417/Line 1666** ❧ In the second line of the stanza, Child prints the text as "I wyll come agayne full soone," but **b** omits "wyll" (found in **fg**). Knight/Ohlgren point out that the verb "will" is not needed, and I agree; we should omit.

❖ **Stanza 421/Lines 1683–1684** ❧ The last two lines of this verse have invited many emendations. The text of **b** is

And euery knyght had so, iwys
Another had full sone.

Child emends "had so, iwys" to "also, i-wys,' meaning that, like the king, each of the knights soon was wearing a green garment. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 167, suggest instead replacing "Another had" in the final line with "Another hode" — in other words, saying that the knights soon had new hoods.

Both emendations are clever, and both eliminate the problem of the redundant use of "had." Neither reading is compelling, however. Child's reading implies less change of meaning; Knight/Ohlgren's requires a smaller change in the text. But an even smaller change would be to alter the second "had" to "hat" — a word which, in addition to meaning "headware," can also be a form of the verb "hote," "to be named/called" (Chaucer/Benson, pp. 1255, 1259). Thus the word *might* mean that they took on another calling or social position. That there is a problem here is likely, but the solution is not obvious; all one can really do is pick a reading, or leave the text of **b** alone (which is what I did), and perhaps mark a primitive error.

❖ **Stanza 423/Line 1689** ❧ The text of **b** here is "Theyr bowes bente, and forth they went." Child emends this to "They bente theyr bowes, and forth they went," on the basis of (**f**)(**g**). Perhaps he objected to the internal rhyme, which does have the air of floating in from somewhere else. Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren prefer the **b** reading, and indeed there appears to be no real reason to emend; sometimes internal rhymes just happen. In any case, if we're going to emend, a more metrical emendation would be "theyr bowes they bent."

❖ **Stanza 433/Line 1731** ❧ There is some textual uncertainty in this line; Child and the modern editions print it as "That he had spend an hondred pounde" on the basis of **fg**, but **b** omits "he had." I am not convinced that the emendation of **fg** is correct. Mightn't Robin have incurred debts that came due that day, or some such? Probably there is an error here, but we have no assurance that the reading of **fg** is the correct alternative. I have printed "he hath" instead of "he had" because this would explain the omission of the words; this would make it an eyeskip error from t**hat** he **hat**h.

❖ **Stanza 436/Line 1742** ❧ Robin sees young men shooting "full fayre upon a day" according to Child; this is the reading of **e** (which begins with this stanza) and **f**(**g**); **b** has "ferre," i.e. probably "far." Knight/Ohlgren prefer the reading of **b**, reading it to mean that the archers are shooting a distant targets rather than that they are a sight worth seeing. There is no strong reason to prefer either variant — though Robin might by more inspired by seeing archers who could shoot almost as well as he could. Ultimately. it probably comes down to our assessment of the relative values of **b** and **e**. I follow **b**, but it isn't an easy choice; I followed it mostly because it's my copy text.

❖ **Stanza 437/Line 1747** ❧ Editors have generally emended the third line of the verse. **b** says Robin was "commytted" the best archer in England, and **e** has "comitted." **fg**, confused by the **b** reading, have one of their typical monstrosities, "commended for." Child and Knight/Ohlgren are both sure that the word should have been a Middle English form of "counted"; Child emends to "compted," Knight/Ohlgren to "comted."

The latter seems more likely, although there are many other possibilities, along the lines of "command to" or "committed to be." Since no reading is clearly superior, but **b** and **e** agree except for orthography, I have followed their united reading (using, as usual, the ordhography of **b**).

❖ **Stanza 444/Line 1775** ❧ Child's text of this line says that Robin took his leave "full courteysly." Knight/Ohlgren omits the word "full," without explanation or support in the prints.

❖ **Stanza 449/Line 1795** ❧ Child has the text read "our *dere* master," following **e**. **b** and all its descendants omits *dere,* a reading followed by Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren. Since the longer reading has the right syllable count, and it is easier to lose short words than to add them, I have followed Child in adopting the **e** reading.

❖ **Stanzas 451, 454/Lines 1803, 1815** ❧ The place where Robin Hood was killed is somewhat uncertain. Child prints "Kyrkesly" in stanza 451, "Kyrke[s]ly" in 454; **b** has read Kyrkesly in the first and Kyrkeley in the second; the other prints have variants on "Kyrkesley" in both places. Sadly, **e** has ended, so we don't have its testimony. Knight/Ohlgren are convinced (p. 168) that Child is wrong and both should read "Kyrkely." Certainly it would make more sense that they would both be the same, but since I don't know which one was the original, I follow **b** and let you decide. See also the variants mentioned in the commentary on the text. Most moderns understand the name to be a references to "Kirklees," as in the "Death"; see the comments on Stanzas 451, 454.

❖ **Stanza 452/Line 1806** ❧ **b** reads here that the prioress loves Sir Roger of "Donkesly," which has the double disadvantage of disagreeing with Stanza 455 (which has "Donkestere," i.e. Doncaster) and of referring to a place which does not exist. Presumably the text should read "Sir Roger of Doncaster," which indeed is the reading of **fg** (although they omit the next line). One suspects some sort of early error -- perhaps the original read something like "Sir Roger of Donkastre Ly" (i.e. "Doncaster Lee"), and the typesetter left out some letters.

Part B: Analysis and Commentary on the "Gest"

Summary: The Plot of the Gest of Robyn Hode

Because the "Gest" is long enough to be difficult to take in in one reading, the following summary may help you get an overview of the plot.

[THE FIRST FIT.] When we begin, Robin is in Barnsdale with Little John, Much the Miller's Son, and Will Scathelock. He sends them out to seek a "guest." They are to bring him back to dinner.

The three outlaws spy a downtrodden knight along the road. They bring him back to Robin, who serves him a fine meal — but then demands that the knight pay. The knight admits that he has only a few shillings. Robin orders John to search his baggage. John determines that it is true. Asked how he came to be so poor, the knight reveals that he has mortgaged all his lands to the Abbot of St. Mary's in order to go bail for his son, who is charged with murder. The reckoning is due, and he cannot repay, and if the Abbot will not extend the loan, all the knight's lands will be lost.

Robin and his band are moved with pity. Robin offers to pay the debt, if the knight will give surety. The knight can give none except the Virgin Mary. Robin, out of his love for the Virgin, at once accepts. He gives the knight four hundred pounds, supplies other gifts at his men's urging, and offers Little John as a servant.

[THE SECOND FIT.] The abbot of St. Mary's is at dinner, happily contemplating the thought that he will soon have the knight's land. The knight shows up in poor clothing and begs the abbot and his allies for more time. The abbot refuses. The knight produces the four hundred pounds lent him by Robin and stalks out, ruining the abbot's day.

[THE THIRD FIT.] Little John takes part in an archery contest, and wins easily. The Sheriff of Nottingham, impressed, takes him on as a servant. A year later, when the sheriff is out hunting, John fails to get his dinner — and attacks the butler. He then fights with the cook. The fight is a draw, and John invites the cook to join Robin's band. The cook agrees, and they head off to the greenwood after robbing the sheriff's home. The sheriff himself is tricked into Robin's lair by John, where he is forced to spend a night in the cold, eat from his own stolen plate, and to promise to be Robin's friend.

[THE FOURTH FIT.] It is time for the knight to repay his debt to Robin. He has done well, and (in an earlier fit) had started on his way to Barnsdale — but he is delayed on his way by a wrestling tournament. While this is going on, Robin sends out his men to find another "guest." This time, they catch a monk and his company heading for London to complain about the knight. Most of the company flees, but John and the others bring the monk, and his baggage, back to Robin. The monk claims to have relatively little money, but John searches the bags and finds that he has eight hundred pounds. Whereas the knight had been honored because he told the truth, the monk is punished because he lied. Robin confiscates the eight hundred pounds and sends the monk on his way. When the knight arrives to pay back the four hundred pounds, Robin declares that the Virgin Mary has already repaid the loan, and gives the knight the four hundred pound excess.

[THE FIFTH FIT.] There is another archery contest in Nottingham, and this time Robin competes and wins the prize. But he and his men are recognized and forced to flee. Little John is injured in the fight. The band is forced to take refuge at the castle of the knight, now revealed to be Sir Richard at the Lee.

[THE SIXTH FIT.] Sir Richard is still under siege, but calls on the sheriff to consult the king. The siege is lifted, and Robin returns to the greenwood — but the sheriff then traps Sir Richard and prepares to take him away. The knight's wife appeals to Robin, who rescues Sir Richard and kills the sheriff, calling him a betrayer of the oath he earlier took to be Robin's friend. The knight, however, cannot return to his castle; he joins Robin in the greenwood.

[THE SEVENTH FIT.] King Edward decides to take matters into his own hands and deal with Robin Hood himself. He comes north, but cannot find Robin. At last it is suggested that he enter the forest in disguise. The king agrees, and his party puts on the clothing of monks. Robin and his band waylay them — but eventually recognize the king and beg pardon. The king grants it.

[THE EIGHTH FIT.] The king sets out for Nottingham, bringing Robin and his band with him. There is panic in the town, but the King agrees to take Robin into his service. Robin tries to cut a great figure at court, but after a year, his money is gone and most of his men have deserted him. He asks the king's leave to visit a chapel he had built in Barnsdale. The king grudgingly gives him leave to depart for a few days. Robin returns home and takes up his life in the greenwood. Twenty-two years later, he feels old and ill, and goes to Kirklees to be bled. Instead of being cured, he is killed by the prioress and her lover Sir Roger of Doncaster. The poem concludes with a pious wish for the soul of Robin, who "dyde pore men moch god" ["did poor men much good"].

The Gest of Robin Hood: A Modern Adaptation

For those who want to understand the "Gest," but do not wish to contend with the Middle English, what follows is a rendering into Modern English. The result probably falls somewhere between a modernization and a translation. It follows the lineation of the Middle English Critical Text of the Gest of Robyn Hode given above, but with spelling modernized and archaic words replaced. Some attention has been paid to rhyme and meter, but the primary goal is to use the modern words that best fit the Middle English original. No attempt has been made to assure consistency in modernization.

In what follows, a [page number in brackets] provides a link to the page containing an explanatory note. Understand that some of the renderings are guesses, or only one of several possible meanings.

I've included summaries of each fit, expanded from the summary above. These of course are my explanatory summaries; they are not in the original prints.

THE FIRST FIT

In which we find Robin in Barnsdale with Little John, Much the Miller's Son, and Will Scathelock. He sends them out to seek a "guest." They are to bring him back to dinner.

The three outlaws spy a downtrodden knight (whom we will later learn is Sir Richard at the Lee) along the road. They bring him back to Robin, who serves him a fine meal — but then demands that the knight pay. The knight admits that he has only a few shillings. Robin orders John to search his baggage. John determines that it is true. Robin therefore asks nothing of him. Asked how he came to be so poor, the knight reveals that he has mortgaged all his lands to the Abbot of St. Mary's in order to go bail for his son, who is charged with murder. The time has come to repay the loan, and he cannot pay, and if the Abbot will not extend the loan, all the knight's lands will be lost.

Robin and his band are moved with pity. Robin offers to pay the debt, if the knight will give surety. The knight can give none except the Virgin Mary. Robin, out of his love for the Virgin, at once accepts. He gives the knight four hundred pounds, supplies other gifts at his men's urging, and offers Little John as a servant.

1 Stop and listen, gentlemen, [373]
Who are of freeborn blood;
I'll tell you of a good yeoman, [375]
His name was Robin Hood.

2 Robin was a proud outlaw, [376]
While he walked the ground;
So courteous an outlaw as he was [377]
Was never yet one found.

3 Robin stood in Barnsdale, [378]
And leanéd on a tree;
And by him there stood Little John, [380]
A good yeoman was he.

4 And so did good Scathelock, [382]
And Much, the miller's son; [383]
There was no inch of his body
But it was worth a pound. [383]

5 At that time then spoke Little John
All unto Robin Hood:
Master, if you would dine on time, [385]
It would do you much good.

6 Up then spoke good Robin; [385]
'To dine have I no lust,
Till that I have some bold baron,
Or some unknown guest. [385]

7 ['We shall await some bold abbot] [386]
That may pay for the best,
Or some knight or some squire
That dwells here in the west.' [386]

8 A faithful style had Robin then;
In the land where that they were,
Every day ere he would dine [386]
Three masses would he hear.

9 The one in worship of the Father,
Another of the Holy Ghost,
The third was of our dear Lady, [386]
That he loved the very most.

10 Robin loved our dear Lady; [387]
For fear of deadly sin, [387]
Never would he harm a company
That any woman was in. [387]

11 'Master,' then said Little John [389]
'Before we our board shall spread,
Tell us where that we shall go
And what life we shall lead.

12 'Where we shall take, where we shall leave,
Where we shall abide behind;
Where we shall rob, where we shall reave,
Where we shall beat and bind?'

13 'It matters not,' then said Robin; [389]
'We shall do well enough;
But look you do no farmer harm,
That tills with his plow.

14 'No more shall ye [rob] a good yeoman
Who walks by the green thicket;
Neither a knight nor a squire
Who would be a good fellow. [389]

15 ‘These bishops and these archbishops, [390]
Them you shall beat and bind; [391]
The high sheriff of Nottingham, [391]
Don’t let him slip your mind.’

16 ‘This word shall be kept,’ said Little John
‘And this lesson we shall fear;
It’s late in the day; God send us a guest,
So we can have our dinner!’

17 ‘Take your good bow in your hand,’ said Robin;
‘Let Much go with ye;
And so shall William Scathelock
And no man stay with me. [396]

18 ‘And walk up to the Sayles, [397]
And so to Watling Street [397]
And wait after some unknown guest,
By chance you may them meet.

19 Be he earl, or any baron, [398]
Abbot, or any knight,
Bring him to lodge to me;
His dinner shall be right.’

20 They went up to the Sayles, [399]
These yeoman all three;
They looked east, they looked west;
They might no man there see.

21 But as they looked in Barnsdale,
Down a hidden street, [399]
Then came a knight riding; [400]
Full soon they did him meet.

22 All dreary was his semblance,
And little was his pride;
His one foot in the stirrup stood,
The other waved beside.

23 His hood hung in his two eyes;
His clothes were a poor array;
A sorrier man than he was one
Rode never in summer day.

24 Little John was full courteous, [400]
And set him on his knee:
'Welcome be ye, gentle knight,
Welcome are you to me.

25 'Welcome are you to greenwood,
Gracious knight and free;
My master has waited fasting for you, Sir, [400]
All these hours three.'

26 'Who is your master?' said the knight;
John said, 'Robin Hood.'
'He is a good yeoman,' said the knight,
'Of him I'v heard much good.'

27 'I grant,' he said, 'with you to go, [400]
My brothers, together here;
My purpose was to have dined today
At Blythe or Doncaster.' [400]

28 Forth then went this gentle knight,
With a woeful grace;
The tears out of his eyes ran,
And fell down on his face.

29 They brought him to the lodge-door; [401]
Where Robin did him see,
Full courteously he took off his hood [401]
And set him on his knee.

30 'Welcome, sir knight,' then said Robin
'Welcome you are to me;
I have awaited you fasting, sir,
All these hours three.'

31 Then answered the gentle knight,
With words both fair and free,
'God save you, good Robin,
And all your company.'

32 They washed together and wiped their hands, [401]
And set to their dinner;
Bread and wine they had enough, [402]
And sweetbreads of the deer.

33 Swans and pheasants they had full good, [402]
And fowl from out the river;
Not even the smallest bird they lacked
That ever was bred on briar.

34 'Do gladly, sir knight,' said Robin;
'Thank you, sir,' said he;
'Such a dinner I have not had
For at least weekés three. [402]

35 'If I come again, Robin,
Here by this country,
As good a dinner I shall make you
As you have made for me.'

36 'Thank you, knight,' then said Robin;
'My dinner when that I have,
I was never so greedy, by dear worthy God,
My dinner for to crave.

37 'But pay ere you leave,' said Robin; [403]
'I think it only right;
It was never the custom, by dear worthy God,
A yeomen to pay for a knight.'

38 'I have nought in my coffers,' said the knight,
That I may offer for shame.'
'Little John, go look,' said Robin, [403]
'And do not fear the blame.'

39 'Tell me the truth,' then said Robin,
'So God have part of you.'
'I have but ten shillings,' said the knight,
'So God have part of me.'

40 'If you have no more,' said Robin,
'I won't take one penny;
And if you had need of any more,
More shall I lend to you.'

41 'Go now forth, Little John,
The truth tell you me; [403]
If there be only ten shillings,
Not one penny will I see.'

42 Little John spread out his mantle [403]
Full fair upon the ground,
And there he found in the knight's coffer
Exactly half a pound.

43 Little John let it lie full still, [405]
And went to his master [below];
'What tidings, John?' said Robin;
'Sir, the knight is true enough.' [405]

44 'A glass of the best wine!' said Robin,
'The knight shall begin;
A great wonder it seems to me
Your clothing is so thin.'

45 'Tell me one word,' said Robin,
'Explain it, if you please;
I think you were made a knight by force [405]
Or else of yeomanry.

46 'Or else you have been a sorry husband,
And lived in quarrel and strife;
An usurer, or a lecher,' said Robin,
'With wrong you have led your life.'

47 I am none of those,' said the knight,
'By God that made me;
An hundred winter here before [406]
My ancestors knights have been.

48 'But oft it befalls, Robin, [408]
A man may be disgraced;
Unless God that sits in heaven above
May amend his state.

49 'Within these two years, Robin,' he said,
My neighbors well it ken,
Four hundred pounds of good money [408]
Freely I had to spend.

50 'Now I have no good,' said the knight,
'God has shapéd such an end,
But my children and my wife,
Till God it may amend.'

51 ‘In what manner,’ said Robin,
Have you lost your riches?’
For my great folly,’ he said,
And for my kindness.

52 ‘I had a son, forsooth, Robin, [410]
That should have been my heir, [410]
When he was twenty winters old,
In field would joust full fair. [411]

53 ‘He slew a knight of Lancashire, [411] [412]
And a squire bold; [412]
For to save him in his plight [413]
My goods both pledged and sold.

54 ‘My lands all pledged away, Robin,
Until a certain day,
To a rich abbot hereabouts
Of Saint Mary’s Abbey.’ [413]

55 ‘What is the sum?’ said Robin;
‘Truth then tell to me.’
‘Sir,’ he said, ‘four hundred pounds; [414]
The abbot told to me.’ [414]

56 ‘Now if you lose your land,’ said Robin,
What shall become of you?’
‘Hastily I will set out,’ said the knight, [416]
Over the salty sea. [416]

57 ‘And see where Christ he lived and died, [416]
On the mount of Calvary; [416]
Farewell, friend, and have good day; [420]
It may not better be.’

58 Tears fell out of his two eyes;
He would have gone his way:
‘Farewell, friend, and have good day;
I have no more to pay.’

59 ‘Where are your friends?’ said Robin. [420]
‘Sir, never one will me know;
While I was rich enough at home
Great boast then would they blow!

60 ‘And now they run away from me, [420]
As beasts in a row;
They take no more heed of me
Than they had me never saw.’

61 For sorrow then wept Little John
Scathelock and Much as a pair; [421]
‘Fill of the best wine,’ said Robin,
For here is a simple cheer.’ [421]

62 ‘Have you any friends,’ said Robin,
Who would your guarantors be?’ [421]
‘I have none,’ then said the knight,
But God that died on a tree.’ [421]

63 ‘Forget your jokes,’ than said Robin,
‘Guarantor that is none;
Think you I will have God to lend,
Peter, Paul, or John?’ [421]

64 ‘Nay, by him that me made,
And shaped both sun and moon,
Find me a better guarantor,’ said Robin,
Or money get you none.’

65 ‘I have none other,’ said the knight,
‘The truth for to say,
But that it be our dear Lady; [421]
She failed me never ere this day.’

66 ‘By dear worthy God,’ said Robin,
You may search all England ’round,
Yet found I never to my pay
A better guarantee for a loan.

67 ‘Come now forth, Little John
And go to my treasury,
And bring me four hundred pound,
And see that well-counted it be.’ [423]

68 Forth then went Litell John
And Scathelock went before;
He counted out four hundred pound [423]
By eighteen and two score. [423]

69 ‘Is this well-counted?’ said little Much; [423]
John said, ‘What’s the matter with you?
It’s alms to help a gentle knight,
That is fallen in poverty.

70 ‘Master,’ then said Little John
‘His clothing is full thin;
You must give the knight a livery [423]
To help his body therein.

71 ‘For you have scarlet and green, master, [423]
And many a rich array;
There is no merchant in merry England [425]
So rich, I dare well say.’

72 ‘Take him three yards of every color, [423]
And look that fit it be.’
Little John took no other measure
But the length of his bow-tree. [425]

73 And of every handful that he took
He lept another feet three;
‘What devil’s draper,’ said little Much, [426]
Think you for to be?’

74 Scathelock stood full still and laughed,
And said, ‘By God Almight,
John may give him good measure,
For it costs him but light.’

75 ‘Master,’ then said Little John
To gentle Robin Hood,
‘You must give the knight a horse, [426]
To lead home all his goods.’

76 ‘Give him a gray courser,’ said Robin, [426]
And a saddle new;
He is Our Lady’s messenger;
God grant that he be true.’

77 ‘And a good palfrey,’ said Little Much, [426]
To maintain him in his right.’
‘And a pair of boots,’ said Scathelock,
‘For he is a gentle knight.’

78 What shall you give him, Little John?' said Robin
'Sir, a pair of gilt spurs set,
To pray for all this company;
God bring him out of debt.'

79 'When shall my day be?' said the knight,
Sir, if your will it be?'
'Twelve months from this day,' said Robin,
Under this greenwood tree.

80 'It were great shame,' said Robin,
A knight alone to ride,
Without squire, yeoman, or page,
To walk by his side.

81 'I shall lend you Little John, my man, [427]
For he shall be your knave,
In a yeoman's stede he may stand you
If you great need have.'

THE SECOND FIT

In which, after the knight leaves Robin, we find the abbot of St. Mary's at dinner, happily contemplating the thought that he will soon have the knight's land. He has paid the Sheriff and High Justice to attend, so as to make the transfer legal. The prior defends the knight; the abbot abuses the prior. The knight shows up in poor clothing and begs the abbot and his allies for more time. The abbot refuses. The knight produces the four hundred pounds lent him by Robin and stalks out, ruining the abbot's day; the men he has hired do nothing to help him.

Over the next year, the knight raises the money to repay Robin. He sets out to go to the meeting-place, but on the way, he comes to a local contest, at which a yeoman performs best — but is threatened by the locals. The knight saves the yeoman and gives him the prize, then continues on his way to meet Robin.

82 Now is the knight gone on his way;
This game he thought full good;
When he looked on Barnsdale
He blesséd Robin Hood.

83 And when he thought on Barnsdale,
On Scathelock, Much, and John,
He blessed them for the best company
That ever he in come.

84 Then spoke that gentle knight
To Little John he did say, [427]
Tomorrow I must to York town,
To Saint Mary's Abbey.

85 And to the abbot of that place
Four hundred pounds must pay;
Unless I be there upon this night
My land is lost for aye.

86 The abbot said to his convent,
(There he stood on ground),
'This day twelve months ago came a knight
And borrowed [many a] pound.

87 ['He borrowed full four hundred pound]
Upon all his land free;
Unless he come this very day
Disherited shall he be.'

88 ‘It’s still early,’ said the prior, [428]
‘The day is not far gone;
[Before the knight disherited be, [428]
A hundred pounds I’d lay down.] [428]

89 ‘The knight is far beyond the sea, [428]
He [can’t guard his English] rights, [428]
There he suffers hunger and cold,
And many a sorry night.

90 ‘It were great pity,’ said the prior,
So to have his land;
And ye be so light of your conscience,
You do to him much wrong.’

91 ‘You are ever in my beard,’ said the abbot,
‘By God and Saint Richard.’ [429]
With that came in a fat-headed monk, [432]
The high cellarer.

92 ‘He is dead or hanged,’ said the monk,
‘By God that bought me dear,
And we shall have to spend in this place
Four hundred pounds each year.’ [432]

93 The abbot and the high cellarer [432]
Started forth full bold,
The Justice of England [433]
The abbot there did hold.

94 The High Justice and many more
Had taken their pay so long,
Holding all the knight’s debt
To put that knight to wrong.

95 They deemed the knight very ill,
The abbot’s company:
‘Unless he come this very day
Disherited shall he be.’

96 ‘He will not come yet,’ said the Justice,
‘I dare well undertake.’
But at a sorrowful time for them all
The knight came to the gate.

97 Then bespoke that gentle knight
Unto his company, [437]
'Now put on your simple clothes [437]
That ye brought from the sea.' [437]

98 [The knight rode up to the abbey] [438]
They came to the gates anon;
The porter was ready himself,
And welcomed them everyone.

99 'Welcome, sir knight,' said the porter;
My lorde at dinner is he,
And so is many a gentle man,
For the love of thee.' [438]

100 The porter swore a full grete oath,
'By God that made me,
Here is the very handsomest horse [438]
That ever yet saw I me.' [438]

101 'Lead them into the stable,' he said,
'That eased might they be.'
'They shall not come therein,' said the knight,
'By God that died on a tree.' [421]

102 Lords were to dinner met [439]
In that abbot's hall;
The knight went forth and knelt down
And greeted them [one and all].

103 'Do gladly, sir abbot,' said the knight,
'I am come to hold my day:'
The first word the abbot spoke,
'Have you brought my pay?' [439]

104 'Not one penny,' said the knight,
'By God that makéd me.'
'You are a shrewd debtor,' said the abbot;
'Sir Justice, drink to me.'

105 'What are you doing here,' said the abbot,
'If you haven't brought your pay?'
''Fore God,' then said the knight,
'To pray for a longer day.' [439]

106 ‘Your day is broke,’ said the Justice,
‘Land get you none.’
‘Now, good sir Justice, be my friend, [439]
And guard me from my foes!’

107 ‘I am bound to the abbot,’ said the Justice,
Both with cloth and fee.’ [440]
‘Now, good sir sheriff, be my friend!’ [439]
‘Nay, ’fore God,’ said he.

108 ‘Now, good sir abbot, be my friend, [439]
For your courtesy, [377]
And hold my lands in your hand
Till I have paid the fee!

109 ‘And I will be your true servant, [439]
And truly serve thee, [440]
Till you have four hundred pounds
Of money good and free.’

110 The abbot swore a full great oath
By God that dyed on a tree, [421]
‘Get you land where you may,
But you’ll get none of me.’

111 ‘By dear worthy God,’ then said the knight,
‘That all this world wrought,
Unless I have my land again,
Full dear it shall be bought.’

112 God, that was of a maiden born, [440]
Grant us well to speed! [440]
For it is good to assay a friend
Before a man have need. [440]

113 The abbot loathingly on him did look,
And [a churl] he did him call;
‘Out,’ he said, ‘you false knight,
Speed you out of my hall!’ [441]

114 ‘You lie,’ then said the gentle knight,
‘Abbot, in your hall;
False knight was I never, [441]
By God that made us all.’

115 Up then stood that gentle knight;
To the abbot said he,
'To suffer a knight to kneel so long,
You know no courtesy. [377]

116 'In jousts and in tournament [441]
Full far then have I been,
And put myself as far in the press
As any that I have seen.'

117 'What will you give more,' said the Justice,
'If the knight shall make a release? [441]
Otherwise, I safely swear
You'll never hold your land in peace.'

118 'A hundred pound,' said the abbot;
The Justice said, 'Give him two.' [441]
'Nay, by God,' said the knight,
'Yet get ye it not so.

119 'Though you would give a thousand more,
Yet were ye never near;
Shall there never be mine heir
Abbot, justice, nor friar.' [441]

120 He went unto a board at once,
To a table round,
And there he shook out of a bag
Even four hundred pound. [442]

121 'Have here your gold, sir abbot,' said the knight, [442]
'Which that you lent to me;
Had you been courteous at my coming, [442]
Rewarded you should have been.' [442]

122 The abbot sat still, and ate no more,
For all his royal [fare]; [443]
He cast his head on his shoulder,
And fast began to stare.

123 'Give me my gold again,' said the abbot,
Sir Justice, that I gave to ye:' [443]
'Not a penny,' said the Justice,
By God that died on tree.' [421]

124 ‘Sir abbot, and you men of law,
Now I have held my day;
Now shall I have my land again, [442]
No matter what you say.’

125 The knight started out the door,
Gone was all his care,
He put on his good clothing, [444]
The other he left there.

126 He went forth singing merrily,
As men have told in tale;
His lady met him at the gate,
At home in Verysdale. [444]

127 ‘Welcome, my lord,’ said his lady;
Sir, lost is all your good?’
‘Be merry, dame,’ said the knight,
‘And pray for Robin Hood.

128 ‘That ever his soul be in bliss;
He helped me out of debt;
Had it not been for his kindness,
Beggars we were set. [445]

129 ‘My debt to the abbot is settled,
He is served of his pay;
The good yeoman lent it to me,
As I came by the way.’

130 This knight then dwelléd fair at home, [445]
The truth for to say,
Till he had got four hundred pound,
All ready for to pay.

131 He purveyed him an hundred bows [445]
The strings well-made to fight,
A hundred sheafs of arrows good,
The heads burnished full bright;

132 And every arrow an ell long, [445]
With peacock feathers for flights, [446]
Marked all with white silver; [446]
It was a lovely sight.

133 He [gathered] a hundred men [446]
Well harnessed as they went
And himself in that same seat,
And clothed in white and red. [447]

134 He bore a light lance in his hand;
A man led his baggage [and mail].
He rode with a light song
Unto Barnsdale.

135 But as he came to a bridge
There was a wrestling, [447]
[With many men gathering there]
[To win the garland of spring.]

135A [And many fought to win the prize,]
And there delayed was he,
And there were all the best yeomen
Of all the west country. [448]

136 A full fair game there was up set,
A white bull the prize [for the fight],
A great courser, with saddle and bridle,
With gold burnished full bright.

137 A pair of gloves, a red gold ring,
A pipe of wine, in good faith;
What man that performed the best, I say,
The prize should bear away.

138 There was a yeoman in that place,
And best worthy was he,
But since he was far from his home, [448]
Slain he should have been.

139 The knight had news of this yeoman,
In place where that he stood;
He said that yeoman should have no harm,
For love of Robin Hood.

140 The knight pressed into the place,
A hundred followed him in fee [448]
With bows bent and arrows sharp,
For to halt that company.

141 They pushed a path and made him room
To learn what he would say;
He took the yeoman by the hand,
And gave him all the play.

142 He gave him five marks for his win, [448]
There it lay on the mold,
And bade a cask of wine be broached,
Drink it whoever would.

143 Thus long tarried this gentle knight,
Till that play was done;
So long abode Robin fasting, [385]
Three hours after the noon.

THE THIRD FIT

In which Little John takes part in an archery contest, and wins easily. The Sheriff of Nottingham, impressed, offer to take him on as a servant. John agrees but is determine to be the worst servant the sheriff ever had. A year later, when the sheriff is out hunting, John fails to get his dinner — and attacks the butler. He then fights with the cook. The fight is a draw, and John invites the cook to join Robin's band. The cook agrees, and they head off to the greenwood after robbing the sheriff's home. The sheriff himself is tricked into Robin's lair by John, who claims to have seen a magical hart. The sheriff he is forced to spend a night in the cold with Robin's men, to eat from his own stolen plate, and to promise to be Robin's friend.

144 Stop and listen, gentlemen, [448]
All that now be here;
Of Little John, that was the knight's man,
Good mirth you now shall hear.

145 It was upon a merry day
When young men would go shoot; [449]
Little John fetched his bow anon,
And said he would them meet.

146 Three times Little John shot a bout,
And always he sliced the wand; [449]
The proud sheriff of Nottingham
By the marks he did stand.

147 The sheriff swore a full great oath,
'By him that died on a tree, [421]
This man is the best archer
That ever yet saw I me.

148 Tell me now, strong young man,
What is now your name?
In what country were you born,
And [how you so skilled became]?'

149 'In Holderness, sir, I was born, [449]
And came forth from my dame;
Men call me Reynold Greenleaf [451]
When I am at home.' [451]

150 ‘Tell me, Reynold Greenleaf, [451]
Would you dwell with me?
And every year I will you give
Twenty marks to your fee.’ [452]

151 ‘I have a master,’ said Little John
‘A courteous knight is he;
If you get leave of him,
The better may it be.’

152 The sheriff got Little John
Twelve months of the knight; [453]
Therefore he gave him right away
A good horse of great might. [453]

153 Now is Little John the sheriff’s man,
God grant us well to speed! [440]
But always thought Little John
To to requite him for his [deeds].

154 ‘Now so God me help,’ said Little John,
And by my true loyalty,
I shall be the worst servant to him
That ever yet had he.’

155 It befell upon a Wednesday
The sherif a-hunting was gone, [453]
And Little John lay in his bed,
And was forgotten at home.

156 Therefore he was fasting
Till it was past the noon;
‘Good sir steward, I pray to you,
Give me to dine,’ said Little John. [454]

157 ‘It is long for Greenleaf
Fasting thus for to be;
Therefore I pray you, sir steward,
My dinner give to me.’

158 ‘You shall never eat nor drink,’ said the steward,
‘Till my lord be come to town.’
I make my avowe to God,’ said Little John, [454]
‘I’d rather crack your crown.’

159 The butler was full uncourteous, [377]
There he stood on the floor;
He started to the buttery
And shut fast the door.

160 Little John gave the butler such a tap
His back broke nigh in two;
Though he lived a hundred winter,
The worse should he go.

161 He spurned the door with his foot;
It flew open well and fine;
And there he made great liberty,
Both of ale and of wine.

162 'Since you will not dine,' said Little John,
I shall give you to drink;
And though you live a hundred winters
On Little John you shall think.'

163 Little John ate, and Little John drank,
As long as he would;
The sheriff had in his kitchen a cook, [454]
A stout man and a bold.

164 'I make my avowe to God,' said the cook, [454]
You art a shrewd hind [454]
In any house for to dwell,
For to ask thus to dine.'

165 And there he lent Little John
Good strokés three;
'I make my avowe,' said Little John, [454]
'These strokés liked well me.'

166 'You art a bold man and a hardy,
And so think me;
And before I pass from this place
Better tested you shall be.'

167 Little John drew a full good sword,
The cook took another in hand;
They never thought to flee,
But stiffly for to stand.

168 There they fought sore together
For forty minutes and more; [454]
Neither could do the other harm
The full length of an hour. [454]

169 'I make my avowe to God,' said Little John, [454]
'And by my true loyalty,
You are one of the best swordsmen
That ever yet saw I me.

170 'Could you shoot as well with a bow,
To greenwood you should go with me,
And two times in the year your clothing [455]
Changéd it should be.

171 'And every year of Robin Hood
Twenty marks to be your fee.' [455]
'Put up your sword,' said the cook,
'And fellows we will be.'

172 Then he brought to Little John
The sweetmeats of a doe,
Good bread, and full good wine;
They ate and drank thereto.

173 And when they had drunk well,
Their troths together they plight
That they would be with Robin
That very same night.

174 Then they went to the treasure-house,
As fast as they might gone;
The locks, that were of full good steel, [455]
They broke them every one.

175 They took away the silver vessels,
And all that they might get;
Dishes, cups, and spoons,
They did not forget.

176 Also they took the good pence,
Three hundred pounds and more,
And did them straight to Robin Hood
Under the greenwood hoar. [456]

177 ‘God save you, my dear master,
And Christ save you and see.’
And then said Robin to Little John,
‘Welcome might you be.

178 ‘And also be that fair yeoman
You bring there with thee;
What tidings from Nottingham?
Little John, tell to me.’

179 ‘Well greets you the proud sheriff,
And sends you here by me
His cook and his silver vessels,
And three hundred pounds and three.’

180 ‘I make mine avowe to God,’ said Robin, [454]
‘And to the Trinity, [456]
It was never by his good will
This good is come to me.’

181 Little John there him bethought [457]
On a shrewd wile;
Five miles in the forest he ran,
There happened all his will.

182 Then he met the proud sheriff,
Hunting with hounds and horn;
Little John, who knew his courtesy, [457]
Then kneeled him before.

183 ‘God save you, my dear master,
And Christ save you and see.’
‘Reynold Greenleaf,’ said the sheriff,
Where now have you been?’

184 ‘I have been in this forest;
A fair sight I did see;
It was one of the fairest sights
That ever yet saw I me.

185 ‘Yonder I saw a right fair hart,
His color is of green; [457]
Seven score of deer in a herd
With him all remain.

186 ‘Their tines are so sharp, master,
Of sixty, and well more,
That I dared not shoot for dread [458]
Lest they would me slew.’

187 ‘I make my avowe to God,’ said the sheriff, [454]
That sight would I fain see.’ [458]
‘Come along, my dear master,
Now, and go with me.’

188 The sheriff rode, and Little John
Of foot he was full smart,
And when they came before Robin,
‘Lo, sir, here is the master hart!’ [458]

189 Still then stood the proud sheriff,
A sorry man was he;
‘Woe to you, Reynold Greenleaf, [458]
Now you’ve betrayed me!’

190 ‘I make my avowe to God,’ said Little John, [454]
Master, you are to blame;
I was mis-served of my dinner
When I was with you at home.’

191 Soon he was to supper set,
And served well with silver white,
And when the sheriff saw his vessels, [459]
For sorrow he might not eat.

192 ‘Make glad cheer,’ said Robin Hood,
‘Sheriff, for charity,
And for the love of Little John [459]
Your life is granted to you.’

193 When they had supped well,
The daylight was all gone;
Robin commanded Little John
To draw off his hose and his shoes;

194 His kirtle, and his coat of pie,
That was furred well and fine,
And give to him a green mantle,
To wrap his body therein.

195 Robin commanded his strong young men,
Under the greenwood tree,
They should lay in that same suit,
That the sheriff might them see.

196 All night lay that proud sheriff
In his breeches and in his shirt;
No wonder it was, in greenwood,
That his sides began to smart.

197 'Make glad cheer,' said Robin Hood,
'Sheriff, for charity;
For this is our order, I know,
Under the greenwood tree.'

198 'This is a harder order,' said the sheriff,
Than anchorite or friar; [459]
For all the gold in merry England
I would not longer dwell here.'

199 'A full twelve months,' said Robin,
'You shall dwell with me;
I shall teach you, proud sheriff,
An outlaw for to be.'

200 'If I be here another night,' said the sheriff,
'Robin, now pray I you,
Smite of my head rather tomorrow, [459]
And I forgive it you.'

201 'Let me go,' then said the sheriff,
'For saintly charity, [459]
And I will be the best friend
That ever yet had ye.'

202 'You shall swear me an oath,' said Robin,
On my bright brand; [459]
You shall never await me scathe,
By water or by lande.

203 'And if you find any of my men,
By night or by day
Upon your oath you shall swear
To help them that you may.'

Now has the sheriff sworn his oath, [460]
And home he soon was gone;
He was as full of greenwood
As ever was rock pile of stone. [460]

THE FOURTH FIT

Robin is still awaiting the Knight, but delayed by the wrestling tournament. While this is going on, Robin sends out his men to find another "guest." This time, they catch a monk and his company heading for London to complain about the knight. Most of the monk's company flees, but John and the others bring the monk, and his baggage, back to Robin. The monk, the High Cellarer of St. Mary's Abbey (responsible for provisions, and hence in charge of the money for them) claims to have relatively little money, but John searches the bags and finds that he has eight hundred pounds. Whereas the knight had been honored because he told the truth, the monk is punished because he lied. Robin confiscates the eight hundred pounds and sends the monk on his way. When the knight arrives to pay back the four hundred pounds, Robin declares that the Virgin Mary has already repaid the loan, and gives the knight the four hundred pound excess he took from the monk.

205 The sheriff dwelled in Nottingham;
He was fain that he was gone;
And Robin and his merry men [461]
Went to the wood anon.

206 'Can we go to dinner?' said Little John
Robin Hood said, 'Nay,
For I fear Our Lady is wroth with me,
For she sent me not my pay.' [461]

207 'Have no doubt, master,' said Little John
'The sun is not yet at rest;
For I dare say, and safely swear,
The knight you truly can trust.' [461]

208 'Take your bow in your hand,' said Robin,
'Let Much go with you, [461]
And so shall William Scathelock,
And no man abide with me.

209 'And walk up under the Sayles,
And to Watling Street [397]
And wait after some unknown guest;
By chance you may them meet.

210 'Whether he be a messenger, [462]
Or a man with [music in hand],
Of my good he shall have some,
If he be a poor man.'

211 Forth then started Little John
Half in wrath and pain,
And girded him with a full good sword,
Under a mantle of green.

212 They went up to the Sayles, [462]
These yeoman all three;
They lookéd east, they lookéd west,
They might no man see. [462]

213 But as he looked in Barnsdale
By the high way, [462]
Then they noticed two black monks, [462]
Each on a good palfrey. [463]

214 Then bespake Little John
To Much he did say,
'I dare lay my life as a pledge,
Those monks have brought our pay. [463]

215 'Make glad cheer,' said Little John
'And draw our bows of yew, [463]
And look your hearts be bold and strong,
Your strings trusty and true.

216 'The monk has two and fifty,
And seven sumpters full strong; [463]
There rides no bishop in this land
So royally, I understand.

217 'Brethern,' said Little John,
'Here are no more but we three;
Unless we bring them to dinner,
Our master dare we not see.

218 'Bend your bows,' said Little John
Make all that crowd to stand;
The foremost monk, his life and his death,
Is closéd in my hand.

219 'Abide, churl monk,' said Little John, [464]
'No farther may you [flee];
If you do, by dear worthy God,
Your death [you soon shall see].

220 ‘And evil fate on your head,’ said Little John
‘Right under your hat’s band;
For you have made our master angry,
He is fasting so long.’

221 ‘Who is your master?’ said the monk;
Little John said, ‘Robin Hood.’
‘He is a strong thief;’ said the monk,
Of him heard I never good.’ [464]

222 ‘You lie,’ then said Little John
‘And that shall rue you;
He is a yeoman of the forest [464]
To dine he does bid you.’

223 Much was ready with a bolt, [464]
[Prepared to spare none].
[He aiméd for the monkés breast],
To the ground lest he were gone.

224 Of two and fifty strong young yeoman
There abode not one,
Save a little page and a groom, [464]
To lead the sumpters with Little John.

225 They brought the monk to the lodge-door, [464]
Whether he were loth or gave leave,
For to speak with Robin Hood,
In bitterness they set their teeth.

226 Robin he cast off his hood, [465]
The monk when that he see;
The monk was not so courteous; [377]
His hood then let he be.

227 ‘He is a churl, master, by dear worthy God,’ [464]
Then said Little Johan:
‘It matters not,’ said Robin,
‘For courtesy can he none.

228 ‘How many men,’ then said Robin,
‘Had now this monk, John?’
‘Fifty and two when that we met,
But many of them be gone.’

229 ‘Let blow a horn,’ said Robin,
That fellowship we may know’;
Seven score of strong yeoman [465]
Came standing in a row.

230 And every one wore a good mantle
Of scarlet and of array; [465]
All of them came to good Robin,
To learn what he would say.

231 They made the monk to wash and wipe, [401]
And sit at his dinner,
Robin Hood and Little John
They served him as a pair.

232 ‘Do gladly, monk,’ said Robin,
‘Gramercy, sir,’ said he.
‘Where is your abbey, when ye are at home,
And to whom have you vowed?’

233 ‘Saint Mary’s Abbey,’ said the monk,
‘Though I be simple here.’
‘In what office?’ said Robin.
‘Sir, the high cellarer.’ [465]

234 ‘You are the more welcome,’ said Robin,
‘So ever I greet such as you;
Fill of the best wine,’ said Robin,
‘This monk shall drink to me.

235 ‘But I greatly marvel,’ said Robin,
‘Of all this longe day;
I fear Our Lady be wroth with me,
She sent me not my pay.’ [461]

236 ‘Have no doubt, master, said Little John,
‘Ye have no need, I say;
This monk has it brought, I dare well swear,
For he is of her abbey.’ [466]

237 ‘And she was a guarantor,’ said Robin,
Between a knight and me,
Of a little money that I him lent, [466]
Under the greenwood tree.

238 ‘And if you have that silver brought,
I pray you let me see;
And I shall help you thereafter,
If you have need to me.’

239 The monk swore a full great oath,
With a sorry cheer,
‘Of the loan you ask of
I never heard before.’ [466]

240 ‘I make my avowe to God,’ said Robin, [454]
Monk, you are to blame;
For God is held to be a righteous man, [466]
And so is his dame.

241 ‘You told with your own tongue,
You may it not deny,
How you are her servant,
And serve her every day.

242 ‘And you are made her messenger,
My money for to pay; [466]
Therefore I can thank you more
You are came at your day. [463]

243 ‘What is in your coffers?’ said Robin, [466]
Truth then tell to me.’
‘Sir,’ he said, ‘twenty marks, [466]
Also may I prosper you.’

244 ‘If there be no more,’ said Robin,
I won’t take a penny;
If you have need of any more,
Sir, more I shall lend to ye.

245 ‘And if I find more,’ said Robin,
I warn you shall it forgo;
But of your spending-silver, monk,
Of that will I take none.

246 ‘Go now forth, Little John,
And the truth tell to me;
If there be no more than twenty marks,
No penny will I see.’

247 Little John spread his mantle down, [403]
As he had done before, [467]
And counted from out of the monk's pack
Eight hundred pounds and more. [467]

248 Little John let it lie full still, [467]
And went to his master in haste;
'Sir,' he said, 'the monk is true enough,
Our Lady has doubled your cast.' [467]

249 'I make my avowe to God,' said Robin. [454]
'Monk, that told I thee:
Our Lady is the truest woman
That ever yet found I me.

250 'By dear worthy God,' said Robin,
To search all England through,
Yet found I never to my pay
A much better guarantor.

251 'Fill of the best wine, and do it drink,' said Robin,
'And greet well your lady [kind],
And if she have need to Robin Hood, [468]
A friend she shall him find.

252 'And if she needs any more silver, [468]
Come again to me,
And, by this token she has me sent,
She shall have it times three.'

253 The monk was going to London-ward, [468]
There to hold a great meet,
The knight that rode so high on horse,
To bring him under their feet.

254 'Whither be you away?' said Robin:
'Sir, to manors in this land,
To reckon with our reeves,
That have done much wrong.'

255 'Come now forth, Little John,
And harken to my tale;
A better yeomen I know none,
To learn a monk's [toll].' [468]

256 ‘How much is on that other courser?’ said Robin, [469]
‘The truth must we see:’
‘By Our Lady,’ then said the monk,
‘That were no courtesy, [469]

257 ‘To bid a man to dinner,
And then him beat and bind.’ [469]
‘It is our old manner,’ said Robin,
‘To leave but little behind.’ [469]

258 The monk took the horse with spur,
No longer would he abide:
‘Have a drink,’ then said Robin,
‘Before you further ride.’

259 ‘Nay, ’fore God,’ then said the monk,
‘I rue I came so near;
For better price I might have dined [469]
In Blythe or in Doncaster.’ [469]

260 ‘Greet well your abbot,’ said Robin,
‘And your prior, I pray,
And bid him send me such a monk
To dinner every day.’

261 Now let us let that monk be still,
And speak of that knight:
How he came to hold his day,
While it was still light.

262 He did him straight to Barnsdale,
Under the greenwood tree,
And there he found Robin Hood,
And the merry company.

263 The knight got off his good palfrey, [469]
When Robin he did see,
So courteously he did off his hood, [469]
And set him on his knee.

264 ‘God save you, Robin Hood,
And all this company.’
‘Welcome be you, gentle knight,
And right welcome to me.’

265 Then spoke him Robin Hood,
To that knight so free:
'What need drives you to greenwood? [469]
I pray you, Sir Knight, tell me.

266 'And welcome be you, gentle knight
Why have you been so long?'
'For the abbot and the high justice [470]
Would have had my land.'

267 'Do you have your land again?' said Robin;
'Truth then tell to me;'
'Yes, 'fore God,' said the knight,
'With thanks to God and thee.

268 'But take not a grief,' said the knight,
'That I have be so long;
[For as I came to greenwood
There I did tarry long. [470]

268A 'For as I passed Wentbridge] [470]
I came by a wrestling
And there I helped a poor yeoman,
With wrong was put behind.'

269 'Nay, 'fore God,' said Robin,
'Sir knight, that thank I ye;
What man helps a good yeoman,
His friend then will I be.'

270 'Have here four hundred pound,' said the knight,
'The which you lent to me;
And here is also twenty marks [470]
For your courtesy.'

271 'Nay, 'fore God,' then said Robin,
'You spend it well for aye; 470]
For Our Lady, by her cellarer
Has sent to me my pay. [470]

272 'And if I took it twice,
A shame it were to me; [470]
But truly, gentle knight,
Welcome are you to me.'

273 When Robin had told his tale,
He laughed and had good cheer;
'By my troth,' then said the knight,
'Your money is already here.'

274 'Use it well,' said Robin, [471]
'You gentle knight so free,
And welcome be you, gentle knight,
Under my tristel-tree. [456]

275 'But what shall these bows do?' said Robin,
And these arrows feathered free?'
'By God,' then said the knight,
A poor present to thee.'

276 'Come now forth, Little John,
And go to my treasury, [471]
And bring me there four hundred pounds;
The monk over-paid to me.

277 'Have here four hundred pound,
You gentle knight and true,
And buy horse and harness good,
And gild your spurs all new.

278 'And if you fail of spending-money,
Come to Robin Hood,
And by my troth you shall none fail,
As long as I have any good.

279 'And use well your four hundred pound,
Which I lent to ye,
And make thyself no more so bare,
By the counsel of me.'

280 Thus then helped him good Robin,
The knight all of this care:
God, that sits in heaven high,
Grant us well to fare!

THE FIFTH FIT [471]

In which there is another archery contest in Nottingham. This time Robin competes and wins the prize. But he and his men are recognized and forced to flee. Little John is injured in the fight. The band is forced to flee and take refuge at the castle of the knight, now revealed to be Sir Richard at the Lee.

281 Now has the knight taken his leave,
And set forth on his way;
Robin Hood and his merry men
Dwelled still full many a day.

282 Stop and listen, gentlemen, [471]
And hearken what I say,
How the proud Sheriff of Nottingham
Did cry a full fair game; [471]

283 That all the best archers of the north
Should come upon a day,
And he that shot best of all
The game should bear away.

284 'He that shoots the best of all,
Furthest fair and wide,
At a pair of fine butts,
Under the greenwood side,

285 'A right good arrow he shall have, [472]
The shaft of silver white,
The head and the feathers of rich red gold,
In England is none like.'

286 This then heard good Robin,
Under his tristel-tree;
'Make you ready, you strong young men;
That shooting will I see.

287 'Get ready, my merry young men, [472]
You shall go with me;
And I will know the sheriff's faith, [472]
To see if true he be.'

288 When they had their bows bent,
Their tackles feathered free,
Seven score of strong young men [465]
Stood by Robin's knee.

289 When they came to Nottingham,
The butts were fair and long;
Many was the bold archer
That shot with bowés strong.

290 'There shall but six shoot with me;
The others shall guard my head
And stand with [their] good bowes bent,
That I be not deceived.'

291 The fourth outlaw his bow did bend,
And that was Robin Hood,
And that beheld the proud sheriff;
There by the butt he stood.

292 Thrice Robin shot a [shot],
And always they sliced the wand, [473]
And so did good Gilbert
With the white hand. [474]

293 Little John and good Scathelock
Were archers good and free;
Little Much and good Reynold, [475]
The worst would they not be.

294 When they had shot a [shot],
These archers fair and good,
Evermore was the best,
Forsooth, Robin Hood.

295 To him was given the good arrow,
For best worthy was he;
He took the gift so courteously, [377]
To greenwood would he.

296 They cried out on Robin Hood, [476]
And great horns began to blow,
'Woe to you, treason!' said Robin, [476]
'Full evil you are to know.

297 ‘And woe to you! you proud sheriff,
Thus greeting your guest;
Otherwise you promised me
In yonder wild forest.

298 But if I had you in greenwood,
Under my tristel-tree, [456]
You should leave me a better guarantee
Than your true loyalty.’

299 Full many a bow there was bent
And arrows they let glide;
Many a kirtle there was rent,
And hurt many a side.

300 The outlaws’ shot was so stronge
That no man might [make them flee],
And the proud Sheriff’s men,
They fled away with speed.

301 Robin saw the ambush coming, [476]
In greenwood he’d rather be;
Many an arrow there was shot,
Among that company.

302 Little John was hurt full sore,
With an arrow in his knee, [476]
So he might neither walk nor ride;
It was a great pity.

303 ‘Master,’ then said Little John,
‘If ever you love me,
And for that very Lordés love
That died upon a tree, [421]

304 ‘And for the reward of my service,
That I have served ye,
Let never the proud Sheriff
Alive now find me. [476]

305 ‘But take out your brown sword, [477]
And smite all off my head,
And give me wounds deep and wide;
No life on me be left.’ [477]

306 ‘I would not that,’ said Robin,
‘John, that you were slain,
For all the gold in merry England,
Though it [were laid out plain].’

307 ‘God forbid,’ said Little Much,
‘That died on a tree, [421]
That you should, Little John,
Part our company.’

308 Up he took him on his back,
And bare him well a mile;
Many a time he laid him down,
And shot another while.

309 Then was there a fair castle, [478]
A little within the wood;
Double-ditched it was about,
And walléd, by the rood.

310 And there dwelt that gentle knight,
Sir Richard at the Lee, [478]
That Robin had lent his good,
Under the greenwood tree.

311 In he took good Robin,
And all his company;
‘Welcome be you, Robin Hood,
Welcome you are to me;

312 ‘And much thank you of your comfort,
And of your courtesy, [377]
And of your great kindness,
Under the greenwood tree.

313 ‘I love no man in all this world
So much as I do ye;
For all the proud Sheriff of Nottingham, [480]
Safe here shall you be.

314 ‘Shut the gates, and draw the bridge,
And let no man come in,
And arm you well, and make you ready,
And to the wall be gone.

315 For one thing, Robin, I you promised;
I swear by Saint Quentin, [480]
These twelve days you shall stay with me,
To sup, eat, and dine.'

316 Boards were laid, and cloths were spread, [481]
Speedily and soon;
Robin Hood and his merry men
To dinner then have gone.

THE SIXTH FIT

In which Sir Richard's castle is under siege, by the sheriff. He calls on the sheriff to consult the king. The siege is lifted, and Robin returns to the greenwood — but the sheriff then traps Sir Richard and prepares to take him away. The knight's wife appeals to Robin, who rescues Sir Richard and kills the sheriff, calling him a betrayer of the oath he earlier took to be Robin's friend. The knight, however, cannot return to his castle; he joins Robin in the greenwood.

317 Stop and listen, gentlemen, [481]
And hearken to your song;
How the proud Sheriff of Nottingham,
And men of armés strong

318 Full fast came to the high sheriff,
The country up to rout,
And they beset the knight's castle,
The wallés all about.

319 The proud Sheriff loud did cry,
And said, 'You traitor knight, [482]
You keep here the King's enemy,
Against the laws and right.'

320 'Sir, I will avow that I have done,
The deeds you here [recite],
Upon all the lands that I have,
As I am a true knight. [482]

321 'Go forth, sirs, on your way,
And do no more to me
Till you know our king's will, [483]
What he will say to thee.'

322 The Sheriff thus had his answer,
Without any hiding; [483]
Forth he went to London town
All for to tell our king.

323 There he told him of that knight,
And also of Robin Hood,
And also of the bold archers,
That were so noble and good.

324 ‘He will admit what he has done,
To maintain the outlaws strong;
He would be lord, and set you at nought, [483]
In all the north land.’

325 ‘I will be at Nottingham,’ said our king, [483]
‘Within this fortnight,
And I will take Robin Hood,
And so I will that knight.

326 ‘Go home, you proud Sheriff
And do as I bid thee;
And organize good archers enough,
Of all the wide country.’

327 The Sheriff did his leave take,
And went on his way,
And Robin Hood went to greenwood,
Upon a certain day.

328 And Little John was healed of the arrow
That was shot in his knee,
And did him straight to Robin Hood,
Under the greenwood tree.

329 Robin Hood walked in the forest,
Under the leaves green;
The proud Sheriff of Nottingham
Therefore he had great grief.

330 The sheriff there failed of Robin Hood,
He might not have his prey;
Then he awaited this gentle knight,
Both by night and day.

331 Ever he awaited this gentle knight,
Sir Richard at the Lee,
As he went hawking by the river side, [483]
And let his hawkés flee.

332 There he took this gentle knight,
With men of armés strong,
And led him home to Nottingham’s ward,
Bound both foot and hand.

333 The Sheriff swore a full great oath
By him that died on rood, [421]
He had sooner than an hundred pound
That he had Robin Hood.

334 This heard the knightés wife,
A lady fair and free;
She set her on a good palfrey,
To greenwood then rode she.

335 When she came in the forest,
Under the greenwood tree,
There she found Robin Hood,
And all his company.

336 'God save you, good Robin,
And all your company;
For our dear Lady's love, [484]
A boon grant you me.

337 'Let not my wedded lord
Shamefully slain be;
He is fast bound to Nottingham's ward,
For the love of thee.'

338 Then out spoke good Robin
To that lady free,
'What man has your lord taken?
[And where may he now be?'] [484]

339 ['The Sheriff has my lord taken,]
The truth to you I say;
He is not yet three miles
Passed upon your way.'

340 Up then started good Robin,
As man that had been mad;
'Get ready now, my merry young men,
For him that died on rood. [421]

341 'And he that this duty forsakes,
By him that died on tree, [421]
Shall he never in greenwood
The longer dwell with me.'

342 Soon there were good bows bent,
More than seven score;
Hedge nor ditch spared they none
That was them before.

343 'I make my avowe to God,' said Robin, [454]
The sheriff would I fain see;
And if I may him take,
Requited shall [I] be.'

344 And when they came to Nottingham,
They walkéd in the street;
And with the proud Sheriff, I know,
Soon then they did meet.

345 'Abide, you proud Sheriff,' he said,
'Abide, and speak with me;
Of some tidings of our king [485]
I would fain hear of thee.

346 'This seven years, by dear worthy God, [485]
I never ran so fast on foot;
I make mine avowe to God, you proud Sheriff, [454]
It is not for your good.'

347 Robin bent a full good bow,
An arrow he drew at will;
He hit so the proud Sheriff
Upon the ground he lay still.

348 And ere he might up arise, [485]
On his feet to stand,
He smote off the Sheriff's head
With his bright brand.

349 'Lie you there, you proud Sheriff,
Evil might you achieve!
There might no man to you trust
The while you were alive.'

350 His men drew out their bright swords,
That were so sharp and keen,
And laid on the Sheriff's men,
And drove them [from the scene].

351 Robin started to that knight,
And cut in two his [bonds], [485]
And took him in his hand a bow,
And bade him by him stand.

352 ‘Leave your horse behind you,
And learn for to run; [486]
You shall come with me to greenwood,
Through mire, moss, and fen.

353 ‘You shall with me to greenwood,
Without any lying,
Till that I have gotten the grace [486]
Of Edward, our comely king.’ [486]

THE SEVENTH FIT

In which King Edward decides to take matters into his own hands; he comes to Nottingham to deal with Robin Hood himself. After a year, he cannot find Robin. At last it is suggested that he enter the forest in disguise. The king agrees, and his party puts on the clothing of monks. Robin and his band waylay them — but, in the course of an archery contest in which the King gives Robin a severe blow, Robin and Sir Richard eventually recognize the king and beg pardon. The king grants it.

354 The King came to Nottingham,
With knights in great array,
For to take that gentle knight
And Robin Hood, if he may. [489]

355 He asked men of that country
After Robin Hood,
And after that gentle knight,
That was so bold and stout.

356 When they had told him the case
Our king understood their tale,
And seized in his hand [489]
The knight's landés all.

357 All the passes of Lancashire
He went both far and near,
Till he came to Plumpton Park;
And found [far too few] deer. [489]

358 There our King was wont to see
Herds many a one,
He could not find even one deer,
That bore any good horn.

359 The King was wondrous wroth at that, [492]
And swore by the Trinity, [493]
'I would I had Robin Hood,
With my eyes I might him see.

360 'And he that would smite off the knight's head,
And bring it unto me,
He shall have the knight's lands, [493]
Sir Richard at the Lee.

361 ‘To him I give it with my charter,
And seal it with my hand, [493]
To have and hold forevermore,
In all merry England.’

362 Then bespoke a fair old knight,
That was true in his faith;
‘Ah, my liege lord the King,
One word I shall you say.

363 ‘There is no man in this country
May have the knight’s lands [493]
While Robin Hood may ride or go,
And bear a bow in his hands,

364 ‘That he shall not lose his head,
That is the best ball in his hood: [493]
Give it no man, my lord the King,
That you wish any good.’

365 Half a year dwelt our comely King [493]
In Nottingham, and well more;
Could he not hear of Robin Hood,
In what country that he were.

366 But always went good Robin
By nitch; also by hill,
And always he slew the King’s deer,
And took them at his will.

367 Then bespoke a proud forester, [494]
That stood by our King’s knee:
‘If ye will see good Robin,
Ye must do after me.

368 ‘Take five of the best knights
That be in your forces,
And walk down by your abbey, [494]
And get you monk´s clothes. [494]

369 ‘And I will be your leadsman, [496]
And lead on you the way,
And before you come to Nottingham, [495]
My head then dare I lay,

370 ‘That you shall meet with good Robin,
Alive if that he be;
Before you come to Nottingham,
With eyes you shall him see.’

371 Full hastily our King prepared,
So did his knights five,
Every one of them in monk’s clothes,
And hasted them there blythe.

372 Our King was great above his cowl,
A broad hat on his crown,
Right as he were abbot-like,
They rode into the town.

373 Stiff boots our King had on,
Forsooth as I you say; [496]
He rode singing to greenwood, [496]
The company was clothed in gray. [496]

374 His pack-horse and his great sumpters
Followed our King behind,
Till they came to greenwood
A mile under the lind.

375 There they met with good Robin,
Standing on the way,
And so many a bold archer,
Forsooth as I you say. [496]

376 Robin took the King’s horse,
Hastily in that stead,
And said, ‘Sir abbot, by your leave,
A while you must abide.

377 ‘We are yeomen of this forest,
Under the greenwood tree;
We live by our King’s deer, [496]
[No other land have we.]

378 ‘And ye have churches and rents both,
And gold full great plenty;
Give us some of your spending
For holy charity.’ [497]

379 Than bespoke our comely King, [497]
At that time then said he;
'I brought no more to greenwood
But forty pounds with me.

380 I have lain at Nottingham
This fortnight with our King, [497]
And spent I have full much good,
On many a great lordling.

381 'And I have but forty pounds,
No more then have I me;
But if I had a hundred pounds,
I'd vouch a half to thee.' [497]

382 Robin took the forty pound, [497]
And parted in in half;
Half he gave his merry men, [498]
And bade them [fun to have].

383 Full courteously Robin did say;
'Sir, have this for your spending;
We shall meet another day.' [498]
'Gramercy,' then said our King.

384 'But Edward, our King, greets you well, [498]
And sent to you his seal,
And bids you come to Nottingham,
Both to meat and meal.'

385 He took out the broad [shield], [499]
And soon he let him see;
Robin knew his courtesy,
And set him on his knee.

386 'I love no man in all the world
So well as I do my King; [500]
Welcome is my lord's seal;
And monk, for your tidings,

387 'Sir abbot, for your tidings,
Today you shall dine with me,
For the love of my King,
Under my tristel-tree.' [456]

388 Forth he led our comely King,
Full fair by the hand;
Many a deer there was slain,
And [put into the pan].

389 Robin took a full great horn,
And loudly he did blow;
Seven score of strong young men [465]
Came ready on a row.

390 They all knelt on their knees,
Full fair before Robin;
The King said unto himself,
And swore by Saint Austin, [500]

391 'Here is a wondrous seemly sight;
I think, by God's pain,
His men are more at his bidding
Then my men are at mine.' [501]

392 Full quickly was their dinner made
And thereto were they gone;
They served our King with all their might,
Both Robin and Little John. [501]

393 Soon before our King was set
The fat venison,
The good white bread, the good red wine,
And then fine ale and brown.

394 'Make good cheer,' said Robin,
'Abbot, for charity;
And for this very tiding,
Blessed may you be.

395 'Now shall you see what life we lead,
Ere you hence journey;
Then you may inform our King,
When you together be.'

396 Up they started all in haste,
Their bows were smartly nocked;
Our King was never so sore aghast
He feared he would be shot.

397 Two yards there were up set,
Thereto they did gang;
By fifty paces, our King said,
The marks were set too long. [501]

398 On every side a rose-garland,[501]
They shot under the trees;
'Who so fails of the rose-garland,' said Robin,
'His gear he shall lose.

399 'And yield it to his master,
Be it never so fine;
For no man will I spare,
So drink I ale or wine:

400 'And bear a buffet on his head,
I order that all bear' —
And all that fell in Robin's lot,
He smote them wondrous sore.

401 Twice Robin shot about,
And ever he cleft the wand,
And so did good Gilbert
With the good white hand.

402 Little John and good Scathelock, [501]
For nothing would they spare;
When they failed of the garland,
Robin smote them full sore. [501]

403 At the last shot that Robin shot,
For all his [band's cheers],
Yet he failed of the garland
Three fingers and more.

404 Then up spoke good Gilbert,
And thus he did say;
'Master,' he said, 'your tackle is lost,
'Stand forth and take your pay.'

405 'If it be so,' said Robin,
That may no better be,
Sir abbot, I deliver you my arrow, [501]
I pray you, sir, serve thou me.'

406 ‘My order doesn’t allow,’ said our King,
‘Robin, by your leave,
Me to smite any good yeoman, [502]
For fear I should him grieve.’

407 ‘Smite on boldly,’ said Robin,
I give you complete leave.’
So our King, with that word,
He folded up his sleeve,

408 And such a buffet he gave Robin,
To ground he fell full near: [502]
‘I make mine avowe to God,’ said Robin, [454]
‘You are a stalwart friar.

409 ‘There is pith in your arm,’ said Robin,
‘I know you can well shoot:’
Thus our King and Robin Hood
Together then they met.

410 Robin beheld our comely King
Squarely in the face,
So did Sir Richard at the Lee,
And knelt down in that place.

411 And so did all the wild outlaws,
When they saw them kneel;
‘My lorde the King of England,
Now I know you well.’ [502]

412 ‘Mercy then, Robin,’ said our King, [503]
‘Under your tristel-tree, [456]
Of your goodness and your grace,
For my men and me!’ [503]

413 ‘Yes, ’fore God,’ said Robin,
‘And also God me save,
I ask mercy, my lord the King, [504]
And for my men I crave.’

414 ‘Yes, ’fore God,’ then said our King,
‘And thereto sent I me, [505]
With that you leave the greenwood,
And all your company;

415 ‘And come home, sir, to my court,
And there dwell with me.’
‘I make mine avowe to God,’ said Robin, [454]
‘And right so shall it be. [505]

416 ‘I will come to your court, [506]
Your service for to see,
And bring with me of my men
Seven score and three. [505]

417 ‘But if I like not your service,
I come again full soon [505]
And shoot at the dun deer,
As I was want to done.’ [506]

THE EIGHTH FIT [506]

In which the king sets out for Nottingham, bringing Robin and his band with him. There is panic in the town. The King takes Robin into his service. Robin tries to cut a great figure at court, but after a year, his money is gone and most of his men have deserted him. He asks the king's leave to visit a chapel he had built in Barnsdale. The king grudgingly gives him leave to depart for a few days. Robin returns home and takes up his life in the greenwood. Twenty-two years later, he feels old and ill, and goes to Kirklees to be bled. Instead of being cured, he is killed by the prioress and her lover Sir Roger of Doncaster. The poem concludes with a pious wish for the soul of Robin, who "dyde pore men moch god" ["did poor men much good"].

418 'Have you any green cloth,' said our King, [506]
'That you will now sell to me?'
'Yes, 'fore God,' said Robin,
'Thirty yards and three.'

419 'Robin,' said our King,
'Now pray I you,
Sell me some of that cloth,
To me and my company.'

420 'Yes, 'fore God,' then said Robin,
'Or else I were a fool;
Another day you will me clothe,
I know, against the Yule.' [506]

421 The King cast off his cowl then,
A green garment he put on, [507]
And every knight, I know,
Another had full soon.

422 When they were clothed in Lincoln green, [507]
They cast away their gray;
'Now we shall to Nottingham,'
All thus our King did say.

423 Their bows they bent, and forth they went,
Shooting [far and near],
Toward the town of Nottingham,
Outlaws as they were.

424 Our King and Robin rode together,
For sooth as I you say, [496]
And they shot pluck-buffet, [508]
As they went by the way.

425 And many a buffet our King won
Of Robin Hood that day,
And nothing spared good Robin
Our King in his pay.

426 'So God me help,' said our King,
'Your game is nought to learn;
I should not get a shot of you,
Though I shot all this year.'

427 All the people of Nottingham
They stood and beheld;
They saw nothing but mantles of green
That covered all the field.

428 Then every man to other did say,
'I fear our King be slain;
Should Robin Hood come to the town, surely
Of our lives he'll leave not one.' [511]

429 Full hastily they began to flee,
Both yeomen and knaves,
And old wives that might hardly walk,
They hoppéd on their staves.

430 The King laughed full fast, [512]
And commanded them again;
When they saw our comely King,
Indeed they were full fain.

431 They ate and drank, and made them glad,
And sang with notés high; [512]
Then bespoke our comely King
To Sir Richard at the Lee.

432 He gave him there his land again,
A good man he bade him be;
Robin thanked our comely King,
And set him on his knee.

433 When Robin had dwelled in the King's court
But twelve months and three,
He had spent a hundred pounds [512]
And all his men's fee.

434 In every place where Robin came
Ever more he laid down, [513]
Both for knights and for squires,
To get him great renown. [513]

435 By then the year was past and gone [513]
He had no man but twain,
Little John and good Scathelock; [514]
From him the others had gone.

436 Robin saw young men shoot
Full far upon a day; [514]
'Alas!' then said good Robin,
'My wealth is went away.

437 'Sometime I was an archer good,
A stout, also a strong;
I was counted the best archer [514]
That was in merry England.'

438 'Alas!' then said good Robin,
'Alas and welladay!
If I dwell longer with the King,
Sorrow will me slay.'

439 Forth then went Robin Hood
Till he came to our King:
'My lord the King of England,
Grant me my asking. [515]

440 'I made a chapel in Barnsdale, [515]
That seemly is to see,
It is of Mary Magdalene, [515]
And thereto would I be.

441 ‘I might never in this seven night
Either sleep or wink,
Neither all these seven days
Neither eat nor drink.

442 ‘I long so much for Barnsdale,
I may not be therefrom;
Barefoot and wool-clad I have vowed [516]
Thither for to go.’

443 ‘If it be so,’ than said our King,
‘It may no better be,
Seven nights I give you leave — [517]
No longer! — to dwell from me.’

444 ‘Gramercy, lord,’ then said Robin,
And set him on his knee;
He took his leave full courteously, [517]
To greenwood then went he.

445 When he came to greenwood,
In a merry morning, [517]
There he heard the notés small
Of birds merry singing. [517]

446 ‘It was long ago,’ said Robin,
‘That I was last here;
I lust a little for to shoot
At the dun deer.’

447 Robin slew a full great hart; [517]
His horn then did he blow, [517]
That all the outlaws of that forest
That horn could they know. [517]

448 And gathered them together,
As fast as they could go.
Seven score of strong young men [465]
Came ready on a row.

449 And fair did off their hoods,
And set them on their knee:
‘Welcome,’ they said, ‘our dear master, [518]
Under this greenwood tree.’

450 Robin dwelled in greenwood
Twenty years and two; [518]
All for dread of Edward our King,
Again would he not go.

451 Yet he was beguiled, I know,
Through a wicked woman, [518]
The prioress of Kirklees, [519]
That nigh was of his kin.

452 For the love of a knight,
Sir Roger of [Doncaster], [521]
That was her own special;
Full evil they did to you!

453 They took together their counsel
Robin Hood for to slay,
And how they might best do that deed,
His bane for to be. [522]

454 Than bespoke good Robin,
In place where then he stood,
Tomorrow I must to Kirklees [519]
Craftily to be let blood.' [522]

455 Sir Roger of Doncaster,
By the prioress he lay, [522]
And there they betrayed good Robin Hood [523]
Through their false play.

456 Christ have mercy on his soul,
That diéd on the rood!
For he was a good outlaw,
And did poor men much good. [523]

Commentary on the Robin Hood Legend and How It Originated

It is a rare man that can make a name for himself that lasts across the years. It is still rarer for a name to make a man. Yet that is what happened with Robin Hood.

It appears that, by 1250 at the latest, the name "Robin Hood" (or some close variant such as "Robehod" or "Rabunhod") was commonly used as a name for unapprehended prisoners — a sort of a thirteenth century "John Doe." Knight/Ohlgren, p. 21, mentions a Robert Hod in 1226 who was a fugitive and whose property was given to St. Peter's of York. Baldwin, p. 51, tells of a Robert Hood of Cirencester who committed murder no later than 1216. Holt, p. 188, lists William Lefevre of Berkshire, who was active 1261–1262, and who came to be known as "William Robehod." Baldwin, p. 52, probably following Holt, p. 187, says there was a "distinct concentration" of people with the surname "Robinhood" in southeast England in the late thirteenth century. Child noted many more people with the name during the fourteenth century.

There is no reason to think these Robin Hoods were anything but common criminals, or that their name had any deeper significance. As Pollard says on p. 187, "That there was an outlaw persona, possibly based on a person or persons who had once existed, called Robehod or variations of that name, known fairly widely by the 1260s, is not in doubt. But we do not know when or by whom stories about this persona were created, let alone when and by whom some of them were brought together as a narrative recognizably set in the early fourteenth century." What is certain is that, over the next two centuries, "Robehod" became "Robin Hood," the forest outlaw who defied the law and still managed to remain free for many years.

We can safely say that these legends had reached poetic form by 1377, when *Piers Plowman* refers to rhymes of Robin Hood.

The legend has taken many twists over the years. Presumably it started with those robbers named Robehod. But it came to stand for more. The legend seems to have been at its best in the period from perhaps 1400 to 1500, when the "Gest" and other early ballads were written. It took a severe turn for the worse when Anthony Munday wrote a series of Robin Hood plays, and in the process converted Robin to a banished nobleman, gave him a wife, and otherwise bastardized what until then had been an excellent piece of folklore. It would frankly be much better to separate the legend into at least two "medieval Robin Hood" and the "modern Robin Hood"; the latter is what people know today, even though it is less the creation of tradition than the work of people like Munday, with people like Joseph Ritson and Sir Walter Scott pulling it even further from its roots The Robin of the "Gest," however, is the medieval Robin: a yeoman, a resident of the forest, Catholic, devout, lover of the Virgin Mary, unmarried, a partisan of the King but not of his nobles or of the church hierarchy; a man who did not "rob from the rich to give to the poor" but rather tried to form alliances with those who would be "good fellows" while robbing those who would not.

We cannot hope to find the "real" Robin Hood. It is self-evident that the modern Robin Hood is basically fiction — but so is the medieval Robin Hood, even though he is a much more realistic character. Many scholars have tried to find an Original Robin over the years; none of their attempts has gained wide support, and most have convinced no one but the scholar himself. Many would agree with Mortimer-Angevin's statement (p.

23) that "The Robin Hood of later legend was not a historical figure, but there were plenty of robbers and outlaws who were genuine enough." Yes, there are plenty of things named after Robin — for instance, Wilson, p. 138, thinks the earliest significant record of Robin is the 1322 mention in the Monkbretton *Chartulary* of "The stone of Robin Hode," in Skelbroke in the West Riding of Yorkshire, near a site which later boasted a Robin Hood's Well. But the earlier records of outlaws named Robin Hood show that this stone is not a memorial of an early robber; it is a relic of a legend. Or, as Holt, p. 106, declares, "the Robin Hood place names illustrate the spread of the legend, not the doings of the outlaw."

Holt (pp. 53–61) summarizes attempts to locate the original Robin; all have defects. Although all can be made to fit some part of the legend, they require ignoring other parts. Two have concentrated on the "Gest" in particular: Joseph Hunter (whose work was known to, and sneered at by, Child) and, in the twentieth century, P. Valentine Harris, who took Hunter's work and extended it. John Bellamy also sought the "original" Robin. They located many parallels between the "Gest" and events in the reigns of Edward II (reigned 1307-1326/1327). There are enough of these that I have often tried to connect the "Gest" with those events, on the assumption that they may have provided a partial chronological frame. (Holt also took this approach, though not in as much detail.) Yet the "Gest" as we have it is clearly fifteenth century, and parts of it simply won't fit in the fourteenth century. Given the vast amount of effort expended, it seems clear that the surviving records are not sufficient to find "the" Robin Hood. Either the records are incomplete (which is possible; to show how poor our sources are for the pre-Tudor period, consider that we don't even know the names of two of King Edward I's children; Prestwich1, p. 126) or there was no one man behind the legend. The latter explanation is far more probable. The summary in Baldwin, p. 42, is probably best: "It is clearly impractical to regard the ballads as even a semi-fictionalized biography of Robin and his followers." At best, the "Gest" may testify to a source which assumes an Edwardian date — but that source is only one of several used in the "Gest."

But there is an unfairly excluded middle here. There are choices that exist between "The 'Gest' is a biography of a real person" and "The 'Gest' is entirely false." In particular, there is the possibility that the "Gest," or one of its sources, is historical fiction: That no one, not even the author, thought it entirely true, but that the author created a story about an outlaw, whom he perhaps thought real, in an historical setting. This seems the likeliest explanation to me: That the "Gest," or at least its account of Robin and the King, is historical fiction set in the reign of one of the Edwards, probably Edward II.

It seems quite possible (although by no means certain!) is that there was some early storyteller who created the first cycles of Robin Hood tales (as later printers would assemble garlands of Robin Hood ballads). The "Gest" as we have it can hardly be his work; it clearly contains bits and pieces of earlier sources, and besides, there are other Robin Hood tales from the same era which differ from it in minor ways. But the "Gest" might possibly incorporate elements of that original storyteller's account. Some of the other early ballads may also be close to this early myth-making. And for learning about the medieval Robin, the "Gest" is the single most important source — being as it is far

longer than any truly traditional British ballad on record. And, for all its inconsistencies, it was clearly carefully prepared. It is likely that the incidents it records are things the author's audience expected to hear about Robin Hood — just as someone reading about Alfred the Great expects to hear about Alfred and the Cakes, or someone reading about George Washington expects to hear about a destroyed cherry tree, even though the former is dubious and the latter definitely false.

Robin's situation in some ways resembles that of that other great name in British legend, King Arthur. There seems to have been an historical Arthur, although all we know is that he probably fought a battle against the Saxons at Mount Badon. The Welsh made him into the subject of folktale — but in that case, as perhaps was also true of Robin, a single tale-teller shaped the modern legend. In the case of the Arthurian myth, it was Geoffrey of Monmouth whose largely fictional work created the Arthur legend. In the case of the Robin Hood legend, we likely will never know who was responsible. But then, the authors of most Middle English romances are unknown. And most of them are far more fictional than the "Gest" — they not only involve non-existent characters but also magic, and non-existent places, and events that never happened. The "Gest" is fiction — but it is by no means fantastic fiction.

The Background: The Early Ballads

Although, as we have seen, we have a few early mentions of "Robehod," our earliest substantial tales of Robin are found in the ballads and traditional romances. And, in the early period, even these are few. The "Gest" is considered by Holt (Holt, pp. 15–34), following Child and others, to be one of only five fundamental pieces of the Robin Hood corpus, the others being "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" [Child 118], "Robin Hood and the Monk" [Child 119], "Robin Hood and the Potter" [Child 121], and "Robin Hood's Death" [Child 120]. And only the "Gest," the "Monk," and the "Potter" are demonstrably fifteenth century. How certain are we that these tales are early? The strength of the early datings varies. Let us consider all of these.

Robin Hood's Death [Child 120]

Robin Hood tells Little John that he is feeling ill; he will go to Kirklees to be bled. The prioress locks him up and sets out to bleed him to death. Robin, realizing that he has been betrayed, blows his horn to call for help. Little John breaks into his room, but it is too late; Robin is dying. John asks if he may destroy Kirklees. Robin denies the request; he has never hurt a woman. In some versions, he fires a last arrow and asks to be buried where it lands.

The evidence of an early date for the "Death" *as a separate ballad* is poor; the earliest known copy is from the so-called "Percy folio" of the seventeenth century. Yet the Percy Folio contains much older material, and the plot of the "Death" is clearly based on the same legend as that which underlies the ending of the "Gest": Robin Hood goes to Kirklees to be bled, and is instead murdered. So while the ballad itself may not be old, the story it contains is. And its quality is quite high, which cannot be said for most Robin Hood ballads. It is the only one of the five early ballads to have stayed in oral tradition into the modern era; it has even been found in the eastern United States!

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne [Child 118]

Little John and Robin quarrel and separate; Little John is captured after trying to stop an invasion of the forest by the Sheriff. Meanwhile, Robin meets Guy, a yeoman who is hunting him to earn a bounty; they fight, and Robin slays Guy. He then takes his clothes and horn and, using them to join the sheriff's company, rescues John.

The situation for "Guy of Gisborne" resembles that for the "Death." The earliest copy — indeed, the only copy, for "Guy," unlike the "Death," has never been found in oral tradition — is from the Percy folio. But there is a fragment of a play from *c.* 1475 which seems to be based on the same plot. On this basis Child and others consider the ballad of "Guy" to belong to the fifteenth century.

Guy, unlike most characters in the Robin Hood legend, may have had a separate existence in legend. William Dunbar's poem "Of Sir Thomas Norny," found only in the Maitland manuscript, has a stanza which reads

Was never wyld Robein under bewch
Nor yet Roger off Cleknisкleuch,
    So bauld a berne as he;
Gy off Gysburne, na Allan Bell, [should this be Adam Bell?]
Na Simonis sonnes of Quhynfell,
    At schot war never so slie. (Dunbar/Mackenzie, p. 64. Poem #35, lines 25-30)

The "Gest"

We shall speak more of the dating of the "Gest" below, but for now we can say that a copy was certainly in print by 1535, and the poem almost certainly dates from at least half a century before that.

Which brings us to the "Monk" and the "Potter."

Robin Hood and the Potter [Child 121]

Robin Hood meets a potter, who defeats him in a fight. Robin purchases the potter's pots and disguises himself as the potter. He sells pots at a discount in Nottingham, giving some to the Sheriff's wife. She invites him home. He offers to take the Sheriff to where he can meet Robin. In the greenwood, Robin robs the Sheriff, sending him home with a horse for his wife.

The manuscript of the "Potter" is dated *c*. 1500 by Child and Ohlgren (and Copland in his late sixteenth century edition of the "Gest" also printed a play which seems to have drawn on the same tradition; Dobson/Taylor, p. 208). In fact there is strong evidence that the "Potter" is somewhat older than Child's date. I am not a paleographer, but the curved subscripts of the "Potter" manuscript clearly did not come into use until the fifteenth century and continued into the sixteenth (see the samples on pp. 480–490 and 540–560 of Thompson-Paleography). Solely on the basis of the writing, a date *c*. 1500 for the manuscript (as given, e.g., by Child) seems about right.

However, it appears the sole manuscript of the Potter was owned by someone who gave the Latin version of his name as Ricardo Calle; his merchant's mark and signature ("Iste liber constat Ricardo calle") are in the manuscript.

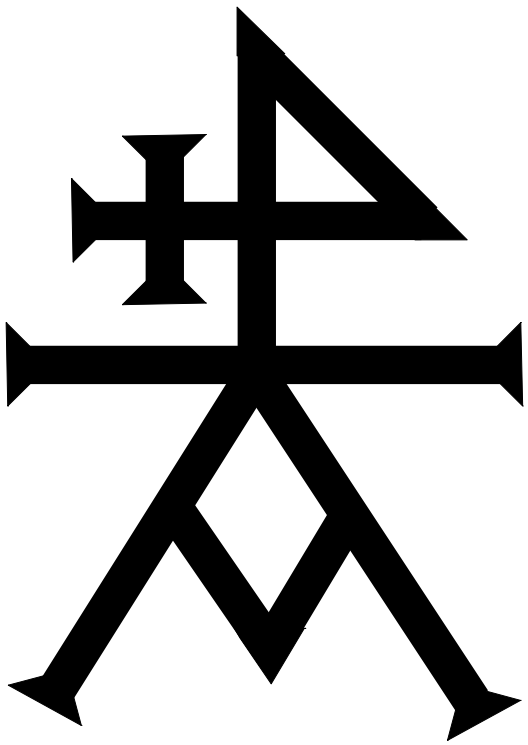


Figure 10:Merchant's Mark (idealized) of "Ricardo Calle" = Richard Calle

Obviously there could have been several Richard Calles in this period. But how many were literate? Probably only one: Richard Calle, a servant of the Pastons of Norfolk (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 21). The Pastons sometimes called him by the initials "R.C." (Paston/Davis-Moderns, p. 177), but often spell it out as "Richard Calle"; (e.g. Fenn/Ramsay, vol. I p. 109); in vol. I p. 36, we find the man himself signing his name "Richard Calle." There are quite a few letters from Calle in the Paston correspondence (e.g. Paston/Davis-Modern, p. 17=Fenn/Ramsay, Vol. II, p. 25 is a love letter to Margery Paston cited in the section The Paston Letters), plus some other letters in which he took dictation from one of the Pastons.

Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 72, suggests that Calle died some time after 1504, and conjectures that he was born around 1431. Castor, p. 215, suggest that he was in his late thirties when Margery Paston was 20 or 21, which comes to about the same date. He is first mentioned in one of the Paston letters from 1453 (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 72). Paston/Davis-Modern, p. 61 n. 3, says that he became head bailiff of the Paston lands around 1455, four years before the death of Sir John Fastolfe in 1459, which set in motion a decades-long inheritance problem involving the Pastons (and, as a result, Calle). He kept the post for at least a quarter of a century. The Pastons spent many years struggling to make good their claim to the Fastolfe inheritance (cf. Wagner, p. 196; Kendall, p. 394. According to Castor, pp. 155–156, Calle was imprisoned in 1461 as an innocent sort-of-bystander in the dispute).

In 1469, against the family's wishes, Calle married Margery, a Paston daughter. (John Paston III exploded to John Paston II, "he shall never have my good will for to make my sister to sell candle[s] and mustard at Framlingham"; Paston/Davis-Modern, p. 177=Fenn/Ramsay, vol. II, p. 24). Castor, p. 215, thinks that their anger was the result of a family newly risen in status not wishing to have any links to those of lower classes. But, given the state of the conflict between the Pastons and their neighbors, it appears Calle was vital enough to the Pastons that they did not permanently deprive him of his office even though he had stolen their daughter (Kendall, p. 400).

And while we don't know of any direct connection between Calle and Robin Hood, we do know of links between the Pastons and Robin; the earliest Robin Hood play, which parallels the story of "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" [Child 118], gives indications of being from the Paston archives, and we know that one of the Paston servants had played Robin Hood in a drama (see The "Robin Hood" letter in the appendix). Thus there is a strong Paston link to our earliest substantial Robin Hood materials. This makes it even more likely that the Calle of the manuscript is the same as the Paston retainer.

Unless the owner was Richard Calle junior, the third son of Richard Calle and Margery Paston Calle, or perhaps Richard Calle the nephew of the Paston's Richard Calle (he was the son of Richard Senior's brother John; Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 229 n. 32). This we cannot determine from either the handwriting of the manuscript or the name. But there are three indications of date in the "Potter" manuscript. One, the weakest, is the handwriting. The second is the ownership mark of Richard Calle. The third is a precise but ambiguous date reference. The manuscript refers to the "espences of fflesche at the mariage of my ladey Margaret, that sche had owt off Eynglonde."

There seem to be three royal Margarets who fit the bill. One is Margaret Tudor, the elder daughter of Henry VII of England, who was married to James IV of Scotland in 1503 (Dobson/Taylor, p. 123). Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 21, suggest that the wedding involved was that of Margaret of York, the sister of King Edward IV, who married Charles Duke of Burgundy in 1468 (Wagner, p. 160).

But the phrasing of the inscription is interesting. It sounds as if this Margaret had to be given some sort of grant to pay her expenses. This fits an earlier royal wedding, that between King Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou. Margaret brought no dowry at all, except a brief truce in the Hundred Years' War (Gillingham-Wars, p. 59), and even that was at the cost of major territorial concessions. And, because the English were broke, she had to be granted property in Lancashire to pay her expenses (Rubin, p. 231). The whole wedding was so obscure that most chroniclers didn't even know where it took place! This fits the description in the manuscript very well. So, while we cannot be sure, it seems a good bet that the "Potter" belongs to the middle of the fifteenth century. It may be the earliest Robin Hood ballad; certainly it belongs with the "Monk" and the "Gest" as a member of the earliest class.

Like the "Monk," it seems to have been an amateur copy; Mathison notes that it features an informal hand and a "high frequency of errors" (Ohlgren/Mathison, p. 190).

The language of the "Potter" is intriguing; the dialect is substantially unlike the "Gest." The "Gest" and the "Monk" have a number of parallels, linguistically and thematically; the "Potter" — even though its tale of tricking the Sheriff is very like the "Gest" — is very distinct. If we were to make a family tree of the Robin Hood legend, I would have to think the "Potter" split off from the other two at a relatively early date. Mathison's analysis seems to support this, if we assume that geographical distance correlates to distance in time; he thinks the "Monk" comes from the area around the borders of Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire (Ohlgren/Mathison, p. 199), but the "Potter" he attributes to East Anglia, perhaps on the border between Norfolk and Suffolk (and hence very close to the home of the Pastons).

Robin Hood and the Monk [Child 119]

Robin Hood decides to take mass in Nottingham. He quarrels with Little John after a shooting match, and proceeds alone. A monk betrays him to the sheriff. John and Much catch the monk, learn the story, and kill him. They trick the king into giving them his seal; they go to the sheriff and rescue Robin.

The "Monk" exists in two manuscripts, the Cambridge manuscript which is essentially complete but defaced and very difficult to read, plus a tiny fragment of 27 lines in the Bagford collection. Except for a probable fake by John Jacob Niles, it does not seem to survive outside the two medieval manuscripts.

The primary manuscript of the "Monk" is widely regarded as the oldest surviving Robin Hood piece (a statement going back at least to Gutch). But estimates of its date vary widely, and many of the estimates are dubious. Percy/Wheatley I, p. 105, date the poem (although not the manuscript) even earlier, "possibly as old as the reign of Edward II," but offers no reason for this incredibly early date. Thomas Wright also suggested this period, but Dobson/Taylor, p. 123n1, are openly contemptuous of this date. Harris, p. 30n.1, thinks the "Monk" is "of a later cycle" than the "Gest" because of

its brutal violence, but given the contents of the manuscript, this is hardly possible. The manuscript, while well-written, is much-stained and hard to read (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 31); there may be a few textual uncertainties as a result. There are many reasons to think the manuscript later than the dating of around 1450 proposed by Child.

The Cambridge manuscript which contains the "Monk," according to Opie, p. 386, is sort of a do-it-yourself minstrel kit: 135 pages not only of tales but also prayers and prophecies. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 22, declares it as "a priest's anthology of texts which served his pastoral and personal needs." There are two odd points about this suggestion. First, the book contains such items as"King Edward and the Shepherd" (a variant on "King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth" [Child 273]) and "The T[o]urnament of Tottenham," a humorous romance which Sands, p. 314, files under "Burlesque and Grotesquerie" and suggests is a spoof on chivalry. It is hard to imagine what use a priest could make of these materials. Also, that the pages of the manuscript were not ruled (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 30). The book does not appear to be the work of someone trained in a scriptorium — an argument against a clerical source.

On the other hand, there were two main scribes involved in copying the manuscript (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 29, although their assignment of scribes makes it appear that several folio were copied by a third scribe). This makes it effectively impossible to suppose that it is a single minstrel's collection of useful materials — although it is possible that a later copyist took an existing book and added the final section (which contains "Tottenham," the "Monk," and several other pieces). However, the portions copied by both scribe A and scribe B are quite diverse and appear to represent similar interests. So odds are that both halves were compiled at the same time.

The single best argument that it was written for a priest is that the manuscript contains an inscription by Gilbertus Pylkyngton (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 21). If, as they believe, this is the priest Gilbert Pilkington ordained 1465 in Lichfield, which seems reasonable, then the argument for a priestly owner is obviously very strong. I should note, however, that the inscription (given on p. 33 of Ohlgren/Matheson) appears to be a scribal colophon rather than an inscription of ownership — the formula is very close to that used at the end of Biblical manuscripts to declare the end of a book and give the scribe's name. Hartshorne, p. x, for instance, declares unequivocally that Pilkington is the scribe, not the owner (while denying the statement found in some sources that Pilkington authored the material in the manuscript). What is more, it is not unknown for such colophons to be copied verbatim from a source manuscript to a copy. Yes, including the name of the original scribe!

Odds are that Gilbert Pilkington was not famous enough to have manuscripts forged upon him — although it was once suggested, almost certainly falsely, that he was the "Wakefield Master" responsible for the famous *Second Shepherd's Play* and the Wakefield Mystery Cycle (Rose-Wakefield, pp. 13-14). Still, that leaves us with three possibilities: That Pilkington owned the manuscript, that he wrote it, or that he wrote the copy of "The Northern Passion" to which the colophon is attached and which was copied verbatim into the Cambridge manuscript. Indeed, since the "Northern Passion" is a translation of a French original, it is not impossible that Pilkington was the translator.

Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 24, 60–61, suggests that Pilkington was interested in the subject of sanctuary, which arguably is abused in the "Monk" when Robin is assaulted in the church (although Robin didn't go there to claim sanctuary).

It is possible that this is another dating clue, because in 1471 the topic of sanctuary could have become very hot. In the aftermath of the Battle of Tewkesbury, a number of Lancastrian lords fled to Tewkesbury abbey. Edward IV, who had firmly reclaimed his throne by winning at Tewkesbury, hauled them out, subjected them to brief trials, and executed them (Gillingham, p. 207). There is much disagreement as to whether Edward IV had the right to behave as he did. If Tewkesbury could be considered a sanctuary, then Edward's action was contrary to church and civil law. If this viewpoint is accepted, one might even consider the "Monk" to be a sort of allegory of Tewkesbury, only with a happy ending. Certainly the timing is about right.

Pilkington's name is one of several reasons to think the manuscript is later than the 1450 date often assigned to it. Dobson/Taylor, p. 114, declare that the cursive style used in the book "would appear to date from the period after rather than before c. 1450, the date customarily assigned to it." Hartshorne, p. xii, writing of the "Tale of King Edward and the Shepherd" in the Cambridge manuscript, says that the language may be "as old as Edward IV," who came to the throne in 1461 Of course there is very little to distinguish the language of the time of Edward IV from that of his immediate predecessors, but if the poem is truly of the time of Edward IV, then the poem can hardly have been copied before that!

The Bagford fragment (British Library, Bagford Ballads, volume 1, article 6 (C.40), a single leaf bound up with much other material) is only a single page, with 13 lines on one side, 14 on the other. It was part of Robert Harley's collection, which means that it must be older than the date when it was donated to the British Library on Harley's death (1724). In fact it is clearly much older. The only printing of the fragment that I have seen, OhlgrenMatheson-Texts, pp. 18-21, does not offer a date. My thought, looking at it, was *c.* 1500 — but all I have to go by is one black-and-white photograph. I don't know if there is a watermark on the paper, and I haven't seen the ink. My dating is thus extremely tentative. Certainly it is before 1600. But it seems equally certain that it is after 1400. Interestingly, in the margin is written "Ed[ward] II" and "Henry the Sixth." It cannot possibly date back to to the reign of Edward II, but the scribe might well have through the action took place in that reign. As for the reign of Henry VI, that might be the date it was copied, but it might also be the date of the source manuscript, or the reign in which the scribe thought it took place, or... something else. In any case, Henry VI was not finally deposed until 1471, so the Bagford copy overlaps the Cambridge manuscript's estimated date range. I don't think the fragment does anything to adjust our estimated date.

The bottom line, I think, is that we cannot assume the "Monk" is much earlier than 1475. It might be older than the "Potter," but that is not certain; in any case, the gap in dates is slight.

That gives us three poems that we can date fairly firmly before 1500: The "Gest," the "Monk," and the "Potter." The question of which is oldest is not really relevant. The only real question is whether the "Death" and "Guy" can be dated with them.

Other lists of "Early Robin Hood Ballads"

Other scholars offer a few variants on Child's list of early ballads, the usual change being to omit the "Death" — my guess would be that this is because the Percy version of that ballad is a mess and all the other copies are late. Holt, pp. 27–28, does not even acknowledge any of the recent traditional versions of the "Death," and Knight/Ohlgren look at the 1786 English Archer version (Child's B) only where the Percy text fails (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 599). Nowhere do they look at any other form of the piece, even though there are other traditional texts, including Arthur Kyle Davis's Virginia version, which appears to be a slightly damaged and mixed version of a very good original. Fortunately, since the "Death" overlaps the "Gest," its antiquity is not a major concern.

Keen's list of Robin Hood ballads of "proven early origin" (pp. 116–117) is the "Gest," the "Story of Robin Hood and the Potter," "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne," and "Robin Hood and the Monk"; he excludes the "Death." On page 123, Keen in effect appends "Robin and Gandelyn" [Child 115] to his list (while adding that it is only the skeleton of a ballad; in his view, it is a sort of proto-Robin tale). He also points out the connection of the Robin Hood corpus to "Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly" [Child 116] — a connection which is widely mentioned by those who wish to make Adam and Company the folkloric ancestors of Robin.

Ohlgren, p. 217, lists only the "Gest," the "Monk," and the "Potter" as early, seemingly based solely on external evidence: these three, and only these three, can be shown to predate 1525.

The list of early ballads in Knight/Ohlgren, not surprisingly, is similar to that in Ohlgren; they file under "Early Ballads and Tales" the "Monk," the "Potter," the "Gest," "Guy of Gisborne" — and tack on "The Tale of Gamelyn," "Robyn and Gandelyn," and "Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley."

EncycLiterature, p. 957, lists the "Gest," the "Potter," the "Monk," and "Guy of Gisborne" as the "core" of the legend.

Chambers, pp. 132–134, after a nod to "Robyn and Gandeleyn" (which on p. 131 he calls the earliest tale of Robin Hood, never mentioning that it does not use the name "Robin Hood") lists as early ballads "Guy of Gisborne," the "Monk," and the "Potter," plus perhaps the "Gest," but not the "Death"; instead he offers "Robin Hood and Friar Tuck," i.e. "Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar" [Child 123].

The dating of the "Curtal Friar" is a vexing question. The language of our surviving versions of the ballad is rather modern, but that is not an indication of date of origin. The tale as it stands features absurdly many fighters and dogs, but that may be the result of the inflation common in tradition.

The first apparent linking of the Friar and Robin Hood dates from the fragmentary play of "Robin Hood and the Sheriff" (for which see page 652), probably based on the same story as "Guy of Gisborne"; it has a reference to, and perhaps even a part for, "ffrere Tuke." Even more explicit is the play printed by Copland around 1560, often called "Robin Hood and the Friar," which has three characters: Robin, Little John, and Fryer Tucke (see the versions on pp. 286–290 of Knight/Ohlgren or pp. 210–214 of Dobson/Taylor). Both of these plays predate the earliest surviving version of the ballad of the Friar (Dobson/Taylor, p. 209).

From about the same time as the "Robin Hood and the Sheriff"play comes the "Tollet Window" — a panel window of the Morris Dances and May games, reproduced in GutchI, p. 349, and RiversideShakespeare, p. 1478, and alluded to in Dobson/Taylor, p. 62. It was thought by GutchI, p. 338, to have been painted in the time of Henry VIII (1509–1547) but based on originals from the time of Edward IV (1461–1483).



Figure 11:The Tollet Window
The bottom six panels of the window (out of twelve), based on Gutch's engraving. Maid Marian and Friar Tuck are believed to be the characters in the two bottom right panels; Robin Hood might be the man to their left or the hobby horse above.

The window shows in its bottom three panels an unidentified man, a lady (presumed to be Maid Marian), and a friar (presumed to be Friar Tuck). There is no overwhelming reason to think the leftmost figure is Robin — but neither is there any other obvious candidate for who it might be. However, RiversideShakespeare, p. 1478, believes that Robin is not the man to Marian's left but the hobby-horse above her. Obviously the presence of Robin in this context is debatable — and, hence, so is this early connection with Friar Tuck. In any case, we note that this is a century after William Langland's reference to Robin in *Piers Plowman*, and more than half a century after the Staffordshire Friar Tuck whom we will meet below.

Logic says that the Friar is not integral to the legend — if there had been a genuine cleric in Robin's band, for instance, why is he not mentioned when Robin dies? And why do we see Robin going to mass in Nottingham in the "Monk?" The Friar Tuck in the play version of "Guy of Gisborne" might be the source of, rather than inspired by, the "Curtal Friar." Certainly there is no proof, contrary to Phillips/Keatman, p. 8, that the "Curtal Friar" song itself was known to the author of the play fragment.

There isn't even absolute proof that the "Tuck" of later legend is the same as the Curtal Friar of the ballad. We are forced to admit that the data is not sufficient to reach a certain conclusion about Tuck. I personally think him a later addition; in any case, I will not base arguments on the "Curtal Friar." For how Tuck came to be associated with Robin, see the section on "Who Made Maid Marian" on page 362.

In sifting through these materials, Keen sounds a warning: "we must remember that we are not dealing with a host of different stories, but with a host of versions of the same story, and that what is significant is the similarity of tone, the forest setting, the animus against the law and its officers, the callous indifference to bloodshed, and not the differences of detail. At the same time we must remember that we are not dealing with a series of individual characters, but with a type-hero, the outlaw, who, though he may appear under more than one alias, remains essentially the same, and what is significant about him is not his name or his individual acts, but his conventional attitudes" (pp. 126–127). Although, just to show how confusing these things are, Pollard, p. 12, says that "We are not dealing with one Robin Hood character: we are dealing with several."

In any case, we will not go far wrong, if we want to consider only the medieval Robin Hood, to confine ourselves to the "Gest," the "Potter, " the "Monk," "Guy," and the "Death."

The Date of the Gest

If the "Gest" is not contemporary with the events it describes, when was it in fact written?

The dating of the poem remains a matter of controversy. GutchI, p. 81, claimed a date from the time of Chaucer, or the reign of Richard II (1377–1399) or Henry IV (1399–1413), which is not quite the same thing, but almost. Chambers, p. 134, thinks he can detect signs of fourteenth century language in the "Gest." Child rejected this but left room for a date c. 1400. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 81, reject even this — but their argument that the poem had a short life in manuscript is questionable. Ohlgren, p. 217, argues that the original was made in the reign of Henry V (1413–1422) or the first reign of Henry VI (1422–1461), but advances no direct evidence.

Even if we allow for the possibility of rewrites to modernize the language, the "Gest" is unlikely to be earlier than the fourteenth century, simply because the saga of Robin Hood seems to be exclusive to Britain. Unlike, say, the story of King Arthur, the Robin Hood tradition seems to be solely the possession of the English and English-speaking Scots (Holt, p. 114). Given that the poem is clearly the work of a professional composer (see the section on the "Gest" as a romance on page 272), this requires a date after English was reasserting itself as a language of the middle and upper classes, which can hardly be before 1300 (e.g. it was not until 1362 that a statute, in French, allowed allowed legal pleadings to be made in English; Chrimes/Brown, p. 85).

Clawson, pp. 5–6, went over Child's text of the "Gest" and counted instances of inflexional endings in *–e* and *-es*, counting 252 in all, or about one every other stanza. He argued for these as instances of fourteenth century usage (repeating the claim on p. 128), but this is indecisive. These endings certainly were still used by Chaucer, and were gone by the time of Malory (*c.* 1470), but there are a few still in Charles of Orleans, and a provincial dialect might have preserved them longer than London did. In any case, Child's text has an inconsistent textual base, and **a** and **b** differ in their use of terminal -e, so Clawson's number is dependent on the whether Child's text uses **a** or **b**.

Holt, p. 192, after mentioning Clawson's observation, points out that no study of the language has been made since Clawson's 1909 work — unfortunate, since knowledge of Middle English dialects has greatly increased since them. And inflexional *-e* alone can't prove much, since spelling can be conservative.

Vocabulary isn't really much help either. There are a few strange words in the "Gest," some of which will be mentioned in the notes, but they are no hint to date because we don't know their meaning! Nor are there many words which changed their usage between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We do note that there is no mention of the office of ranger, an office probably instituted in the early fourteenth century and known to have been in existence in 1341 (Young, p. 163) — but there is only one mention of the older office of forester ("fostere," 367.1), so that may not mean much.

Ohlgren argues that the poem, although written in Lancastrian times, was set in the reign of Edward III, because the "Gest's" king is referred to as "our comely king," a term similar to that used by Laurence Minot, *c.* 1300–1352? (see note on Stanza 353). That the poet tried to set the "Gest" in the reign of Edward III is not inherently impossible, but it is not compelling. Minot seems to have been a northerner (Kunitz/

Haycraft, p. 358), but his poems survive in only a single manuscript, so there is little reason to think he was popular outside court circles. Nor can I detect any other allusions to his work (e.g. Minot often referred to Edward III as a boar — Sisam, p. 254 — and there is no hint of that in the "Gest"). There is a common vocabulary, but that's presumably just because both authors are northern. And all the Plantagenets Edwards were tall, and both Edward II and Edward IV were considered notably handsome.

Furthermore, Edward III, once a hero-king, "outlived his own generation and his own usefulness, and became a considerable liability to the throne during his last years" (Ormrod, p. 35). Also, Edward III relied on parliament far more than earlier kings, and while he was anything but a constitutional monarch, that did mean that he had to redress grievances. And this was remembered. Why would a Robin Hood have arisen in this time? A date in the reign of Edward III is tempting to us now because (as we shall see) Langland's 1377 mention of Robin Hood is the earliest datable reference. But the elements of the poem suggest several different dates. We shall deal with these below.

In this connection we might note that Henry V (reigned 1413–1422) kept very tight reign on criminals, but his son Henry VI (1422–1461 plus 1470–1471) did not, and his government was riven by faction (Wolffe, pp. 116–117) — a good fit for an "outlaw" romance. There was also much disorder in the reign of Henry IV (1399–1413), as that king tried to hold the throne he had usurped from Richard II. Might the disorder of the one of those kings' reigns have given rise to an interest in an alternate source of order?

Holt, p. 10, observes that "Robin.... was the product of a society where the threshold which separated lawful behavior from self-help by force of arms was indistinct and easily crossed." This, of course, was true for most of the middle ages. On the other hand, it was probably never more true than in the 1440s and 1450s, as England stumbled toward the Wars of the Roses (see, e.g., Wagner, pp. 186–187, regarding the Percy-Neville feud).

Ohlgren, in his later writings, seems to have reconsidered his original dating. On p. 185 of Ohlgren/Matheson, he strongly urges a date for the poem toward the end of the Yorkist period, choosing 1483 as a somewhat arbitrary approximation. This, I think, is impossibly late, given that Ohlgren is arguing that Pynson's first printing was from around 1495. Although the primary texts of the "Gest," by de Worde and Pynson, are similar enough to have a recent common ancestor, they are also defective enough that it is hard to believe the original could be only twelve years old at the time Pynson printed it!

Keen, followed by Holt, pp. 35–36, says that the three shorter early ballads have very different "feel": The "Potter" is humorous, with little real violence but a lot of tricks. Pollard, p. 12, in fact calls Robin a "trickster" in this tale — although, in the "Gest," it really appears that Little John, not Robin, is the trickster. Nor is that the only instance of John as trickster — e.g. in "Robin Hood and Allen a Dale" [Child 138], John is impressed into the role of Bishop, and rather than asking three times whether there are objections to the marriage, he asks seven times.

The "Death," if it be granted as ancient, is of course more a tale of treachery than anything else.

By contrast, The "Monk" and "Guy," especially the latter, are very bloody; in describing the latter, Pollard (p. 12) calls Robin a "cold-blooded killer." Pollard, p. 96, counts "nine homicides in the early ballads," although on p. 97 he grants that this is far fewer than the hundreds slain in "Adam Bell" and admits that the outlaws rarely inflict injury on the victims they rob. Compare this to Fulk FitzWarin, who kills fourteen of King John's knights on their first meeting (Ohlgren, p. xix), and more thereafter.

Pollard's suggestion, on pp. 98–99, is that Robin is appropriating forms of violence allowed by the rules of chivalry — although, it should be noted, he has to take several of the ballads collectively to make this argument.

If the diverse nature of these ballads tells us anything, it is that the material of the legend is old enough that several different fifteenth century poets worked on it, each taking it in a different direction. We observe that the "Gest," although composite, does not use any elements of the "Monk," the "Potter," or "Guy," and merely uses the content, not the lyrics, of the "Death." This implies a very large amount of Robin Hood material, of which the "Gest" perhaps takes only a small subset. This would fit with a legend that had been evolving for a long time after the first "rymes of Robin Hood" mentioned in *Piers Plowman.*

I will admit that I have held very different opinions over the date of the "Gest." Any suggestion must be tentative.

The longer I worked on the "Gest," though, the less I liked early dates. Then I made the decisive realization that the text refers to "Saint Richard," and that this probably refers to Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York. Scrope died in 1405, executed by Henry IV, who would simply have gone ballistic had someone referred to Scrope as "Saint Richard." Henry V was more tolerant, but still didn't consider Scrope a saint. A date in the reign of Henry VI or after would be far easier. On the other hand, we don't want to go too much later than that, since by Tudor times the un-canonized Saint Richard was being forgotten. Also, aside from a few textually troubled references to Lancaster or Lancashire, we see no hint of the political situation of the Wars of the Roses in the "Gest." While a date very early in the reign of Edward IV (i.e. probably pre-1470) cannot absolutely be ruled out, a date in the reign of Henry VI seems much more likely, and probably before the political troubles became acute in the mid-1450s.

So my personal guess is that the poem dates from the 1440s or 1450s, with earlier in that range is more likely than later. It based on materials from the earlier fifteenth and perhaps even the late fourteenth centuries, however. And the internal historical framework, if there was one, probably points to the early fourteenth (which may, indeed, be the period when the name "Robin Hood" ceased to be that of simply a successful outlaw and became that of a courteous outlaw concerned with justice and propriety) — at least, this is the chronological frame of the last two fits. It also seems likely that there was a revision of sorts, cleaning up the northern dialect although not changing the plot, involved in preparing the song for print. Ohlgren's suggestion that the revision took place in Yorkist times is plausible, although I would prefer the period prior to 1475 to give more time for the defects or, and divergences between, the texts to crop up.

The Romance of the Gest and Its Sources

Child included the "Gest" among the ballads. As a result, it tends to be discussed as a ballad. But this is really a mistake. The "Gest" is not a ballad. It is a romance.

Of course, this mostly a matter of definition. But the similarities of the "Gest" to the romances are strong and its similarity to the common ballads slight. Dobson/Taylor, p. 8, say it is "not strictly a ballad in any conventional sense" and add on p. 10 that "the 'curteyse outlaw' of the *Gest* has many of the attributes of the well-born chivalric hero of medieval tradition. In other words the contents as well as the form of the early Robin Hood ballads reveal the strong influence upon them of the conventions of late medieval English romance."

Wilgus, p. 36, declares explicitly, "the Robin Hood ballads [combine] the features of the *chanson de geste* and the literary romance." CHEL1, p. 300, says, "Of Robin Hood [presumably the 'Gest'] and Adam Bell and many more, it is hard to say whether they are to be ranked with ballads or with romances." Clawson, p. 49, looks at the first fifteen stanzas of the "Gest," which provide a thumbnail description of Robin, and declares, "The combination of a direct opening with characteristic description is not a ballad, but an epic construction."

And yet, these scholars do not take the next step and move the "Gest" to the romance category. They probably should have. For this, a comparison of the "romance" of Gamelyn and the so-called "ballad" we call the "Gest" is instructive.

If you see "Gamelyn" and the "Gest" on a printed page, they may at first glance appear rather different (see, e.g, the version of Gamelyn on p. 194 of Knight/Ohgren, or that on p. 156 of Sands) — but this is because "Gamelyn" is printed in long lines of fourteen syllables, with each pair of lines rhyming, and is not divided into stanzas. The "Gest" is usually presented in short lines, alternating eight and six syllables, with only the alternate lines rhyming, and with stanza division. But the choice between long and short lines is arbitrary, and the stanza division found in Child does not derive from the sources — **b**, **c**, **d**, **epq**, and **f** all print it without stanza divisions, and **a** not only lacks stanza divisions, it doesn't even have line breaks in the first portion.

The similarities between the two works are many — the first long line of the "Gest" is "Lythe and listin, gentilmen That be of frebore blode"; the first line of "Gamelyn" is "Listeth and lestneth and herkneth aright" (a tag Knight/Ohlgren use to divide "Gamelyn" into fits similar to the fits of the "Gest"). And the "Gest" as printed by Knight/Ohlgren has 1824 short lines = 912 long lines; "Gamelyn" has 902 long lines in Sands, 898 long lines in Knight/Ohlgren — in other words, it is almost exactly the same length as the "Gest."

And it is the "Gest," not "Gamelyn," which does not fit its alleged category — the "Gest" is five times longer than the longest non-Robin Hood ballads in Child's collection. But if we look at the dozen romances in Sands (whose collection includes most of the best of the English romances), we find that their lengths are 1542 lines ("King Horn"), 3001 lines ("Havelok the Dane"), 810 lines ("Athelston"), 902 lines ("Gamelyn"), 580 lines ("Sir Orfeo"), 1044 lines ("Sir Launfal"), 408 lines ("Lay Le Friene"), 1131 lines ("The Squire of Low Degree"), 1083 lines ("Floris and Blancheflour"), 234 lines ("The Tournament of Tottenham"), 855 lines ("The Wedding of

Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnall," although this is damaged and must have been much longer), 660 lines ("Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle"). The median length of these dozen romances is 879 lines — just less than the length of the "Gest." The mean (average) is 1020 lines, or just more than the "Gest."

Taking the more than eighty Middle English romances I identified in Waltz-Orfeo (pp. 61-94), 32, or substantially more than a third of those to which we can assign a length, are shorter than the "Gest."

The fact that the length of the "Gest" is typical of romance does not make it a romance, of course. But the style of the "Gest" is the style of the romance: Sands, p. 1, says "Very generally, one can say that the Middle English romance is usually metrical, and the most favored prosodic convention is the iambic tetrameter couplet. The narrative concerns a series of incidents often very loosely strung together" — a description which, except for the length of the lines, perfectly fits the "Gest.'"

BaughConvention also says, p. 141, that "the weakest point in medieval romance is characterization." The characters in romance are mostly stock — gallant knights, hostile giants, beautiful princesses. The "Gest" succeeds in giving us new types, but mostly they are just sketched out. We have some insight into the behavior of Robin, John, the knight, perhaps the Sheriff, and the King, but very little of Scathelock or Much, and none at all into the others — we don't know why the Prioress of Kirklees did what she did, for instance.

Hahn, p. 10, lists as characteristics of the contents of romances "chivalry, Arthurian legend, prowess in combat, personal love, intrigue, encounters with the marvelous, and the decisive resolution of every real or personal conflict." Of these seven, the "Gest" has at least four and arguably as many as six.

Some, to be sure, demand that a romance be "concerned with love" (so Hollister, p. 275). And the "Gest" patently does not have a love interest. On the other hand, Robin's love of the Virgin Mary particularly suffuses the tale of Robin, the knight, and the abbot.

This is not to say that the "Gest" is a typical romance. It is not. A typical romance is a courtly tale, usually about knights, stressing themes such as physical prowess and loyalty to one's superiors and duties (BaughConvention, pp. 123). Mortimer-Angevin, p. 27, says that "fine sentiments of loyalty were what the aristocracy liked to hear about and be told they possessed" — in other words, loyalty tales were what they wanted in their romances. Little wonder, then, that they enjoyed tales like "Floris and Blancheflour," of a couple who were loyal even when threatened with death, or "Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnall," where Gawain marries a hag out of loyalty to Arthur — and is rewarded for it. To this compare the regular people and sad ending of the "Gest."

Ohlgren declares on p. 136 of Ohlgren/Matheson that "the creators of the early Robin Hood poems deliberately cloaked them in courtly ideology, not because of 'ideology lag' but because the poems themselves marked a stage in the dialectical process of transforming the knightly adventurer to merchant adventurer." This whole chapter of Ohlgren/Matheson — the longest in the book — is an argument that Robin should be seen as "the 'marchaunt' of Sherwood" and that the target audience is the guilds. Ohlgren offers many cases of actions taken by Robin which fit with guild practice — although almost all of them have other significance as well, and many of

them were forced on him by his outlaw status. There is nothing in Ohlgren's list which forces us to consider Robin a guildsman.

I truly don't think the "Gest" fits in a category as simple as any of the suggestions above — it is certainly true that the "Gest" is not like other romances, but it isn't like ballads, either. As Holt, p. 66, declares, "The ballads are not bred in simple fashion from the romances. Mutation has intervened."

A mutation bred perhaps of the decline of the romances. BaughDefinition, pp. 349-350, notes, "The romance in its beginning was an aristocratic type appealing to the tastes of the upper classes.... [R]omances in English are not to be expected until English begins to displace French as the language of polite society, that is, until the middle of the thirteenth century. There is only one English romance that can be dated with certainty earlier than 1250. Unfortunately by this time the romance in France, and indeed in Europe generally, had passed its prime. The great creative period of medieval romance was the twelfth century, and the beginning of the thirteenth. By the end of the latter century the type begins to deteriorate. Poets, chewing over the old straw, are driven to desperate measures to make it seem more palatable." (I don't really agree that this is a universal problem — I defy you to say that Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale" or "Wife of Bath's Tale" are chewed-over and desperate — but certainly there are plenty of feeble Middle English romances.)

The "Gest" does a more than usually thorough job of "chewing over the old straw." It takes all the standard romance themes and diverts them from the gentry to the yeomanry — perhaps because more minstrels were being forced to cater to the common people rather than the nobility (Loomis, p. ix, suggests that this is because the nobility was becoming literate — all Kings of England from at least Edward III on could read and write; Mortimer-Traitor, p. 245 notes that we have an actual signature of Edward III's from 1329 — so minstrels had to find someone still illiterate to hear their tales). Robin is not the greatest knight; he is the greatest archer. He is not loyal to his superiors; he is loyal to his fellows, as when he rescues Sir Richard from the Sheriff, or refuses to abandon Little John to be killed.

To accomplish this change of type, the "Gest" naturally must include new themes and perhaps some unusual materials, and at times the result is rather clumsy (as witness the fact that the "Gest" never figures out whether Robin is based in Barnsdale or near Nottingham, and Robin's band seems to grow exponentially from four to seven score in a very short time). But overall it does a good job of reinventing the romance form.

As an aside, we might note that the popularizing tendency in the "Gest" was an early step in what became a general trend. In 1957, Northrup Frye wrote *The Anatomy of Criticism*, in which he classified literature into "myth" (a very poor term; he means supernatural tales, not ancient traditions which explain something), "romance" (which I would summarize as tales of extraordinary but not fully divine creatures) "high mimesis (tales of exceptional men)," "low mimesis (the typical mode of modern fiction about rather ordinary people)," and "irony." (Summarized on pp. 33–34 of Frye.) Shippey, p. 211, points out perhaps the most important fact of Frye's analysis — that fiction has tended to move down the scale over the centuries.

Shippey wanted to make the point that J. R. R. Tolkien was bucking the trend (which he assuredly was), but his discussion helped me to see that the "Gest" is like Chaucer in accelerating the trend. As Chaucer took the format of the "Decameron" and changed it to a tale of ordinary people, the author of the "Gest" took the romances (most of which fit Frye's "romance" genre) and — while retaining the form — converted it to a tale of high mimesis. Robin is a great archer, and an honest judge — but there is no magic in the tale (by contrast, e.g., to Hereward the Wake, whose magical power was so great that they hired a witch against him; Alexander, p. 130; Head, p. 104), no Gawain whose courtesy overcomes all, no Roland so mighty that he can die only by blowing a horn so hard that he causes himself to suffer internal injuries!

(To be sure, Wimberly, p. 216, is convinced that there is a witch active in the Percy version of the "Death." But we can't be sure of this — the old woman is banning Robin, but we have no evidence that anyone thought she actually was a witch or had the power to make curses stick. And this element in any case is missing in the "Gest's" account of Robin's death. This seems to be the only reference in all of Wimberly of magic in the Robin Hood ballads. All the magical elements we hear about today — hobgoblins and the like — seem to be modern accretions to the legend.)

The "Gest" seems to have been written at a time when authors were experimenting with escaping the romance straightjacket. "The Tournament of Tottenham," a burlesque of the chivalrous romance, is from the same era as the "Gest," and indeed found in the same manuscript as the "Monk." What is more, its dialect, like the "Gest's," is rather northerly (Sands, pp. 314-315). Perhaps not much later is the Yorkshire pseudo-romance of "The Felon Sewe of Rokeby and the Freers of Richmond" ("The Felon Sow of Rokeby and the Friars of Richmond"; Bell, pp. 346-357), which features a battle between men and a fierce animal — but in which the animal comes off very well indeed. It seems clear that the north in the late fifteenth century was seeing some sort of revolt against the conventions of romance.

The "Gest" in fact turns a common romance trope upside-down. In romance, a knight often goes hunting in the forest (as Hahn, p. 169, points out, this is the opening action of many of the Gawain romances, and occurs even in some of the Welsh romances, such as the tale of Pwyll; Ford, p. 35). In the "Gest," a knight is *being hunted* in the forest!

This is in many ways a dramatic improvement in the romance genre; CHEL1, p. 319, complains of the general trend of the usual epics: "Sated with the sight of knights and ladies, giants and Saracens, one longs to meet an honest specimen of the citizen class, but such relief is never granted." Never granted, that is, as long as one defines the romances as containing only knights, ladies, giants, and Saracens, but not Robin Hood.

It is noteworthy that Frye, p. 34, says that the hero of a tale of high mimesis is "a leader" — of an outlaw band, say. Frye also suggests, pp. 36–37, that many tales of myth, romance, and high mimesis end with the death of the hero — and that, in the first two types, the death seems to imply the coming of a new, but probably inferior, age. This is what is called "thinning" in fantasy circles. Clute/Grant mention on p. 942 the most famous example of this: "The passing away of a higher and more intense REALITY provides a constant *leitmotif* in the immensely detailed mythology created by

J. R. R. TOLKIEN. *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955) comes at the end of aeons of slow loss." Nor did the conclusion halt the destruction; the book ends with the departure and loss of much that came before: The destruction of the Rings of Power brings the end of Sauron — but also the devastation of the power that created Rivendell and Lórien, and the passing of the Elves; it hastens the decline of the Ents and the fading of the dwarves.

Even the word "romance" itself has ceased to refer to a tale of honor and wonder and become simply a word for a love affair.

The Norse gods fail, and fall, at Ragnarok. Brien Boru wins at Clontarf, but dies in the battle. The death of Beowulf ends the heroic age of the Geats and leaves them exposed to outside attack. The death of Arthur means the end of Celtic Britain. The books about them end in elegy.

The tale of Robin ends in death and elegy, but the world is not changed. Not only did the prioress kill him — the final triumph of the organized church over its tormenter — but, according to the "Death," she is not even slain in her turn. In the long run, Robin has made little difference. This is by clear contrast with many of the (alleged) source romances.

The romances most often connected with the tales in the "Gest," and cited as its sources, are the stories of Gamelyn, Hereward the Wake, Fulk FitzWarin, and Eustace the Monk. All have parallels to Robin's tale which are worth investigating.

Hereward the Wake

Hereward "the Wake" — whom Toynbee, very fancifully, compared to Giuseppe Garibaldi (Head, p. 58) — lived around the time of the Norman Conquest, although "Nothing certain is known of [his] background or of his early life" (Linklater, p. 238). Supposedly he was rebellious from his youth (Head, p. 38), was condemned by Edward the Confessor at about the age of 18, perhaps around 1057 (Head, p. 58), and was an outlaw even before the Normans came (Cawthorne, p. 136) — advantageous from the standpoint of the tale, because he was untainted by the conquest (Ohlgren, p. 17). In 1070 he apparently joined a Danish invasion in an attempt to regain lands he thought were his.

When the Danish invasion failed, he based himself on the easily-defended island of Ely until the monks of the island betrayed him (Baldwin, p. 35; Ohlgren, p. 13; Head, p. 107fff.). He reportedly escaped when the rebels were dispersed, but is not heard from again in sober history (Linklater, p. 239). As Douglas, p. 222, puts it, "Hereward, having escaped with difficulty, passed out of history into legend.'

StentonEtAl, p. 106, notes that "Hereward and a few companions cut their way out to further adventures, in which Normans and English came before long to find a common interest." But we cannot really tell which of these are based on actual events and which are pure fiction; Hereward's *Gesta* is very bad history at its best (e.g. it never mentions the Danes who helped Hereward establish his base at Ely; Ohlgren, p. 15), and mixed with that bad history are many items which, flatly, are not history at all — if the exploits described in Cawthorne, pp. 137–145, were even partly true, we would have learned of it from the chronicles!

Hereward's *Gesta* claims to be based partly on materials left by his priest Leofric (Ohlgren, p. 14; Wilson, pp. 124–125 says that it does appear that there were two sources used; Head, p. 25, seems to think that some of the inaccuracy derives from the fact that two accounts of the siege of the island of Ely were treated as two different sieges). Apart from that we have little information about him. The fourteenth century Croyland Chronicle says that women mentioned Hereward in their songs and dances (Chambers, p. 73). Knight/Ohlgren, p. 633, quote Charles Plummer's 1889 quip that Hereward had a brief life in history and a long one in romance. Indeed, Charles Kingsley wrote about him in the nineteenth century (Benet, p. 498).

It is possible that Hereward was eventually reconciled with William (Ohlgren, p. 13), but clear proof is lacking; the hypothesis is based on a short reference in Gaimar plus some references to Herewards (not necessarily *the same* Hereward) in Domesday Book (e.g. a Hereward held property in Marston Jabbett in Warwickshire at the time of Domesday, and had held it in the reign of Edward the Confessor also; Domesday, p. 658; there was also a Hereward with land in Lincolnshire; Holt, p. 63). Head, pp. 28–29, lists lands held by a Hereward whom he considers to be *the* Hereward.

Hereward's saga contains two close parallels to Robin Hood tales, one in which he disguised himself as a potter, as in the "Potter" (as well as in, e.g., "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford" [Child 144]), and one in which he fought with a cook, as Little John fights the Sheriff's cook in the "Gest" (Baldwin, p. 36). Hereward also quarrels with an abbot, although Ohlgren, p. 16, notes that in this saga abbots are not all wicked; foreign abbots are distinguished from native. We also see an instance where he finds himself in trouble when his sword breaks (Cawthorne, p. 148), which resembles what happens to Robin in the "Monk." We also see Hereward, for revenge, decapitating a man after he is dead (Head, p. 69), which resembles the way Robin treated the Sheriff of Nottingham in the "Gest" (Stanza 348).

There is also a legend that Hereward was murdered by jealous knights (Hole, p. 129) as Robin was murdered by Roger of Doncaster. But this isn't even the only legend about Hereward's end; we can surely discount it. In any case, the story is very unlike Robin's; Hereward supposedly took fifteen men with him to his death (Hole, p. 136).

There are other differences between Robin and Hereward. Hereward's reconciliation with the King is very distinct from Robin's; as best we can tell, Robin was always loyal, whereas Hereward was supposedly exiled by Edward the Confessor (Head, p. 40) and rebelled against William the Conqueror. Thus Hereward had a genuine quarrel with two kings; Robin had none. Also, Hereward had a wife (Head, p. 67); Robin, in the "Gest," clearly has none.

It's possible that we see even older folklore in the story of Hereward: when Hereward was holding out on the island of Ely, William the Conqueror supposedly built a causeway out to the island to attack him (Cawthorne, p. 134). This is reminiscent of the well-known story of how Alexander the Great took Tyre fourteen centuries earlier.

Ohlgren, p. 17, observes that the saga of Hereward is too early to really partake of the greenwood legend, but some of its elements may have contributed to the eventual formation of that legend.

The story of Hereward survives in only one copy (Ohlgren, p. 13).

Eustace the Monk

Although the story of Eustace the Monk is often compared to that of Robin Hood, its parallels in the "Gest" are primarily to the story of Little John taking service with the Sheriff of Nottingham in Fit 3. Eustace, like John, quarreled with his master (in this case, the Count of Bolougne) and turned outlaw, taking particular care to hunt the Count (Cawthorne, p. 120). In this, he was noteworthy for his use of disguise, as well as for playing the "Truth or Consequences" game with those he robbed (Cawthorne, p. 125).

In addition, Eustace eventually went to sea as a pirate. I wonder if this part of his story didn't inspire an equivalent story about Robin, which became "The Noble Fisherman, or, Robin Hood's Preferment" [Child 148]. Eustace was in fact a servant for a time of King John, "and well known in the streets of Winchelsea" (Powicke, p. 10). But he then went to serve the French, and was a vital supporter of the French invasion of England at the end of John's reign.

Ironically, the man who is said to have tricked so many opponents finally succumbed to a trick; at a sea battle in 1217, an English ship seemed to be falling behind their fleet, and the lords Eustace was carrying in a last bid to reinforce the rapidly-failing French invasion of England insisted on attacking it. The English threw powdered lime into the wind and incapacitated the French. Eustace's ship was captured. Although the nobles aboard were ransomed, Eustace was executed on the spot (Powicke, pp. 12–13; Cawthorne, p. 122).

Although Eustace's robberies are somewhat like Robin's, the differences in his story are very great. Whereas Robin served only himself, Eustace's services as a mercenary were available to the highest bidder (DictPirates, p. 115). His success is attributed to necromancy (Ohlgren, p. xviii), which Robin of course never would have considered. Eustace was executed as a pirate. And he felt no qualms about exposing innocent bystanders to questioning and even beatings by the authorities (Cawthorne, p. 127). Plus his use of disguise was far more complete than Robin's — he even disguised himself as a woman and lured a man with sex (Cawthorne, pp. 128–129).

It strikes me as highly ironic that the story of Robin, who detested monks and abbots, would be based on the story of Eustace, who was a Benedictine monk (Cawthorne, p. 121), although one who had little use for his vows.

There is only one copy of the story of Eustace, and that is in Old French (Ohlgren, p. 61). This reduces the odds that it was a direct source of the Robin Hood legend, although romances did get translated on occasion, especially from French to English (perhaps a quarter of the known English romances are translations from the French).

Fulk FitzWarin

Fulk FitzWarin (sometimes FitzWarrene or Fitz Waryn) was the name of three post-conquest barons. The romance of "Fouke le Fitz Waryn" (found in translation in Knight/Ohlgren and Ohlgren) is about the third of these, although it is guilty of conflating the careers of the first two (Cawthorne, pp. 96–97). Fulk the third was a rebel against King John, and became the subject of a romance similar in theme to the tale of Robin's forgiveness by the King — although with many unrelated elements (such as a tale that Fulk and John grew up together, but quarreled over a game of chess, causing

John to hate Fulk; this is perfectly reasonable, since it fits John's youthful temper and we know little else of the prince's childhood, but completely unverifiable; Warren-John, pp. 96–97).

Interestingly, Fulk, like the later stories about Robin, has a giant sidekick — in this case, his brother Alan (Cawthorne, p. 101). We should note, however, that Little John in the "Gest" does not seem to be unusually tall.

I also note with interest that the tale of Fulk contains an incident in which the outnumbered FitzWarins fight off their attackers, killing many and leaving only one whole (Cawthorne, p. 99). The similarity to ballads from "Earl Brand" [Child 7] to "Johnie Cock" [Child 114] to "The Dowie Dens o Yarrow" [Child 214] will be obvious to ballad scholars.

Keen hints that the tale of Robin, which probably started as a story of one of the Kings Edward, was attracted to the Richard I/John period by the similarity to the plot of Fulk. On the other hand, Fulk's tale is full of supernatural elements (Keen, p. 39; Ohlgren, p. xix and Simpson, pp. 56–57, point out conflicts with giants, serpents, and dragons); Robin's tale has none. (To be sure, Hole, p. 100, notes a few late mentions of natural features which Robin Hood supposedly marked, but these have no part in the early legend. Similarly, Wells, p. 17, links Robin with the "hob-thrush," a sort of Yorkshire brownie, but this seems based only on the alleged kinship of the names "Hob" and "Robin.") And Fulk supposedly still has descendants today, who use a dragon crest (Simpson, p. 57).

Phillips/Keatman, pp. 121–122, imply that the tale of Fulk is composite — one part greenwood tale, one part wonder tale. They argue on p. 124 that the wonder tale is almost identical to some versions of the Arthurian legend. The other half, the greenwood tale, is the one that has contributed to the Robin legend. While not entirely convincing to me, this bifurcation obviously suggests that neither tale actually contained Fulk — or Robin! — in its original form (so Phillips/Keatman, p. 130, and the same point occurred to me as soon as I read their claim of two sources in Fulk's tale).

In light of the claim, made below, that the "Gest" is set in the reign of Edward II, it is interesting to note that the prose tale of Fulk is believed to have been set down around 1325 (Phillips/Keatman, p. 112) — in other words, in the reign of Edward II.

Fulk's tale also has a number of elements which are historically impossible (e.g. the great battle with King John described on p. 106 of Cawthorne). If the compiler of the "Gest" knew the Fulk legend we are forced to conclude that either the compiler of the "Gest" knew a version of Fulk's tale which omits all the falderol, or he ruthlessly cut it out. Although any conclusion must be tentative because we know so little of the historical Fulk, I would be more inclined to see Fulk's tale as deriving from the same elements as Robin's but elaborated in a different direction — especially since (as Keen admits on p. 50) Fulk was a nobleman seeking noble position; Robin was a yeoman trying to survive a justice system which did not respect him.

As Cawthorne says on p. 120, "Certainly Robin of Locksley, the dispossessed earl of Huntington, bears a closer similarity to Fulk FitzWarren than he does to the Robin Hood of the ballads."

Like the tales of Hereward and Eustace, there is only one copy of the romance of Fulk, British Library, Royal MS. 12.C.XII (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 687), which is in Anglo-Norman although we have a partial summary of a Middle English version (Ohlgren, p. 106). The manuscript, which is certainly not the original, was written in the first half of the thirteenth century, making it clearly older than the "Gest" — and hence a possible source if someone produced an English version now lost.

Gamelyn

We've already mentioned the romance of Gamelyn, which is perhaps from around 1350 (Holt, p. 71). Pollard, pp. 13–14, suggests that the Tale of Gamelyn is a sort of a link between the Robin Hood tales and the aristocratic romances; CHEL1, p. 298, offers it as an example of native English romance without French influence and calls it "As You Like It" without Rosalind or Celia, adding that Thomas Lodge used it as the basis of a novel.

Gamelyn is the youngest of three brothers. When his father dies, the oldest brother seeks to dispossess Gamelyn, who is still a minor. Gamelyn rebels and flees to the greenwood with the sheriff in pursuit. His brother then becomes sheriff, and Gamelyn submits but is condemned along with the middle brother. Gamelyn and his outlaws then free the middle brother, kill the eldest, and are pardoned by the King, who appoints Gamelyn a royal official (Baldwin, p. 178).

"Gamelyn" is not only similar to Shakespeare's "As You Like It," it is believed that it helped inspire that play (at several removes). The parallels to the Robin Hood story are obvious; Gamelyn kills the sheriff (in this case, his brother), and he is pardoned by the King — but "Gamelyn" is largely about family dynamics (a topic of intense interest to the aristocracy), not outlawry. Plus the tale of Gamelyn is extremely violent — at least as violent as the "Monk" or "Guy of Gisborne," and over a longer period; it is much more bloody than the "Gest," where Robin only uses actual violence when attacked by the sheriff.

There are textual similarities between the "Gest" and "Gamelyn"; both are in rhymed couplets (although Gamelyn has shorter lines; it almost seems to hint at Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse) — and, as mentioned above, they open with similar stereotyped invocations (see the first line in Sands, p. 156).

It is far from clear how popular "Gamelyn" actually was; it owes its survival to an odd chance. In the *Canterbury Tales,* the Cook's Tale is only a stub; either Chaucer never finished it (by far the more likely explanation) or his intended tale has been lost. Some scribe, sensing a need, plugged in the Tale of Gamelyn (Chaucer/Benson, p. 1125, although Sands, p. 154, and CHEL1, p. 298, mention with approval Skeat's suggestion that Chaucer might have planned to convert it into a tale for the Yeoman; perhaps it was among his papers; Gamelyn/Skeat, pp. xiv-xv). This means we have dozens of copies of Gamelyn, but odds are that every copy derives from the original manuscript copied into the *Canterbury Tales.*

In "Robin Hood Newly Revived" [Child 128], Robin welcomes Young Gamwell into his band; Sands, p. 155, suggests that Gamwell is Gandelyn.

Some Other Likely Sources and Influences

The Gawain Legend

The four romances mentioned above — Hereward, Fulk, Eustace, and Gamelyn — are linked to the "Gest" by almost all scholars. But these are not the only romances which share elements with the "Gest." We should also note several links between the "Gest" and the Gawain legend. Child's "A" version of the late ballad "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine' [Child 145] goes so far as to state that Sir Richard Lee comes from "Gawain's blood" (stanza 22; cf. Holt, p. 164), but this is too recent to have any value.

The list of common elements the the "Gest" and the tales of Gawain is long, although none of the parallels are close. Robin's refusal to eat dinner before something interesting happens (Stanzas 6–7) is also found in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (where it is Arthur who wants to see something interesting) as well as the fragmentary romance of *The Turk and Gawain* (Hahn, p. 355, note to l. 169). Gawain, like Robin, has a strong reliance on the Virgin Mary (Tolkien/Gordon, p. xxi.) *The Turk and Gawain* hints at a hitting game such as the "pluck-buffet" of Stanza 424. And Hahn, p. 26, notes that more than half his Gawain tales "begin with a forest episode." Hahn suggests that these were interludes to, in effect, let the audience settle into their seats — but it would be no great stretch to create a romance which never left the greenwood.

Hall, pp. 12–13, observes that, although the Gawain tales seem mostly to have been committed to writing in the fifteenth century, the equipment they describe is mostly fourteenth century — the era of the three Edwards, and hence the presumed era of the "Gest."

In referring to the Gawain romances, Hall, p. 10, says that four of his seven romances are in Scottish dialect, and five of seven are set in Inglewood or Carlisle. Hahn, whose definition of a "Gawain romance" is distinctly broader, says on p. 4 n. 6 that seven of his Gawain works are set in Carlisle but that only five other Middle English romances, all with some Arthurian links, even mention Carlisle! And Gawain was said to be the son of the King of Orkney, who was also Lord of Lothian near the Anglo-Scottish border (Hahn, p. 4). Was Gawain some sort of local hero in Cumbria or Northumbria? Obviously this is close to Robin Hood's haunts.

Child called Robin Hood "a popular Gawain" because of his courtesy (a remark which seems to have been noticed only by Gummere, p. 314), but he did not pursue the matter. Still, courtesy is a key component of both the Gawain cycle and of the "Gest" (see the note on Stanza 2). It seems reasonable to assume that the author of the "Gest" was familiar with the various Gawain stories floating around the north of England, and that they influenced his writing.

Clawson, in fact, compares the compiler of the "Gest" to the Gawain/Pearl poet (Clawson, p. 128). This is about like comparing Spike Jones to Stephen Foster — too absurd even for consideration. But it is another token of the similarities in genre.

And the "Gest" is somewhat like the Gawain legend in its ending. The other tales — Hereward and Gamelyn and such — mostly end happily, as is proper in a romance. But while most of the Gawain romances end well in the short term, their listeners would all have known that, in the end, the Arthurian universe will be destroyed. And, at the end

of the "Gest," Robin Hood dies — not a heroic death, but a death by treachery, at the hands of his kin, as Arthur was betrayed by his near kin Mordred.

The Bible and the Miracles of the Virgin

David: The Outlaw Who Became King and other Biblical Footnotes

The analogies between Robin and the Biblical King David perhaps don't get enough attention from folklorists. Like Robin, David was regarded as a mannered outlaw — after he and Saul quarreled (the Bible claims because Saul was tried to kill David), David turned outlaw and formed a band of followers — though these eventually joined the Philistine army. According to the Bible, David never raided Israel, but only Geshurites and Girzites and Amalekites and other innocent bystanders (1 Samuel 27:8–10, although few Biblical scholars actually believe this — the statement is thought to be pro-Davidic propaganda). The Biblical account, written by David's propaganda department, claims (probably falsely) that he remained loyal to his king, having refrained from killing Saul when he had the chance (there are two versions of this, in 1 Samuel 24 and 26). Like Robin, David was famous for piety. Even the story of Nabal, Abigail, and David (1 Samuel 25) in which David forms a protection racket to demand money in return for not being raided, has some parallels to the tale in the "Potter," although the differences are too great for them to be truly considered related (the similarity lies in the fact that, in the "Potter," Robin gets along well the the Sheriff's wife and is relatively merciful to the Sheriff because of her; in the tale of Nabal, it is because of Abigail, whom he later marries, that David refrains from destroying Nabal's property).

We should remember that, although literacy was becoming more widespread in the time the "Gest" was written, for many centuries the only people who could read and write were clergy, and what they read was mostly the (Latin Vulgate) Bible. The authors who wrote the sources of the "Gest" would certainly have a lot of Biblical stories and quotations stored up in their heads, because those were the sorts of tales they heard in church.

The history of David perhaps affected the image of Robin as a mannered outlaw, but it doesn't really affect the plot.

Another Biblical motif that shows up in the story of the Knight is "The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant," Matthew 18:23-35. Just as, in stanza 105, the Knight "pray[s] of a lenger day," and then begs of the justice, sheriff, and abbot to be his friend, we read in Matthew 18:26 that "the slave fell on his knees before [his master], saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." Of course, the ending is different: In the "Gest," the Knight gets no mercy but is able to pay; in Matthew, the slave receives mercy — until he proves unworthy of it.

Miracles of the Virgin

The other religious element underlying the "Gest" is the form known as the "Miracles of the Virgin," and this form may be present in the "Gest."

Mary was the "mother of mercy," with tremendous miracles being asked of her (Southern, p. 305). The best-known English example of this genre is Chaucer's Prioress's Tale (Burrow/Turville-Petre, p. 306). In this, a young boy neglects his other studies to

give all his attention to learning a song of the Virgin Mary, which he is able to sing beautifully. A group of Jews, despising the singing, cut his throat and throw his body away. But — here is the miracle — even having taken a death wound, the boy continues to sing the Virgin's song. As a result, he is found, the Jews are punished, and the boy finally given release and taken to heaven. (The ballad of "Sir Hugh, or, The Jew's Daughter" [Child 155] is to some extent related to this, but it has been "Protestant-ized" so that the Miracle of the Virgin as such is omitted. There are many other versions of the tale as well, often called something like "The Child Slain by Jews"; Wells, p. 166).

(Another of Chaucer's tales, the Man of Law's Tale of Constance the accused queen, is thematically similar to another Miracle of the Virgin, "The Empress of Rome." In that tale, the Empress is accused of murdering the children she was caring for; Boyd, pp. 126-127. The two differ substantially in detail, however, and Chaucer's tale is not a Miracle of the Virgin. Thematically related to the tale of Constance is the romance of Emare, a calumniated queen associated with semi-magical events. Both Wells, p. 131, and Speirs, pp. 157-160, suggest a fairy motif — Speirs thinks that in the original tale Emare was the half-fairy daughter of a fairy mother. But much of the action is also reminiscent of the Virgin's mercy miracles, e.g. when Emare is put in a rudderless boat but somehow manages to land somewhere safe.)

Boyd either prints or summarizes all English Miracles of the Virgin. There are dozens, although many of them are variations of each other (Boyd, p. 4). "All the Middle English miracles of the Virgin that have any literary significance are in verse" (Boyd, p. 9), but the stories are often not very well-told and the poetry is often poor; the one major exception is, of course, the Prioress's Tale, which Boyd, p. 9, calls it the outstanding example of the genre "in English, perhaps in any language." In most of the Miracles, the piety is real, but the presentation is generally inferior.

Wells, p. 168, says of the Miracles in the Vernon Manuscript, which are pretty typical, that "Each piece concludes with exhortation to the service of Mary, who will ever care for her servants. The genuine devoutness and earnestness of the writer makes him naively obtuse to the grotesqueness and incongruity between incident and attitude, in the tales. The pieces are full of that simple devotion to the lovely and potent protector, and of confidence in her loving grace, that are among the most grateful features of medieval literature." The similarity to Robin's devotion to the Virgin is surely obvious.

It is sometimes claimed that "Brown Robyn's Confession" [Child 57] is a Miracle of the Virgin (Wimberly, p. 381), but it would better be described as a song offering the possibility of such a miracle than one in which it actually happens.

The tale of Thomas of Ercildoune, as found in the romance of that name (as opposed to the ballad "Thomas Rymer" [Child 37]) also sounds to me like it might have tied in to a Miracle of the Virgin: Thomas, seeing the beautiful Queen of Elfland approach, asks her if she is the Virgin Mary. Told she is not, he hits on her — and, after being warned, is trapped in her fate. He is tempted to eat where he must not eat and to talk where he must not talk, and spends seven years away from the world. His soul is not his own; it may be that he is being primed for a human sacrifice, as in "Tam Lin" [Child 39]. But, prompted by the Queen (the Queen of Elfland? or the Queen of Heaven?) he is able to

return to the world (summarized from Speirs, pp. 168-177), and have at least his chance at normal salvation. It really sounds like Thomas had special treatment twice, and the second time, it was to bring him mercy, as in the Miracles of the Virgin. But, as with "Brown Robyn's Confession" [Child 57], the miracle is a possibility, not something made explicit, at least in the surviving form of the romance.

Most of the surviving tales are literary, but there is good reason to think that similar Miracle tales were well-known to the common folk. The manuscript of the Wakefield mystery plays, for instance, was significantly revised at the time of the Reformation. Twelve pages seem to have been excised entirely. It is believed that these pages were devoted mostly to the life of the Virgin Mary (Rose-Wakefield, p. 17).

Chaucer/Benson, p. 913, say that Miracles of the Virgin were often violently anti-Semitic (like the tale in Chaucer) — e.g. Boyd, pp. 33-37 is the aforementioned "The Child Slain by Jews," which is very much like "The Prioress's Tale"; compare "The Jewish Boy,"described below. This brutal streak is common in the Miracles, but it is not inherent.

The popularity of these tales is shown by the fact that Gautier de Coinci's extremely long poem about the Miracles of the Virgin, which contains fully fifty-eight examples, survives in more than eighty manuscripts, some of them fabulously illuminated (Voronova/Sterligov, p. 48) — a figure comparable to the total for the *Canterbury Tales.* According to Wells, p. 165, the poem had 30,000 verses!

It is interesting to realize that Wynkyn de Worde, who published the **b** text of the "Gest," in 1496 published a book of *The Miracles of Our Lady* (Duff-Bibliog, pp. 83-84).

I won't try to list every Miracle of the Virgin; rather, I'll give summaries of a few, to try to give you a feeling for the genre. These examples are taken rather randomly from Boyd and Wells. The ones with links to the Robin Hood legend are described in more detail at the end of this section.

- "How Our Lady Restored a Man's Leg" or "The Lost Foot Restored," called "How a Man Got a New Leg" on p. 167 of Wells. It is an example of Thompson V411.3, a very charitable man restored to wholeness. Summarized on p. 114 of Boyd. A man's leg is so inflamed that nothing can be done about it; he has it amputated. The Virgin restores his leg. Somewhat similar is "How St. Leo's Hand Was Restored" (Boyd, p. 133), in which St. Leo, in disgust because he was aroused when a woman touched his hand, cuts it off and the Virgin restores it.
- "The Jewish Boy," or "The Jew of Bourges." Boyd, pp. 38-43, called "The Jew Boy in the Oven" on p. 167 of Wells.. A Jewish boy takes Communion with his school friends (at Easter). In response, his father throws him into a furnace, but the Virgin saves him (and he converts). According to Boyd, pp. 117-118, this is one of the earliest of the Miracles; an account of it is in the sixth century writer Evagrius Scholasticus. There are dozens of versions, in Latin, Greek, and many later languages; it occurs in several English manuscripts.
- "The Painter and the Devil" (Thompson P482.1; the Devil knocks the painter from a chair, but the Virgin holds him until help arrives). One of many instances of the Virgin saving someone from damnation, e.g. "How Our Lady Came to the Devil Instead of the Victim."

- "The Child Caught by the Tide" (Boyd, p. 130). A mother teaches her child to always say "Ave Maria" when afraid. One day the child is swept out to sea, and he repeats the invocation. A beautiful lady (obviously Mary) leads him to shore. This is typical of a large class of miracles involving the "Ave Maria," or repeating it many times, or saying the correct prayers. For example, there is a Miracle called "The Monk Who Could Learn Only 'Ave Maria.'" Another example is the following:
- "The Monk and Our Lady's Sleeves," by Thomas Hoccleve Boyd, pp. 50-55. Curiously, it was later made into an addition to Chaucer, the self-proclaimed Ploughman's Tale., in one manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* (Bowers, pp. 27-30; Boyd, pp. 119-120, points out that a spurious link has also been added, which may have affected the text). A rich Frenchman places his son in a monastery and instructs him to pray regular prayers to the Virgin Mary. She appears to him in a sleeveless garment and instructs him in how to pray more correctly (according to Boyd, p. 121, he wasn't counting out his "Ave Marias" properly.). He obeys, and she reappears to him, properly dressed, and tells him that he will be elected an abbot, then after seven years die and go to heaven. All of which, naturally, comes to pass. This is a parallel to the tale of "The Clerk Who Would See Our Lady," or "How the Psalter of Our Lady Was Made" an older tale found, e.g., in the Auchinleck Manuscript and summarized on pp. 112-113 of Boyd. In this tale, it may be the Virgin's petticoat, rather than her sleeves, which are lacking.
- "The Rule of St. Benedict." A variation on the prayer theme (Boyd, p. 109). A well-regarded monk dies. A friend prays to know the state of his soul. The dead man appears to the living friend in a vision, saying that he had not actually followed the Rule of the Benedictines properly, and only his prayers to Mary had saved him. This is one of a group of so-called "Miracles" (e.g., "The Priest Who Sinned with a Nun,") in which the alleged miracle actually takes place in the afterlife and cannot be demonstrated on earth or in which the "miracle" is merely a vision with no consequences (e.g. "The Clerk of Lichfield," "Ave Benigne Jesu," "Octavian and the Sybil," "The Nun of Florence"). On the other hand are items like "The Barns of Jerusalem" (Boyd, p. 125), in which, during a famine, the barns of a particular abbey are found to have been miraculously filled, saving the lives of those who lives there — but no one knows who did it; the miracle is ascribed to the Virgin sort of general principles.
- "The Ring Given to an Image" (Boyd, p. 125). A young man places a ring upon an image of the Virgin — which then closes on the ring and will not release it. When the young man wants to marry, the image comes alive to tell him that he is already betrothed (to the Virgin), so he jilts his bride and becomes a monk. "The Clerk Who Forgot Our Lady's Hours" (Boyd, p. 133) also involves a man jilting his prospective bride. (I have to admit that these strike me less as a Miracles of the Virgin and more a cases of "Vicious Jealousy of the Virgin." Or maybe "Hey, Virgin Mary, I Want Someone Hotter Than This.")
- "Julian the Apostate" (Boyd, p. 133). The Emperor Julian quarrels with St. Basil of Cæsarea and threatens to destroy that city. Basil prays to the Virgin, and Julian

(whose reign lasted for less than three years) is killed in battle with the Persians. Another example of a "miracle" in which prayers avert a disaster, though the Virgin is not actively seen to be involved, is "How Our Lady's Image Ended the Plague" (Boyd, p. 133). The Virgin saving a besieged city is also found in "The Deliverance of the City of Crotey" (Wells, p. 166), in which a bishop uses Marian relics to cause a besieging army of Normans to go blind.

- "The Unshriven Clerk" (or parallels). A clerk who lives a life of wickedness, or scants his vows, dies and (typically) is buried in unholy ground. But, perhaps as a result of him saying his "Ave Marias," the Virgin intercedes, and has him buried in holy ground. When he is moved, some object (e.g. a lily) is found on his tongue that is preserving it. (Note that this theme of a preserving token also occurs in "The Prioress's Tale," and of course all those repetitions of the "Ave Maria" are involved in several of the other miracles. There are many, many Miracles involving the Virgin bringing a sinner some measure of mercy, e.g. "Our Lady's Hand and the Scales of Justice" and "A Drop of Blood and the Scales of Justice"; in the former, she sets her hand on the scale to help a man; in the latter, she induces Jesus to put a drop of blood on the scale, and it outweighs all the man's sins.)

Three of the Middle English Miracles of the Virgin perhaps have thematic links to the "Gest."

A Miracle of the Virgin: The Merchant's Surety

In a typical version of this tale, one Theodore/Theodorus seeks a loan from a Jew, Abraham, offering something of religious significance (a cross, an image of the Virgin) as a surety. According to Wells, p. 167, Theodorus realizes, when the payment is due and when he is far from home, that he has not paid. He puts a treasure in a cask, praying to the Virgin that it will reach the Jew. The Jew denies bing paid. By some religious means (e.g. an image of the Virgin in a church telling him where to look), Theodorus discovers where the treasure was hidden (by the Jew) and uses it to pay off the loan or prove he has done so.

Boyd, p. 118, describes one of the earliest versions of this tale, which was translated from Greek into Latin by one Johannes Monachus in the ninth century: "In his account, the Jew is a friend of the merchant Theodore, and he denies receiving his payment in order to test the power of Christianity. The surety is a crucifix.... Theodore's silver is used to decorate the Church of Santa Sophia [in Constantinople]."

That version is not a Miracle of the Virgin, because Theodore did not invoke her. But a modified English version found in the the Vernon MS. (Bodleian MS. Eng. poet.a.1) and printed on pp. 44-49 of Boyd. It's still set in Constantinople, and the hero is still Theodorus. He seeks a loan from a Jew, Abraham, offering the Virgin Mary as guarantee. An image of Mary reveals gold hidden by Abraham from Theodorus. (For more on this, see the note on Stanza 65.) Both Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 152–153, and Clawson, p. 31, mention this as a parallel to the "Gest's" tale of the Knight, and indeed it has all the key elements: the Virgin being offered as a surety, and the unexpected discovery of a treasure to pay the loan.

Goodich, p. 2, says that the fourteenth century saw a major upswing in "rescue" miracles, noting on p. 3 that one class of these was "protection of both victim and accused against the vagaries of an unjust judicial or social system." He adds on p. 25 that "the distressing conditions prevalent in the fourteenth century encouraged… belief in the efficacy of the rescue miracle among all classes." Clearly the sort of "miracle" described in the "Gest" was a popular theme at the time of its composition.

It's worth noting that there were actual Church definitions of miracles; Augustine and Aquinas among others had written extensively on the matter (Goodich, p. 147). The Knight's story in the "Gest" clearly does not qualify; there is no instance of something which goes against the way the universe normally works. But the church also had an actual checklist of data to be gathered to authenticate a miracle (outlined on pp. 7–8 of Goodich), and there are a few hints of Robin and John checking off items on the list.

A Miracle of the Virgin: Theophilus and the Devil

This Miracle has also been compared to the "Gest," though I personally don't think it is very similar. It is Thompson type H1273.1, "demanding fulfillment of contract from the Devil." Boyd summarizes on p. 105. Theophilus, a pious clerk, rejects a bishopric because he feels unworthy. The man who becomes bishop in his place takes all Theophilus's goods and ruins his reputation. Theophilus sells his soul to the Devil to try to regain his position. Despite being damned, he continues to pray to the Virgin, and when the Devil comes to collect his soul, the Virgin saves him, and he goes on to become a saint.

This is a very old tale, originally Greek, and is related to the Faust legend (Boyd, pp. 127-128). It was translated into Latin in the ninth century; that version is attributed to Paul the Deacon. Versions are very widely known in English; Wells, pp. 314 says that it is "treated in the Southern Legendary (long couplets) MSS. Lud 108, Harley 2277 and Corpus (and the Harley cognates), Trinity Cbg., and Cleopatra D IX; in a later version in the Northern Homily Cycle (short couplets) MSS. Vernon, Harley 4196, Tiberius E VII; and in the still later versions in MS. Rawlinson Poetry 227 f. 11 (642 verses of tail-rime aabccb)." (Note: that MS. number is incorrect; it's Rawlinson 225.) The Rawlinson version is long — one of the longest of the Miracles; a text is on pp. 68-87 of Boyd (this version differs significantly from the other Theophilus versions, but Boyd, p. 128, thinks that merely the result of putting it into tail rhyme.)

A Miracle of the Virgin: The Oxford Scholars

Another Miracles of the Virgin is "The Oxford Scholars," part of a family of tales in which a priest sees a dying boy's soul being carried to Heaven by the Virgin (Boyd, pp. 15-17). I am a little surprised that, at the end of the "Gest," we see Christ's mercy invoked upon Robin rather than the Virgin's. The latter would seem such an obvious person to call upon! This, to me, hints that the sort-of-miracle tale of the Knight was created by one of the "Gest's" sources rather than being the work of the poet who assembled the "Gest." There are no references to the Lady after 336.3, and only one after 271.3. The theme of the Lady, and Robin's devotion to her, seems to be confined to the story of the Knight.

The Knight's Story as a Miracle of the Virgin. The reason we are interested in this mass of mostly rather poor stories is that the tale of Robin, the Monk, and the Abbot of Saint Mary's has similarities to the miracles of the Virgin, and to The Merchant's Surety in particular: The Knight is in a desperate state. He needs a loan. Robin can offer that loan, but demands surety. The Virgin is the surety (stanza 65). Moreover, Saint Mary's Abbey repays the loan — in fact, doubles it. Little John explicitly credits the Virgin with doing so: "Out Lady hath doubled your cast" (stanza 248.4). It is even possible that the Virgin works a third miracle: In Stanza 336 the Knight's wife invokes the Lady when she asks Robin to help her husband — and Robin goes on to rescue Sir Richard for her.

We note that this possible Miracle of the Virgin is atypical in several ways — and not just because it's better poetry than most of the non-Chaucerian examples, though it is that. It is also longer than most, even if we take out the extraneous elements such as John's time serving the Sheriff, and much longer if we include that. It is a double miracle: The Virgin saves the Knight, then repays Robin. But, also, it is subtle. In the Prioress's Tale, the miracle is thoroughly obvious: A dead boy keeps talking. Most of the other Miracles are similar: If there is a demonstrable miracle at all (as opposed to a vision or something), the tale pretty much beats you over the head with the extraordinary event. Not so the "Gest." Bankrupt knights do get loans, if rarely on such weak surety. Clerical officials do venture into the forest with treasure. Outlaws rob travelers. Friends rescue friends. There is nothing inherently unlikely about the tale of the Knight, except that it all works out so neatly. This is a level of artistry rare in the miracles of the Virgin — but, if anything, that makes it more likely that the author of the "Gest" wanted it to be considered such a miracle: it's too tidy to be coincidence.

Another possible element in the "Gest" is the conflict between religious groups. In the regular Miracles, it's between Christians and Jews. In the "Gest," however, it is between true Catholics and the wealthy church hierarchy.

Clawson, pp. 25–30, notes tales in which making a loan to a man with poor security is rewarded supernaturally, although not all are Miracles of the Virgin. One of these, outlined on p. 26, describes an instance, similar to the "Gest," in which the creditor is paid back twice, once rather miraculously — but it is an Arabic tale that surely is not a source of the "Gest." His next two examples are Arabic and Russian. The only one that could have been known to the author of the "Gest" is "The Merchant's Surety."

Clawson, pp. 35–36, also points to the German tale of "Schimpf und Ernst," which is much like the story of Robin, the Knight, and the Monk, but is not a Miracle of the Virgin but rather a variation on the tale of "The Master Thief" (Thompson-Folktale, p. 174); again, see the note on Stanza 65.

The Greenwood Legend; The King In Disguise; Truth or Consequences; minor sources

The "Greenwood Legend" is such a broad term that is can hardly be considered a source for anything; it is more a theme. But English tales of the forest as a refuge go back at least to "Beowulf," where we find people using it to hide from the dragon (Young, p. 2). Young (p. 164) firmly declares that the Robin Hood legends can only be understood in the light of the forest laws — although he also says on p. 170 that the

conflicts over the forest were between the King and the nobles, not the upper and lower classes.

The "King in Disguise" is a commonplace now best known from the (later) tale of the Scottish King James V, but which also occurred in a late Middle Scots romance, "The Taill of Rauf Coilyear," which is probably from about the same time as the "Gest" (Sands, p. 2). There are Biblical examples (Saul visiting the Medium of Endor; 1 Samuel 28:8; Ahab going into battle in disguise; 1 Kings 22:30), although both end badly; we see an angel in disguise in the Book of Tobit.

Knight/Ohlgren, pp. 2–3, and Ohlgren, p. 316 n. 12, point out that the "Truth Or Consequences" game of outlaws asking travelers how much they have, and of the visitors being robbed only if they lie (for which see Stanza 37), is also found in the tales of Eustace the Monk and Fulk FitzWarin.

The reconciliation with the king motif is found in the tales of Fulk FitzWarin and of Hereward the Wake.

The Outlaw in Disguise, used especially in the "Potter" and in "Guy" but also implicit in Robin's and Little John's dealings with the Sheriff (cf. Holt, p. 35), is found, in much fuller form, in the tales of Eustace the Monk, Fulk FitzWarin, and Hereward the Wake.

Several sources even compare Robin to William Wallace, especially as portrayed after the fact by Blind Harry, who makes Wallace a great archer (Baldwin, pp. 39–40; Keen, pp. 75–76). But Blind Harry is more recent than the earliest reports of Robin Hood.

The theme of the bankrupt knight, which occupies so much of the "Gest," is known in several other romances; see the note on Stanza 21.

Less often mentioned as a possible source, but with real parallels to the story of Robin and the King, are the stories of "King Edward and the Hermit" and "King Edward and the Shepherd," with the former being particularly interesting.

"King Edward and the Hermit" is summarized on pp. 418–423 of Briggs-Dictionary. In the story, the king is on a hunting party (in Sherwood no less), gets lost, and meets a hermit who does not recognize him and eventually treats him to a meal of the King's own deer. In the end, presumably, the hermit goes to the court and the king is revealed (Shuffleton, paragraphs 2–3).

"King Edward" exists in only one copy, in Codex Ashmole 61, and that is defective at the end (Shuffleton, paragraph 1). Ashmole 61 is of the fifteenth century (Sisam, p. 13), meaning that it was probably written within a few decades of the composition of the "Gest." And the manuscript's contents are very intriguing; it also has copies of "Sir Orfeo" and other romances such as "Sir Isumbras" and "Sir Cleges," plus several dozen other miscellaneous items.

We also note that a copy of "King Edward and the Shepherd" is found in the same manuscript as "Robin Hood and the Monk" [Child 119] (Dobson/Taylor, p. 9), MS. Cambridge Ff. 5.48 (a fact that Child curiously failed to mention).

Another generic name for this type of tale is "The King and the Barker"; still another version is "The King and the Miller of Mansfield."

Child prints relatives of this tale under the title "King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth" [Child 173], but the Ashmole 61 version, in which the King is an anonymous Edward, seems to me to fall closer to the "Gest" in feel as well as in date, and is long enough to count as a romance rather than a ballad — Shuffleton prints it in twelve-line stanzas (although the aabccbddeffe rhyme scheme is far more complex than the "Gest"), and the surviving portion is 520 lines long, implying a total length of probably about 600–700 lines. My guess is that "King Edward and the Hermit" and "King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth" are a romance-and-ballad pair, similar to "Sir Orfeo" and "King Orfeo" [Child 19] or "King Horn" and "Hind Horn" [Child 17]. So the compiler of the "Gest" very possibly knew this other romance of a King Edward.

There is also a version of this, known as "John the Reeve," found in the Percy Folio; according to Clawson, pp. 107–108, Edward I is the hero of this version. But the plot is generic to tales of this type and could apply to any king. Clawson, pp. 109–111, cites several other tales of the type, but most of these are either too late to be relevant or are tales unlikely to have been known in northern England (e.g. one is about Charlemagne).

Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 148–149, classes all of these as "The King and the Subject," a genre name going back to Child, and observes that the king of "King Edward and the Shepherd" is clearly Edward III, while the "Tanner of Tamworth" is of course referred to the reign of Edward IV. The lineage of these poems may be one of the reasons why the "Gest" sets itself in the reign of a King Edward. But, treated collectively, the "King and Subject" tales are an amalgam of many reigns — and many Edwards.

We might hypothesize that there was a romance, now lost, of Ranulf Earl of Chester which also contributed to the "Gest." This would make sense in the light of Langland's link between Robin and Ranulf (discussed extensively below), but unless it should somehow come to light, this remains pure speculation. Still, one story of Ranulf sounds a little like a part of the story of Robin and the knight: Ranulf was leading an army into Wales, but in the face of superior forces had to take refuge in Rothelan castle. He was rescued by a crowd of locals, supposedly led by minstrels (Wilson, pp. 128–129). We have this tale only from a rather fictional-sounding chronicle (Dugdale's *Baronage*); perhaps there is a more Robin Hood-like version in the original source.

The one other hint of a Ranulf romance comes in "Havelok the Dane." At the end of this romance, we find Havelok, restored to his kingdom, marrying Gunnild daughter of Grim to the Earl of Chester (Bennett/Gray, p. 161). But there is no hint that the earl involved was Ranulf.

Some of the aspects of the "outlaw tale" may predate the Norman Conquest and go back to Old Norse elements. IcelandicFaulkesJohnston, p. xxv, says that "there are some similarities between the outlaw sagas of Iceland and English outlaws like Robin Hood." If these actually go back to common roots, they would almost have to stem from the period of the Danish invasions of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.

IcelandicFaulkesJohnston, p. xxv, makes an interesting observation about outlaws and their bands, "Although Gisli spends his outlawry in solitude or being sheltered by his wife, and Grettir on remote heathland or island with an occasional male companion, and they only occasionally attract other outlaws, Hord gathers together a band of

outlaws and lives with his wife and children in a community with a hierarchy resembling that of society in general. Both Gisli and Grettir employ tricks to escape their enemies, often disguising themselves or impersonating other people, and Grettir, like Robin Hood, attends assemblies of his people in disguise, obtaining safe-conduct from them, and competing in games (which he of course wins). Grettir, again like Robin Hood, manages to get on good terms with the king (of Norway), though he fails to become integrated back into society."

The "Gest" may also have some elements derived from stories of actual historical outlaws. There is a genuine tale of a man who gave support to a King of England while based in the woods: Early in the reign of the boy king Henry III, the French were occupying much of southeast England. Most of the barons who opposed the invasion were in the north and west — but in the heart of the French-occupied territory was the great forest of the Weald. William of Kensham, a local bailiff, organized resistance to the French in the forest, and came to be known as "Williken of the Weald" (Powicke, p. 10). He played a significant part in the expulsion of the French, and I wonder if this might not have vaguely influenced the tale of Robin.

Baldwin, pp. 104–106, mention a band of criminals, the Coterels, who lived in the early to mid fourteenth century; they were active during the reign of Edward III, and according to Bellamy "poached, ambushed, had a spy in Nottingham, ill-treated clerics, were pursued by bounty hunters and the sheriff, operated in Sherwood, entered royal service, had as an ally a member of the gentry who had lost his inheritance [Sir William Aune], and were pardoned by the King" (quoted by Baldwin, p. 111; see also Dobson/Taylor, p. 27; the passage does not seem to appear in Bellamy's book).

On the other hand, Cawthorne, p. 196, says that Sir Richard Ingram, sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, was in league with them, which doesn't sound much like Robin Hood!

Dobson/Taylor, pp. 27–28, although mentioning the Coterels (and the Folvilles, whom we will meet below), think a closer parallel to Robin Hood is the band which William Beckwith led in Knaresborough forest in Lancashire in the period 1387–1392. Bellamy had much to say about this group, but of course their date is very late — after Langland's first mention of Robin Hood.

Dobson/Taylor, p. 28, add that there is one very strong difference between the Robin Hood cycle and the actual outlaws: "the early Robin Hood ballads lack the theme of feuding between neighbours which seem to have been such a dominant element in the exploits of fourteenth-century gangs."

The Forest Law

The action in the "Gest" seems at times to be driven by the forest laws. These may have caused Robin to be outlawed (we can't tell), and Robin apparently violates them with impunity. To understand the legend, we must understand the laws as well.

There is a summary of the forest laws in Knight/Ohlgren, pp. 164–165, and much detail (naturally) in Young, who notes on p. 3. that "the royal forest was first of all an area in which a special kind of law — the forest law — applied." On pp. 28–29, Young lists twelve major points of the laws as enforced by Henry II. Several of these are of great significance to the Robin Hood legend, including #2, that no one should have

bows, arrows, or dogs in the royal forest; #3, that wood could not be taken from the forests; #4–#7, assuring that foresters guarded the forest; #7, charging the foresters with guarding venison (game) and vert (trees and habitat); and #8, that a forester was responsible for any unexplained destruction in the forest (making the forester responsible for suppressing people like Robin).

The forest laws before the Norman Conquest were relatively mild, but William the Conqueror started putting lands into royal forests, eventually including about a quarter of England (Young, p. 5), meaning that much "forest" was not woodland but merely land designated for the King's purposes. The primary purpose of the laws was to preserve trees and game where they existed. They also brought in some revenue from the farming out of the office of forester (Young, p. 14; on p. 52, Young mentions a case of a man paying 900 marks=600 pounds to become forester of Cumbria!), so Robin's band might be costing the King money as well as game.

The punishments for violating the laws varied over time, at least in practice if not officially; item #30 or so in the lengthy list of proofs that Richard I was not Robin's king comes in the fact that Richard ordered poachers of the deer to be blinded and castrated. Only in the period of the Magna Carta were these penalties relaxed — the Forest Charter of 1217 declared that no one would be executed or mutilated for violation of the forest laws (Young, p. 67).

Even before the Forest Charter, fines were a more typical punishment, and even those were often forgiven (Young, p. 30) — but a fine could destroy a serf as thoroughly as mutilation. And the fines could be huge — one year, forest eyres brought in twelve thousand pounds, although between one thousand and two thousand was more typical (Young, p. 39). Even these often were kept on the books for decades because they went unpaid (Young, p. 40). A man who failed to pay could, under the later forest laws, be imprisoned for a year and a day and then exiled (Young, p. 68).

There is another footnote: "Park," like "Forest," was an officially designated area. The forest laws applied, but with some modifications (Young, p. 45). The custodians of a park were not foresters but, logically, parkers. A park was fenced to keep the game within (or without), and one of the tasks of the parker was to maintain the fence — a park could be seized by the king if the enclosure was not tight (Young, p. 96). I gain the impression that parks were much more closely controlled than forests, so for Robin to be raiding Plumpton Park in Stanzas 357–358 was a significant accomplishment.

The Source Components of the "Gest"

Almost all commentators see the "Gest" as composite to some degree. Even at the linguistic level, the evidence is strong (and could use a truly thorough analysis). For example, the phrase "I make mine avowe to God" occurs in clumps (see the note on Stanza 158); probably it was a favorite of one of the sources. Similarly with references to the Virgin Mary. References to "lewte" (loyalty) seem to occur in sections relating to the Sheriff, while "fellowship" is more typical of episodes involving the Knight. But most commentators distinguish the sources based on plot, not vocabulary.

Lord, p. 206, reminds us that even the creators of modern epics often produce tales which are episodic, with stories of the same hero all being jumbled together. He cites as an early English example the case of "Beowulf," with the episodes of Grendel and the Dragon, with very little relation except that both involve Beowulf. On p. 13, Lord explicitly contrasts the performers of epics with folk singers (although an epic is not precisely the same as a romance — and Lord was not speaking of actual folk singers anyway but of professionals who called themselves "folk" performers). It is certainly true that many medieval romances are episodic (none more than the culmination of the genre, the *Morte d'Arthur,* which is basically a prose retelling of a bunch of older, shorter stories). But if a single author just runs us through a series of adventures, he will still tend to try to keep them consistent. The "Gest" often fails of this — for example, Little John would probably need a private teleportation device to be all the places he manages to be in stanzas II-IV. Since many of the inconsistencies in the "Gest" appear to derive from the use of separate sources, it's worth something to try to untangle tem.

Keen, p. 101, regards the "Gest" as a combination of elements from four other ballads or tales, which he titles "Robin Hood and the Knight," "Robin Hood, Little John and the Sheriff," "Robin Hood and the King," and "Robin Hood's Death." He derives this list from Child (page 42), slightly changing the name of the first. Except for the last, they do not correspond to any extant ballads, although some of the four were imitated in the later legends. Keen also notes that, for all its length, the "Gest" opens with Robin already in the greenwood; he simply appears there, almost like a wood sprite. There is no early legend of where Robin came from.

Pollard's list of components of the "Gest," on p. xvi, is "Robin Hood and the Knight," "Robin Hood and the Sheriff," " Little John and the Sheriff" (a tale which he suggests is for comic relief; p. 6) "Robin Hood and the King," and "The Death of Robin Hood." (I'm not sure I agree that one specific component of the "Gest" was responsible for the comedy, but I do agree that there are comic aspects to the whole — Little John is always asking for his dinner, he is a trickster; and some of the conversations between John, Much, and Scathelock seem like exaggeration for effect).

Brandl sees three different components, consisting (according to Clawson, p. 7 n. 4) of fits I+II+IV, V+VI, and III+VII+VIII — which we might perhaps call "Robin and the Knight," "Robin and the Archery Contest," and "Little John, the Sheriff, Robin, and the King."

Holt, pp. 24–25, suggests that the "Gest" is based on at least two cycles, one being the account of the indebted knight and the other being the rest.

Clawson digs much deeper than the other scholars, seeking to identify individual ballads which became components of the "Gest." His analysis strikes me as too detailed — he assumes too many ballads which have the same form as the "Gest." But some of them may be real:

- A ballad of Robin Hood and the Knight, in which Robin, upon learning of the Knight's difficulties, pays his debts (Clawson, p. 24, 41), which forms the primary basis of the first fit.
- A possible tale of the knight going to Calvary and/or repaying the Abbot (Clawson, p. 42), which is the main element of the second fit, although Clawson was not certain this was in ballad form. He does suggest that there was, at minimum, a ballad about a knight on a voyage (Clawson, p. 44). He says on p. 125 that the compiler treated it very freely, and compares it to "The Heir of Linne" [Child 267].
- A ballad about a wrestling (Clawson, p. 47), which underlies the wrestling at the end of the second fit. This may be somehow related to the tale of Gamelyn (Clawson, p. 48; see line 171fff. in the Tale of Gamelyn).
- A ballad about someone infiltrating an enemy's household, which underlies the tale of Little John becoming a servant of the Sheriff and then convincing the cook to desert at the beginning of the third fit (Clawson, pp. 63–64).
- A ballad about a robber in disguise tricking a high official into the forest and then robbing him, which underlies the tale of Little John tricking the sheriff with the tale of the green hart at the end of the third fit (Clawson, p. 75). He also suggests a "Robin Hood Meets His Match" ballad was used here (Clawson, p. 126).
- A ballad of Robin Hood robbing two monks, which in the "Gest" is turned into a tale of Robin robbing the High Cellarer (Clawson, pp. 19–20), which is the primary source of the fourth fit (Clawson, pp. 23–24, 41). This would explain why two monks seem to dissolve into one in the course of the story.
- A ballad of Robin Hood and his men participating in a shooting contest in Nottingham, being recognized, and fighting their way out (Clawson, p. 80), which provided the bulk of the fifth fit. He compares this not only to the tale of Fulk but to that of William Wallace.
- A ballad of Robin Hood organizing a rescue and killing the Sheriff, which occupies most of the sixth fit from stanza 329 on (Clawson, p. 86). Clawson, pp. 86–87, says that many of the elements of this are similar to "Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires [Child 140]," although that song contains many details not found in the "Gest." Clawson also notes on p. 89 a similarity to the story of Wulric the Heron, an ally of Hereward the Wake, as well as of Gamelyn's rescue of his brother Ote. These are, however, parallels of theme only, with no detailed similarities.
- A ballad in which the Sheriff places a price on Robin's head (Clawson, p. 96). Clawson does not attribute any portion of the "Gest" to this ballad but hypothesizes it to explain the enmity between the two. That there was such a tradition seems likely; there is no evidence that it was in ballad form.

- Some sort of ballad about Robin and the King (Clawson, p. 119), probably built around a visit to the royal court (Clawson, p. 127).
- The tale of Robin Hood's Death, which the poet merely excerpts to provide the last half-dozen verses (Clawson, pp. 123–124).
- In addition, Clawson posits elements which he does not claim existed in ballad form: The tale of a miraculous repayment of a loan (Clawson, p. 36), an exemplum about the Virgin Mary (Clawson, p. 38). Later scholars would, of course, redefine this in terms of the Miracles of the Virgin, for which see the section on "The Bible and the Miracles of the Virgin."

All of these sections have at least some stanzas added by the compiler of the "Gest." In all, Clawson attributes all or parts of stanzas 1–16, 44–61, 69–78, 80–85, 126–134, 143, 144, 150–153, 205–207, 253–254, 266–269, 276–280, 281, 309–328, 354–364 to the "Gest" poet (see list on pp. 125–127 of Clawson). But Clawson, p. 86, suggests that only one major section — stanzas 309–328, in which the Knight takes Robin Hood into his castle, thus setting up the confrontation with the King — is a really independent part of the "Gest" supplied by the compiler.

There are two problems with Clawson's view. One is primarily a matter of terminology: The sections he claims are from "ballads" often include stanzas with highly irregular meter. These can hardly be from ballads as we would understand the term, although they could well be from metrical romances, where the metrical rules are looser. The other problem is that his hypothesis simply requires too many sources. Holt, p. 200 n. 11, says cautiously, "Clawson may have been a little to ready to multiply the number of separate components which must have underlain the *Gest* and to assume that those components already took the form of ballads." I would go farther: To postulate as many different ballads as he does is possible but too complicated to be convincing. Perhaps the "Gest" derives some ideas from sources like those, but they aren't being quoted. To put it another way, they aren't sources; they are influences.

(In Clawson's defence, he was simply following in a venerable tradition that goes all the way back to the great Karl Lachmann's analysis of Homer, which also split that epic into smaller oral pieces; Lord, p. 10. Lachmann was a great textual critic, perhaps the greatest innovator in that field. As a folklorist… eh....)

Personally, I agree with Keen: there are at least four different parts, which (with the exception of the story which became "Robin Hood's Death") survive largely intact in the "Gest" but with a little glue to hold them together. This is not absolutely incompatible with Holt's two-source hypothesis, because the component stories could have been gathered into two smaller cycles which were then combined by the "Gest" poet, but Keen's version is simpler. The one thing that we must keep in mind is that any particular feature we find might come from the source or the compiler or from some other stage in this complex history.

If it be objected that this scheme is incredibly complex and that this use of sources is more than a composer could normally juggle, it is worth noting that the *Odyssey* — universally acclaimed as one of the greatest of epic poems — is generally considered to be just such as composite, combining multiple sources in a continuous narrative (Finley, p. 35). The difference lies not in the nature of the combination but in the skill with which

the elements were combined. The combination in this case in fact is *not* complex: Robin and the Knight constitutes the beginning, Robin and the King the end (except for the short section on Robin's death), and the tales of the Sheriff are mined (and, probably, heavily adapted) to allow us to transition from one to the other. See, for instance, the note on Stanzas 280–281 about the source transition there.

We perhaps cannot identify the sources of every part of the "Gest," but recognizing that it is composite can help us to understand some of the inconsistencies. For example, in the first fit, Robin seems to have just three men. By the middle of the "Gest," he has seven score. The final section, about Robin and the King, has a lot of details which hint at a date in the time of Edward II. There are no such hints of a chronological setting outside the last two fits. In the first fit, Robin can casually lend £400 without any concern, but in Fit eight, spending £100 leaves him bankrupt. Little John's actions while he is in service to the Sheriff seem almost impossible to reconcile with what comes before and after; there just isn't *time* for it all. But it all makes sense if the third fit is inserted from a different source. I think we can at minimum say that fits 1+II+IV are from different sources than III and from VII+VIII.

The Sources As I Would Identify Them

Personally, I agree generally with Keen's four-source analysis, except that I believe that three of the sources were substantial and one was either short or was not available to the author of the "Gest" in written form, so that he had to go by memory. The four:

a. Robin and the Knight (fits I, II, IV)
b. Robin and the Sheriff (fits III, V, possibly part or all of VI)
c. Robin and the King (Fits VII, VIII, and possibly VI, minus the last six stanzas)
d. Robin Hood's Death (the last six stanzas only)

But I think we can go beyond Keen's analysis to guess at how these sources were used. The four sources were not equal. The tale of "Robin and the Knight" is complete in itself and has probably been included almost verbatim, except for the insertion of Fit III in the middle of it; note that it ends on a happy note, with the Knight re-established and Robin doing well in the greenwood. It might almost be a Miracle of the Virgin adapted to a Robin Hood setting. (I observe the irony that the story of the Knight, which is usually treated as the most original thing in the "Gest," is actually the one that appears to be closest to its source. But it appears original to us today because it is the only component of the "Gest" not paralleled in other extant materials.)

The tale of "Robin and the King" is also pretty complete, although the opening is hard to precisely locate (since there would be glue leading into it). Like the tale of the Knight, it could and almost certainly did exist independently, a complete single-incident romance.

The ending, "Robin Hood's Death," is clearly a very short epitome, or more likely a summary. The most likely explanation for its brevity is that it was something the poet of the "Gest" had heard but did not have direct access to; he tacked on what he remembered at the end because people expected to hear of Robin's death, but he had few details to provide.

That leaves "Robin and the Sheriff." I think the explanation for all the contradictions its presence causes is that it was considered a lesser source, or possibly a combination of two sources, by the poet; he was using this material to glue together his two major sources, the tales of the Knight and the King. So the poet sliced it up into parts, inserting bits and pieces here and there, adding more material of his own than in the two major stories. The result is far less consistent and thought-through than the other two major sources.

An example of what might be "glue" was that suggested by Clawson, p. 86: stanzas 309–328, in which the Knight takes Robin Hood into his castle, thus setting up the confrontation with the King. This bit of glue equates the unnamed Knight of Fit I with the Sir Richard at the Lee of Fits VI-VIII. In other words, in the tale of Robin and the Knight, Robin rescues one Knight (who is never named); in the tale of Robin and the King, Robin gains forgiveness for another Knight, Sir Richard, and the "Gest" poet added a transition to make the Knights the same.

Note that I am not sure of this division. It merely feels right to me based on many, many readings of the "Gest." But I have tried, in the notes, to pay attention to the implications of other hypotheses.

Once we identify these components, we can start to identify some characteristics:

Robin and the Knight

FITS I, II, IV

- Robin has a small band, perhaps just John, Scathelocke, and Much
- Little John is a trickster and, very likely, has some sort of scribal/clerical training (although he clearly is not in holy orders), since he is the one who counts the money
- Robin has a strong devotion to the Virgin (but no fondness for the Church); this whole tale resembles a Miracle of the Virgin
- Robin is based in Barnsdale
- The knight whom he helps has no name — indeed, *no one* in this section has a name except Robin, John, Much, and Scathelock
- Robin is rich enough that £400 is not a major expense for him, and he "trades" in things such as horses and cloth, like a merchant
- There is no mention of a king, or fealty to him
- There are no archery contests
- There are no clear dating hints; it could have happened any time when longbows are in use
- *Vocabulary notes:* this section places particular stress on Robin's and his men's status as yeomen — 15 of the 23 uses of "yeman" are in this part, as is the only use of "yemanry." This is the only section to refer to "borowes" or "borowehood." It is heavy on religious terminology, being the only section to refer to bishops or archbishops; it has most of the uses of "abbot"; it is the only section to mention any of the Apostles; it is the only section to refer to "[God the] Fader"; it has 11 of the 12 uses of "Lady" for the Virgin Mary

Robin and the King

FITS VII-VIII, PLUS PROBABLY PART OR ALL OF VI; EXCLUDES THE FINAL SIX STANZAS ABOUT ROBIN'S DEATH

- Robin is based near Nottingham
- Robin's band is large (seven score), but he has has no noteworthy followers to play a large role
- Gilbert is a member of Robin's band; Much apparently is not
- The King is Edward (first mentioned in the last stanza of Fit VI), and the context clearly best fits Edward II
- Robin has no special religious devotion; in particular, there isn't much mention of the Virgin Mary
- *Vocabulary notes:* This is the only section to mention "garlands" as an archery target.
- It is worth noting that this is the only source in the "Gest" to name the King (Edward); it thus seems to be the only source of the "Gest" to present an historical framework. Despite the researches and opinions of Joseph Hunter and others, I think it extremely unlikely that this is true history. It's what we would now call historical fiction. But historical fiction implies an historical setting — and the setting of this source is the Edwardian period, and probably the reign of Edward II. This strongly implies that, in the fifteenth century (before all the rewriting of the legend), Robin Hood was thought to have lived in the Edwardian period.

Robin and the Sheriff

PART OR ALL OF FITS III, V, AND POSSIBLY VI

- Location is not clear, but there are no references to Barnsdale
- Gilbert is a member of Robin's band
- This section first identifies the Knight as "Sir Richard at the Lee" (but this might be part of the "glue"). It was apparently Joseph Hunter who first suggested that the Knight of this part was not the same as the Knight of the early fits (Bellamy, p. 74)
- This section seems most fond of archery contests
- Robin has no particular religious affiliation. The section has no references to abbots or friars (although it has the only mention of "ankir"). It has the only uses of "Christ thee save."
- Although almost certainly based on, and including, older materials, this is probably the part of the poem that the poet rewrote the most, in order to glue together the tales of Robin and the Knight and Robin and the King. This gluing was not always particularly successful, as is shown by the contradictory indications about what Little John was up to in and around Fit III.
- There may well be two different sources in use here, one mostly about Little John, one about Robin, and the Sheriffs involved might well be different people
- *Vocabulary notes:* All references to "Lewte" are in this section.

What the Gest Represents: The Audience of the Poem

Comparisons of Robin to other figures of folklore can be tricky. Robbers are just robbers — but Keen, p. 128, suggests that the Robin Hood of legend, from the very start, was completely unlike an outlaw such as Dick Turpin or Jesse James: Robin "was the enemy of the existing order, not a parasite on it." Similarly, Cawthorne, p. 71, says that he represented anarchy in the May Games — "a rebel against the normal order of things." On this basis it has been suggested that he functioned as a control on or outlet for social unrest.

Perhaps it would be clearer to say that Robin stood outside the existing order than that he was its enemy, but he was certainly something unusual. Jones-Larousse, p. 371 goes so far as to maintain that "it seems likely that he is an entirely fictitious character, in whom was embodied the rebellious disquiet during the turbulent years from the end of the 12th century, which culminated in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381." Keen, in his chapter "The Outlaw Ballad as an Expression of Peasant Discontent," also connects Wat Tyler's 1381 rebellion with balladry (pp. 166–167), although he does not mention Robin Hood in this immediate context, and on p. 173 denies a direct connection. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 144, compares Robin with the rebel Jack Cade — even though Cade's rebellion took place in 1450, long after the legend was established and very likely after the "Gest" was compiled.

Holt objected to the connection on the grounds that Robin was a northern hero, with no connection with the southern rebels (Tyler and Cade are both associated primarily with Kent), and Dobson/Taylor, p. 30, agree. In any case, we know from Langland that the legend was already in existence in some form before Tyler's and Cade's revolts. Chances are that later poets would have wanted to explicitly deny a connection between Robin and Wat Tyler — Tyler, after all, failed to accomplish anything.

Pollard, p. 109, declares that Robin uses "righteous violence to maintain true justice precisely when the officers of the law have failed." Pollard, pp. 157–158, follows Hobsbawm in seeing Robin as the "Noble Robber." It is hard to deny that this is what the Robin Hood tale *became*, but this is far less clear in the early ballads than in modern folklore. Ashley, p. 86, believes Robin represents a different sort of protest: "Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest was to become a popular hero because he defied the forest laws."

But to create a legend needs more than a feeling of discontent. John Ball, who actually preached the sort of message that Jones-Larousse describes (Ball's catch phrase was "When Adam delved and Eve span, who then was the gentleman?"; see "John Ball's Letter to the Peasants of Essex"), is barely remembered — and, as Dobson/Taylor point out on p. 32, "The strong sense of Christian fraternity expressed in the mysterious letters (possibly written by John Ball).... has left little imprint on the outlaw ballads...." Similarly, the Lollards, who represented many of these same ideals and who were as much against wealthy clerics as was Robin, were fairly popular but never had any great success in overthrowing the church. When England turned Protestant, it was imposed from above.

Some moderns have produced more extreme speculations — to them, Robin became a wood spirit; he is "Robin Hood, whom modern criticism has transformed from a forester into a forest elf, a kinsman of Herne the Hunter. It can hardly be considered a

dry or destructive criticism which thus metamorphoses Robin Hood and Maid Marian into Oberon and Titania!" (Garnett/Gosse, p. 305). This is particularly problematic since Herne apparently wasn't traditional until the time of Henry VIII! (Hole, p. 33); Phillips/Keatman, p. 143, would offer the Celtic god Cerne as a replacement.

Thomas Wright in 1846 made Robin a figure in Saxon myth — again, a spirit of the forest (Phillips/Keatman, p. 67); Hole, p. 72, mentions this and adds that W. H. Stevenson said that Robin emerged from "the mists of Teutonic paganism." Silliest of all was the claim in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that Robin was a forest elf because elves wore hoods! (Hole, p. 72).

Child too (p. 47) mentions a scholar who claimed Robin was a manifestation of Woden, the Anglo-Germanic chief god, and CHEL1, p. 218, says explicitly that in the period around 1200 "the ancient figure of Woden was being slowly metamorphosed into the attractive Robin Hood." Phillips/Keatman, p. 68, mention folklorists who have linked him to the Teutonic elf Hodekin, but this again seems to be based solely on the name. Pollard, p. 78, mentions scholars who have equated him with figures of legend such as the Green Man, or even Robin Goodfellow!

Frye, p. 196, proposes that "The characters who elude the moral antithesis of heroism and villainy generally are or suggest spirits of nature.... Kipling's Mowgli is the best known of the wild boys; a green man lurked in the forests of medieval England, appearing as Robin Hood and the knight of Gawain's adventure."

If you think that's bad, consider this: Wilgus, p. 315, mentions a whole movement — the "Cambridge School" — which make the claim that Robin was "the grand master of a witch coven and therefore the survival of a pagan god." This, however, was based on claims by Margaret Murray, who said that Robin was originally "Robin with a Hood" (Hole, p. 72); these claims were definitively exploded by P. Valentine Harris in 1951 (Phillips/Keatman, p. 69). (Murray was a sort of modern witch hunter; Simpson/Roud, pp. 253-254, 389, 395 credit her with inventing many of the modern notions of Wicca.)

Happily, Child declared (p. 48) that he could not 'admit.... even the shadow of a case" for any such interpretation. Similarly Anderson, pp. 147–148: "Efforts to attach Robin Hood to the tradition of the Huntington family or of the family of Ralph *[sic.]* of Chester, as well as efforts to give him a purely mythological kinship with Woden, come to nothing." Phillips/Keatman, p. 68, observe that if Robin were a pagan sprite, there would surely be hints in the ballads — and there are none. As a result, this sort of silliness has largely faded. (At least among scholars, if not in modern "retellings.")

Much more likely is W. E. Simone's conclusion, quoted on p. 316 of Wilgus: "A historic figure may be at the matrix, and he may wear the tatters of a god, but certainly the legend has been built, ballad by ballad, overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, by the ballad maker. His imagination wove a rich diversity into the ballads which, surprisingly enough, will support almost any theory for the origin of the great English outlaw."

As Wilgus summarizes on pp. 316–317, "Simone has restored Robin Hood to his rightful place in a pattern, not of ritual myth, but of the outlaw from before Hereward the Saxon to Jesse James and beyond — 'a story that has been created before and will undoubtedly be created again.'" Pringle, p. 14, is even more succinct: "The psychology

of Robin Hood is very plain. There was no Robin Hood, so it was necessary to invent one."

(It appears, in fact, that one recounting of the Jesse James story actually borrowed from the "Gest." It was told by Homer Croy in 1949, and is found on pp. 79–81 of Dellinger. The James Gang comes upon a woman who is about to lose her land. They give her the money to redeem the property, tell her to get the receipt, then as the mortgage agent leaves her land, rob him and take the $800. Note that this not only is the basic plot of the story of Robin, the Knight, and the Monk in the "Gest," but the sum of money involved even matches, in a different currency, that stolen from the Monk!)

The audience of the tales has been much debated. The very first line of the "Gest" calls on "gentilmen" to listen to it (pointed out by Pollard, p. 173), yet follows that up by speaking of those of freeborn blood — much more likely to be a reference of yeomen and guildsmen than the aristocracy or gentry. And CHEL1, p. 276, observes that our surviving medieval epics gradually become more popular: "*Beowulf* was composed for persons of quality, *Havelok [the Dane]* for the common people."

Dobson/Taylor, p. 10, declare that "'yeoman minstrelsy' remains the most appropriate description for the Gest" as well as the two other earliest poems, the "Monk" and the "Potter" — but they hardly explain the term; as Holt, p. 110, declares, "the words leave much to be defined." Similarly, LindahlEtAl, p. 346, say that "the Robin Hood ballads may represent the assertion of a yeoman ethic," but don't explain what this ethic *is* except a push for greater rights.

Dobson/Taylor add on p. 32 that "An unprejudiced reading of the *Gest* leads one to the inescapable conclusion that the outlaw leader's famous acts of liberality derive less from any notion of social distribution of wealth than from the aristocratic virtues of largesse and display," which seems to imply an audience of people trying to climb the social ladder. But they go on to add on p. 33 that "in the last resort it is the differences between Robin Hood and his counterparts [such as Hereward the Wake and Fulk] rather than their similarities which deserve most attention." Robin, they point out, shows no desire to take a high place in the legitimate social hierarchy (in general, that is; in Fit 8 of the "Gest" he goes broke trying to achieve status — in Stanza 434 he goes broke hiring knights and squires "to gete hym grete renowne". This even though, we should note, he is described as having enough money and followers to be a baron (see the notes on Stanza 49 and Stanza 229).

Besides, simply being "yeoman minstrelsy" does not automatically make the "Gest" unique; other romances may have been meant for the same market. According to Sands, p. 56, "the majority of the sixty-odd extant Middle English metrical romances are *bourgeois* in that they are designed to satisfy a nonaristocratic palete *(sic.)*." Sands makes this remark in connection with "Havelok the Dane," whose author probably shared some concerns with the author of the "Gest": "He is distressed over current inequities in law; unquestioningly he accepts, not birth and power, but work, virtue, and integrity as paramount."

And pieces for popular rather than noble consumption do start to survive from before this time. *Piers Plowman*, e.g., has lessons for everyone, and "makes its appeal more broadly to humber — as well as instructed — folk" (Speirs, p. 265).

Bennett/Gray, p. 126, give us an interesting way to view the standard romance: It is everything Chaucer parodies in his tale of "Sir Thopas": "Sir Thopas figures as the valiant knight who is also a mighty hunter… he rides through a forest, filled with love-longing… finally, the general setting and situation gives opportunity to describe minstrelsy, feasting, arms, and armour… and excuse to 'lay it on' with both hands."

Observe how the "Gest" reverses all of this. Instead of the hero going from habited lands into the forest, the "Gest" (and, for that matter, the "Monk" and the "Potter") show Robin our hero go from the forest into civilization. He does not hunt wild animals; he hunts people. He is an outlaw, but a thoroughly mannered outlaw; time and again we are told of Robin's courtesy. Robin has a love-longing — but not for a woman, for the Virgin Mary. The feasting consists of Robin entertaining his guests — a good meal, but not one they are likely to enjoy. As for the battles — they have become archery contests, and by no means does the hero always succeed. The "Gest" is not, like "Sir Thopas," a satire — but it does turn all the conventions on their heads. As Harris, p. 60, notes, Lord Raglan listed 22 characteristics of the classic hero tale (the type that Joseph Campbell classified as the "Monomyth"), and that Robin has none of these traits. (I think that's a little strong; Robin at least hints at some of them. But certainly he doesn't have many, and he doesn't follow Campbell's mythic plot scheme.)

Holt, p. 128, believes the legend as a whole was addressed to the various clerks and other officials of feudal households, many of whom would have borne the title "yeoman." Yet he also notes that Robin Hood plays were at least known to, and very likely performed before, the Pastons (Holt, p. 142) — who were of the gentry, and fairly substantial even by the standards of that class, though they also were under constant financial strain due to litigation about their properties. He also has a throwaway comment, on p. 157, that the tales were targeted to "young men without responsibility" (this on the basis of the lack of women in the early stories).

Ohlgren suggests, p. 220, that the target audience of the "Gest" was the rising class of merchants and guildsmen. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 25, claims that "another ideological subtext promotes the interests of the London guilds by portraying Robin as a cloth merchant. The poem, I believe, was originally commissioned in the mid-to-late fifteenth century… [for use] at the election dinner of one of London's major cloth guilds."

The logic strikes me as a stretch — yes, Robin makes a grant of cloth to the Knight in stanzas 70-73 -- but that is a gift that is described as "a lyvery." There are some points of contact between Robin's acts and the behavior of the guilds, but Robin is too much the critic of society for him to be a close fit with the guilds. The lack of business-like language in the "Gest" is no proof, since most of the modern terms such as "profit" did not come into English until quite late (Shippey, p. 85) — but Robin doesn't *think* like a merchant, as his refusal to make a profit on his dealings with the Knight show. The contacts Ohlgren sees arise, I think, because the "Gest" poet came from a mercantile background, not because they were his audience.

Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 26–27, also allude to the widespread belief, mentioned above, that Robin Hood plays and legends were an "outlet valve" created by the upper classes to keep the lower classes from getting out of hand. This strikes me as even more improbable — for one thing, the many ballads in which a lord marries a commoner

seem to imply that the primary goal of the lower classes was to move up the social scale, not overthrow it. And would even the stupidest lord be tempted to give his villeins ideas about running off? I strongly doubt it.

Pollard, although pointing out on p. 29 that the "Potter" is clearly written for a yeoman audience, on p. xi, suggests that from a very early time the legend "appealed to both gentry and the commons. There are elements of both chivalric romance and lewd ribaldries" in the extant materials. He suggests on pp. 8–9 that the "Potter," the "Monk," and "Guy of Gisborne" were addressed to common people, but that different portions of the "Gest" were addressed to gentle and humble audiences. Given that the "Gest" is composite, this is not unreasomable.

Anderson, p. 148, says that "Robin Hood is, in his prime, a fine archer and woodsman; he is something of a socialist, even a communist; he is an outlaw, but a beloved outlaw who represents the commoner's itch for opportunity at the expense of his feudal masters. He is decent, self-respecting, and chivalrous (though not chivalric); he is God-fearing, devout, but carefree; he has, in short, all the middle-class virtues." This too would seem to imply a middle-class (yeoman) audience.

Ohlgren, on p. 112 of Ohlgren/Matheson, suggests that the "Gest" has a "pro-Yorkist bias" and so would have appealed to the Yorkist exiles in France and Burgundy in the period after Richard III was overthrown in 1485. There were Yorkist exiles, of course, and it is not impossible that the Lettersnijder edition **a** was produced for them — but I'm somewhat pro-Yorkist myself, and I completely fail to see evidence of a "Yorkist bias" in the "Gest." (For more on the political context, see in particular Appendix IV: "By Saint Richard!": Richard Scrope and the Abbot's Oath.) And, if the Tudors had seen even a hint of such a thing, how could so many printers working under the Tudors (Pynson, de Worde, Copland, and — if Ohlgren is right — Goes and Notary) have produced editions?

It is obvious that printers of the period thought the tale would appeal to an educated audience; were it not so, the "Gest" would not have been printed. The fact that it was printed, and repeatedly, proves that either the business classes or the aristocracy read it. The initial invocation also sounds rather like that in a lot of the romances, hinting at an attempt to appeal to the same audience. Still, it seems likely that it originated with the people. It seems even more likely, as Knight/Ohlgren observe on p. 82, that the ultimate audience was mixed.

Historical and Literary Sources for the History of Robin Hood

Although Robin Hood is primarily a figure of folklore and folktale, we do see some references to him in other sources. Since literary references and chronicles can generally be dated, as folktales cannot, these are our primary basis for the history of the Robin Hood legend.

Piers Plowman

Other than the ballads, the first literary reference to Robin Hood — and the first source to explicitly treat him as a figure of legend — is in Langland's *Piers Plowman*. In the "B" text, Passus V, lines 395–396, we read

I kan [ken, know] noght parfitly my Paternoster as the preest it syngeth,
But I kan [ken] rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolf Erl [Earl] of Chestre

(so Langland/Schmidt, p. 82, but there are no major variants in these lines — although the numbering varies; Dobson/Taylor on p. 1. n. 1 call these lines 401–402).

In the C text of *Piers Plowman*, this is Passus VII, lines 10-12:

I can nat parfitly my pater-noster *as þe prest hit syngeth,*
I can rymes of Robyn Hode and of Randolf erle of Chestre

(Langland/Pearsall, p. 129. The differences in orthography are almost certainly post-Langland; they derive from the different traits of the various scribes and the orthographic standards of the editors). Langland, clearly, disapproved of these idle rhymes, but Langland was a proto-puritan.

It is believed that the B-text was written around 1377, at the very end of the reign of Edward III or early in the reign of Richard II, implying that by that date the Robin Hood legend had already entered the ballad tradition.

There is no particular reason to think that Langland means that Robin and Ranulf of Chester were contemporary with each other. We do find a statement in the Forresters manuscript text of "Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham" [Child 139] that "Randolph kept Robin fifteen winters" (Knight, p. xvii, with the actual text on p. 2), but there is no reason to think that that the "Randolph" of this reference is the Earl of Chester (a point even Knight admits on p. 2).

Even if Ranulf and Robin are linked in Langland's mind, it isn't much help. Several Earls of Chester were named Ranulf, with the second and the sixth being probably the most important (Child, in his note on p. 40, seems to refer to the sixth earl).

The first Ranulf became Earl of Chester in 1121 when his uncle died in the famous sinking of the White Ship (Tyerman, p. 146). His son, the second Ranulf, succeeded to the Earldom in 1129 (Tyerman, p. 146) but did not become heavily involved in politics until the time of King Stephen (reigned 1135–1154). Bradbury, p. 144, calls him the fourth earl of Chester, and notes on p. 175 that he died in 1153.

Warren-Henry, p. 25, says of him: "In the extent of lands he held and the number of his vassals, Earl Ranulf de Gernons eclipsed all the other barons of the realm. The marcher lordship of Cheshire was only one element, and not the most important, in an honor which embraced wide estates throughout the midlands, major holdings in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, and manors scattered over most of the southern counties. In

addition he held important lordships and hereditary fiefs which made him a dominating influence in western Normandy as far as the confines of Brittany."

According to Bradbury, p. 37, "Ranulf de Gernons (the mustachioed) was a vitriolic individual." During the civil war between Stephen and the rightful queen Matilda, he had reason to dislike Stephen, but generally stayed neutral — until Stephen made an attack on his position. Ranulf called on the forces of the Empress Matilda and her half-brother Robert of Gloucester. The combined armies routed and captured Stephen (Warren-Henry, p. 26); had Matilda's behavior been even slightly more reasonable, she might have been able to assume the throne. When she failed, Ranulf went back to Stephen's side — only to be arrested by that King (Bradbury, p. 137). This forced Ranulf back into rebellion, and prolonged the civil war — which, until that moment, Stephen had been winning.

There is an interesting sidelight on this Ranulf. We know that he had an ongoing quarrel with the constable of Nottingham, William Peverel, whom he accused of poisoning him (Bradbury, p. 164). So he might have passed on his hatred of the Nottingham official to Robin — except that he lived too early to be involved with a longbow-bearing yeoman.

A later Ranulf of Chester — the "third Randle" of Child, p. 40 — became earl in 1181 and held the dignity for half a century, i.e. during the late reign of Henry II, through the entire reigns of Richard I and John, and into the reign of Henry III. He seems to be the standard nominee for Langland's earl; Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 50, notes several other recent scholars who have accepted this link. Phillips/Keatman, p. 43, says unequivocally that he is the one. And he does have a link of sorts with the tale of Robin Hood, since this Ranulf is mentioned in the story of Fulk FitzWarren.

Baldwin, p. 28, says that "The only thirteenth-century Randolf (more usually Ranulf), Earl of Chester, was Ranulf 'de Blundeville' (i.e. of Oswestry), who died in 1232" — although he is honest enough to add that "it is unclear if he was associated with Robin in some way." Nor, of course, can we arbitrarily assume that Robin lived in the thirteenth century, although this is Baldwin's position.

Powicke, p. 2, observes that when the barons wished to make the Earl Marshal regent over the new King Henry III in 1216, who was still a young boy, "The marshal was reluctant. In any case he felt that they should await the coming of Ranulf de Blundevill, earl of Chester, the greatest baron of the realm." Only when Ranulf arrived did the marshal finally accept the office of protector — although, when an attempt was made to bring Ranulf into the Marshal's government in 1217, the barons rejected it (Jolliffe, p. 267). Eventually they drove Ranulf to the brink of rebellion (Jolliffe, p. 268) — which makes a certain amount of sense for an associate of Robin.

Langland/Schmidt, p. 427, thinks this is the Ranulf that Langland meant, since his note on the verse refers to the Earl who lived from 1172–1232. Langland/Goodridge, p. 274, says "The Earl of Chester may be the one who married Constance [of Brittany], the widow of Geoffrey Plantagenet and mother of Prince Arthur (Earl from 1181 to 1231). Though his exploits are known, no ballads about him have survived."

Except that this Ranulf is involved in the tale of Fulk FitzWarren (Knight, p. 2; Cawthorne, p. 114), which is considered a source of the "Gest." This almost makes me

wonder if Langland's reference to Robin and Ranulf might actually be to tales of Robin and Fulk. But this is pure speculation.

Although the ballads are lost, Wilson, p. 128, says that Dugdale's *Baronage* has a "long unhistorical story, ascribed to an 'old monk of Peterborough,'" of the deposition of King John, with Ranulf of Chester defeating a French invasion and crowning Henry III — obviously something that sounds a lot like a romance.

Ranulf's career was certainly ballad-worthy. How often, for instance, do you hear of a man kidnapping *his own wife*? Yet Ranulf did so (Gillingham, p. 260): When in 1199 the throne of England became vacant after the death of Richard I, Ranulf had to decide whether to support John or Ranulf's own stepson Arthur of Brittany as the new King of England — and he chose John. Arthur's mother, Constance of Brittany, who was now his wife, obviously wasn't happy with that. She preferred to be separated from him, and to live in Brittany, while Ranulf preferred England, so he had to capture her to assert control over her (Cawthorne, p. 32; according to Tyerman, p. 333, the marriage was finally dissolved not too long after).

Late in his life, according to Tyerman, p. 334, Ranulf was a participant in the Fifth Crusade (the one that attacked Egypt). And crusaders always tended to attract romantic tales.

Apart from the mention of "rhymes of Robin Hood," there are two other comments in Langland that may have some very tangential interest to the Robin Hood legend (cf. Holt, p. 156). In the A-text, V.234 (Langland/KnottFowler, p. 82), we read

Roberd the robbour on Reddite [making restitution] lokide.

In the B-text, V.462 (Langland/Schmidt, p. 85), this becomes

Roberd the robbere on Reddite loked.

Despite the disagreement on the spelling of "robber," (and the fact that the C-text changes "robbere" to another word with the same meaning, "ruyflare" or "ryfeler," VI.316; Langland/Pearsall, p. 123), there is no question but that Langland's Robert was one. And Robin is the diminutive of Robert. It may be coincidence — *Piers the Plowman* is alliterative, and Langland may have simply wanted a name beginning with "R" — but it is of note that this robber has the same name as Our Hero. Indeed, one manuscript actually reads "Robyn" for "Roberd" (MS. W, according to Mustanoja, p. 61; this is at Trinity College, Cambridge, MS. B.15.17, according to Langland/Schmidt, p. liv., which James, volume 1, p. 480, dates to the fourteenth century; the binding contains fifteenth century materials)

In addition, Langland mentions "Folvyles Laws" (Passus XIX, line 248 in Langland/Schmidt). According to Baldwin, pp. 107–108, and Holt, p. 155, this is a reference to the Folville Gang, a band of robbers active in the reigns of Edward II and Edward III who in 1332 robbed a justice of the King's Bench (Baldwin, p. 106); they were last active in 1347 (Alford, p. 187). Baldwin, p. 105, says that they eventually made peace with the authorities (perhaps because they were willing to fight for Edward III in France), and says on p. 107 that they were admired in certain quarters. Despite Langland's reference, which seems to imply that "Folville Laws" were instances of "might makes right," the account of their deeds and their pardon could have influenced the Robin Hood legend.

John Ball, the hedge priest who helped incite Wat Tyler's 1381 rebellion, told his listeners to bid "Piers Plowman go to his work and chastise wel Hobbe the Robbere" (for full text of the remark, see *John Ball's Letter to the Peasants of Essex* in the Appendix). Since there is at least one instance of a man being called both "Hobbehod" and "Robehod," Cawthorne, p. 40, thinks this might be a reference to Robin. It is interesting to note that the letter's salutation says it is from "Iohan Schef, som tym Seynte Marie prest of Ȝork" [York] — the very religious house with which the Knight of the "Gest" was involved. But Sisam's extensive notes on this verse do not link it to Robin Hood; the one historical figure he cites is Robert Hales, the Treasurer of England who was killed in 1381 during Wat Tyler's Rebellion — although Sisam thinks even that link unlikely. Sisam also notes that "lawless men" were called "Robert's men" starting in the fourteenth century.

Geoffrey Chaucer

Curiously, from about the same time as Langland and John Ball comes a mention of a yeoman archer, clad in much the same forest costume we see in most Robin Hood stories: lines 101, 103–105, 108 of the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* read as follows (Chaucer/Benson, p. 25):

A YEMAN [yeoman] hadde he and servantz namo…
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily…
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe…

In line 118, Chaucer goes on to call the yeoman a "forster" = forester.

For the peacock feathers, see the note on Stanza 132 of the "Gest." For foresters, see the note on Stanza 1. On this basis, Dobson/Taylor, p. 35, suggest that "this may have been Chaucer's own portrait of Robin Hood," and Pollard seems convinced (pp. 47–48) that Chaucer's yeoman is patterned on Robin, although we of course have no proof that Robin was called a forester, or even was considered to live in the forest, at this time.

Keen also mentions a line in *Troilus and Criseyde* which reads "From haselwode, there joly Robin pleyde" (V.1174 in Chaucer/Benson; stanza 168/line 1174 on p. 372 of Chaucer/Root), which Keen — without manuscript support that I can see — converts to "hazellwood there Jolly Robin plaid."

Keen thinks this passage a reference to Robin Hood, and Knight/Ohlgren, p. 1, call it "probably a glimpse of the outlaw at a distance." Chaucer/Benson, p. 1054, mentions the possibility but regards it as improbable, noting that "Joly Robin was a common name for a shepherd or rustic." Chaucer/Mills, p. 274, Chaucer/Root, p. 550, and Mustanoja, p. 64, appear to think it a reference to the French Robin-and-Marian traditions — in other words, not a reference to Robin but perhaps part of the connection that led eventually to Maid Marian. Cawthorne, p. 31, seems to accept it as a reference to Robin, and Baldwin, p. 28, mentions it without even quoting the doubts. Chaucer/Warrington's notes don't even mention Robin Hood. Chaucer/Benson and Chaucer/Warrington both think the hazelwood is a place divorced from contact with society — an otherworld — rather than part of the greenwood; similarly, Chaucer/Root calls the

hazelwood "the land of fancy" and says the line is a reference to events that "will never come at all.

What is certain is that Chaucer himself never mentioned Robin Hood by name, though the Miller and several others in the Canterbury Tales are named Robin. However, some Chaucer manuscripts *do* mention Robin, hinting that the scribes, at least, were aware of him. The trail here begins with a piece called *The Reply of Friar Daw Topias* (Wilson, p. 139; Chambers, p. 130). It reads

And many men speken of Robyn Hood,
And shotte nevere in his bowe.

Cawthorne, p. 40, also notes this proverb in an edition of *Dives and Pauper*, which he cites as being a few years older than *Friar Daw Topias*. Dobson/Taylor, p. 2, say that *Dives* was published by Pynson in 1493, but never really critically edited; it refers elsewhere to Robin Hood as a figure of song.

What Wilson believes to be a variant this proverb, minus the name of Robin, is found in *Troilus and Criseyde*, iii.859–861 (actually ii.861): "Thei speken, but thei benten nevere his bowe" (Chaucer/Root, stanza 123/line 861 on p. 97 of Chaucer/Root). And two manuscripts of Chaucer, H4 and Ph, make the line to refer to Robin: H4 reads "Thei spekyn of robynhod but thei bente never his bowe"; Ph, although it preserves the original wording, has a contemporary gloss that says "of Robyn hood" (Chaucer/Root, p. 449). We should note, however, that neither manuscript is considered very good; (Chaucer/Benson, pp. 1161–1162). Holt, p. 141, also thinks this a de-Robinized version of the proverb).

For full discussion of this proverb, see Dobson/Taylor, p. 289. This is their section on proverbs of Robin Hood, but this appears the only true proverb of the bunch.

The question then becomes, did Chaucer remove the reference to Robin, or did he know the proverb without it? There is no way to know, now. To me, it appears that the amorphous "Greenwood Legend" was known to Chaucer, but I don't think the evidence strong enough to claim that he knew Robin himself. On the other hand, given Chaucer's general hesitation to discuss the controversial, I don't think we can say he *didn't* know him.

Early Chronicles

Walter Bower

Robin occurs in several chronicles, but they place him in very diverse contexts. At one time it was believed he was mentioned by John of Fordun *c.* 1386 (Benet, p. 934), but Fordun's Chronicle was continued by Bower, and it is now accepted that Bower interpolated the reference to Robin (Keen, p. 177; this was *c.* 1445, according to Holt, p. 40).

The Latin text is in a footnote on p. 41 of Child, and a translation on p. 26 of Knight/Ohlgren. Bower himself called Robin a "famous murderer" and links him to Little John; he dates them to 1266 (reign of Henry III. Holt speculates that this might make him one of the defeated followers of Simon de Montfort; compare Keen, p. 177; Chambers, p. 130; Dobson/Taylor, p. 16; Cawthorne, p. 36). The account involves Robin being trapped

while hearing mass and managing to escape. Bower thus is in the odd situation of calling Robin a murderer and saying he was saved because of his religious devotion!

Pollard, p. 3, observes that Bower's tale of Robin is not attested elsewhere.

Baldwin, in fact, makes Bowyer's dating the basis for his whole book. He thinks Robin is based on Roger Godberd and Little John on Walter Devyas. Godberd was a rather rambunctious member of the yeomanry who fought for de Montfort, and Devyas was his ally (their biography occupies pp, 153–166 of Baldwin). The Knight of the "Gest," on this argument, is Sir Richard Foliot (Baldwin, p. 169), one of whose castles resembled the description of Sir Richard's in the "Gest" (Baldwin, p. 170), and who did shelter Godberd for a time (Holt, p. 99). Baldwin, p. 172, compares several of their actions to the events in the "Monk." Some have even claimed that he operated in Sherwood Forest (Baldwin, p. 182).

The parallels to the story of Robin, the Knight, and the Abbot are impressive enough that Holt allows the possibility that Godberd's story was a source for the "Gest" — though there is the obvious difficulty that the king involved is not named "Edward." But the Godberd tale might be the related to the strand of the "Gest" responsible for fits I+II+IV.

There are difficulties, however. Even Baldwin admits, p. 168, that Roger Godberd was not known as an archer — and, surely, if there is one thing Robin Hood must be, it is an archer! Nor was Godberd notably pious, and he had a wife and children (Baldwin, p. 174). Plus he was taken into custody in 1272 (Cawthorne, p. 152), and stayed there long enough to plead a case (Baldwin, pp. 183–184, 187). And Holt, p. 98, says that the association of Godberd with Sherwood was a misreading of the source manuscript; it actually reads "Charnwood."

Plus the story of Gilbert de Middleton has parallels to the story of the Knight which are about as close as those of Roger Godberd (see note on Stanza 292) — and allow us a more consistent chronological framework. And, if the story of Roger Godberd is so carefully preserved that even the description of the Knight's castle is accurate, why does the "Gest" not tell any other parts of Roger Godberd's story?

And Baldwin, p. 172, quotes a section in Bower about Robert Hood, who was one of the rebels against Henry III — but in a context separate from his mention of Robin Hood. Bower's information about Robert Hood may be from a historical source, but his information about Robin Hood is from legend, and there is no reason to equate the two.

Admittedly, some secondary support for Bower's date in the reign of Henry III comes from the fact that Henry, in his 1251 Assize of Arms, includes bowmen for the first time; men with property of 40 to 100 shillings were to bear a sword, dagger, and bow (Featherstone, p. 26; this contrasts with the first known assize, of 1181, in which a freeman with land worth 16 marks was supposed to have a hauberk, helmet, shield, and lance, according to Mortimer-Angevin, p. 54). Thus the time of Henry III is the period when the longbow was first coming to prominence.

Admittedly Gerald of Wales refers to what sounds like a longbow in 1188 (Baldwin, p. 46). But we are referring to English, not Welsh, use of the longbow. Even Henry III's son Edward I still took mostly spearmen when he fought in Wales in the 1280s, and archers do not seem to have been important at the great battles of Lewes and Evesham

in the 1260s (Chandler/Beckett, p. 9). In any case, Lewes and Evesham were battles between the barons and Henry III; it doesn't make much sense for Robin to be a follower of Earl Simon de Montfort unless he was at least of the gentry.

This does not mean that Roger Godberd's exploits could not have contributed to the general outlaw legend; they might well have. But that does not make him the Original Robin, or even a direct source.

Chandler/Beckett, p. 9, claims that it was "not until the 1330s that [longbowmen's] full value began to be recognized." This is an argument that Robin-the-famous-archer should be dated between about 1251 (when bows were becoming common) and 1330 (when they were all but universal).

Andrew Wyntoun

The Scotsman Andrew de Wynton/Wyntoun (*c.* 1415, according to Holt, p. 40; Knight/Ohlgren, p. 24, dates him *c.* 1420; EncycLiterature, p. 1218 gives his dates as *c.* 1350–*c.* 1423; ScottishComp, p. 303, notes that his history runs through 1408) mentions Robin and John; see the note on Stanza 3. Wyntoun — who was an old man at the time he wrote his octosyllablic chronicle, and so would probably have known had the legend arisen in recent decades (Baldwin, p. 59), dates Robin to 1283–1285 (reign of Edward I), and places him in "Ynglewode and Bernysdale" or "Ingilwode and Bernnysdaile" ("Inglewood and Barnsdale"). Keen, p. 176, thinks the mention of Inglewood, not normally associated with Robin, may be by confusion with "Adam Bell" — although there is no evidence that Adam's tale existed at this time.

Interestingly, Young, p. 118, shows a chart of forest receipts for Inglewood in the 1300s, and it reveals a decline in the 1320s, hitting bottom in 1323, followed by a sharp spike in 1324 and rising to a peak in 1328 before declining again. In the chronology below, the low point corresponds exactly to the time when Robin was most active in the greenwood, and the ascent begins the year he was gone. Of course, the most likely explanation is that all this has to do with Edward II's wars with Scotland, the Duke of Lancaster, and the bad weather of the time, not with Robin Hood.

Alternately, Knight/Ohlgren, p. 24, suggest that the linkage of Inglewood and Barnsdale derives from the Barnsdale in Rutland, associated with the Earls of Huntingdon, who were Kings of Scotland. Except that the Scots king had lost the Huntingdon earldom a century before Wynton's time.

Robyn Hod in Scherewod stod

From about the same time is a scrap of poetry beginning

Robyn Hod in Scherewod stod,

Hodud & hathud, hosut & schod… (Wilson, p. 140. cf. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 18).

The fragment is only four lines, and the date of the handwriting is only a guess Baldwin, p. 28, would place it around 1410; but Wilson says only that the most likely date is early fifteenth century. Ohlgren/Matheson place *c.* 1425 based on the fact that it uses linguistic forms which were just coming into use.

Dobson/Taylor, p. 18, go so far as to call it "the very first poem on the subject of Robin Hood," but it tells us nothing. Its main significance, apart from being a very early "ryme of Robyn Hood," lies in the fact that it places him in Sherwood (a name which is

not mentioned even in the Nottingham portions of the "Gest") rather than Barnsdale. On the other hand, the mention of Sherwood is the only reason to assume the Robin Hood of this poem is the legendary outlaw.

Balancing that reference is a 1429 mention (supposedly as a legal maxim!) "Robin Hode en Bernesdale stode" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 18). Given the uncertainty of the date of the Sherwood reference, we really cannot say whether the Sherwood or Barnsdale reference is earlier. There are two copies of the Barnsdale version (DIMEV #4508), one of them a print by John Rastell, who was active *c.* 1512-1536 (Isaac, introduction to Rastell), compares to only one copy of the Sherwood verse (DIMEV #4509).

Miscellaneous References

Dobson/Taylor, p. 23, point to a chartulary of (probably) 1422 which mentions a Robin Hood's Stone; it seems to be on the same site as one of the places now known as Robin Hood's Well (in Barnsdale, on the Great North Road about four miles south of Sayles and Wentbridge).

A 1439 petition to parliament compares a certain Piers Venables to "Robyn-hode and his meyne" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 4; Chambers, p. 130). The next year, we find a gang making some sort of demonstration and declaring that they were "Robynhodesmen" (Baldwin, p. 28).

A ship *Robyn Hude* was at Aberdeen in 1438 (Chambers, p. 131, Dobson/Taylor, p 40), although we don't know why it was so named. Perhaps vaguely linked to this is a report of an "early fifteenth century sermon" which mentions prophecies of "Thomas of Asildowne [Thomas of Ercildoune, i.e. Thomas the Rhymer] and Robyn Hoode" (Pollard, p. 163. This seems to be the only early mention of a supernatural side to Robin — and, at that , it might not by prophecies by, but rather prophecies about, Robin. It would appear that this is the sermon mentioned by Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 50–51, which was preached to parliament by Chancellor Robert Stafford in 1433).

A letter from Sir William Monypenny, a French ambassador to the English court, reports in 1468 that "In another county, named 'Surforchier' [South Yorkshire? Sherwood Forest?], there have risen full three hundred archers and have made a captain like Robin and have sent to my Lord of Warwick to know if it is time to act..." (Lander, p. 113). This event is not otherwise known from the chronicles, but it sounds like an allusion to Robin. Could Monypenny have heard one of the Robin Hood ballads? And could it have given Warwick the idea for Robin of Redesdale's rebellion? (Lander points out that it cannot be a reference to Redesdale himself, since he came later.)

Our next mention of Robin probably comes from the ballads themselves, probably either "Robin Hood and the Monk," which occurs in ms. Cambridge Ff. 5.48 of about 1475, or "Robin Hood and the Potter." Soon after, we find a dramatic fragment of the story of "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" scribbled on the back of a slip of financial receipts dated 1475/6 C.E. (Note, incidentally, that Guy is *not* "Sir Guy"; he is a yeoman, not a knight.) The play is not the ballad itself, but it is almost certainly the same story. The *Complaynt of Scotland* (1549), which mentions many ballads, also mentions shepherds' tales of "Robene Hode and litil ihone" (Chambers, p. 165).

A note in the margin of a reference work, Higden's *Polychronicon*, mentions Robin Hood as a robber. The *Polychronicon* was written by Ranulf (or Ralph) Higden (or

Hyden, or Hygden), about whom little is known except that he probably died in 1364. It was a seven-book history of the world, popular enough to exist in about a hundred copies. In its original form, it seems to have ended with the year 1327, although there were continuations, including a common one taking the history to the year 1342 (Kunitz/Haycraft, p. 269). As a history, it is of slight significance, and the text does not itself mention Robin Hood. But because it was so common, it would easily pick up glosses about other historical events. That seems to be the case with this particular note.

The note is not contemporary with the text; it is believed to have been written in about 1460. It gives no date and few other details, but it is written in a part of the *Polychronicon* dealing with the late period of Edward I's reign (implying a date for Robin *c.* 1295). Although the newspapers at the time made a lot of noise about the discovery of this note (Baldwin, pp. 60–61), the uncertainty about its date dramatically reduces its value. Its interest lies in the fact that it is in a history copied in England (Baldwin, p. 62). Every previous verifiable mention is either Scottish (Bower, Wyntoun, Major; see Holt, p. 51) or literary rather than historical (Langland). (Indeed, Pollard, p. 64, makes the curious comment that, although the Robin Hood legend is clearly northern, the references to it in historical sources are all from southern England.)

Robin of Redesdale

The story of Robin of Redesdale shows just how hard it is to reconstruct history....

During the Wars of the Roses, a certain Robin, surname unknown, led a gang in Yorkshire which supported the Earl of Warwick in 1468 (Ross-Edward, p. 119). Another Robin, Robin of Redesdale raised a rebellion against Edward IV in 1469. This fellow also called himself "Robin Mend-All" (Ross-Edward, p. 126). The name is patently a disguise (Warkworth's Chronicle declares that Robin was really Sir William Conyers; Dockray, p. 69), and he there is no doubt that he was commissioned by the Earl of Warwick and other rebels, but Scott/Duncan, p. 531, calls him an "avatar" of Robin Hood. I agree that the name seems a clear attempt to invoke Robin's legend. This marks an interesting change; in the early 1400s, rebels called themselves "Jack' — in 1450, it was Jack Cade, and a rebel of the 1430s called himself Jack Sharp (Wolffe, p. 66).

On the other hand, another rebel of the period was called Robin of Holderness, and although Holt, p. 58, links both Robin of Redesdale and Robin of Holderness with Robin Hood, the rebel of Holderness had few Robin Hood characteristics; it seems much more likely that "Robin" was just a common name for "ordinary folks" (or maybe "ordinary free yeomen") Note, however, the fact that Little John in Stanza 149 of the "Gest" claims to be from Holderness.

It is fascinating to note that Robin of Redesdale's rebellion prompted Edward IV to come north to try to suppress him (Ross-Edward, p. 129), just as the king in the "Gest" came north to deal with Robin Hood. Edward, in fact, seems to have based himself at Nottingham for a time (Ross-Edward, p. 131). And, somewhat later, Edward formally pardoned Conyers/Robin (Ross-Edward, p. 144).

At the time, though, Edward IV's attempt to deal directly with Robin of Redesdale was a complete flop; Redesdale was an open rebel, and Edward's attempt to suppress him never got off the ground; Edward in fact was captured soon after by the Earl of

Warwick and temporarily removed from power (Ross-Edward, p. 133). And Redesdale beat forces sent by Edward to deal with him at the battle of Edgecote (Dockray, p. 65)

Fitting this into the Robin Hood legend is tricky. Our sources for this period are extremely poor (Ross-Edward, pp. 130–131), so we may not know what actually happened. Ross-Edward devotes an appendix to the sources for the various Robin-the-rebels (pp. 439–440), noting that they are so confused that different scholars have proposed four different explanations:

1. That there was a single rebellion, by Robin of Redesdale;
2. That there was a single rebellion, by Robin of Holderness (or "Robert Hulderne");
3. That there were two rebellions, one by Redesdale and one by Holderness;
4. (this is the one that Ross tentatively follows:) That there were three rebellions, by Redesdale, by Holderness, and a revived rebellion by Redesdale. Reid, pp. 431–432, has a variant on this in which Robin of Holderness came first, then Robin of Redesdale, who was "suppressed" but then revived his rebellion.

Curiously, there seems to have been another "Robyn of Riddesdale" scare after the overthrow of Richard III in 1485 (Goodman, p. 96), but this seems to have been only a scare, not an actual uprising.

About all we can say for certain is that one of the rebellions seemed to invoke Robin Hood. We can't really say what parts of the Robin Hood legend it involved. What does seem clear is that, by 1469, Robin Hood was well enough known that it was meaningful to invoke him as the leader of a rebellion and as someone who can amend wrongs.

The Paston Records

At almost the same time as the Robin Rebellions, we find a mention of Robin Hood in the Paston Letters (April 16, 1473): John Paston II, writing to his younger brother John Paston III, saying (apparently of the stableboy W. Wood) "I have keypd hym thys iij yere to pley Seynt Jorge *and* Robynhod *and* the shryff off Notyngham, *and* now when I wolde haue good horse he is goon in-to Bernysdale, *and* I wyth-owt a kepere" (Paston/Davis, vol. 1 p. 461; letter 275; cf. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 57; Phillips/Keatman, p. 4; Holt, p. 142 things the reference is instead to a Kothye Plattyng, mentioned in the same letter, but who is found still in service a few pages later). In other words, this Wood had performed in a play about Robin Hood and the Sheriff for three years, then run off.

It may be that Wood's escapade was inspired by the play of Guy of Gisborne; although the letter cited above is the only mention in the Paston letters of Robin Hood (at least according to Davis's index), it has been suggested that the play itself came from the Paston correspondence (Dobson/Taylor, p. 204; Pollard, pp. 12, 164), and the glue on the back of the paper seems to imply that it was extracted from a larger collection of materials (Cawthorne, p. 68). Dobson/Taylor, p. 18, suggest that Paston's reference to Barnsdale is a joke, and I suspect they're right (Wood clearly ran off, but to Barnsdale?), but it still links Robin with Barnsdale and with the Sheriff. And John Paston II refers to Robin Hood without offering any explanation of the name. Clearly he expects his brother to understand the reference.

Note further the point made above that the manuscript of Robin Hood and the Potter was probably owned by the Paston associate Richard Calle. Thus we have three

substantial Paston links to Robin Hood: The "Potter," the servant W. Wood who performed in the play and ran away, and, less certainly, the play of Guy itself. It seems Robin was very well known in the Paston area of Norfolk by 1470 at the latest — and known as an outlaw who lived in Barnsdale..

The May Games

The Tollet Window, mentioned above in connection with Friar Tuck, is only one of many pieces of evidence showing that, by the late fifteenth century, Robin Hood was a character in the May games — Holt, p. 194, thinks that this was how most people knew him around 1500. And most scholars, including Dobson/Taylor, p. 41 and Holt, p. 160, think this is how he came to be associated with Maid Marian.

The first known instance of Robin in the games comes from Exeter in 1427 (Keen, p. 228). But, except that he was a bowman associated with Little John, little can be learned from these early games. We do read that Robin collected tolls for the games, which might link to the notion of robbery (so Holt, pp. 195–196). Supposedly playing the role of Robin Hood was very popular, and men had to wait years for the chance, at least in the town of Yeovil (Cawthorne, p. 70).

Pollard, p. 91, seems to suggest that the revival of the forest laws under Henry VII Tudor (reigned 1485–1509) would have renewed interest in that most noteworthy of poachers, Robin Hood — which might be why the "Gest" was printed at least twice around this time. But the number of mentions of Robin in the century before 1485 reduces the force of this argument.

Henry VIII

Supposedly Henry VIII played around at being an outlaw in 1510 — "he made a carefully prepared invasion of Queen Catherine's chamber one morning, with a dozen companions, all in short coats of Kentish Kendal with hoods on their heads, each with his bow and arrows, sword, and buckler, 'like outlaws, or Robin Hood's men, whereof the Queen, the ladies, and all others there were abashed.'" Only after dancing did the men reveal their identity (Williams, pp. 46–47).

Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 186, suggests that this was associated with the 1515 publication of Julian Notary's edition of the "Gest" (Child's **d**), but since we cannot prove either that Notary produced an edition or that he did it in 1515, this is obviously speculation.

Dancing with women is utterly unlike the early legend, but the gear is Robin Hood-like. Indeed, Edward Hall, the source for the story, compares them to Robin Hood's men (Cawthorne, p. 72; Dobson/Taylor, p. 42; the text of Hall's report is in Ohlgren/Matheson, pp. 127–128) — but he was writing a third of a century later and is not a very reliable author. Ohlgren nonetheless suggests on p. 128 of Ohlgren/Matheson that there is some sort of link between Hall's account and the events of the last two fits of the "Gest."

Kendall Green was a color associated with outlaws, see the note on Stanza 422.

We shouldn't make too much of Henry's games; Mattingly, p. 129, says of this event, "Once when the court was at Greenwich, a party of masked invaders, all in Kendal Green, burst into the Queen's apartments, conveniently followed by a band of music." It

was obviously evident at once that this was Henry VIII — and the fact that he chose outlaws is not unusual, because he and his fellow revelers did this sort of thing regularly, invading the Queen's apartments in the guise of "Turks or Moors or Germans."

Later, in 1515, Henry saw a Robin Hood pageant (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 9; Williams, p. 47; Cawthorne, pp. 72–73), although we have few details; it seems to have involved a longbow exhibition. This is perhaps most significant because Anthony Munday (of whom more below) used this as a framing device for his plays: The opening phase of "The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington" features actors playing Henry's courtiers presenting a play before King Henry, with the courtiers then taking the roles of Robin and colleagues, making it a "play within a play" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 221; Knight/Ohlgren, p. 298, plus the cast of characters on p. 303, etc.).

John Major and his followers

In 1521, historian John Major (according to Holt, p. 41) dated Robin to 1193/4 (reign of Richard I), although he called this an "estimate" (Keen, p. 177; Knight/Ohlgren, p. 27, quotes him as saying that Robin lived "About this time.... as I conceive"). Major confirms that tales — and songs — of Robin were widespread (Dobson/Taylor, p. 5), that he defended women, that he robbed abbots, and that he had a large band of a hundred men (compare Stanza 229, where Robin is credited with seven score followers). Major condemned his acts but called him the "humanest" of robbers.

Baldwin, p. 29, points out that Major credited Robin with helping rather than robbing the poor. Major also calls Robin the "dux" of robbers, which Knight/Ohlgren render as "chief." Cawthorne, p. 38, points out that "dux" was also the root of the English word "duke," and suggests that this was the first attempt to link Robin to the nobility — which is perhaps possible, but the context seems to imply merely that Robin was the foremost robber. And to call Robin a shadow duke, rather than a shadow earl, is impossible in Major's context — the first English Dukes were not created until the reign of Edward III (Cannon, p. 556; Barber, p. 20), and it was not until some time later that England saw its first non-royal duke.

In any case, Major published his work *after the "Gest" was published,* and probably long after it was written, so we have no reason to believe that the author of the "Gest" had even heard of a date in the era of Richard and John. Phillips/Keatman, p. 52, believe Major originated the dating to the reigns of Richard and John.

Major's date was followed by John Leland (fl. 1530) and later by Richard Grafton (fl. 1550), who claims to have found records of Robin in the exchequer rolls — records which, however, cannot now be found. Grafton, who seems to have published in 1569 (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 27), also claimed an "ancient pamphlet" (but what are the odds that he would have an unprinted pamphlet? And if it was printed, then it wasn't very ancient). Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 187, suggests that the pamphlet was a copy of the "Gest," but if this were so, why would Grafton have dated Robin to the reign of Richard I? Phillips/Keatman, p. 52, make the perhaps slightly more reasonable suggestion that the "ancient" pamphlet is in fact John Major's tale of Robin — then about thirty years old!

Leland was the first to claim that Robin was a nobleman (Phillips/Keatman, p. 29). Grafton's claims of documentation seem to have given his claims extra weight (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 28), but there is every reason to think the claims were false. For more on Grafton, see the notes to Stanzas 451, 454.

Baldwin, p. 30, says that Grafton claimed Earl Robin was outlawed for debt — and points out that this is extremely unlikely. Earls certainly went bankrupt from time to time, but they didn't get outlawed, they just had to forfeit properties.

Other Sixteenth Century Mentions

The Scotsman Gavin Douglas in 1501 mentions "Robene Hude, and Gilbert with the quhite hand" in his long poem *The Palis of Honoure* (line 1718; Douglas/Parkinson, p. 66) — the first mention of Gilbert in the legend. Dobson/Taylor, p. 5, think this an allusion to the "Gest," and Douglas/Parkinson also mention the "Gest" in their note on the line, but why, in that case, link Robin to such a minor character?

William Tyndale, the first man to translate the Bible from Greek into English, in 1528 denounced Robin Hood stories as "ribabldries" (Pollard, p. 10).

Around 1550, Bishop Hugh Latimer mentions "Robin Hood's Day" in a sermon to Edward VI (reigned 1547–1553), and gripes that he cannot find people to preach to on this day (Dobson/Taylor, p. 39); this is probably a complaint about the May Games (Hazlitt, p. 519), though it also reminds me a bit of the Paston dramas.

The Stationer's Register for 1557–1558 contains a mention of the "ballett of Wakefylde and a grene" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 47). If, as seems likely, this is an early printed version of "The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield," that would make it perhaps the first Robin Hood piece printed after the "Gest," and the first true broadside print associated with Robin. There was also a "ballett of Robyn Hod" entered in 1562–1563, but this we cannot identify at present. Dobson/Taylor, p. 48, say that Robin Hood broadsides are commonly registered starting in 1624; a handful of these survive today.

In 1560, William Copland registered a Robin Hood play in the Stationer's Register (Cawthorne, p. 74). This is very likely the play which appears at the end of the **f** print of the "Gest," although the matter cannot be proved.

Our first tune associated with Robin, according to Bronson, comes from the period from 1575–1591, but as it is simply called "Robin hoode," and has no lyrics, we do not know whether it was for one of the extant ballads or is something else.

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 5, observe that a "remarkable number of plays and games of Robin Hood" are attested, from all parts of Britain, by 1600. Indeed, in 1577–1578, the Scottish Kirk felt the need to go beyond its action of 1555 and suppress "playes of Robin Hood, King of May, and sick others, on the Sabboth Day" (i.e. the May Games) and later to ban them entirely (Child, p. 45). Robin even begins to appear on the London stage in the 1590s (Cawthorne, p. 77) — at least once in association with the Pindar of Wakefield (Cawthorne, p. 78). One of these plays includes the unlikely stage direction "Enter Robin Hood in Lady Faukenberg's nightgown, a turban on his head" (Cawthorne, p. 80).

But these are only mentions; we do not have the scripts of the plays themselves, and cannot know what state of the legend they reveal. Knight/Ohlgren think Robin is used

in them to raise money for community projects. On p. 6 they suggest that the surname "Robinhood" arose because it became hereditary in some families for someone to play Robin in village pageants (although the citations in Holt imply that it was around well before any hint of such pageants). Knight/Ohlgren, p. 7, suggest that the plays may have preceded and given rise to the ballads. Chronologically this is possible — the Paston reference to a Robin Hood drama is roughly contemporary with the earliest surviving ballads, though the mention of "rhymes" in *Piers Plowman* is much older — but the difficulty is that it is much easier for a ballad to spread than a play. The first play might have preceded the first ballad — but in general, it seems likely that the ballads preceded and gave rise to the legend that the plays portrayed.

The London stage had certainly seen Robin in drama by 1593, when George Peele's *Edward the First, sirnamed Edward Longshanks* was published (Dobson/Taylor, pp. 43–44).

Anthony Munday

We do not know the exact date when Anthony Munday started working on Robin Hood plays, but we know that he was paid five pounds for one in February 1598 (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 296).

Munday died in 1633; he born 1553 according to his tombstone, although there are indications that he was younger, according Kunitz/Haycraft, pp. 370–371; Boyce, p. 453, gives his birth date as "*c.* 1560."

Munday had apparently been a printer and an unsuccessful actor before turning his limited talents to writing. Kunitz/Haycraft, p. 371, give an amazing summary of his early career: "First he imitated the *Mirror for Magistrates* in two gloomy poems, *The Mirror of Mutability* and *The Pain of Pleasure*. Then he imitated Lyly's *Eupheues* in his prose romance *Zelauto*. Next, he turned informer against his Catholic friends and was instrumental in having several of them executed. In 1581–82 he wrote several anti-Catholic pamphlets and *The English-Roman Life*… " It was apparently around 1585 that he turned his talents to drama.

His two dramatic works on the Robin Hood theme were "The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington" and "The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington." Knight/Ohlgren suggest that this was originally intended to be one play, but was too long. Henry Chettle was called upon to break it into two items (making it one of the small handful of items we still have from Chettle's pen; Kunitz/Haycraft, pp. 104–105), although Dobson/Taylor, p. 221, think the plays are substantially as Munday wrote them.

The pair of plays seem to have been produced in 1599, although Kunitz/Haycraft, p. 371, date them to 1601 (the date they were printed) and Boyce, p. 453, to 1598 (apparently on the basis that Philip Henslowe commissioned "antony monday" to write a Robin Hood play in that year; Dobson/Taylor, p. 221).

Whether one play or two, monograph or collaboration, a primary source seems to have been Michael Drayton's 1594 poem "Matilda, the Fair and Chaste Daughter of Lord. R. Fitzwater" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 222) — a long work now almost impossible to find. But Munday used his sources with "a freedom which occasionally bordered on violence" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 222, quoting the Malone Society edition of Munday).

It has been suggested (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 296) that the Robin Hood plays inspired Shakespeare to write "As You Like It." However, of the four Shakespeare references I

checked, only one even mentioned the possibility, and only as a possibility. Perhaps the Munday plays suggested a play in the greenwood — but Shakespeare also used the greenwood in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" without evident external prompting. Such vague thematic links as exist probably derive from the fact that Shakespeare's "As You Like It" is indirectly based on "The Tale of Gamelyn."

There is an actual link between Munday and Shakespeare (as well as Chettle), but it is quite indirect: Munday seems to have been the primary scribe, as well as the primary author (perhaps with Chettle), of the play "Sir Thomas More," which Shakespeare (and three or four others) were called upon to rewrite because it was so lousy (RiversideShakespeare, p. 1683).

Although he had a modest success as a translator of French and Spanish romances, Munday seems to have been a hack; only one other of his unquestioned plays survives ("John a Kent and John a Cumber," written in 1594 according to Craig, p. 187), although Kunitz/Haycraft, p. 371, also credit him with "Fidele and Fortunio" (1585) and "Sir John Oldcastle" (1600).

None of these products is regarded as memorable; Craig, p. 109, is the most charitable, and praises the Robin Hood plays and the poem "I serve a mistress whiter than the snow'" (which does absolutely nothing for me), yet even Craig admits that Munday was "not a great author." FordEtAl, p. 126, quotes an early source which calls him a "dismal draper of misplaced literary ambitions" (a wisecrack that is widely quoted but somehow never attributed). He would be almost completely forgotten were it not for his work on the Robin Hood plays and "Sir Thomas More."

It is an interesting comment on the power of Elizabethan theater that such a lousy work as Munday's plays could have so much influence on tradition. Admittedly Shakespeare's so-called "history" plays, which have about as much history in them as Hitler had friendship for Jews, have distorted people's understanding of the Plantagenets for centuries — but that's Shakespeare. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 10, describe Munday's works as the best of the "gentrified" stories of Robin Hood, but grant that the Munday version "lacks an inner thematic and political tension," resulting in the enfeebling of the tradition.

Dobson/Taylor, p. 44, point out ironically that another alleged Munday play, "Metropolis Coronata, The Triumphes of Ancient Drapery," completely changes the scenario and makes Robin the son-in-law not of Lord Fitzwater but of Henry Fitz-Aylwin, the first Lord Mayor of London. However there is significant doubt about whether Munday wrote the 1615 pageant. In any case, it had far less influence than his earlier work. For Ohlgren's suggestions about this piece, see the notes to Stanza 310.

Dobson/Taylor's conclusion about Munday is that "No English writer has ever handled the Robin Hood legend in a more high-handed and cavalier fashion" (p. 45) — which does not alter the fact that he completely altered the shape of the story as told by future writers.

(Briggs, in her summaries of the Robin Hood tales, says on p. 474 of volume A.2 that there is "no satisfactory treatment of the subject of the noble outlaw" in the various motif indices, which is truly unfortunate in examining tales such as this. It makes it hard to track what elements Munday might have used.)

The Garlands and Other Late Sources

From around the same time as Munday is the biography of Robin found in British Library MS. Sloane 780. This seems to agree with Munday in making Robin a nobleman (Holt, p. 42, although damage to the manuscript at the key point, and the fact that it is generally quite hard to read, make this unsure).

In 1632, Martin Parker published "The True Tale of Robin Hood," which lists Robin's death date as December 4, 1198, very late in the reign of Richard I (Holt, p. 41).

The first of the surviving garlands was published in 1663 (and, according to Dobson/Taylor, p. 52, it cannot have been the earliest although the earlier examples are lost); it is the primary basis for many of Child's texts. Another garland followed in 1670. Eventually the garlands ran 80–100 pages and included 16–27 ballads (Dobson/Taylor, p. 51), although hardly what we would consider the best of them. Dobson/Taylor (p. 50) say that "generally, the Robin of the broadsides [and hence the garlands] is a much less tragic, less heroic and in his last resort less mature figure than his medieval predecessor." This was the Robin Hood of the middle seventeenth and eighteenth century — so different from his ancestor that I really think we have to regard them as different characters.

The Percy folio, the earliest source for, among others, "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne," "Robin Hood's Death," "Robin Hood and the Butcher," "Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar," "The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield," "Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires," and "Little John A Begging," is thought to date from the mid-seventeenth century; so is the Forresters manuscript, discovered in 1993, with texts, often edited or expanded, of 22 Robin Hood ballads (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 13). Knight, p. xviii, suggests that it might have been compiled as the basis for a new and improved garland.

In 1661, the town of Nottingham was publishing a play, "Robin Hood and His Crew of Souldiers" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 237). This obviously implies that Robin was well known by then — and that Nottingham thought him worth claiming, even though the tale heavily rewrites the legend and is really quite poor.

The papers of Thomas Gale (d. 1702) say that the inscription on Robin's alleged tombstone dated his death to 24 Kalends of December 1247 (this is not a legitimate Roman date, but may mean December 24; in any case the language of the inscription is far too modern for 1247 and Keen, p. 180, points out clear evidence of fakery: "Neither [English] spelling nor its pronunciation were ever so hideously mauled as here." (This was, of course, pre-Internet.) Those wishing to see the absurd thing for themselves may see Percy-Wheatley I, pp. 103–104, or — with a different spelling which is doubtless revealing — Holt, p. 42.

Cawthorne, p. 44, points out that Gale had the education to know better than to use a date of 24 Kalends, so he probably didn't invent it. And Ritson accepted this death date (Cawthorne, p. 45), because it fit his world view, even though it forced him to make Robin eighty-seven years old at the time! (Which, notes Hole, p. 86, makes the whole tale of the "Death" rather absurd — if Robin were in fact eighty-seven, then there is no particular reason to think the fatal bloodletting was malicious. Eighty-seven–year-olds who fall sick and are let blood have a strong tendency to die on their own!)

Phillips/Keatman, p. 37, think that the Gale inscription is based on Parker's "A True Tale of Robin Hood" [Child 154].

Other sources report a grave at Kirklees, with the inscription "Here lie Roberd Hude, William Goldburgh, Thomas" (names not otherwise found in Robin Hood lore, unless William Goldburgh was the real name of the man known in tradition as William Scarlock/Scathelock/Scarlett. A "Goldburgh/Goldborow" was associated with Havelok the Dane, according to Sands, p. 56, but I don't see that this helps much. We do find the names in Grafton; see the notes on Stanzas 451, 454. It has been suggested that the stone's inscription was taken from Grafton rather than the reverse). The grave was copied by Johnston in 1665, but was no longer legible in the time of Gough (1786), apparently because people had been chipping off portions as souvenirs or maybe even relics with curative powers (Cawthorne, p. 45; Baldwin, p. 75), so Gough reprinted Johnson's version.

Phillips/Keatman, p. 39, make the interesting point that the alleged grave is some 650 yards from the gatehouse at Kirklees priory — far beyond longbow range. Thus we can be certain that it either is not the grave of the actual Robin or that the story of the last arrow is false.

Today the grave slab can no longer be found — presumably because the artifact-hunters and seekers of toothache cures kept pounding on it — and Keen, pp. 180–182, notes conflicts in our sources regarding it. Gough said that the ground under the slab was undisturbed, meaning that the slab was either a trick or had been moved (Holt, p. 44). Holt, p. 41, is convinced that the slab was real, because so many witnesses reported it, but while the actual stone might have given us some useful information, the stories about it don't.

There are many other alleged relics. We know of a "Robin Hood's Stone" in Barnsdale, which apparently was seen by Henry VII in 1486 (Pollard, p. 70; Baldwin, p. 79, says that this is the first spot which can be documented to have been named for Robin). Also attested at a fairly early date (1622) is "Robin Hood's Well" -- but in fact there are at least two Robin Hood's Wells, according to Baldwin, p. 78, one near Nottingham and the other near Barnsdale; Betts, *Legends*, p. 17, says they are near Doncaster and Fountains Abbey).

Betts, pp. 16–17 in the "Legends" volume, gives a catalog of (mostly unlikely) sites and objects associated with Robin, such as Robin Hood's Penistone, a great rock which he is said to have kicked from the next town; a Robin Hood's Tower at Richmond Castle in Yorkshire; Robin Hood's Picking Rods in Derbyshire; and even Robin Hood's Bog in Northumberland.

Some may have been named for him long ago, but they are simply too widely scattered for all of them to have been originally associated with his legend. Indeed, Dobson/Taylor, pp. 295–311, give a catalog of artifacts and places traditionally associated with Robin Hood, and while the great majority are in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire, there are items in some two dozen counties, scattered from Kent to Essex to to Shropshire to Cumberland to Northumberland to Norfolk.

In addition to Robin's alleged gravestones, Keen, p. 182, notes *three* graves for Little John, one English (plates 7 and 36 in Baldwin offer a photo and an enhanced sketch of

the English gravestone, which is in Derby), one Scottish, one Irish (where one legend says he was executed; Cawthorne, p. 80, who also notes a piece of wood at Barnsley alleged to have been John's bow). Will Scarlet's grave is said to be at Blidworth in Nottinghamshire (Carthorne, pp. 80–81). But all such relics are either lost or too-recent inventions. And, of course, some could refer to other people named Robert Hood.

Percy's *Reliques* was published in 1765, containing "Guy of Gisborne" — the first publication of one of the older ballads since the White edition of the "Gest." Plus, of course, it sparked the "ballad mania" which eventually let to much more serious scholarship (Dobson/Taylor, p. 53).

In 1795, Joseph Ritson published his *Robin Hood*. It is to him that Dobson/Taylor, p. 54, give credit for the "rehabilitation" of Robin — and in one sense his book is invaluable, as it contains a vast amount of Robin Hood material not accessible elsewhere — note how many of the Child references are to Ritson; Dobson/Taylor, p. 54, remark that he published versions of all the major ballads except the "Monk." On p. 55, they mention some evidence that Ritson's work actually influenced the later tradition. (Note the title of Basdeo's work: *Discovering Robin Hood: The Life of Joseph Ritson*.) This is, I think, generally true; Ritson pushed the chronology that put Robin in Richard I's time and accepted many of the later accretions; even though he reprinted some of the older sources, I think he is responsible for finally killing off the medieval Robin Hood.

To give Ritson his due, he also marked an important change — for the first time, we see analysis of tradition. Kunitz/Haycraft, p. 437, say of him "Ritson was the first 'scientific' editor of such material, and he was savagely critical of editors who (like Percy) 'improved' their originals or (like Pinkerton) wrote spurious folk poetry."

Unfortunately, Ritson's skills did not match his ambitions; his editions of Robin Hood material retail a lot of late rubbish, making little attempt to separate early from late. Ritson, e.g., says that Robin was born in 1160, in the reign of Henry II (Holt, p. 45), providing what seemed like a basis for the Gilberts and Reads who "retold" the legend.

It was Ritson, too, who is largely responsible for the notion of "robbing the rich to give to the poor"; Major in 1521 had hints of it (Holt, p. 154), but it is not mentioned in the ballads. (Although Holt, p. 194, thinks it not unlikely: The poor weren't worth robbing, and by helping them even a little, Robin would build a support system). Dobson/Taylor, p. 55, suggest that this is a consequence of Ritson's radicalism — he was one of the few British supported of the French Revolution, and was a follower of Tom Paine..

Basdeo makes this a large theme of his book, describing on pp. 94-120 how Ritson was deeply interested in the progress of the revolution in France, and how he continued to support it even during the Terror, when saner men turned away from its orgy of blood. On p. 121, Basdeo says, "Having toned down his radicalism in his letters during the time of Pitt's terror, Ritson needed an outlet to express his revolutionary zeal" (referring to William Pitt the Younger, whose government often imprisoned revolutionaries without trial to prevent them from inflaming the population).

I have to suspect that this (plus his inherent mental instability) is also why Ritson accepted the idea that Robin lived in the reign of Richard I, even though he had edited the "Gest" that dated Robin in the reign of Edward. Ritson saw Robin as someone who

"set Kings, judges, and magistrates at defiance" (Basdeo, p. 123). The idea of Robin being an ally of one of the Edwards — especially the imperious Edward I or the savage, power-grabbing, inept Edward II — must have been anathema to him. So he grasped at the straw of a date in the reign of Richard I, that oh-so-romantic monarch (even though a very large fraction of historians now regard him as a terrible king), which let him "set at defiance" Richard's brother John. The fact that this was historically impossible, and that it had Richard all wrong (and wasn't so accurate about John either), wouldn't matter to Ritson; the false narrative would have given him a true hero.

It is hard to imagine how the notion of robbing the rich to give to the poor could have arisen out of history. Almost all historical highway robbers were in it exclusively for the money. Sharpe, pp. 49–50, notes the case of James Hind, or "Captain" Hind, who lived in the time of the English Civil War and boasted that "most of the robberies he committed had parliamentarians as their victim" (making him a curious parallel to the oh-so-loyal-to-the-monarch Robin Hood) — but the main reason that Hind was so noteworthy was that a robber with a political agenda was such a rare thing.

Hind was eventually to be credited to refusing to rob the poor (Sharpe, p. 54). It may well be that he was credited with this trait before Robin Hood was.

The lack of the theme of giving to the poor, so vital to the legend today, raises an interesting question: Why the Robin Hood legend became so widespread? If it wasn't due to transferring wealth from rich to poor, then why was he remembered? Perhaps for being free when few were? But this would not explain his survival after the reign of Edward III. It is yet another point on which we have no clear answer.

Sir Walter Scott was apparently the first to suggest that Robin was a Saxon opposed to the Norman Conquest. In 1820, he made Robin an opponent of the "Norman" dynasty of Henry II, Richard I, and John (Holt, p. 183). But as Holt observes, the Saxon/Norman dichotomy was false by 1189 — and to place Robin in, or before, the actual Norman period (which ended in 1154) is absurd; prior to William the Conqueror, there were no forest laws (Keen, p. 26).

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 164, mention that forests were in the law codes of Ine, Alfred, and Cnut, but these rules were not onerous; Young, p. 7, says that the Norman creation of royal forest and forest law "provoked more negative comments from chroniclers than any of their other acts." Nor was the longbow in use at the time. It is true that Cawthorne, p. 134, sees an antagonism between "the Saxon peasantry and the Norman gentry" in the Robin Hood tales — but there is absolutely no sign in the "Gest" of a distinction between Saxons and Normans (neither word is used; the only ethnic or national designation is "Englond(e)"), or even between those who speak English and those who speak French. This is another strong piece of evidence that the "Gest" is not set any time near the reign of Richard I, who spoke not a word of English! It wasn't until the time of the Edwards that the nobility and gentry shifted from speaking Anglo-Norman to speaking English.

Robin's place as a Saxon rebel could be by confusion with the tale of Hereward the Wake (itself mostly legend) — a suspicion strengthened by the parallels between "Robin Hood and the Potter" and a similar tale of Hereward's disguise, as well as by the fact that Hereward, like Robin, is said to have eventually reconciled with the King. Keen, p.

21, calls Hereward the "lineal ancestor of Robin Hood." But, although the link is obvious, Hereward was a political rebel, Robin an economic rebel. Robin has no quarrel with the King, only with the King's laws.

The forest laws offer additional evidence against an eleventh or early twelfth century date. There is no evidence that either Barnsdale or Sherwood was royal forest in Norman times. Young, p. 10, says "there is no mention of Sherwood forest [in Norman times], and its condition in the eleventh century can only be a matter of speculation." On p. 9, Young shows a map of known Norman forest sites. There are many along the Welsh border, and in the New Forest area in Hampshire and Suffolk. There are scattered sites in south-central and east-central England. There are none in Nottinghamshire or Yorkshire.

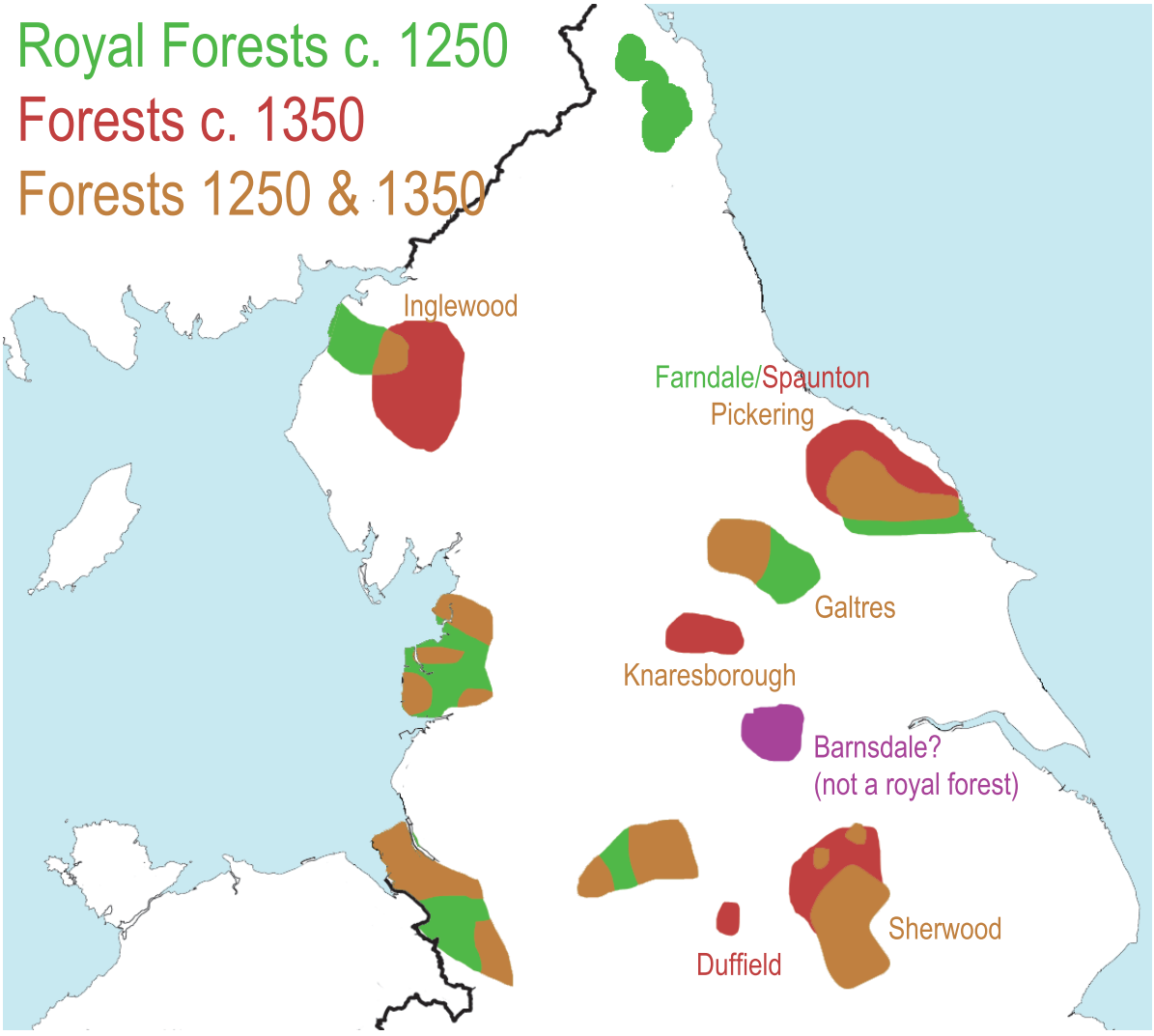


Figure 12: Sketch of the Royal Forests in the "Robin Hood Period." Only forests with possible significance in the "Gest" are named.

By the thirteenth century, we know that Sherwood was a royal forest (see map on pp. 62–63 of Young, or the simplified version below). So were Inglewood and Allerdale in Lancashire, plus Farndale, Pickering, and Galtres in Yorkshire and vicinity — but not

Barnsdale. In the early years of Edward III's reign, Sherwood, Inglewood, Galtres, and and Pickering were still forest, and Farndale had transformed into Spaunton. There is still no report of Barnsdale as a forest — although Knaresborough in Yorkshire, which is very close to Barnsdale (according to Holt, p. 86, it was the closest royal forest to Barnsdale), is now on the list.

A noteworthy point about the forests and forest law is how much the enforcement fell off during the Edwardian period. After all Edward I's attempts to take advantage of the forest, things slipped under Edward II and Edward III. Young, p. 154, documents an extreme decline in forest eyres in the fourteenth century, with typically only a few counties visited year by year. He notes that "Only Yorkshire had as many as four eyres in the fourteenth century (1334, 1336, 1337, and 1339)." It is fascinating to note that this is exactly the period when Robin Hood might have been lurking in Barnsdale after fleeing Edward II's court, if my reconstruction of the history behind the "Gest" is correct.

The one thing that comes out clearly in looking at the early chroniclers' accounts of Robin is how much they *disagree*. Clearly they have no more reliable data than we do. Holt, p. 185, compares the accretions of Scott and Ritson to an ivy strangling the old oak of the Robin Hood legend. This is partly false — in some ways the modern version is in better shape than when the seventeenth century broadsides made Robin a buffoon. But Scott and Ritson made permanent the false image of Robin the nobleman of the time of Richard I; we can dismiss it and pass on to more useful speculation as we seek the date of the medieval Robin, and the Robin of the "Gest" in particular. For example, Robin Hood is Catholic, so we can obviously eliminate the period of Henry VIII and all later kings; the official religion in the legend is clearly Catholicism.

The Common Elements of the Early Ballads

If the chronicles are useless, we can only try to glean information about the evolution of the legend from the early ballads, especially the "Gest." These give us a surprisingly limited picture. Robin is an outlawed yeoman (see notes on Stanza 1 and Stanza 2), attended by a band of unknown size (see the notes on Stanza 4, Stanza 17, Stanza 229). Little John is certainly one of this band, but the others (Much the Miller's Son and Will Scathelock/Scarlock/Scadlock/Scarlett/whatever) are little more than names. The other outlaws, if any, aren't even that. They live in the north of England, in Yorkshire or Nottinghamshire or possible Lancaster or Cumbria.

Holt, p. 86, makes the interesting note that Robin's band may not even have lived in the greenwood; there is, for instance, little or no mention of the King's Deer in the early sources. The "Gest" is rather confusing on this point; deer are mentioned several times (see the notes on Stanzas 32–33, Stanzas 357–358, Stanza 377) — but do not seem very important in the tale of Robin and the Knight. Toward the end, however, the King meets Robin because he's angry about the lack of deer in Plumpton Park. Perhaps the deer were a motif only in the source that gave us the tale of Robin and the King.

The forest laws, according to Young, p. 4, protected "the red deer, fallow deer, roe deer, and the wild boar until a judicial decision in 1339 [reign of Edward III] removed the roe from the list," and points out on p. 5 that the purpose of the law was not just to

protect the animals but their habitat. This was the reason, e.g., why people were forbidden to cut down trees in royal forests. But Holt makes an important point: We don't see foresters in the "Gest." It is not clear why. Maybe they avoided Robin?

As far as his character goes, Robin is genuinely religious, clearly Catholic (and devoted to the Virgin Mary; see note on Stanza 10) — but no friend of high church officials such as abbots and bishops (see note on Stanza 19), whom he happily robs. Note too that it was a prioress who murdered him! (Stanzas 451–455). He is willing to rescue those in need, but he does not seem to go out of his way to do so. He very likely eventually meets the King, who is coming to investigate troubles in the North (Stanzas 357–358, etc.)

What is absent from these accounts is notable. Holt, pp. 35–38, catalogs what is missing: Maid Marian, Richard the Lion-Hearted (recall that Gest's king is Edward; Stanza 353), Robin's birth as Robin of Lockesly and/or Earl of Huntingdon (in the early legend, Robin is clearly a yeoman; Stanza 1), and the theme of robbing the rich to give to the poor. Pollard, p. 188, offers a similar list of famous elements of the modern telling which are absent from the early stories: robbing the rich to give to the poor, Robin the Anglo-Saxon earl fighting the Normans, the Sheriff as agent of "Prince" John who is attempting to overthrow King Richard, and the tale of Maid Marian. (Pollard attributes all these changes to the rise of class consciousness, which I must say I find a stretch.)

Can the later ballads possibly add any useful details?

The Later Robin Hood Ballads

If we look at the later ballads with true traditional attestation, the list is longer than the list of early ballads, but still rather thin. It appears that we can list only about fifteen songs, or fewer than half the Robin Hood pieces printed by Child, as being genuinely "folk," and only about four of these have a strong hold in tradition. Those with at least some traditional attestation:

- Willie and Earl Richard's Daughter [Child 102] (traditional in US, but possibly from print)
- Robin Hood's Death [Child 120] (traditional in US — the only one of the five core ballads to survive to the nineteenth century. Indeed, it may have been the only one to survive to the seventeenth century)
- The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield [Child 124] (traditional attestation somewhat dubious)
- Robin Hood and Little John [Child 125] (traditional in Scotland, Canada, US)
- Robin Hood and the Tanner [Child 126] (traditional in England, US)
- Robin Hood and the Prince of Aragon [Child 129] (traditional in US, although much damaged; the tune may have come from a non-traditional source)
- Robin Hood and the Ranger [Child 131] (traditional in England)
- The Bold Pedlar and Robin Hood [Child 132] (traditional in England, Scotland, US, Canada; probably the most popular Robin Hood ballad in tradition)
- Robin Hood and the Beggar II [Child 134] (traditional in Scotland)
- Robin Hood and Allen a Dale [Child 138] (traditional in Scotland)
- Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham [Child 139] (traditional in Canada)

- Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires [Child 140] (traditional in England, Scotland, US; probably second only to #132 in popularity)
- Robin Hood Rescuing Will Stutly [Child 141] (traditional in US)
- Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford [Child 144] (traditional in England)
- Robin Hood Was a Forester Bold (traditional in US)

As it turns out, these add little useful information to the sources we already identified. Most of them are clearly late poor imitations of the basic handful — as Keen notes (pp. 99–100), "Most, at least in the form in which we have them, are compositions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Robin Hood's traditional world already belonged to a half-forgotten past. The cruel forest laws have fallen into desuetude; archery was no longer a national exercise; the abbeys whose monks the outlaws had robbed had been dissolved. Robin Hood's legend belonged, in fact, to a world so far away in time that almost anything could be believed of it, and as a result his story was sometimes changed out of recognition." In seeking the source of the legend, therefore, we have little choice but to turn back to the small collection of early ballads. The only one late text to which we will pay much attention is the "Bishop of Hereford." Whatever the quality of the newer ballads (a point on which critics may perhaps disagree), they shed no light at all on the old.

Having catalogued our sources (such as they are), we can attempt to wring some meaning from them.

Outlaw Or Not?

Both Munday and the late ballad "Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham" [Child 139] offer explanations for how Robin was driven to the greenwood. Holt, p. 44, also notes a tale transmitted by Roger Dodsworth, in which Roger Locksley killed his stepfather and was forced into the wood; in this version, it is apparently Little John who was the disgraced nobleman.

The references to Locksley/Loxley as Robin Hood's home are first found in the Sloan manuscript biography. There were Loxleys in Yorkshire and Warwickshire. Phillips/Keatman, p. 137, suggest on the basis of the latter that Robin might have been Robert Fitz Odo, who came from the Yorkshire area and lived in the reigns of Richard I and John. They suggest that this might be the basis of the dating of Robin to the reign of Richard I. All I can say is, it's an incredibly long chain of suppositions to hang on the name of a town that isn't even in the early versions of the legend.

Even Phillips/Keatman, p. 138, ask, "Was Robert Fitz Odo truly linked with the Robin Hood legend? He certainly lived during the reign of Richard I, he seems to have been outlawed, and his name might have been rendered Robert or Robin Ode. Moreover, he was a lord of Loxley." They also note a grave slab which seems to be similar to the traditional Robin Hood inscription. They suggest, on weak evidence, that an actual grave slab might have been moved from Kirklees to Loxley (p. 141).

Phillips/Keatman, p. 144, combine this material to conclude that Robin Hood is actually a composite of three actual characters. The Robin of the early ballads — the one who, as we shall see, so clearly lived in the reign of Edward II, was "Robert Hood of Wakefield." The Robin Hood of Munday and the Renaissance writers was "Fulk Fitz

Warine of Shropshire." And the original Robin Hood was "Robert Fitz Odo of Loxley in Warwickshire." The obvious problems with this are its complexity and the lack of data about all three characters; all are extremely shadowy figures, and only Fulk is a character of folklore.

All these stories of outlawry stories are all different — and all late. There is no clue in the early materials how Robin came to be outlawed (Holt, p. 9). Pollard, p. 13, points out the parallel in the tale of Gamelyn, in which Gamelyn is dispossessed by his brothers, but there is no sign of this in the "Gest" or other early ballads. In fact, we don't even know that Robin *was* outlawed, at least at the time when he first went to the greenwood; he may simply have been forced off his land, or perhaps away from his employment. Kings and lords of this period were good at that.

Since we will have to deal in time with the claim that Richard I was Robin's king, we should note Richard was particularly rapacious, because of the financial demands of his crusade — and later of his ransom, which resulted in an almost unendurable 25% tax, according to Gillingham, p. 230. Many people must have been forced off their lands to pay for their lion-hearted, pea-brained king.

But would Robin then side with Richard? I think not. If Robin were simply dispossessed, as opposed to outlawed, a date in the reign of one of the Edwards would seem more likely even if the "Gest" didn't refer to King Edward. And if Robin's ancestors were in fact squatters (which is perfectly possible), then there is a high likelihood that they took over the land in the lawless period after the Norman Conquest, and the sooner after the Conquest they did so, the more time for them to think the land was theirs.

Even Edward I, often held up as a lawgiver, was a land-grabber in his personal capacity as king, and Prestwich1, p. 105, comments that "The methods he used did him little credit: he was devious and grasping." For more on his techniques, see the discussion on Stanza 47.

Edward I's queen was even worse about grabbing land (Prestwich1, pp. 124–125; on p. 124 and again on p. 262, he quotes a fragment of what sounds like a folk rhyme, although apparently it was taken down in Latin: "The king he wants to get our gold, The queen would like our lands to hold"). And if other kings weren't as concerned as Edward I with updating the statute books, they certainly were just as eager to latch onto any cash they could.

Around 1298, Edward I had had a major dispute with local residents about the boundaries of the royal forests (Prestwich1, p. 518), which had been at their greatest in the reign of Henry II and since steadily been reduced (Young, p. 19). Many locals tried to encroach upon the forests, leading to the conflict with the King (Prestwich1, p. 527; Young, p. 139).

Edward I being Edward I, this might well have caused him to punish harshly anyone whom he could lay his hands on. Edward, under pressure, reduced the total area of the royal forest — but in 1305 "laid down that those people who had been placed outside the Forest boundaries would no longer be allowed to exercise any rights of common within them." In 1306, he reneged and took back some of that forest land (Prestwich1, p. 548).

This raises an interesting possibility, that the reason we never see Robin go to the greenwood is that he never did — he was there all along. He lived in the wood on what he thought was his personal land, until the king reclaimed it. There is a tradition (found e.g. in "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valor, and Marriage" [Child 149], although this is a very poor source) that Robin's father was a forester. This raises the possibility that Robin was a yeoman forester, and was displaced as a result of someone eventually enforcing the 1306 law.

Prestwich1, p. 286, adds that, in Edward I's time, due to some legal changes which made legal penalties stiffer but convictions harder to obtain, "Fairs and markets were the scene of a good many crimes, as when a royal bailiff was assaulted by Thomas de Aston and his two brothers, pursued, and beaten up publicly in the market at Stafford." Several similarities to "Robin Hood and the Potter" [Child 121] will surely be evident.

Another possibility relating to the forest laws has to do with the way they treated guilt. Young, p. 107, describes the "climate of fear" they generated: If someone was found near the dead body of a deer, that person was often punished — severely — for its death. It was difficult to establish innocence unless the real killer of the beast could be found. So Robin might simply have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Although it is usually assumed that Robin was an ordinary yeoman, it may be that Robin might have been a *royal* yeoman, in service to the king (Holt, p. 120, argues strongly for this). In that case, it is not unlikely that he was cast out of the royal service during a purge of the household Edward I conducted in 1300 (Prestwich1, p. 159). 1300 however seems early for him to be active based on him still being the active head of his band in 1322 (if we can trust the one genuine chronological peg we have in the "Gest").

"Robin Hood's Birth" also has the tradition that "His mother was neece to the Coventry knight, Which Warwickshire men call Sir Guy, For he slew the blue bore that hangs up at the gate." This presumably is a reference to Guy of Warwick, a famous saga hero who indeed was credited with killed a great boar although one who is claimed to have lived in the reign of Athelstan (Simpson/Roud, p. 158, Pickering, p. 128. Don't ask me what someone named "Guy" was doing in tenth century England…. He was popular enough, however to have inspired two extremely long and tedious romances about him, plus one about his son).

The period of the Wars of the Roses (roughly 1455–1485) were also tough on landowners. Since the crown changed hands so many times, there was a real danger that one might be attainted if one supported the wrong side. We don't know of any great lords turning outlaw, but a yeoman might. There are, however, two problems with a date this late: First, the "Gest" was probably already in existence, and second, of the two kings who reigned for most of this period, Henry VI was not active enough for the role given him in the "Gest" and wasn't named Edward anyway, and Edward IV, while obviously named "Edward," hardly had enough time as King.

If we had to make a wild guess about how Robin came to be outlawed, Pollard's suggestion that he had been a yeoman of the forest (pp. 41–43; see also the note on Stanza 222) does make a certain amount of sense. Perhaps he — or, more likely, his father — had been yeoman of the forest displaced during Edward I's reign, and he

stayed in the forest to maintain his claim to what he considered his home and occupation. But while reasonable, this is clearly beyond proof.

The bottom line is, we simply don't know why Robin was outlawed (or, rather, why the earliest hearers of the tradition thought he was outlawed). But the circumstances of the Edwardian period certainly offer many opportunities.

Dobson/Taylor, p. 29, make the interesting comment that "the royal courts of medieval England degraded the severity of sentences of outlawry by its over-use. During the course of the fourteenth century the application of the process of outlawry to cases of misdemeanor and even civil offenses lessened its deterrent effect still further." Outlawry, intended to be a hideous sentence which drove the victim away from home or forced him to appear in court, became more like having outstanding traffic tickets — something which might even be considered a virtue to some.

Even in the reign of Henry VII, when government was much more centralized, outlawry was mostly a failure. Chrimes, p. 162, notes its frequency and its lack of effectiveness: "In the course of Michaelmas term 1488, when some two-thirds of the 958 cases [before the King's Bench] were civil suits, outlawing, which was seldom reversed, was resorted to in the bulk of cases, and few final judgments were recorded." About the only effect was to bring revenue to Henry VII, since he could latch onto the lands of outlaws.

Perhaps we should just conclude, with Shippey, p. 233, "in romance it is a good rule that not everything should be explained." If we truly *knew* why Robin went to the greenwood, it would probably detract from the legend: If he committed a true crime and was outlawed, it makes him less of a good man, but if he was simply went broke, that is far too mundane. The best answer, from a dramatic standpoint, is doubtless the one adopted by modern retellers: That he was driven from his land by unjust superiors. But even this runs the risk of reducing his motives to petty jealousy....

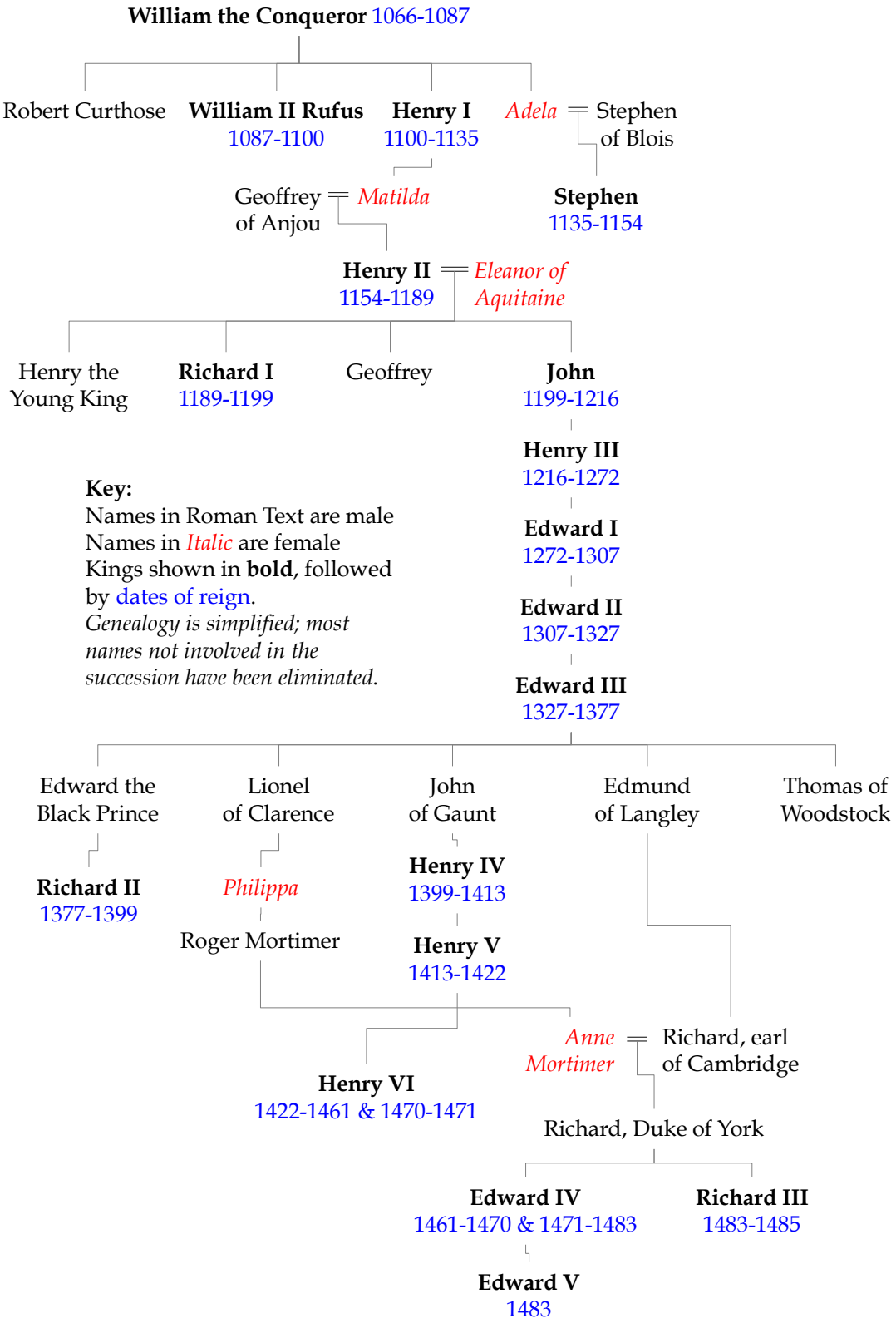


Figure 13:The Plantagenet Dynasty

Dating the Legend: The Setting of the Gest

In the section on The Date of the Gest, we concluded that the "Gest" was written in the mid-1400s, with the period 1440-1455 the most likely. But the time when a romance was written is not the same as the time it was set — Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" was set more than two thousand years before it was written! And the author of the "Gest" seems to regard it as having been set somewhat in the past, and in any case it is made up of older sources.

Possibly the author of the "Gest" simply thought it was "a story from some time ago," or "from long ago" — the way we often set fairy tales "once upon a time." Certainly the source tale of "Robin and the Knight" is utterly lacking in time indications; the only named characters are the members of Robin's band. But possibly the author intended a setting — or, more likely, one or more of the sources did. In particular, the tale of "Robin and the King" is dated to the reign of "King Edward." Tales can have that sort of setting, too: "In Old King Arthur's Time," or "In the days before the Revolution," or "when tall ships still sailed the sea." These are the sorts of hints from which we can work. We might also consider the origin of the Robin Hood legend itself, or at least of the medieval version that is the earliest form we have left, to see if that influences the assessment.

In trying to date the origin of the Robin Hood legend as a whole, we must keep in mind that, here too, we are dealing with multiple sources — a few short references in chronicles, but mostly half a dozen different ballads, the most important of which, the "Gest," is itself compiled from multiple sources. Sorting through this material involves us in contradictions. Dobson/Taylor, p. 14, stresses the point made above: that the legend changed in the sixteenth century, and on p. 37 point out that there were at least two major periods of alteration of the story, the sixteenth century change coming at the hands of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights (particular Anthony Munday) and a later alteration by early nineteenth century romantics (one might call this the "Ritson Rewrite").

Pollard, p. x, asserts that, since Robin's story changed completely in the sixteenth century (which is undeniably true), we cannot discount the possibility that it also changed completely between 1377 and 1450. Thus any pattern we perceive in the various sources might be just the coincidental agreement of independent sources, or a side effect of the evolution of the legend.

Baldwin p. 48, argues that there is conflicting evidence regarding the setting of the various Robin Hood pieces, some "suggesting an earlier date of composition [probably in the reign of Henry III or Edward I], the other later [probably the reign of Edward III]." On p. 84, Baldwin stoutly maintains that there were five kings in "what may loosely be called the Robin Hood era," referring to Richard I through Edward II. In fact, the evidence of names found by Holt shows there is every reason to think that the legend originated before Edward II. The content of the later ballads seems to indicate a date in the reign of Edward III or later. This by itself is modest support for the reign of Edward II as the meeting point, so to speak, of the two types of evidence.

To show how diverse the ballads are, the "Gest" says Robin's King is "Edward." Knight, p. xx, says that in the Forresters manuscript, three pieces name the king

"Richard" (presumably Richard I, since the Forresters manuscript was copied after the legend started to be distorted, though there is no actual internal reason why it couldn't be Richard II). Two call him "Henry" (presumably Henry II, although Henry III is not an unreasonable possibility and Henry IV would be a better fit for a famous archer), and Knight thinks that one other Forresters piece also points to a King Henry — although in this case either Henry V or Henry VIII, since his queen is Catherine. The tradition simply is not unified. And since every king of England from the death of Stephen in 1154 until the accession of Mary I in 1553 was named Henry, Richard, Edward, or John, and John was associated with Richard I, that list of names includes every *possible* King.

This is important: all the people who seek an "original Robin Hood" ignore the fact that there is no single "point of origin" that we can recover, nor an "original Robin Hood Legend" from which all surviving tales are directly descended. We can only look at the individual tales and seek their settings. And the more I looked at the scattered hints, the more I have become convinced that the intended setting of the "Gest" — or at least the last two fits, about the King — is a particular period: The reign of Edward II. This section tries both to present that case and to offer the evidence for other periods.

What follows will at first seem like a disorderly collection of historical facts. Indeed, it *is* a disorderly collection of historical facts. They cannot collectively give proof of anything, but they can be used for inference.

The numerous references to Robin's skills with the bow — the most persistent trait of the tradition, except that he was an outlaw and associated with Little John — strongly suggest that he was a bowman even in the earliest tales — which by itself is a dating hint. The mention of the longbow requires, at the earliest, a post-conquest date for Robin; it also gives a latest possible date. It absolutely must be before the time of Henry VIII — probably well before. Keen, p. 138, dates the decline of the longbow to the Battle of Castillon in 1453, when French gunnery destroyed an army of English bowmen. The English continued to use bows for many decades (e.g. they were a key weapon in the Wars of the Roses), but gunpowder weapons became increasingly dominant after 1453.

But Robin the Legendary Archer must have lived long before Castillon. Edward III, more than a century before that battle, commanded regular competitions with the bow (see the note on Stanzas 145–146) — something often seen in the Robin Hood tales. And yet, once these competitions were well-established, it would be almost impossible for a band of outlaws, gathered at random, to all become exceptional bowmen. The longbow demands great skill (contrary to what is implied by Keen, p. 138). Longbows required more pull than short bows, but even the strongest muscles could not compete with a crossbow in power and range. To compete with crossbows, longbowmen had to aim in an arc far above their targets. You couldn't just aim at a target; you had to try to figure out how to fire into the air in such a way that it would drop down onto the target. This took long practice; archers, for the most part, had to be brought up to the bow, and stay with it throughout their lives — in the reign of Edward III, we find the king complaining that the common people weren't spending enough time with the bow (Chandler/Beckett, p. 10).

That was the main reason no one other than the English and Welsh took to the longbow; it was too tricky. But the longbow won battles for the English at Halidon Hill (1333) and Crécy (1347) during the reign of Edward III. (Featherstone, p. 31, in fact claims that archers from Sherwood Forest were given conditional pardon to serve the King at this time. It is true that Edward III gave pardons to outlaws willing to fight in France — Ormrod, p. 57 — but Ormrod says nothing of archers from Sherwood. Ormrod does tell us that this was new; no earlier King had offered such pardons. although Prestwich1, p. 561, says that Edward I pardoned soldiers who served in his campaigns. For the conditions attached to such pardons, see the notes on Stanza 439).

Robin of course received a pardon from his king, and one suspects his skill with the bow played a role. Hewitt, p. 30, finds that Edward III offered at least 850 pardons to those willing to serve in his wars in 1339–1340, several hundred more in 1346–1347, 140 in 1356, and 250+ in 1360–1361 — and that very many of these pardons were for murders. Also, Edward II pardoned a number of murderers in 1326 when England was invaded by his wife and Mortimer (MortimerTraitor, pp. 150–151). Hewitt believes that as many as an eighth of the soldiers in some English armies may have been pardoned criminals, and observes that some of these convicted felons — Sir Robert Knowles and Sir Hugh Calveley being obvious examples — held quite senior commands.

We known that, as early as the reign of Edward I, longbow training was required of ordinary folk (Seward, p. 53), just as it would be in the time of Edward III. Yet we note, in Stanzas 397–398, that the marks set by Robin Hood's men are very distant. So they must be exceptional archers. In turn meaning that they are at a time when there aren't many *other* exceptional archers — which strongly implies that it is before the time of Edward III.

So we can say that, starting from 1333 and Halidon Hill, the longbow was a universal weapon, and the odds of Robin's men being exceptional is slight. For them to be as unusual as they clearly are is evidence for a date before 1333.

It has been argued that we must look much earlier than that: since the longbow was already common as early as the time of Edward I (reigned 1272–1307), we are forced to a date in the reigns of Henry II (1154–1189), Richard I (1189–1199), John (1199–1216), or Henry III (1216–1272).

This is not compelling, even if we ignore the several contests with the bow in the "Gest" (which of course are evidence that the longbow was starting to be common). Although Edward I had encouraged the use of the bow at times in his reign, he was not consistent. For his preparations for the invasion of Wales in 1277, Edward I ordered cartloads of crossbow bolts (Prestwich1, p. 179), leaving little if any room for arrows. Edward II (1307–1327) largely turned his back on the use of the bow. This was a major reason he lost at Bannockburn in 1314 (Phillips, pp. 236–237, who notes that a military revolution was going on at the time; both at Bannockburn and at Courtrai in 1302, mounted knights had lost to infantry, forcing a reassessment of tactics. The English learned the lesson after 1314, and Edward III began to depend on longbows; the French would need another century to learn that mounted chivalry could not beat properly-prepared infantry defenders).

To sum up, the use of the bow means that the only serious candidates for the Kings in the Robin Hood legend are Henry II (reigned 1154–1189), his son Richard I (1189–1199), his brother John (1199–1216), his son Henry III (1216–1272), his son Edward I (1272–1307), his son Edward II (1307–1327), and his son Edward III (1327–1377). Many would restrict the period even more — e.g. McLynn, p. 244, would examine only the period 1215–1381. Phillips/Keatman, p. 58, say it must be between 1282 (when Edward I beat the Welsh at Orewin Bridge) and 1377 (when Langland mentions Robin). I tend to agree: we are restricted to the time of the Three Edwards. Not before and not after.

Plus there is the fact that Stanza 353, Stanza 384, and Stanza 450 of the "Gest" give the name of the king of England as Edward. At first glance. since we are not told which Edward, we might think this was Edward I. In many ways Edward I fits the content of the legend better than Henry II (his great-grandfather), Richard I (his grand-uncle), or John (his grandfather), notably since the longbow was not widely used in the time of the early kings, at least outside Wales. The flip side is, there is nothing in the "Gest" which sounds specific to this reign.

Joseph Hunter, as mentioned in the notes to Stanzas 357–358, pointed out that Edward II had made a trip to the north in 1322–1323 which fits the ballad — and that he was the only King Edward to do so. The real problem with Hunter's reconstruction is that Hunter then went on to try to ring in a Robin Hood who was active around Wakefield at the time, and who was a follower of the Lancastrian rebels (Cawthorne, p. 49). Phillips/Keatman, pp. 56–57, note that Lancaster actually occupied the important Robin Hood site of Wakefield at this time.

Hunter was also able to find a Robert Hood who was in Edward II's service at the right time (Philipps/Keatman, p. 74). And a later scholar, J. W. Walker, in publications from 1944 to 1952, found that a Robert Hood was supposed to fight under the Earl of Lancaster (Phillips/Keatman, pp. 74–75), but he does not give source documentation. In any case, despite Hunter's desperate attempts to show otherwise, there is no reason to think either of these is "our" Robin.

Indeed, the chronology of this Robert Hood of Lancaster will not fit into the "Gest," because we find him still on his land in 1322, when Lancaster summons him against the King (Phillips/Keatman, p. 167). This does not leave time for him to be driven from his land, gather wealth as a robber, give some to the Knight, wait a year, get it back from the monks, pass more time, and then be pardoned by Edward II.

The link to Lancaster in fact badly weakens Hunter's case, because the "Gest" implies that Robin was always loyal to the King. Robin doesn't just hope for pardon; he appears to expect it. Hunter's full reconstruction cannot stand up, and many have rejected all of it on that basis — but the evidence he found for the 1322–1323 visit to the north *does* stand up. If (and this is a substantial if!) the "Gest" is supposed to be based on actual events, 1323 is an extremely strong candidate for the King's visit to Robin.

On the basis of the date it has been suggested that Robin was a former Knight Templar (Phillips/Keatman, p. 76). This fits chronologically; the Templars were suppressed in France in 1307 to get at their money (see the note on Stanzas 56–57), and Edward II was eventually induced to go along, but seemingly without much zeal. The

difficulty with this hypothesis is that Robin shows no inclination whatsoever to fight like a knight.

Therefore Holt, p. 192, affirms that fits 7–8 of the "Gest" *must* be based on Edward II's northern trip, and I agree that, if there is a chronological framework at all, that is probably it. If we assume, for argument's sake, that Robin was a Lancastrian tenant driven out by Lancaster for his support of the King, much makes sense.

(If I had to pick another "real" king on which the story is based, the next-best bet is probably Richard II. In early 1396, he spent a long time based in Nottingham and other northern sites; BennettM, p. 77. The visit fits well enough, both in terms of chronology and in terms of the social background — there were two Popes at this time, which would fit with Robin's dislike of the clergy — but of course Richard wasn't named Edward. To be sure, the "Gest" was written during Lancastrian times, and the the Lancastrians had overthrown Richard II. So they might not take kindly to a positive reference to Richard II. So the poet might have converted Richard to Edward, not really caring which Edward was meant. But the real killer is that Richard II was one of those monarchs who was really much too full of his regal self; his willingness to get along with Robin is too far out of character for him to be convincing. The case for Edward II is based mostly on chronology, but also to a significant degree on Edward's personality.)

The 1322–1323 dating, when Edward II was in the north, is suitable on other grounds. We know that Edward II was very concerned with forests and forest management at this time (Young, p. 145).

The context fits as well; it was a time of great social displacement. There was a major famine and economic downturn in 1315–1317 (Prestwich3, p. 92); Phillips, p. 238, blames it on excessive rain beginning in 1314, adding on pp. 252–253, that the years 1315 and 1316 were unusually cold, that 1317 brought only a brief respite, and that 1318–1321 also saw bad weather and poor harvests).

The problems were especially bad in the north; according to Wilkinson, p. 124, the bad harvest of 1315 was "followed by famine 'such as our age has never seen.'" It didn't help that many of those who should have taken in the harvest in 1314 had been slain at Bannockburn (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 72).

KellyJ, p. 14, says that worldwide conditions were so awful that some think they may have started the chain of events which led to the Black Death thirty years later. KellyJ, p. 56, observes that large tracts of land were left unpopulated — sometimes because they were no longer productive in the poor climate. On pp. 58–59, he notes that some parts of Yorkshire had all their topsoil eroded away. The rain was so heavy that in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire some farm fields became lakes — he calls them "inland seas." There were widespread reports of cannibalism (p. 60).

Allen, p.11, shows a chart of economic conditions in London in this period. Even in that prosperous city, the *average* resident in 1325 had only about 1.75 times the bare minimum needed for survival (which is very low). So bleak was this period that it inspired a tremendous recovery; the next half century saw a rate of economic growth almost without precedent in history prior to the twentieth century: By 1375, the average resident of London was earning about 2.4 times the minimum. In other words, the 1310s and 1320s were a truly dreadful time.

Goodich, p. 86, says that from 1250 to 1360 the rate of children per couple fell from 3.5 per couple (a rapidly expanding population) to 1.9 per couple (below the replacement rate), with corresponding loss in productivity. Southern, p. 305, says that the "chief sources of religious movements [in this period] were disease and despair," caused by "natural and social disasters."

Satin, pp. 106–107, mentions estimates that one tenth of the population of Europe died of famine in this period. KellyJ, p. 62, thinks it may have exceeded 15% in some areas. And the period is said to have been a period of especially high taxation as well (Turville-Petrie, p. 17). Tenants everywhere were driven from their lands. If the knight was truly trying to repay a loan at this time, it is understandable that he failed — it was the worst time in memory for raising money, and his lands may well have suffered a crop failure. This would surely raise the irony of the abbot serving rich food at this time, too.

To add to the misery of northerners, in the aftermath of Bannockburn, the Scots raided freely throughout the north of England. They had raided the north before, of course, but these were larger raids, better organized, which penetrated much farther south (Phillips, p. 248). They could not capture fortified cities or castles, but they destroyed the holdings of peasants and forced them to flee (McNamee, pp. 72–74). And, of course, the lords rarely gave their tenants any sort of help if they had been raided — if anything, their exactions increased as they gathered up food to feed their garrisons (McNamee, pp. 144–145).

As McNamee says on p. 147, "Altogether the North of England's castles ought to have been its salvation from the Scottish raids. The failure of the crown to pay and provision garrisons adequately, and to exercise control over castellans, left them to prey on those they were supposed to defend."

The Scots were relatively quiet in 1316 and 1317, but were back in 1318, when their raids reached as far south as Yorkshire (McNamee, pp. 84–86). There must have been very many refugees in the latter year — and indeed as early as 1314, when McNamee, p. 134, says Northumberland was "descending into chaos." Plus we have reports of outbreaks of sheep murrain in 1315–1319 (McNamee, p. 107), which of course damaged the wool clip, meaning that the chief source of non-farm income for the northern provinces was much reduced. Other northern leaders were paying the Scots not to raid them, placing another demand ultimately on the peasants (McNamee, pp. 129–140).

These were the circumstances in which villeins slipped away from their lands and formed gangs. We know that the unsettled conditions of Edward II's reign weakened feudal bonds and created uncertainties for freeholders (Prestwich3, p. 109). Tuck, p. 84, calls the period from 1322 to 1330 one of unprecedented factionalism and says the times "were marked by judicial executions and forfeitures of lands on a scale unknown, perhaps, since the Conquest." It was the ideal situation for the formation of bands like Robin's, which probably combined a few yeomen, such as Robin himself, with villeins.

There was actually a special word for the bands of robbers who arose in the wake of the Scottish incursions around the time of Bannockburn — they were called *schavaldores*. They may well have robbed clergy; at least, a bishop told Edward II that he couldn't send tax money because of them (McNamee, p. 55). Nor was it easy to fight them,

because the conditions made it hard to feed and supply a large force (McNamee, p. 81). And if a gang formed in 1316–1317, and grew larger in 1318–1319, it would allow enough time for the band to become well-known by the time Edward came north in 1322, and to make a significant dent in the deer population (which would have been further reduced by the bad weather anyway).

Edward II wasn't the only monarch whose reign saw near-anarchy in some parts of England. Three other kings — Stephen (reigned 1135–1154), Henry III (1216–1272), and Henry VI (1422–1461, plus a brief restoration in 1470–1471) — lived in times when government largely broke down. But Stephen was too early for legendary bowmen, and never had enough control to visit the forests of the north. Henry VI is far too late, and was a "useful political vegetable" in his later years (so Ross-War, p. 52; Ross-War, p. 118, notes that Henry VI was take prisoner *three times* during the Wars of the Roses). If anarchy is a criterion for dating Robin, then by far the most likely reigns are those of Henry III and Edward II. The intervening reign, of Edward I, is also possible simply because his taxes caused so much unrest.

We see in the notes to Stanza 93 that we cannot identify the official or office the "Gest" means when it refers to a "justice." But the Edwardian period was one of extreme rapaciousness. During Edward II's reign we find the cases of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, who held four earldoms after 1311 (McNamee, p. 51) and was chief counselor after 1316; and the Despensers, who largely ran the government when not in exile. The younger Despenser — the ally of Robert Baldock the extortionist chancellor (for whom see notes on Stanza 93) — used just the sorts of methods described in the "Gest" to obtain lands formerly held by the Earl of Gloucester, killed at Bannockburn (Hutchison, p. 104).

We also find the Bishop of Durham being robbed by outlaws led by Gilbert de Middleton in the reign of Edward II (see notes on Stanza 292 of the "Gest").

Edward II, as mentioned in the notes on Stanzas 357–358, was the one king who seems to have made a hunting trip similar to that in Fit 7 of the Gest.

It is interesting to learn that Edward II was the first king to request that his retainers recruit infantry as well as cavalry for his wars (Chandler/Beckett, p. 19). Every previous army of course included infantry, but they were incidental. It makes sense to imagine Edward II trying to hire a group of top bowmen. It makes far less sense to try to imagine the haughty Richard I or the foolish Henry III trying it.

Also, the King talks to the outlaws with no hint of a translator (see note on Stanza 379). This is an argument for one of the Edwards (although it is little clue to which) rather than one of the earlier French-speaking kings.

Although Robin and his men spend most of their time on foot, in Stanza 152 the Sheriff offers Little John a horse. This hints at a date after 1330, when Edward III mounted his archers. This was a major change — it made archers (and hence armies) more mobile, but the greater need for horses also meant that armies were smaller. The fact that mounted archers aren't common probably argues for a date before the middle of the reign of Edward III, but probably not too much earlier, since the idea of mounting archers was obviously in the air. The flip side is, Robin in Stanza 352 tells the knight to abandon his horse....

The fact that Robin is an outlaw who loves his king would seem like a dating hint — but probably isn't. There is nothing unusual about common folk who respect the King but reject lesser authorities. Campaigns to rid a King of his "evil councilors" were almost routine, and were the excuse for the revolts against Edward II (e.g. Prestwich3, pp. 82–84). Somewhat later, in Wat Tyler's rebellion, the rebels respected Richard II but wanted the heads of many others (SaulII, p. 68). They actually killed Archbishop Sudbury of Canterbury (SaulII, p. 69). Campaigns against "evil councilors" continued for centuries (Pollard, p. 216) — Jack Cade's 1450 rebellion was loyal to Henry VI, as were most of the barons who began the Wars of the Roses. Even the sixteenth century Pilgrimage of Grace were theoretically loyal to Henry VIII — just not to his religion.

By the end of his reign, Edward II seems to have been very unpopular in the south of England, but was perhaps not so unpopular in the north. Phillips, pp. 532–533, gives a partial list of those who supported his deposition. They include many southern bishops and barons, but relatively few northerners. Henry of Lancaster, the brother of the executed Thomas of Lancaster, supported the move, but he was a special case — and was apparently the only earl with major lands north of the Humber to support the deposition. The bishops of Coventry and of Lincoln supported the deposition, but the Archbishop of York signally did not, nor did the Bishop of Carlisle (Phillips, p. 536), and the Bishop of Durham is also missing from the list. The opinions of northern lords may not reflect those of commoners, but it is reasonable to assume that northerners were more sympathetic to this otherwise-disliked King.

If we turn to the other old ballads, "Robin Hood and the Monk" [Child 119] offers us little in the way of datable evidence, but the king in the song is extremely foolish. Since the manuscript is from *c*. 1450, this might be a veiled allusion to the King at that time (Henry VI, who was never very clever and eventually went mad), but if we assume the song is older, then we must look for an easily-fooled King. The best candidates for this are Henry III or Edward II, with Edward being the better bet.

To be sure, John also had a very bad reputation, and in his earlier days was prone to bad mistakes. Warren-John, pp. 46–47, admits that John "stood in 1194 as a traitor and a fool. Such a reputation long clung to him, and in some quarters was perhaps never entirely displaced; but, in fact, the real John had not yet emerged.... As a king he was to show a grasp of political realities that had eluded the young Henry [John's oldest brother], a more fierce determination than even Geoffrey could boast of, as sure a strategic sense as Richard displayed and a knowledge of government to which the heroic crusader never even aspired. Only the Old King himself [Henry II] is comparable to the later John in his powers of organization...."

This is probably too kind to John. Tyerman, p. 296, is probably more balanced when he says John was "the most notorious English king, one of the most unfairly maligned but also one of the least successful. The legend of his awfulness as a person as well as a ruler dates from his own lifetime. Even now, when his positive qualities as a conscientious judge, a careful administrator, a man of culture and a ruler of energy are widely recognized, his personality and style leave a nasty taste in the mouth." But, although slimy, John was not stupid; he was simply too sneaky to be on the list of possible Kings for the "Monk."

If we try to bring in Richard I, we have a timing problem. Gillingham, p. 242, observes that Richard I did visit Sherwood Forest — for one day, in 1194. He spent it hunting; clearly, in Richard's time, the forest had not been hunted out. Gillingham notes that this was "the nearest [Richard] ever came to.... Robin Hood," and that he promptly headed back to Nottingham to get some work done. Nor would he make himself popular in Nottingham; he actually besieged the town for a time and hung some locals (Boyd, p. 282).

That visit to England lasted two months. Richard would never again return to his kingdom (Baldwin, p. 86). Richard spent only about six months of his reign in England (Gillingham, p. 5). As Baldwin says on p. 84, "Richard I is unique among English monarchs in that he was a figure of European standing yet played only a small part in the affairs of his own kingdom." Thus it might be possible to fit him into the "Gest" (though even that is a squeeze), but certainly not into the "Monk."

Richard I might qualify as a fool — he was a *terrible* king, despite his legend; I recently heard a podcast which rated him as the worst king England had in the medieval period. As Warren-John says on p. 38, "Everything was sacrificed to raising money for [the Third Crusade], even good government." On p. 41, he adds that "Richard was no judge of men," so friendship with Robin Hood would have been no compliment to Robin anyway. Jolliffe, p. 227, notes that "With the accession of Richard we come to an new phase.... in which the community begins to realize the potentialities of bureaucracy for oppression."

Runciman3, p. 75, compares Richard's performance at home and on crusade and says "He was a bad son, a bad husband and a bad king, but a gallant and splendid soldier."

One very minor support for the reign of Henry II or Richard I is that the "Gest" never mentions a coroner — an office created by Richard I (Lyon, pp. 43–44). But this is at best quite indirect testimony; although coroners were royal officials responsible for looking into deaths and retaining suspects, there is no incident in the "Gest" which directly requires a coroner to be present.

The versions of the story which place Robin in the reigns of Richard and John have other problems. Modern versions of these tales often involve an incredible anachronism, as they refer to "Prince John." But John never held the feudal title "prince" — indeed, England did not *have* princes until Edward I created the title of Prince of Wales a century after the reign of Richard I. John's feudal title was Count of Mortain. He was Count John, not Prince John.

What's more, the common picture of Richard as a fine king and John as a grasping tyrant are simply untrue. John fought with his barons, and one of the points of conflict was the forest law (Young, p. 60), but "how far [John] was a tyrant to common men is doubtful. At least he knew where Angevin government pressed them, and in 1212.... he bid high for the support of the counties and boroughs" (Jolliffe, p. 247). On p. 248, Jolliffe adds that John investigated some of the worse abuses of sheriffs, and for the first time made them serve at pleasure rather than at farm (Jolliffe, pp. 269–270) — that is, they weren't paying for the office, which eliminated the main incentive to extort the locals.

Jolliffe adds that when the barons rose against John, the towns and the people generally stood with the king. What's more, John not only restored the old forest custom (Joliffe, p. 247) but consulted with the locals about forest laws (Jolliffe, p. 307), which none of his predecessors had done.

Richard would never have done any of those things — he *needed* to farm out sheriff's duties so as to raise the cash for his wars. Richard might, perhaps, have pardoned Robin in return for money, but only John would have pardoned him for right.

The "Gest," and several other songs about Robin, show the outlaw, although a devoted Catholic, as opposed to the clerical establishment — he happily robs bishops and abbots. Such a man would be unlikely to approve of Richard I, who financed his crusade largely by selling lands and rents to the bishops (Kelly.A, p. 252). Many of the abuses which Robin fought against were actually the result of Richard's actions. He might well have gotten along with Edward I, however, who went so far as to appeal to the Pope for the ouster of Archbishop Winchelsey of Canterbury (which he obtained; Prestwich, p. 541. It was yet another phase in Edward's attacks on the church). Edward II also had trouble with his bishops, notably Orleton of Hereford (more on this below), but Orleton wasn't the only one; the bishops of Ely, Lincoln, Durham, and Norwich would also eventually condemn him (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 153).

Also, if the reign were that of Richard I and John, would we not hear of the much-reviled chief forester Hugh de Neville (Young, p. 49), or of John's forester of Nottingham and Derby, Brian de Lisle (Young, p. 51)? It has been claimed that, in this period, the four chief officials of England were the justiciar, chancellor, treasurer, and chief forester (Young, p. 49). The first and last would decline in importance in the reigns of Henry III and after; it is hard to imagine the a forest outlaw being able to ignore the chief forester in the early Angevin period.

Furthermore, the main evidence for the reigns of Richard I and John comes from a strong mass of later legend, supported by late songs such as "The King's Disguise, and Friendship with Robin Hood" [Child 151], which explicitly gives the king the name "Richard." However, this ballad is probably an eighteenth century rewrite of the last two fits of the "Gest," and is certainly a hack job; it has no independent value. There are no hints in the early ballads which directly support a date in the period 1189–1216, except for the suggestion that Sir Richard at Lee might be going on crusade (see note on Stanzas 56–57), and this is neither a clear reference nor a decisive link to Richard I. Nor is there any sign, in the "Gest," of the difficult relations between Richard and John which so affected England in the mid–1190s (Warren-John, pp. 40–45) — there isn't even a hint that the King had a brother. If Robin and Richard I actually met, it is almost inevitable that the "Gest" would have mentioned his troublesome brother.

We might add that, although Richard I became a hero of folklore, he does not seem to have been popular in his own time. According to Warren-John, p. 31, the only son of Henry II to be popular with his contemporaries was Henry the Young King, who died before his father and never exercised power.

I can't help but note an irony: One folkloric account of the death of Richard I has the Greek Fates cut off his life. Why? Because he introduced the crossbow into France

(Gillingham, p. 12). Not the longbow, note, the *crossbow*. For the evidence that Robin's weapon was the true longbow, which came later, see the note on Stanza 132.

Early dates do however have the advantage that a date in the reign of Henry II, Richard I, John, Henry III, or even Edward I has the advantage that it give time for tales to grow around Robin. His legendary status is more problematic if we accept a date in the reign of Edward II or Edward III. Could a Robin Hood who was active in 1323 or later have become a legendary figure as early as the time Langland wrote in 1377?

This may not be quite as unlikely as it sounds. A similar situation occurs in the great Spanish epic *The Poem of the Cid*. This in fact has many similarities to the Robin Hood legend. Northup, p. 47, tells us that "The poet interpreted history imaginatively, but his imagination is restrained. Magic does not appear.... We lack completely the exaggeration so common in the French epic, where, as in the *Chanson de Roland*, whole armies fall in a faint. The Cid's personal exploits are no greater than those recorded of many knights...." This is the same mode of "high mimesis" as in the "Gest": like the Cid, Robin is an exceptional but not superhuman character.

The general feel of the "Cid" resembles the "Gest" in other ways: "There is no element of romantic love.... The poet is interested neither in in his hero's youth nor in his death. The Cid is presented in his prime, engaged in his greatest achievements" (Northup, p. 47). "The Cid figures as a loyal vassal ever seeking a reconciliation with his lord" (Northup, p. 44), and eventually he gains this reconciliation. The Cid is an outlaw, and his first act in the extant portion of the poem is to commit a robbery (Cid/Simpson, p. v). The Cid is "pious.... loyal to his companions and even to his King.... and.... endowed with a saving peasant humor" (Cid/Simpson, p. vi). There is even a similarity in meter: The "Gest" is frequently metrically irregular (though I suspect much of this is the result of corruption), and the "Cid" has so many different line formations that scholars, according to Northup, p. 48, cannot agree whether it is intended to be in ballad meter (eight syllables in four feet, then a caesura, then six syllables in three feet) or in Alexandrines (sixteen syllables with a caesura in the middle).

And when was the "Cid" written? Many authorities believe it was *c.* 1140 (Cid/Simpson, p. vii; Northup. p. 42). That date has been questioned in recent times, but the sole extant manuscript seems to have been taken from an exemplar, not the original, which was written in 1207 (Cid/Michael, p. 16). Therefore the story must date from the twelfth century. The Cid died in 1099. So it is likely that the time gap between the life and the tale of the Cid is no greater than that between Edward II and Langland. And the "Cid," although grounded in reality, contains a fair amount of non-historical material; it is proof that legends can quickly gather about a sufficiently extraordinary figure.

And Robin Hood wasn't even real — anything could be added to his legend! The question is not what could be said about him, but what could be said about his context. There is nothing in the "Gest" that cannot be made to fit reasonably well in the context of the Edwardian period.

Another objection to a date in the reign of Edward II is that that king was deposed and murdered in 1327; is it possible that the legend would take no notice of this? To be sure, the "Gest" says that Robin left the King's service after only a year; see the note on Stanza 435. This would have allowed him to avoid Edward's debacle. But would it not

be mentioned? And why no mention of the war between Edward and Robert Bruce of Scotland, which was the main business of Edward's northern visit? (And in which Edward's forces suffered defeats at the hands of Bruce's raiders; Hutchison, p. 119.)

Keen, p. 186, suggests that Edward II's unpopularity would argue against him being the good King of the "Gest." This would certainly be true if the audience of the poem was aristocratic; it is less of an objection in the case of the common people. According to Wilkinson, p. 132, "after Edward's death it was the manner of his dying rather than his ruling which tended to be remembered. It was his cruel death and not his foolish life which made his tomb at Gloucester the centre of a cult." This had a tendency to happen to deposed kings; Henry VI was widely regarded as a saint within a decade of his death (Wolffe, pp. 351-358). Being an ally of Edward II might be considered a failing in 1325; twenty years later, it might be a reason to make Robin a hero, for supporting Edward II when few others would.

Keen, p. 140, thinks that the frequent mentions of Robin as a yeoman implies a late date (p. 140), presumably after Edward III, since this was the period when villeins were becoming free yeomen. Keen, pp. 141–142, adds that the lack of mentions of offenses against "vert" (the plants of the forest) dates Robin to the time of Edward III or later — but poaching was a worse offense than tree-cutting (Young, p. 108). The typical forest eyre adjudicated far more offenses against "vert" than venison, but the penalties for the latter were higher (and it sounds as if the prosecutions more likely to succeed) — despite which, Pollard, p. 85, says that even poaching was little punished in the fifteenth century.

It was not until very late, when the English navy needed every tall tree it could find for ship's masts, that tree-cutting became a serious crime. In any case, it was often difficult to prosecute offenses against "vert" — Henry VI, for example, granted so many exceptions that the laws became simply unenforceable (Wolffe, p. 111). It was only under Henry VII, whose goal was to bring the entire nation under his thumb, that the forest laws really revived (Pollard, p. 86).

Ohlgren, p. 220, argues that Robin "imitates knightly behavior by giving liveries and fees to his retained men" (e.g. he notes on p. 317 that Robin's men wore a uniform of scarlet, not green, although later, they give the King green cloth; Ohlgren, p. 319 n. 35) — behavior typical of what is now called "bastard feudalism," which was largely a product of the Hundred Years' War (Cannon, p. 83). But Robin was not a king that he would be able to give out lands and titles; his behavior was quite typical of what a local Lord of the Manor would have done even in the height of the feudal era.

Bastard Feudalism in any case did not arise overnight. It was in 1296 that Edward I made a decision which completely changed the nature of military service in England. In that year, he conducted a census seeking men wealthy enough to perform knight service. In the past, such a demand had been made only of knights. After 1296, the qualification was simply wealth (Prestwich, p. 406). The barriers had fallen; a rich yeoman or an esquire could now do the work of a knight. This would obviously make it easier for a former yeoman such as Robin to enter royal service.

Keen sees links between the legend of Robin Hood and the stories told of William Wallace in the centuries after Wallace's death (Keen, pp. 75–76). Wallace was executed

by Edward I in 1305, shortly before Edward II took the throne. So there is a theoretical possibility that the links to Edward II arise because the Wallace legend arose in Edward II's time, and that the Wallace legend was then converted to the Robin Hood legend. I really don't think this likely, however; first, the conversion of Wallace from a man to a figure of legend seems more recent than the Robin legend; plus, the Wallace legend and the Robin legend are dependent on very different monarchical situations, and I see no hint of Wallace's situation in Robin's legend or vice versa.

Holt seems to argue (Holt, p. 115) that the fourteenth century feel in the legends is because Robin Hood is an English vernacular hero, and that it was only in the fourteenth century that the English vernacular again became common. In effect, he's arguing that Robin Hood must be from the fourteenth century because the fourteenth century allowed great men like Chaucer. This oversimplifies. First, French was still the language of the upper class in the early fourteenth century. Second, there was plenty of English vernacular writing prior to 1300 (e.g. Laȝamon's "Brut," "King Horn," "Havelok the Dane," "The Owl and the Nightingale"). None of this compares to Chaucer in quality — but neither was there any quality Anglo-French literature in this period, and the fifteenth century produced no great English literature either. Chaucer was Chaucer because he was a genius, not because he lived in the fourteenth century! And Chaucer's contemporary Gower wrote as fluently in French and Latin as English.

Holt in his first edition made much of the links to the era of Edward II. His discovery of many "Robinhoods" in a period prior to that, already alluded to, caused him to back away from this in his second edition (Holt, p. 189). This causes him to bring up a Robert Hod/Hobbehod, who seemingly was in trouble in two different shires in 1225–1226. He suggests, very vaguely, that this man might have been active in the 1190s, an outlaw in 1225, and dead in 1247 — a version of the legend owing much to Ritson. This places him in the reigns of Richard I, John, and Henry III. But Holt is not convinced. Indeed, he thinks the first Robin Hood may have been earlier still.

Benet, p. 934, offers a similar speculation: "It is doubtful whether [Robin] ever lived — the truth probably being that the stories associated with his name crystallized gradually around the personality of some popular local hero of the early 13th century."

The best argument for the reign of Henry III is that this is the period when the longbow was first becoming a respected weapon in the royal muster. The rebellion of Simon de Montfort could tie in with the traditions of conflict in the legends. Plus it was a long reign, giving many opportunities for potential Robins. And, for the little it's worth, it ties in with Langland's reference to Ranulf of Chester, since one of the Ranulfs of Chester was active early in the reign. And the reign of Henry III saw the activities of Roger Godberd, Baldwin's candidate for the original Robin Hood. It's certainly a better fit than the reigns of Richard I or John. But Henry III wasn't one to hang around with outlaws, and he's still early for the longbow, and he wasn't named "Edward."

Several scholars have strongly suggested that the "Gest" is targeted at the reign of Edward III. These include Ohlgren, who treats a date in the reign of Edward III as established fact, and Pollard. The chief evidence in Knight/Ohlgren seems to be the reference in the "Gest" to the "comely King," which title we know was used of Edward III (see note on Stanza 353). Pollard (pp. 202–204) bolsters the argument that Edward III

must be meant with the claim that Edward III restored justice after a period when it was lacking, or at least was considered to have done so. This is true but a poor argument — note that the single most substantial element in the "Gest" is built around an injustice which Robin has to correct because royal justice cannot.

Remember too that Edward II was proposed for sainthood, by Richard II (Phillips, pp. 600–606). True, Edward did not deserve it, but the idea was obviously "in the air" about the time the elements of the "Gest" were coalescing. And saints were generally considered just but unworldly — a perfect fit for the King in the "Gest," who has a weak grip on what is going on but tries for justice once he finds out.

Holt, even after his retraction in his second edition, thinks that Edward II's trip north was a key component in the legend (p. 192).

So what can we make out of all this conflicting data? If we sit down and list all our various points of evidence, and fit which kings they match, we get this list (in no particular order):

1. King during a crusading period (Stanzas 56–57): Henry II, Richard I, John, Henry III, Edward I, Edward II
2. King who used distraint of knighthood (Stanza 45): Henry III, Edward I, Edward II, Henry VI
3. King during whose reign high clerical officials were known to have been robbed by outlaws: Edward II
4. King during whose reign longbows were a common weapon: Henry III, Edward I, Edward II, Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV
5. King during whose reign longbows were used but not widely encouraged: Henry III, Edward II
6. King during whose reign social unrest would encourage outlawry: Henry III, Edward I, Edward II, Henry IV, Henry VI
7. King during whose reign there could be a connection between Robin and Ranulf of Chester: Henry III, Edward I
8. King named Edward (Stanza 353, etc.): Edward I, Edward II, Edward III, Edward IV
9. King who went to the north of England and was concerned with deer herds (Stanzas 357–358): Edward II, Richard II (to a lesser degree)
10. King who lived during the period of problems with livery (Stanza 107): Edward I, Edward II, Edward III, Richard II, Edward IV
11. King who was clearly not up to the job, but who was regularly in England, fitting the situation in "Robin Hood and the Monk": Henry III, Edward II, Henry VI
12. King who would be relatively likely to personally deal with ordinary outlaws (Stanza 408, etc.): John, Edward II, Edward IV
13. Kings whose reigns were early enough that Robin might be legendary by 1377: Henry II, Richard I, John, Henry III, Edward I, Edward II
14. Kings in whose reign a sheriff would be powerful but not a noble: Henry III, Edward I, Edward II

15. Kings in which coins were available for the counting of money: Henry III (briefly), Edward I, Edward II, Edward III (after 1344), Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI
16. Kings who used a gold coinage (Stanza 121): Henry III (briefly), Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV
17. Kings who spoke English: John (?), Edward I, Edward II (?), Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV
18. Kings who reigned more than 22 years (Stanza 450): Henry II, Henry III, Edward I, Edward III, Henry VI (Richard II reigned exactly 22 years, so maybe we could stretch things)

The archetype of the legend need not fit all these traits, but certainly should fit most of them. Note that Edward II fits probably 15 of the 18, and the only three he doesn't fit (a gold coinage, a reign of 22 years, and a tie to Ranulf of Chester) are the weakest on the list. Richard I fits only *two* of the traits.

Second place after Edward II is Edward I, who fits twelve traits (I will admit that I am sorely tempted to link Robin to the disorder and breakdown of law at the end of Edward I's reign. But the visit of the King implies a still-strong monarch. By 1290, when things started to come unglued, Edward I was too old). Henry III had eleven or (briefly) twelve traits. Edward III had seven; no one else had more than six.

For the reign of Henry II (three traits) there is no direct evidence except a sort of historical reconstructionism: "If Robin was around during the short reign of Richard I, he must have been around in the long reign of Henry II." But given Robin's problems with bishops, could he possibly have lived in the time of Henry II without mention of Becket? Or of Becket's rival for the Archbishopric of Canterbury, Gilbert Foliot — who just happened at the time of Becket's election to have been Bishop of Hereford? (Dahmus, p. 160; Boyd, p. 167).

Adding to the case for Edward II is the fact that he seems to have been unusually pious. This is not to say that the other Plantagenets were not (with the likely exception of John, who was very possibly a freethinker; Boyd, p. 42, explicitly calls him an atheist). But Edward II was particularly fond of religious observance and religious men, according to Phillips, p. 66. What's more, when Edward was in danger after Bannockburn, he is said to have vowed to the Virgin Mary to found a college if he were spared (Phillips, p. 68). Edward II was also devoted to (St.) Edward the Confessor. When he upgraded the chapel of St. Edward at Windsor, he set it up to say two masses a day, one for his father Edward I and one for the Virgin (Phillips, p. 69). Edward's devotion to Mary probably did not match Robin's — but it was evidently stronger than most.

Thus the clear preponderance of evidence points to the reign of Edward II as the period in which the "Gest" is set. Almost everything fits, and no other reign fits as well. I emphasize that this is not proof — the "Gest" is clearly an assembly from older materials, and those older materials might have come from diverse reigns. But *if* there was some chronological setting used as backdrop for those early legends, it is likely that the context was the reign of Edward II — or possibly spanned the reigns of Edward I

and Edward II (since Edward I also fits at several points), or Edward II and Edward III. It is morally certain that it did not arise out of the reign of Richard I.

Holt's conclusion, on p. 190, is that "The answer then to the question 'Who was Robin Hood?,' must be 'There was more than one.'" This suggestion is, I think, undeniable. But the "Gest's" version of the legend, if not the man, was based in, and perhaps even born in, the reign of Edward II.

Sidelights on the Legend

If we accept as an hypothesis that many of the early Robin Hood tales were associated with Edward II, it can potentially explain other features of the legend.

Barnsdale, Sherwood, and Nottingham

One of our most difficult questions is the place where Robin lived. Although today we think of him as haunting Sherwood Forest (and indeed, seventeen of the ballads in Child place Robin in Sherwood or Nottingham), the "Gest" places him in Barnsdale and never names Sherwood (Nottingham, yes; Sherwood, no. The other early sources also usually place him in Barnsdale. Dobson/Taylor catalog these on pp. 18–19: The "Gest" and "Guy of Gisborne" have explicit references to the Barnsdale area, and the "Potter" in stanza 6.1 tells of Little John meeting the potter at "Wentberg," which is probably near (indeed, probably a variant of) Wentbridge in Barnsdale.

On the other hand, there is the "Robyn Hod in Scherewod stod" verse, and the "Monk" places itself in "mery Scherewode" in stanza 16. This seems to be the only mention in early ballads; James Peterson argued that the mention of Sherwood in the Monk was a graft (Phillips/Keatman, p. 41). Phillips/Keatman, p. 45, add that there are few place names in Sherwood associated with Robin; they suggest that, originally, he was associated with Barnsdale and Nottingham but not Sherwood. They go on to suggest that the references to Nottingham are all conditioned by the Sheriff — in other words, that Robin was based solely in Barnsdale but from the first had a quarrel with Nottingham's Sheriff.

Phillips/Keatman, p. 48, suggests that it was Anthony Munday who was most responsible for shifting the story to Sherwood — and suggest political motives. Their basis for this strikes me as rather feeble, however.

The reference to Barnsdale is not necessarily to Barnsdale Forest, merely to some place called Barnsdale. Barnsdale the place is not a forest; Child, p. 50, calls it a "woodland region," and Dobson/Taylor, p. 21, say of it, "A magnesian limestone area, probably not much more heavily wooded in the later middle ages than today, Barnsdale does not appear to have ever been a forest in either the literal or legal sense." It is in west Yorkshire, somewhat east of Leeds and Wakefield, more than ten leagues to the north of Sherwood (see map in p. 101 of Holt). Barnsdale, therefore, is outside the "beat" of the Sheriff of Nottingham.

Although some (e.g. Baldwin, p. 44) claim that Robin could have lived in both Barnsdale and Sherwood, the two are so far apart that an outlaw could not reasonably occupy both simultaneously. (As of 2004, in fact, this has become an issue in the British parliament, with Nottinghamshire posting signs saying "Robin Hood Country" and Yorkshire wanting them taken down.) A man could travel from one to the other in a day, but would not have time to do anything upon arriving.

The three Edwards regularly hunted in Sherwood (Baldwin, p. 44). But this doesn't help us explain the events in the "Gest," because the King there complained about lack of deer at Plumpton Park, and that assuredly is not in Sherwood.

Additional minor evidence for why Barnsdale is a more likely home for the legend comes from the fact that arrows had iron heads. In the Middle Ages, only five counties in England were important iron-producing areas. One was Yorkshire (Hewitt, p. 70).

Nottinghamshire was not one of them. Thus it would have been easier for Robin to liberate arrows in Barnsdale than Sherwood.

If we allow the dubious possibility that Edward IV was the "Gest's" king, this would tend to support the Sherwood hypothesis. Edward I, Edward II, and Edward III all visited the north mostly for their wars. Edward IV, since he was not born to be king (he was the son of Richard Duke of York, and gained the throne by conquest), spent much time in the north when he was young, but after winning the Battle of Towton at the very beginning of his reign, tended to stay in the south. What is interesting is that Ross-Edward, p. 271, lists several visits he made around the country in the 1470s (his last trips outside southern England). One did go as far north as York, but in most, the King visited Nottingham and then returned south. He in fact rebuilt Nottingham castle to be a more comfortable residence (Ross-Edward, p. 272). Thus he was far more often in the vicinity of Sherwood than Barnsdale.

Edward IV's interest in Nottingham is in sharp contrast to his predecessor Henry VI, who visited Nottingham only once in the long period from his accession in 1422 until 1450 (Wolffe, p. 94). The map on pp. 96–97 of Wolffe, however, does show Henry VI visiting Blythe and Doncaster.

If we have three Robin Hood centers, in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Nottinghamshire, it makes slightly better sense to assume the legend originated in Yorkshire. In that case, the legend spread out from the central county. Otherwise, we have to assume that it spread from Nottinghamshire to Yorkshire to Lancashire, or vice versa, without being picked up in other counties. This could have happened — but in general we should prefer the "middle" variant.

On the other hand, the earlier we date Robin, the more likely a Lancashire origin becomes. Of the three counties, Lancashire is the closest to Wales, where the longbow originated. Yorkshire is the most remote of the three. If we assume Robin took up the bow on his own, rather than under royal encouragement, then Lancashire makes the best sense.

Holt, p. 53, notes that the description of Barnsdale in the "Gest" is more detailed and accurate (mentioning, e.g., Watling Street) than that of Sherwood (see the note on Stanza 3). On p. 88, he amplifies this, saying that "Barnsdale seems real. Sherwood is somewhat like the 'wood near Athens'" of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The details of Barnsdale might, however, be from the poet rather than veing something found in the legends he used.

Kirklees, where Robin died according to both the "Gest" and the "Death," is much closer to Barnsdale than Sherwood — a sick man would hardly want to make the two-day journey from Sherwood to Kirklees. But from Barnsdale it is about twenty miles — perhaps less. It is also fairly close to Lancashire.

Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire all fit the account of King Edward's northern visit; Edward II visited all these places.

Of the three places (Nottinghamshire, west Yorkshire, Lancashire), Lancashire would be the least likely haunt for robbers; it was a rather poor area and is far from the main routes north from London. Barnsdale and Sherwood are both near the Great North Road/Watling Street (see map on p. 82 of Holt).

Prestwich3, p. 68, makes the fascinating note that, when Edward I was preparing to campaign against Scotland, his army consisted of knights, men-at-arms, archers — and *slingers* from Sherwood Forest. It was apparently not unusual for the King to call on foresters to recruit forces for his wars (in fact, Edward II called out levies from the forests south of Trent in 1322 for a campaign against Scotland; Young, p. 165) — but this is the only instance I can think of of slingers in an English army. Could this be another reason for the transfer of Robin from Barnsdale to Sherwood?

Minor additional support for Barnsdale comes from the fact that several Scottish chroniclers knew of Robin; they would have been more likely to know of a Yorkshire robber than one from Nottinghamshire.

Almost all the sites named after Robin Hood are much later than the earliest references to the outlaw. The one partial exception, according to Holt, p. 107, is a Robin Hood marker in Barnsdale attested from 1422. The first known Nottingham Robin Hood site is dated to 1485 (Holt, p. 108).

My guess is that Barnsdale was Robin's original home, and that locals in other areas adopted him, and that Sherwood and Nottinghamshire won out because Nottinghamshire and Sherwood are larger and better known (Dobson/Taylor, p. 20; most modern maps don't even show Barnsdale). The connection with the unscrupulous Sheriff John of Oxford may have helped. So might the memory of Roger Godberd, that particularly busy robber who was active in Nottinghamshire in the reign of Henry III (Holt, pp. 97–99) who was Baldwin's candidate for the Original Robin Hood. Several scholars have suggested that the current legend is a fusion of two cycles, one based in Barnsdale and one involving the Sheriff of Nottingham which attracted Robin of Barnsdale (Dobson/Taylor, p. 14). Holt, p. 97, seems to accept a possibility that the Godberd tale, which involved the constable of Nottingham, might have attracted the Robin Hood legend to Sherwood.

But the possibility that the attraction went the other way cannot be ruled out, since Barnsdale was known as a den of robbers by 1306 (Holt, p. 52; Dobson/Taylor, p. 24, following Hunter; according to Phillips/Keatman, p. 35, the Scottish bishops of Scone, St. Andrews, and Glasgow were held up near Winchester, and therefore took an enlarged guard to Barnsdale). So a robber in Sherwood might have been relocated by tradition into Barnsdale (perhaps also helped by the link to the Hood family of Wakefield). Once the memory of Barnsdale as a haunt of robbers faded, the Sherwood legend might re-emerge.

I'll admit that I've had some pretty strange thoughts about this. For example, the fact that there seemed to be Robin Hood legends in three places — Barnsdale, Sherwood, and Inglewood — gave rise to the thought that Robin invented the idea of "franchising." The image is of a guy who sleeps and eats at home, then goes to his day job of Robinhooding. Robin set up his first outlaw band in Barnsdale. Then he granted a license for the name to someone (Young Gamwell, perhaps?) in Sherwood. Then he opened a third franchise in Inglewood — perhaps selling the rights there to Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley. Robin, after all, must have employed a very good bowyer (in the "Potter," stanza 55.4, we see it reported that a bow supplied by Robin Hood was expected to be exceptional), and Robin's fletcher must also have

been good. They, and perhaps other specialists in his band, could potentially serve several outlaw bands.

Another thought that comes to me is based on the possibility that the whole meeting between Robin and the King was a set-up (see the note on Stanza 367). Could it be that Robin was originally based in Barnsdale, but when he heard that Edward II was spending a long period in Nottingham, he transferred there to try to get a hearing from the King? There is no hint of this in the "Gest," but it would resolve the confusion.

For more on Barnsdale, see the note on Stanza 3.

The Earldom of Huntingdon — and of Chester

We should probably demonstrate why the claim that Robin Hood was earl of Huntingdon (the correct spelling) is impossible, and the claim that he was any sort of noble is almost as bad. (The tendency to ennoble folk heroes seems to have been constant; Hole, p. 15, notes a tendency for heroes to be promoted, and remarks on pp. 15–16 that only one major English folk hero — Dick Whittington — saw his social status lowered by tradition.)

It is true that Edward III created an Earl of Huntingdon (Tuck, p. 154). Richard II created another line (Tuck, p. 175) But both those lines quickly fizzled; there was no possible heir there. We must look earlier — back to the period of the Norman Conquest — if we are to find an Earl who could have been Robin.

The last Saxon Earl of Huntingdon was Waltheof, who was a young man at the time of the Norman Conquest. Our information on this period is scanty, but William the Conqueror kept very close watch on him at first (Head, p. 56), and he was executed for some sort of treasonous activity in 1076 (Barlow-Rufus, p. 31) — perhaps for complicity in Malcolm Canmore's invasion of the north in that year (Douglas, pp. 232–233), or perhaps for working with the Danes in an earlier invasion (Head, p. 91).

Apparently Waltheof had no male heir, but according to Tyerman, p. 21, "his heirs were not harried," so the Huntingdon earldom was allowed to pass to his daughter Matilda/Maud and her husband Simon of Senlis (St. Liz), a soldier who served William the Conqueror well; she married him probably around 1090 (in the time of, and probably at the command of, William II; Barlow, pp. 93, 172–173).

After Simon's death, Matilda (who by now was around forty) married the future King David I of Scotland (Magnusson, p. 73, says this took place in 1114; Oram, p. 65, says in 1113), meaning that David was the first of several Kings of Scotland who also were Earls of Huntingdon. Matilda had earlier children (Oram, p. 65), but it was decided that her children by David would be the heirs of Huntingdon. There was only one child, a boy Henry, who ended up as David's only son, since the king never remarried after Matilda died in 1130 (Oram, p. 73). Thus Henry of Huntingdon became both Earl of Huntingdon and ancestor of the royal line of Scotland.

During his life, however, he was perhaps more English than Scottish. Henry became a member of the English King Stephen's court (Bradbury, p. 33), and Henry's son Malcolm "the Maiden" campaigned in France with Stephen's successor Henry II as his vassal (Magnusson, p. 80).

King David before his death passed the earldom to his son Henry (it was common practice for kings to give their heirs some sort of property to manage), and this was confirmed by King Stephen in 1139 (Bradbury, p. 36, although he notes that Ranulf of Chester wanted to take Carlisle from Henry of Huntingdon. Stephen ignored this — one reason Ranulf turned against him — although Stephen did split off part of the Huntingdon earldom to form the earldom of Northampton; Bradbury, p. 37. Thus a person with Northampton ancestry might also claim the Huntingdon earldom — but as far as I know, no one ever linked Robin with Northampton.).

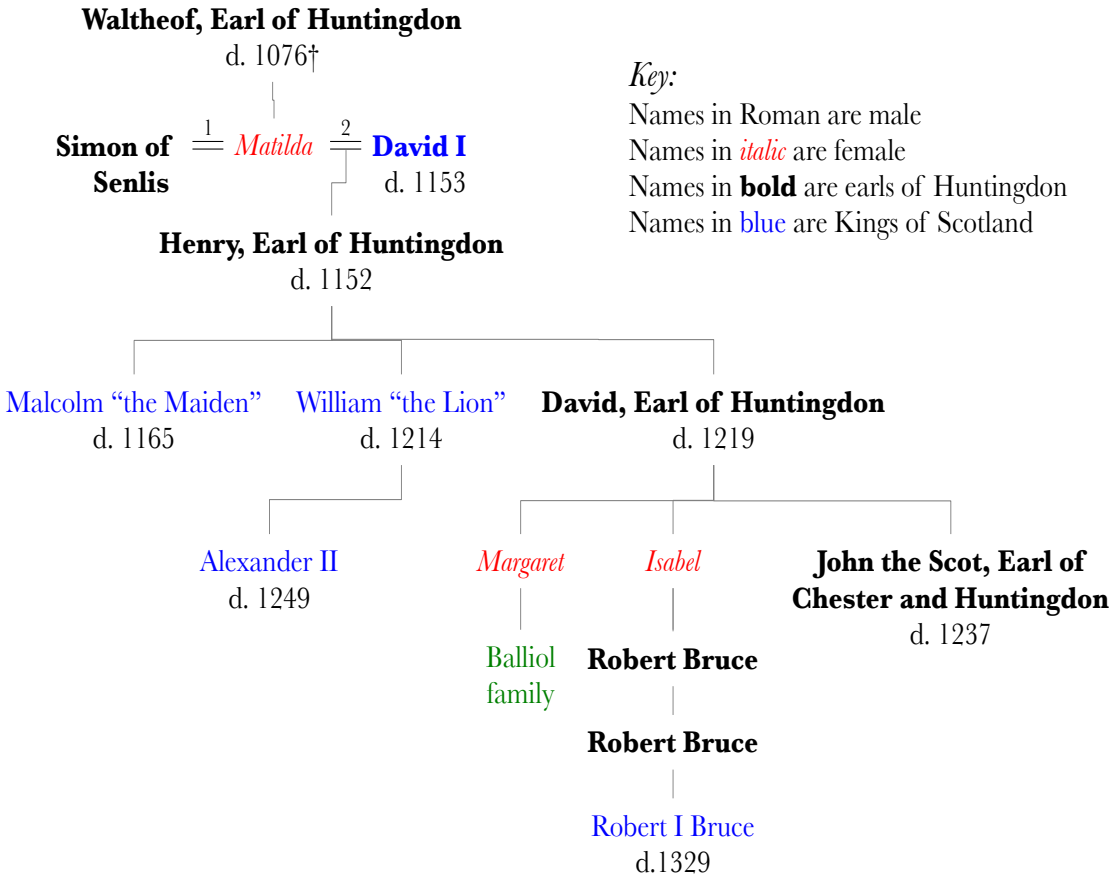


Figure 14:The Earldom of Huntingdon after the Norman Conquest

Henry of Huntingdon however died a year before his father, so he never became king of Scotland; when David died, Henry's older sons Malcolm and William each in turn succeeded to the throne of Scotland. As a result, Henry's the third son, David, eventually was given the earldom to give him some property (Bradbury, p. 177). The honor passed to David's son John in 1219. John also inherited the earldom of Chester, but died childless in 1237 (Oram, p. 90). The Earldom of Chester went back to the English crown, but the Huntingdon earldom, although Mortimer-Angevin, p. 78, declares it extinct, went to the Bruces of Annandale, since they were descended from Earl David's second daughter Isabel (see the chart above or the genealogy on p. 301 of Oram). Isabel's son Robert Bruce, the future competitor for the throne of Scotland and

grandfather of King Robert I, fought with Henry III at the Battle of Lewes and was taken captive (Powicke, p. 190), and his son Robert fought with Edward I in Wales (Prestwich1, p. 196); indeed, an earlier Bruce had fought been with the English army that defeated the Scots at the Battle of the Standard in 1138! (Young/Adair, p. 24).

There seems to have been no attempt by the English crown to retake the Earldom. Even had they wanted to, it would probably have been very difficult in this period to take the Huntingdon earldom from the heirs of Waltheof, since the dead earl was by this time being informally venerated as a saint (Tyerman, p. 21).

Members of the Scots royal family thus held the Huntingdon earldom from the reign of Henry I of England until the reign of Edward I — Robert Bruce #2 (the son of the competitor and the father of the future king) held to his English allegiance until his death in 1306, very probably so that he would not lose his English title. The Bruces, like their ancestors, were at least as English as Scottish; they had a home in London at this time (Oram, p. 117), and one of King Robert Bruce's brothers bore that quintessentially English name, Edward — an especially noteworthy point since he was born in the reign of Edward I. Another brother, Alexander, graduated from Cambridge in 1303 (Oram, p. 118).

Despite this, Robert Bruce, Earl of Huntingdon, was regarded by all as a Scot, not an Englishman. This brings us to the curious part. Remember Langland's link between Robin Hood and Ranulf of Chester? The last Earl Ranulf of Chester died in 1232 without a direct heir (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 78, who adds that his lands were divided). The next person in line for the Chester earldom was the aforementioned "John the Scot," the son of David of Huntingdon (Powicke, p. 197 n.), the last of his line to hold the Chester earldom (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 78).

Even though the English King took back the Chester earldom after the death of John the Scot, if you assume that Robin really was Earl of Huntingdon, then he almost had to be Scottish, and he also had the claim to being Earl of Chester. In other words, if Robin really was an earl, then Ranulf and of Robin would be cousins (probably first cousins once removed), with Robin being Ranulf's heir!

No, I don't buy a word of it either. Apart from all the assumptions we have to accept, the Scots never took to the longbow — one of the main reasons why the English won most of the battles with the Scots from 1300 to 1513. The one major Scottish win, at Bannockburn, came about because Edward II ignored his archers — a lesson his son was quick to learn. And yet, if we continue the speculation, we do find in "Robin Hood and the Scotchman" [Child 130] the interesting fact that Robin is willing to accept Scots into his band. But this ballad is late, and the surviving versions short — and the "Scotchman" shows no indications of actual Scottishness. I almost wonder if this isn't some sort of strange attempt to show James I or some other Stuart king that Robin was an equal opportunity outlaw.

One last observation: Martin Parker's feeble "A True Tale of Robin Hood" [Child 154], which in stanza 3 makes Robin Earl of Huntingdon in the reign of Richard I (i.e. when David was Earl of Huntingdon), in stanza 83 has Robin's men flee to "the Scottish King," but not Robin himself. Parker seems to have made up much of his tale, but some might be from now-lost tradition. His tale fits badly in the reign of Richard I; Richard

lived before the formation of the Auld Alliance between Scotland and France. Scotland and England were often friendly in this period. Outlaws who fled to Scotland at that time might be turned over to the English king. It was only after Bannockburn in 1314 that Scotland would be a safe and secure refuge.

None of that is really relevant, except to prove the following: The only way that Robin Hood could have been shadow Earl of Huntingdon is if he has been a child of Matilda daughter of Waltheof by her first marriage to Simon of Senlis. But that would mean that he was born in 1107 at the latest, and probably a few years earlier. This would mean that he would have been active in the reigns of Henry I (reigned 1100–1135) and Stephen (1135–1154). And that's just plain too early.

There is one other question: If the legend early on had made Robin a shadow earl (perhaps under the influence of the Tale of Gamelyn or some such), why Earl of Huntingdon? We can't really answer this, but it leads to interesting speculations.

The office of Earl was established before the Norman Conquest. In Saxon times, the number and boundaries of the earldoms were not fixed (e.g. E. A. Freeman, as reproduced on p. 362 of Barlow-Edward, pp. 362–363, shows eight earldoms in 1045, but only six plus a sub-earldom in 1065–1066). Our knowledge of the earldoms at the time is very limited (Walker, p. 231), but they did not correspond at all to the modern counties; indeed, counties were often swapped from earl to earl during the reign of Edward the Confessor (Walker, pp. 233–234, tabulates the little we know about these changes).

But several earldoms always existed in the late Saxon period, based in large part on the ancient kingdoms of Britain: The earldoms of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumberland, plus apparently the smaller earldom of East Anglia. The three major earldoms had belonged to three great families under King Cnut: Godwine of Wessex, Leofric of Mercia, and Siward of Northumbria (the father of the above-mentioned Waltheof). All of them were dead before 1060, but the later earls were selected from their descendants.

Without bothering with the details of how it ended up so, in 1066 King Harold II son of Godwine retained his old Earldom of Wessex as well as being king. His brother Gyrth was Earl of East Anglia, and his brother Leofwine held an Earldom in the southeast that doesn't seem to have had a name (Barlow-Edward, p. 197). Edwin the grandson of Leofric held Mercia, and his brother Morkere/Morcar had recently been granted Northumbria (Barlow-Edward, p. 238). Waltheof, the only living son of Siward, had been very young when his father died (his older brother Osbeorn had died at Dunsinane in the battle where MacBethoc/MacBeth was killed; Head, p. 48), but around 1065 was given land in Huntingdon and Northamptonshire (Barlow-Edward, p, 194 n. 3; Walker, p. 234). It is not clear what this earldom was called at the time, but after the Conquest, it was labelled the earldom of Huntingdon.

After the Conquest, William the Conqueror broke up the great Earldoms. Indeed, it is Douglas's opinion (pp. 295–297) that William completely redefined the office of Earl, from an administrative post to a military one — most of his earls held marcher counties; the areas under firm Norman control were not governed by earls. William immediately dissolved Harold's earldom of Wessex, and when a few years later he got rid of Edwin and Morkere, he dissolved Mercia and chopped Northumbria down to the county of

Northumberland (Linklater, pp. 263–264). East Anglia was divided into Norfolk and Suffolk. Leofwine's southeastern earldom also was dissolved.

Thus Waltheof's earldom of Huntingdon, although small compared to the other Saxon earldoms, was the only one to survive William's reforms essentially intact. Was whoever invented the Huntingdon claim anticipating Scott's idea of Robin the Saxon survivor? No idea. However, had Robin not been claimed as shadow earl of some other county, it is not unlikely that Scott, or an earlier author, would have converted him to Earl of Huntingdon just because it was such a historically interesting title.

To return to the earlier topic of Robin's home, if Robin Hood was not Earl of Huntingdon, which he wasn't, then he surely did not live in the Barnsdale in Rutland. So we're still trying to decide between Sherwood and the Barnsdale in Yorkshire as Robin's home.

Adam Bell and the Northwest of England

Or maybe we should look for Robin someplace to the west. Much of the material in the "Gest" parallels portions of "Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly" [Child 116], first published, as best we can tell, in 1536 (though the names were associated earlier, in the 1432 gag parliamentary roll that also mentions Robin; see the note on Stanza 4). Those three outlaws were based in Inglewood in Cumbria and Lancashire, not Barnsdale or Sherwood — although it's worth remember that Wyntoun placed Robin in Inglewood. An attempt to combine the two legends produced the monstrosity that is "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valor, and Marriage" [Child 149]. Some have tried to claim "Adam Bell" as an ancestor of the Robin Hood legend. But there is every reason to think the dependency goes the other way; Chambers, p. 159, calls Adam Bell "almost a burlesque of Robin Hood," and its publication date makes me think that some hack author, noting the popularity of the "Gest," tried to produce a story in the same genre. The result was feeble — the "Gest" is decent poetry, but "Adam Bell" is so irregular that it would probably be reckoned as free verse today. The poem as we have it looks like an attempt to turn a folktale into a salable short romance.

"Guy of Gisborne" hints at a location somewhat south of Inglewood, in Lancashire — but close enough that Robin could be in both Inglewood and the Gisburn region. Gisburn is a small town, due north of modern Burnley, relatively close to the west coast of Britain, on the Ribble river in Lancashire; it is thirty or forty miles west and somewhat north of Barnsdale — although, interestingly, it is directly between Barnsdale and Sir Richard's presumed home in Wyresdale. If Guy lived in the immediate vicinity of Robin's haunts, Robin might well have lived in Bowland Forest east of the Wyre river, roughly in the center of a triangle with vertices at Preston, the city of Lancaster, and Gisburn. The chances of anyone from Sherwood, or even Barnsdale, casually showing up in the Gisburn area are slight.

Alternately, references to Robin in Inglewood might come out of Edward II's wars with Scotland. McNamee, p. 47, mentions that people in southwest Scotland were hiding their cattle in Inglewood due to English raids. (We see a similar situation in England in 1345, when English herders took their cattle to Knaresborough and Galtres forests in Yorkshire due to Scottish raids; Hewitt, p. 103.) Talk about an opportunity for

outlaws! — maybe Robin made a business trip. Another possibility is that Robin originally set up in Barnsdale, but during the period of the Scots raids, pickings grew so slim in Yorkshire that he moved south, perhaps temporarily, to Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, which was south of the area devastated by the Scots.

Young, p. 99, has an interesting table calculating up the average rate of offenses against venison at several forests in the late thirteenth century. The lowest rate is two per year at Melksham in Wiltshire. Ten of the other twelve forests for which statistics were available, all in southern or central England, averaged four or five offenses per year. Only two exceeded five offenses per year: Sherwood, with seven, and Inglewood, with eight. (Barnsdale, since it wasn't a Royal Forest, is not in the list.) More evidence that both were well-known as outlaw haunts.

Holt, p. 105, makes the interesting observation that, although references to Lancashire locations are relatively few in the "Gest", they are scattered across the several parts of the poem — the killing of the knight of Lancaster is in fit 1, the mention of Verysdale (Wyresdale?) is in fit 2, and King Edward is near the passes of Lancashire and Plumpton Park in fit 7. Holt suggests that the Lancashire references were all added after the story was nearly finished; the other possibility, of course, is that they are very ancient and precede localization to Sherwood and Barnsdale.

Vague additional support for a Lancashire setting comes from Stanza 53 of the "Gest," which says that the Knight's son slew a knight of Lancaster/Lancashire. Obviously Lancashire knights were most common in Lancashire — but on the other hand, who would bother identifying a knight as being "of Lancashire" if the setting were Lancashire?

And then there is the alternate reading "Lancaster" (see the textual note on Stanza 53) Although a geographic designation, it is also a political one — could the boy have slain a knight who was a vassal of the Earl (or Duke) of Lancaster? If so, it might even explain why Robin befriended Sir Richard, since the Earl of Lancaster was Edward II's strongest and bitterest adversary. And Lancastrians still existed and "were unreconciled" after the earl's execution (Wilkinson, p. 128 — although it is noteworthy that Lancaster's tenants pelted him with snowballs before his execution, according to Packe, p. 13; he had not been a popular lord).

Alternately, "Lancaster" might be an anachronism — a supporter of the House of Lancaster in the Wars of the Roses, which began after the "Gest" was written (probably, anyway) but before the "Gest" was printed.

This is one of the most important variants in the "Gest," and I disagree with Child on purely textual grounds — although it would be very helpful if someone could do a more serious critical analysis. But if my analysis of the text is correct, then the reading "Lancashire" is an argument, although a weak one, against placing the Robin in Lancashire.

Fountains Abbey and the Curtal Friar

If the "Curtal Friar" be regarded as solid evidence, the Friar is from Fountains Abbey. The abbey dates from the twelfth century (founded 1132, according to Tatton-Brown/Crook, p. 112, by the Cisterians; Kerr, pp. 193–194, says the founders wanted to adopt a stricter rule and so broke away from the Benedictines — although Tyerman, p.

116, says that this worked only moderately well; the stricter rule didn't really take hold). The abbey's age means that it is no help with dating — but it is a geographic hint about the origin of the legend: it is in west Yorkshire, near Barnsdale, not in Nottinghamshire. It was raided by the Scots in 1318 or 1319 (McNamee, p. 88) — which might perhaps explain why the Friar was active so far from his base: the Abbey residents were scattered. (The other possibility is that he was herding sheep; Kerr, p. 195, says that the abbey at one time had 15,000 sheep!)

Fountains eventually started paying significant sums to visiting minstrels (Holt, p. 137); might Fountains Abbey have come to be part of the tradition because some visiting performer zipped its name into one of his Robin Hood songs? It would help explain how the Friar of the May Games became a Robin Hood character.

For the interesting relationship between Richard of Fountains and the Abbot of St. Mary's, see the notes to Stanza 88.

Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford — Adam Orleton — The Fate of Edward II

It is fascinating that two of the ballads describe Robin as robbing the Bishop of Hereford: "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford" [Child 144] and "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine" [Child 145]. The latter mentions the robbery only in passing (stanza 23 of Child's "A" refers to Hereford, as does line 177 of the Knight/Ohlgren text based on the Forresters manuscript; see also Knight, p. 39, second stanza; Knight, p. 58). "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine" is partly based on the "Gest," and may also have influence from one of the various tales of Robin robbing bishops. In any case, "Queen Katherine" cannot be an early legend — England did not have a Queen Katherine from the time of William the Conqueror until Henry V married Catherine of Valois in 1420.

If "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine" is of little value, "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford" is another matter. The plot comes from Eustace the Monk, and it is so similar in concept to "Robin Hood and the Bishop" [Child 143] that Knight/Ohlgren do not seem even to distinguish them. But while extant copies of "The Bishop of Hereford" are fairly recent, it is noteworthy among the late ballads in placing Robin in Barnsdale, not Sherwood — a strong hint of older content. And Child considers it superior to most of the later ballads, plus it is fairly well attested in tradition.

Admittedly the action in "Hereford" is probably a doublet of the robbing of the abbot in the "Gest," or the monk in the "Monk." But why the Bishop of Hereford? Hereford is nowhere near any of Robin's known haunts. Nor, we note, is it a rich bishopric. Barlow-Rufus, p. 262, has a table of the values of sundry bishoprics. The list is not complete. but Hereford, with a farm of 270 pounds per year in the time of Henry II, is the poorest see on the list except for Chichester. Even allowing for inflation (there was heavy inflation in the early 1200s; Mortimer-Angevin, p. 51; Boyd, p. 319), it's hard to see how a Bishop of Hereford could have 300 pounds in cash to haul around.

Almost all of these problems are solved if we assume that the Bishop involved is Adam Orleton, Bishop of Hereford at the end of the reign of Edward II. Although he was only Bishop of Hereford at that time, he soon after was translated to Worcester (in 1327; according to Packe, p. 39, this was done by the Pope against the will of Queen Isabella), and then to Winchester (in 1333); according to Hicks, p. 60, he was among the

very first bishops to be translated (moved from one bishopric to another), a practice which had been frowned on in the early church. (He managed a lot of firsts — he was also the first English prelate to be called before a lay tribunal; Packe, p. 16.)

Winchester was the richest diocese in England (with a farm of 1440 pounds per year in Henry II's time, or more than five times the value of Hereford, according to Barlow-Rufus, and on the order of 4000 pounds per year by the time of Henry III, according to Mortimer-Angevin, p. 81), and was still considered "the richest of English sees" (Wolffe, p. 67) and a "lucrative" bishopric in the time of Henry VI (Wolffe, p. 56).

And, if we assume that Robin was a supporter of Edward II, then he had a particular reason to go after Orleton — and to call him Bishop of Hereford even after his translation. Doherty describes Orleton (p. 86) as "ruffianly," while Hutchison, p. 128, calls him "unamiable and self-serving." Even the less pro-Edward Harvey declares (p. 160) that he was one of several bishops who "counted treason as nothing."

The most positive assessment I can find of him is in Hicks, p. 61, who thinks the Pope liked and promoted Orleton because Orleton — a man of "exceptionally obscure" origins — believed in a strongly hierarchical church (a church, thus, which might promote common men like Orleton!). Hicks also says that he seems to have made genuine efforts to manage his diocese well, and argues that his reputation has suffered because of the works of one particular chronicler.

This argument does not seem to have been convincing; few other historians have anything better to say of Orleton than Ormrod, p. 28, who shrugs him off as a "political prelate" (although, interestingly, he would later play a role in claiming the kingdom of France for Edward III) and Barber, who on p. 14 calls him "far from incompetent."

Mortimer-Traitor, p. 93, tells us, "Contemporaries and later generations considered Adam of Orleton a cunning, calculating man, a ruthless cleric with more thought for his own authority than for his flock. Orleton was highly intelligent, cynical perhaps, but with an intolerance of foolish government and a loyalty to the Pope bordering on fanaticism. Therein lies the key to understanding his political career."

Harvey, p. 132, is harshest of all: "Not the most adept of American kidnappers has gone to the electric chair with the load of evil on his soul that encumbered those of Roger Mortimer and his Christian brother, Orleton."

Orleton was unusual in that he was not the monarch's pick for his see. Edward II had opposed Orleton's appointment in the first place (Prestwich3, p. 105; Hicks, p. 61). Phillips, p. 450, says that Edward II had sent him on a mission to Avignon in 1317, and that Orleton managed to obtain the Bishopric of Hereford while there, presumably by intrigue. Edward tried to have the Pope set him aside. Orleton would more than have his revenge.

Edward II had trouble with several of his bishops at one time or another, but Phillips, pp. 453–454, says that Orleton was the one bishop with whom he was never reconciled — Orleton was actually called before judges in 1324 (Phillips, p. 453). Doherty, p. 86, declares that Orleton of Hereford was a friend of Roger Mortimer (who became Isabella's lover and led the rebellion against Edward II) and helped Mortimer escape from the Tower. Packe, p. 32, considers Orleton a strong member of Mortimer's party. Edward II, not surprisingly, took away his temporalities (Hutchison, p. 130).

Later, Orleton would preach against Edward II's favorites the Despensers (Doherty, p. 91), and Hutchison, p. 135, declares that he "preached treason" at Oxford (though preaching against the Despensers, who were ghastly thugs who stopped at nothing, strikes me more as an act of high courage than treason).

"The bishop of Hereford declared in the parliament of 1326 that if Isabella rejoined her husband [Edward II] she would suffer death at his hands. Soon after, we find the Bishop of Hereford allied with Queen Isabella against the King; he was one of those who joined her party in France" (Prestwich3, p. 97; although Phillips, p. 504, says that Orleton joined the rebels after they landed in England).

Phillips, p. 98, says that Orleton was the first to openly declare Edward II a sodomite — although it must have been whispered earlier. He also called Edward a tyrant (Phillips, p. 523, who notes however that Orleton later claimed — once the political tide had turned — that he was using the words about Hugh Despenser the Younger rather than Edward. Phillips, pp. 523–524, n. 22, admits that the charge of sodomy was widely reported on the continent but occurs rarely in English chronicles).

Once the anti-Edward rebellion succeeded, Isabella and Mortimer had to figure out what to do with Edward. They finally decided to try to get him to publicly abdicate his throne — and Orleton was one of those sent to talk him into it (Doherty, p. 110. Edward of course refused to go along). Orleton did manage to retrieve the Privy Seal (Hutchison, p. 137). When Parliament met, Orleton presented most of the arguments for Edward's deposition (Doherty, pp. 110–111; Hutchison, p. 138, says that on January 13, 1327, he preached on the theme "A foolish king shall ruin his people"). In Hutchison's view, in the period immediately after Edward's deposition, three people ran the country: "the adulteress Isabella, her paramour Mortimer and the execrable Orleton" (p. 140).

Orleton would later, once Edward III was firmly in control, be accused of ordering the death of Edward II. He was able to prove his innocence — he was both out of favor and out of the country at the time of the murder (Doherty, pp. 130–131) — but surely friends of the king would be those most likely to listen to such rumors.

We know Orleton ended up with a reputation for sneakiness. A late source, demonstrably false, told of him sending a message to Edward II's guards, "Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est" (Doherty, p. 130). If punctuated with a comma after timere, this becomes "Do not be afraid to kill Edward; it is good"; if punctuated with a comma before timere, it is "Do not kill Edward; it is good to be afraid." We know the story is not true because, first, Orleton wasn't in England to send the message, and second, the story was originally told of someone else (Hutchison, p. 142; Doherty, pp. 130–131; Mortimer-Traitor, p. 192). But it is probably a valid example of how Orleton was seen at the time.

Thus, while Robin Hood disliked bishops in general, if he lived *c*. 1327, the bishop he would surely hate above all would be Orleton of Hereford.

The most likely time for the robbery might be the period in 1327–1328, when memories of Orleton's part in the deposition of Edward II were fresh and Orleton was Lord Treasurer and hence would be dealing with large sums of money. Toward the end

of the latter year, Orleton lost his post of Treasurer because he disagreed with the forced regency of Roger Mortimer (Ormrod, p. 15).

So while it would be unlikely that a bishop would carry 300 pounds, let along the eight hundred pounds allegedly taken from the cellarer of the "Gest," Orleton, if taken after 1333, or during his time as treasurer, would be good for the sum. And Robin and his men might call him "Bishop of Hereford" even after he was translated, because the translations took place under a regime they disapproved of. And Orleton lived until 1345, so there was plenty of time to rob him after his translations.

It is perhaps slightly ironic to note that it has been suggested that the compiler of the tale of Fulk FitzWarin was a member of Orleton's clerical family (Ohlgren, p. 106).

Orleton went blind by 1340, and died in 1345 (Hicks, p. 62).

The Redating of the Legend: Robin Hood and Richard I

Holt, p. 36, declares, "Nothing has so confused the story of Robin so much as the imposition of modern anachronism on the medieval legend." The observations above and below surely show how true this is. If the medieval stories of Robin Hood are so clearly linked to the period of the Edwards, how did the later Robin Hood come to be so associated with the time of Richard I? As Dobson/Taylor point out on p. 16, "there is no evidence whatsoever" that Robin lived in the time of Richard and John, adding in note 3, "The only serious scholar to accept a twelfth-century date for Robin Hood in recent years was Professor W. Entwistle."

So why Richard I?

The modern tendency to place Robin in the reign of Richard I was the work of Joseph Ritson, whose work reshaped the legend (Dobson/Taylor, p. 55), and it seems likely that he accepted the idea because it fit his revolutionary ideology (Basdeo, pp. 121-123). But while Ritson almost certainly adopted the idea because it fit with his somewhat delusional political views, he didn't actually invent it. He merely filtered the data he had through his ideology to choose the option that made the least sense, and then popularized it. So how did the idea come to be in Ritson's sources?

Some of it may have been the curious similarity between the story in the "Gest" of Robin and the Knight and that of Saint Robert of Knaresborough (see note on Stanza 91). Also, there was a tale, in Roger of Wendover's chronicle (1232?) which Briggs-Folktales prints on pp. 219–220, called "King Richard and the Penitent Knight," about a knight condemned for killing deer. This has some similarities to the tale in the "Gest," and might have caused the two to become attracted.

Bridge, p. 218, suggests that Robin was redated because Richard I ordered a slight loosening of the forest laws: "it seems at least possible that the popular imagination, wondering what had induced a Norman king to do something so un-Norman as to make life a little less dangerous and uncomfortable for the Anglo-Saxon poachers in the greenwoods of England, concluded in its poetic and religious way that during his hunting days in Sherwood forest, he must have met that ancient spirit of the trees... Robin, and liked him.

Of course, Robin wasn't in Sherwood and was never a spirit of the trees. Probably a bigger part of it is just the wild guesses of the earlier chroniclers. It is interesting that many of the early reports about Robin are from Scottish sources; Pollard, p. 190,

suggests that the Scots chroniclers might have transferred Robin from the reign of the Edwards, who oppressed Scotland, to Richard, who granted Scotland independence. And Anthony Munday, and later Walter Scott, strengthened the suggestion.

But those early chroniclers' guesses about dates — which are probably based in part on materials we no longer have — could also have been influenced by the many similarities (some trivial, some quite significant) between Edward II and Richard I:

- Both have been charged with homosexuality — although Edward managed to father legitimate children, which Richard did not. Edward was not openly accused of homosexuality until Tudor times; Philipps, pp. 25–26. But Edward's obsession with Piers Gaveston was a major issue even before Edward took the throne (Hutchison, p. 30), and his obsession with Hugh Despenser the Younger was if anything worse. On the other hand, Richard's homosexuality is dubious (Gillingham, pp. 161-162, is sure it is false; he notes, e.g., strong evidence of an illegitimate son). But the only other seemingly-homosexual pre-Tudor English king was William Rufus, who never married and apparently dressed his courtiers in effeminate styles (Barlow-Rufus, pp. 102–104). No one wanted to imitate Rufus, who was not admired. (Although, interestingly, he, like Richard I, died of an arrow shot probably by a vassal.) In any case, Rufus was known for his poor relations with the church (Barlow-Rufus, p. 110) and his appropriation of funds from bishoprics he refused to fill (Barlow-Rufus, p. 181); although Barlow-Rufus on p. 113 denies that Rufus was actually non-Christian, the pious Robin probably would not have liked him. So a tale of Edward II could hardly transfer to Rufus; it had to direct to Richard if the "target" was a homosexual king.
- Both Richard and Edward were younger sons of overbearing fathers who did not initially expect to succeed to the throne (Edward II's older brother Alfonso was heir at the time Edward was born; Alfonso did not die until 1284, when he was eleven years old; Hutchison, pp. 5–6. Richard's brother was Henry the Young King, who died in 1183, when Richard was already twenty-five or twenty-six).
- Both suffered severe financial difficulties (not that *that* is unusual for an English King).
- Neither held true to his word (Hutchison, p. 69, notes Edward's repeated flouting of the Ordinances to which he agreed; one of the reasons Richard fought his father was that neither could be trusted).
- Both were considered to have inherited the overlordship of Scotland from their fathers, and both lost it (Richard sold it to finance his crusade, Edward forfeited it at Bannockburn).
- Both died violently when rather young — around 43. Richard was still on the throne when he died, whereas Edward II had been deposed earlier in the year, but Richard had sown a wind which would be reaped by his brother John, and which brought John to the brink of deposition.

Plus, Richard I is often said (somewhat exaggeratedly) to have been in conflict with his younger brother and successor John. This is a particularly common theme in the later Robin Hood stories. And Edward II had been in conflict with his nobles long before his deposition — notably with his cousin Thomas of Lancaster.

Lancaster wasn't Edward II's brother — but Edward II had no living full brothers, and his two half-brothers were young, and his only male heirs in 1318 were two boys under the age of seven. Apart from those boys, Henry of Lancaster was the heir in male line of Edward II; both were grandsons in male line of King Henry III. Close enough to a brother for ballad purposes (Wilkinson, p. 119, calls him the "first lord of the royal blood"); had Edward II died accidentally around 1315, with all other male descendants of Edward I still minors, the temptation would have been strong to give the throne to Lancaster.

Indeed, when Edward was deposed, Henry of Lancaster (the brother of the executed Thomas of Lancaster) became the nominal head of the government as regent for the young Edward III (Hutchison, p. 140). Plus, when Edward II was overthrown, Henry of Lancaster was part of the force which turned against him. And the Scots seem to have addressed a letter to Lancaster in which they called him "King Arthur" (Phillips, p. 406, although of course Arthur was not his name).

In the end, even his real brother would betray Edward II: in the final rebellion which overthrew the king, Edward's half-brother Thomas, Earl of Norfolk gave support to the invaders led by Edward's wife, although he was not a leader (Hutchison, p. 134; Phillips, p. 504. Frankly, the sons of Edward I all seem to have been pretty useless. Edward II never managed peace with his barons. His half-brother Edmund of Woodstock, earl of Kent, was disastrously defeated in Gascony; Hutchison, p. 125. And the other half-brother, Thomas of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, was a non-entity until the rebellion of 1326).

I also note that Richard at the Lee in the "Gest" and Richard I in the later legend are alleged to have been held up, then released, by Robin. Might confusion of names have somehow contributed to the assignment of Robin to the reign of Richard I? Particularly with the legend of Fulk FitzWarren also attracting Robin to the reigns of Richard and John? Keen, pp. 46–48, seems convinced that the story of Fulk lies at the roots of most of the "Gest." I would be more inclined to say that the same motifs went into both — indeed, the fact that Fulk (who is historical) was firmly dated to the reign of Richard and John would be a reason to date Robin to the same period.

It must have been tempting to dissociate Robin Hood the hero from Edward II the disaster. Richard I was a failure as a king, but he was a glorious failure — a crusader, a figure of romance, a fighter to the end. But "No other English king has received such unanimous disapproval as Edward II," according to Hutchison, p. 145. I'm not sure that's true — Henry VI was pure disaster — but certainly Edward II was the worst in the century before Langland wrote "Piers Plowman," and retains a poor reputation to this day.

Suppose, then, that there was a tale of an outlaw who met with and supported Edward II. Perhaps he was one of those who conspired to restore Edward II after his deposition. Would not the temptation be to transfer his exploits to another time — perhaps a time when there was a romantic king otherwise similar to Edward? After all, "More than any other King of England[,] Richard the Lionhearted belongs, not to the sober world of history , but to the magic realm of legend and romance. The picture we have of him is still shaped by the images of a child's view of the Middle Ages"

(Gillingham, p. 4. He adds on pp. 5–6 that "Once we look a little more closely at some of the stories about Richard it soon becomes obvious that the coat of legendary paint which conceals him is a very thick coat indeed").

There might be another reason for the transfer. Richard I, after he went on crusade, was captured by Leopold, Duke of Austria, and was in captivity for more than a year. Since he had been out of the country for about four years in all, there were sporadic rebellions on his return. Most of these collapsed quickly. The very last town to hold out was Nottingham (Gillingham, p. 241). Since the sheriff of Nottingham was Robin's foe, and the town of Nottingham opposed Richard, mightn't that have helped attract Robin to Richard's time? Or, perhaps, explain a transfer from Barnsdale to Sherwood in Nottinghamshire.

This is all speculation. It might be just that somebody made a bad guess about Robin's dating. That's probably the most likely explanation.

Who Made Maid Marian, And Other Late Additions

In the earliest stage of the legend, Robin's band seems to have consisted of Robin himself, Little John, Scathelock, and Much (see the note on Stanza 4). Others — Allen a Dale, Will Stutly, perhaps Friar Tuck — came from one-off ballads. But no one is more closely associated with the late legend than Maid Marian.

The link between Robin and Marion/Marian perhaps comes from French romances — Simpson/Roud, p. 223, note that Robin and Marion were stock lovers in French tradition starting in the thirteenth century, and Holt, p. 160, observes that Gower knew this tradition circa 1380. Dobson/Taylor, p. 42, declare that it is "virtually certain that by origin she was the shepherdess Marion of the medieval French *pastourelles*, where she was partnered by the shepherd Robin."

Mustanoja, p. 53, suggests that equivalent native English lovers would be Jankin and Malkin, citing e.g. the thirteenth century "Lutel Soth Sermun." They are, he suggests on p. 54, the names of "'any frivolous young man' and 'any flighty girl.'" (It is perhaps of interest to note that "Malkin" is connected by different scholars variously to the name Mary=Marian and Matilda, both of which are alleged as the true name of Maid Marian; Mustanoja, p. 55.) He also notes on p. 53 an English tradition linking men named Robin with women named Gill. If the link derived from English folktales, we almost certainly would not see Robin and Marian together — although Percy printed a piece called "Robin and Makyne" from Scottish tradition.

Marian's link to Robin Hood may have been cemented by the May Games, where Marian was queen (and supposedly very lusty indeed, according to Dobson/Taylor, p. 42 — a strong contrast to the aristocratic, chaste Marian of the Munday plays). This would explain why there is no Scottish tradition about the pair (Chambers, p. 121).

In light of their role in the Games, it is interesting to note that Marian was often said to be as good a fighter as Robin himself (see "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" [Child 150]), and in the May Games she was usually played by a man (Benet, p. 675) or boy (Dobson/Taylor, p. 42).

Child says categorically that she should be linked sexually with Friar Tuck, not Robin (p. 218, in the notes to Child 150).

The data for this is somewhat ambiguous. Most authors believe that the first mention of Robin and Marian in the same immediate context was made by Alexander Barclay in *The Ship of Follies* around 1508. It seems to contrast them, not link them: "Yet would I gladly hear some mery fit of Maide Marian, or els of Robin Hood" (Cawthorne, p. 181; Dobson/Taylor, p. 41; Harris, p. 41); moreover, the whole stanza is a jumble of elements from many sources. Henry Mackyn in his description of the May Games says that after the play of Saint George and the dragon, and various dances, there appears "Robyn Hode and lytull John, and Maid Marian and frere Tuke" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 40).

Child-ESB prints, from Gutch, a piece entitled "In Sherwood Livde Stout Robin Hood." This was apparently first printed in 1606, and contains lines such as

A noble thiefe was Robin Hoode,
Wise was he could deceive him;
Yet Marrian, in his bravest mood,
Could of his heart bereave him!
No greater thief lies hidden under skies
Then beauty closely lodgde in womens eyes.

Observe that "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" is the only ballad that is really about her; two other Robin Hood ballads mention her, but in a context such that she might be associated with any of Robin's band, or none.

Knight/Ohlgren note on p. 58 (compare Pollard, pp. 26–27) the almost complete absence of women in the early ballads (if you exclude the Virgin Mary). There is the prioress of Kirklees in the "Death," and we briefly see the Knight's wife in the "Gest," but the only woman who is at all a character is the Sheriff's wife in the "Potter," who gives hints of being interested in Robin. Pollard, p. 27, comments that she seems to be drawn from the same sources as the Wife of Bath and Noah's wife (who, in the plays of this period, was usually a shrew).

Pollard, pp. 14–15, suggests that, after the Reformation, Robin's devotion to the Virgin Mary (which of course is idolatry to Protestants) was diverted to Marian instead.

Phillips/Keatman, p. 143, mention a suggestion that Marian is a transfer of the Saxon goddess Eostre — a possibility perhaps a little more likely than that Robin is a wood sprite, but still without supporting evidence.

In Robin's death scene (in both the "Death" and the "Gest"), Robin makes no mention of a wife, and certainly none of children. There is no early hint that he was married. (To be sure, Munday had Marian die, poisoned by an agent of King John, shortly after Robin's death; Knight/Ohlgren, pp. 426–428. But this is entirely out of Munday's head — a place I certainly would not wish to visit.)

The many ballads in the Forresters Manuscript mention Marian only once, and not in a love context (Knight, p. xx). This implies that, even as late as the seventeenth century, Robin and Marian were not strongly linked. To be sure, Phillips/Keatman, p. 91, mention a notion that she might have been dropped for a time because of medieval prejudices against women. But we see the Knight's wife come off well in the "Gest," and the Sheriff's wife in the "Potter." While one or two ballads might be affected this way, it's hard to believe that they *all* were!

Munday's plays invented a love triangle between Robin, Marian, and Prince John (Simpson/Roud, p. 299). This gives me the mad image of Robin courting Marian in English and John in Norman French, but Munday's idea is patently an accretion. It is true that Robert FitzWalter, who in legend was the mother of Matilda=Marian (Holt, p. 162), was a genuine enemy of King John (Tyerman, p. 307), and that "There is a story of Robert arriving at the trial of his son-in-law for murder with five hundred armed men, a reflection if not of the truth then of his reputation for violence and wealth" (Tyerman, p. 312). That would need a lot of twisting to turn into the Robin and Marian legend, though.

Holt, p. 162, gives Munday much of the blame for fixing the notion of a date in the reign of Richard I as well as for ennobling Robin, and so creating this scenario — but it probably comes ultimately from the fact that Fulk FitzWarrene married a woman, Matilda, whom John had sought after (Keen, p. 51; the plot as summarized by Cawthorne, p. 103, is almost identical to the Munday tale). The story of Marian is, to me, the clearest indication of the Robin legend borrowing from the Fulk legend (or, rather, an indication of Munday using the Fulk tale) — but Marian's entry into the Robin Hood corpus did not occur until both traditions were past their prime.

It is interesting that Robert Hood of Wakefield, whom Hunter identified as "the" Robin Hood, was married to a wife named Matilda (Phillips/Keatman, p. 90). But no traditional source calls Marian "Matilda." This is again pure Munday.

The case of Friar Tuck is more mysterious. Both as the Curtal Friar and as Friar Tuck (if, indeed, these two are the same), he seems to be a native English figure. But is he truly a part of the Robin Hood saga? Dobson/Taylor on p. 41 point out the complications of this legend: "Many ingenious attempts to trace the origins of the Friar Tuck of the Robin Hood legend seem to have foundered on a failure to appreciate that he was the product of a fusion between two very different friars." They add that he did not become a key part of the Robin Hood legend until Scott reshaped him in *Ivanhoe*.

Keep in mind that public opinion of friars waxed and waned dramatically. One of the main topics of "Pierce the Ploughman's Crede" is the corrupted state of various friars (Barr, p. 6), but in early Lancastrian times friars were given exclusive rights to preach in some settings. Edward I seems to have approved of them, and his queen liked them a lot (Prestwich1, pp. 112–113). But the ballad of the Curtal Friar is not clear enough to tell us whether the friars were "in" or "out" in Robin's time.

Simpson/Roud, p. 135, cautiously declare, "Tuck may have been an independent comic figure based on the medieval stereotype of a disreputable friar — fond of fighting, hunting, and wenching." Copland's play seems to indicate that Tuck was lusty indeed; according to Dobson/Taylor, p. 209, Child cut a dozen extremely bawdy lines from the end. Based on one of these lines, it appears that he wore an artificial phallus (Cawthorne, p. 75). Certainly Robin offers him "a lady free" as part of his fee (line 111 on p. 289 of Knight/Ohlgren).

Robin Hood's friar may not be a version of this particular figure of fun, but that Tuck originated separately seems very likely — Holt, pp. 58–59, described an actual outlaw of 1417 who called himself Friar Tuck. According to Baldwin, p. 68, he actually was in holy orders; his name was Robert Stafford, and he was chaplain of Linfield in Sussex.

Stafford was like Robin in at least one regard: He was good at evading capture. He avoided the authorities for more than a dozen years (Pollard, p. 95), being mentioned in both 1417 and 1429 (Phillips/Keatman, p. 103).

Dobson/Taylor, p. 4, suggest that Stafford took the name "Friar Tuck" in imitation of Robin Hood's association, and Holt seems to think (p. 16) that Robin and the Friar were connected from the start.

On the other hand, Alexander, p. 99, notes Tuck's strong history outside the Robin Hood legend: "In the May Day entertainments Friar Tuck took on the role of the Fool while at Christmas he became the Abbot of Misrule in charge of the celebrations."

On this evidence, whatever the age of the ballad of the Curtal Friar, it draws upon tales not integral to the Robin Hood legend. The friar, like Maid Marian, is likely to have come to be associated with Robin via the May Games.

Keen, p. 134, suggests that Marian and Tuck have no analogies in the early ballads because they were "inappropriate" to the natural situation of an outlaw. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 10, suggest that Marian was made a major character by Munday because the playwright made Robin a nobleman, and a nobleman needs a wife so that he can have heirs. McLynn, p. 243, offers the wild suggestion that "Maid Marian underlies the link to fertility cults"!

If Munday helped establish Maid Marian, and retained Friar Tuck, he is even more important in the establishment of Robin as a nobleman. It is little surprise to see this sort of "promotion"; it happened with Hereward the Wake as well — e.g. Head, pp. 41, 49, cites with some approval the incredible hypothesis that Hereward was actually the son of Godgifu=Lady Godiva and of Leofric, the old Earl of Mercia who died in 1057; so also Hole, pp. 129–130, although she doesn't believe it. (Hereward's *Gesta* says Hereward was the son of Leofric of Bourne, grandson of Radulf, according to Head, p. 156, but this doesn't sound like Leofric of Mercia to me, and Head justifies the idea on p. 62 with the fact that Morkere the descendent of Leofric eventually was said to join Hereward at Ely.)

Apart from Munday, the claim that Robin was well-born was made by Grafton, and was supported by the Gale inscription, paraphrased by Parker in 1598. Dr. William Stukeley, in 1746, combined inaccurate records of the peerage with a good deal of imagination (such as a "marriage" which took place after one of the participants was dead; Cawthorne, p. 47) to convert Robin into "Robert fitz Ooth" (an unattested name; read perhaps Fitzhugh?), third earl of Huntingdon, giving his death date as 1274, just after the accession of Edward I (Holt, pp. 42–43). This even though the Huntingdon earldom was then in the hand of the Bruce family. Stukeley never did cite sources for his claims (Phillips/Keatman, p. 32).

Stukeley also claimed that Robin inherited his outlaw ways from a grandfather who lived in the reign of Stephen (Hole, pp. 81–82), so you can perhaps get an idea of the amount of imagination involved.

The ballad "Willie and Earl Richard's Daughter" [Child 102] makes Robin the (bastard) grandson of an Earl — but Child declares the piece to be no part of the Robin Hood legend, and Bronson calls it a rehash of Child 101. It is a late ballad, plus Child's "A" text does not say which earldom Richard held ("B," which makes him Earl of

Huntingdon, is patently literary). What's more, the mention of Robin Hood looks like a paraphrase of the proverb of Robin's bow in "Friar Daw Topias." Besides, the bastard descendent of an earl had no claim to nobility in English law. The Bruce claim to the Huntingdon earldom was valid, and Robin's claim, if he made one, would not have been upheld.

Since we don't know how Robin came to be outlawed, we certainly can't say where he was born! The common story that he was from Locksley (presumed to be near Sheffield, and thus a bit north and a bit west of Nottingham but well south and west of Barnsdale and south and east of Lancashire) is found in "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine" [Child 145] and in one manuscript biography probably based on the ballads (Cawthorne, pp. 42–43), but it is probably best known because Scott used the name in *Ivanhoe*.

The Presumed History of Robin Hood

The preceding several sections are a mish-mash of random data; if it seems that there is no coherence to it, it is because there are so many contradictions. The depth of the problem is shown by the many historical "reconstructions." Suggestions for the "original" Robin Hood are many. Baldwin, as I've mentioned several times, liked Roger Godberd. Hunter famously held out for the Robert Hood of Wakefield who lived in the reign of Edward II. Owen in 1936 found an outlaw named Robert Hood who was pursued by the Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1230 (Dobson/Taylor, p. 16; Holt, pp. 53–54). But, for all that scholars try to make these characters fit the legend, they simply cannot be the same person as the hero of the "Gest." To try to flesh out the legendary Robin *as the ballad singers understood him*, we must look to the legends, not the chronicles.

Cawthorne, p. 46, offers a "shadowy biography" of Robin based mostly on Ritson: Born in Locksley around 1160, active as a robber around 1193–1194, outlawed again 1225, died 1247. Cawthorne claims this conforms to the 22 years Robin spent away from the court in the "Gest," although I fail to see how Robin could go to the greenwood for fear of King Edward when the King from 1216 to 1272 was Henry III. This might be a biography of the modern Robin Hood; it is not the biography of the medieval hero.

Nor is this the only such reconstructed biography; Cawthorne, p. 46, goes on to describe a biography suggested by Dodsworth in the seventeenth century. In this, Locksley was apparently Robin's surname. He had to flee after wounding his stepfather with a plow, and met Little John in Derbyshire. Dodsworth went on to suggest that Little John, not Robin, was the nobleman!

Most of these reconstructions fall down under their own weight, which should perhaps be a warning to me and other modern reconstructors. As Holt, p. 61, says, "no one ever put a name to the abbot or the sheriff or.... even to the prioress of Kirklees. They are lay figures. They contributed to the legend as types, not as individuals." But all these alleged biographies try to reconstruct based on the whole tradition — as if all of it had equal value. This is clearly hopeless; many of the ballads are just made-up add-ons.

By restricting our aim, we can perhaps produce better results. As Holt says on p. 40, even though Robin Hood is essentially fiction, "From the first he was believed to be a

real historical person." Dobson/Taylor, p. 11, make the even stronger statement that "the geographical allusions in the early Robin Hood ballads, and especially in the *Gest*, are sufficiently specific to suggest the exploits of a real Barnsdale outlaw lay behind the later Robin Hood saga."

I think that statement is still too strong; Holt's belief that there was no single source of the legend is clearly correct. But Holt's suggestion that Robin was *believed* to be historical is the more important point. This means that anyone writing about him would try to use a real world setting. To think clearly about the "Gest," we should regard it as historical fiction. I think there could be a historical framework underlying the "Gest" — even though its hero is not himself historical or that the events in any version of the legend are real. If I had to guess, I would guess that the first elements of the Robin Hood legend started to coalesce in the reign of Henry III — but that the legend came to be set in other periods. Probably in different periods in the various early ballads. We know that, by the time the "Gest" was written, chroniclers were already producing conflicting dates (see the information above on Wyntoun and Bower and such).

But this means either that the person writing a tale of Robin has to go with what the folklore said or that had what amounted to free rein to choose a time. So we should not ask when Robin Hood lived, but *when the author of the "Gest," or its sources, believed he lived.* There is, of course, an assumption here, which is that there is a chronology imposed on the materials — which in turn assumes that Clawson is wrong and the "Gest" is made of only three or four component elements, not from dozens of ballads. This assumption is very weak, but it is stronger than Clawson's alternative.

We can, on this basis, create a *specific* "biography" of Robin Hood — the biography *used in the "Gest"* (and *only* in the "Gest." I cannot repeat that enough times!). Again, keep in mind that I do not claim that what follows is the story of an actual outlaw. I do not believe it is. I am not even sure that the author of the "Gest" worked from a chronological framework — very likely he did not, and the only historical framework is that used in the source that supplied the seventh and eighth fits. But most authors, when they write novels, compile mental histories of their major characters. *If* the author of the "Gest" had such a framework — a tremendous "if"! — then this is my reconstruction of what the author of the "Gest" thought was Robin's story.

Robin Hood was born in the reign of Edward I, perhaps between 1290 and 1295. He was the son of a yeoman, perhaps in eastern Lancashire, the property of that "rapacious, grasping and cruel landlord," the Earl of Lancaster (Hutchison, p. 115), although we cannot rule out the possibility that he was born in Yorkshire — perhaps in the area of Pontrefract, which is near Barnsdale; Lancaster's wife, Alice de Lacy, held the honor of Pontrefract from her father (Holt, p. 53), and inherited it from her father in 1311 (Hutchison, p. 66) — although Alice walked out on her husband in 1317 (Hutchison, p. 92).

It was a very unsettled period — Edward I and his barons had been on the brink of civil war when the Scottish situation forced them to cooperate (Prestwich1, pp. 424–427). At this time, common men were expected to practice the longbow, and Robin took up this weapon at an early age. But Edward took fewer infantry on his later campaigns in Scotland (Prestwich1, p. 513, who argues that this was one reason the campaigns

failed), and after the death of Edward I in 1307, the laws about the bow were relaxed. Some gave up the bow; Robin, the best of the local boys, continued to practice, and became better still as he grew older.

The reign of Edward II was a time of unrest. Probably sometime between 1310 and 1315, Robin found himself in trouble with the authorities in Lancashire. Perhaps it was in 1311, when the Earl of Lancaster succeeded to the de Lacy holding of Pontrefract (as well as to lands around Wyresdale). Perhaps Robin supported Edward II against the Earl of Lancaster — dangerous in Lancashire, a county where the Earl had palatinate powers even in peacetime. And Lancaster's power increased during the Scots Wars, since he became regional commander after Bannockburn (Phillips, p. 250). The possibility that Robin was one of Adam Banaster's rebels against Lancaster is discussed in the notes to Stanza 412.

Another possibility is that the depression that had started in the 1290s forced Robin off his lands. Maybe it was an effect of the inflation of the period, caused by the appearance of cheap coins designed to look like English pennies but with rather less silver content; Edward I had been unable to prevent the import of these coins — and later did a reminting allowing him to pick up cash but at the cost of jacking up prices for others (Prestwich, p. 531–532). Maybe Robin's outlawry was an after-effect of Edward I's forest laws. Or perhaps it was the result of the 1315 famine, which would explain why his band was so small at the beginning of the "Gest" (see the notes to Stanza 4 and Stanza 17). We don't have enough detail to know.

Whatever the reason, Robin fled (over the border from Lancashire) to Yorkshire. Perhaps he went directly to the greenwood; perhaps, given the poor economy of the time, he sought work and only fled society when he could not find it. But by 1316 — perhaps much earlier — he was in Barnsdale. He likely joined an existing band of outlaws — and rose to the top because of his superior leadership skills and ability with the bow. The early events of the "Gest," such as the encounter with Sir Richard at Lee, happened in the period between 1313 and 1322 — probably toward the middle of the period, when Edward II still wanted to go on crusade, with 1316–1317 the most likely dating.

In 1322/1323, Edward II visited Robin during his northern trip. He gave Robin a (probably conditional) pardon — very possibly because Robin had supported Edward against the Earl of Lancaster. But Robin — a yeoman born and bred — did not enjoy court life, and especially court life in the corrupt court of Edward II. He returned to the north, and to the greenwood. Possibly he spent some time in Sherwood at this time — and possibly suffered enough pressure from the Nottinghamshire authorities that he returned to Barnsdale.

If the robbery of the Bishop of Hereford was part of the legend from the beginning, it probably took place in the years after 1327, when Orleton of Hereford had helped depose Edward II. Perhaps some of Robin's exploits in archery contests took place around 1330, when Edward III was starting to revive the practice but before Robin grew too old.

In 1345, Robin — now well into his fifties — grew ill. Although he had lived in Yorkshire for most of the last thirty years, his family was in Lancashire or on the border

between Lancashire and Yorkshire. He therefore went to Kirklees, near that border, to be treated. But three decades had weakened the family ties, and there he was tricked by the prioress and died. Many of his men, now leaderless, took the pardon of Edward III (Hewitt, p. 30, says that hundreds of outlaws were pardoned around 1346); some very likely served at Crécy and helped the English win that battle (we cannot prove this either way, because none of the indentures for soldiers at Crécy has survived; Hewitt, p. 35).

There are a few other historic events which might tie in with this (call this the "hints for the historical novelist" section). For instance, if Robin joined Edward II's court in 1323, then he probably left it in 1324. It is interesting to note that this was a period when Robert Baldock and the Despensers were passing a series of changes in the government. Most of these were good reforms (Hutchison, p. 122), but Robin might not have trusted a change made by Baldock, given his (possible) involvement in the Richard at Lee situation (see the note on Stanza 93). Or perhaps, with the Despensers sucking up all the available grants, there were no properties left for Robin (see the note on Stanza 435).

When Edward II was taken into custody, the Earl of Lancaster (the brother of the man Edward had executed) originally had custody of him, but eventually turned him over to others. Was this because of the conspiracy in early 1327 which arose to free Edward (Doherty, p. 115)?

Given the timing and location, Robin and his band might have been part of the conspiracy. Doherty, p. 121, speaks of a "Dunheved gang," said to be "irrepressible," which tried to rescue Edward; indeed, one report says that Edward actually escaped (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 176). Might this be Robin and his men? It is true that two of their raids were in Berkeley and Cirencester, far from Robin's home, and that Dunheved (or Dunhead) was said to be from the vicinity of Kenilworth in Warwickshire (Phillips, p. 542), but another Dunheved raid was in Chester, which wasn't too far away from Yorkshire (Doherty, p. 122).

And there is a Robin Hood's Butts in Herefordshire (Westwood/Simpson, p. 328) — although, to be sure, there are Robin Hood's Butts all over the place....

The counter-argument against Robin being part of the Dunheved company is that most of the raiders were allegedly captured (Doherty, pp. 124–125) and killed with torture (Hutchison, p. 141). And Thomas Dunhead reportedly was a Dominican friar (Packe, p. 38), which doesn't fit Robin too well. It does appear that Edward was briefly loose, but not long enough to make any difference.

Neither that nor even Edward II's death stopped the rescue attempts, however — supposedly a "demon-raising friar" said Edward was still alive (Doherty, pp. 147–150). An Italian priest claimed to have talked to Edward II as late as 1340 (Doherty, p. 185). And, if people could believe a dead king alive, they could certainly believe he could be rescued....

Doherty, p. 217, thinks there is an actual possibility that Edward II escaped, and Mortimer-Traitor, p. 195, is sure of it, even claiming that Roger Mortimer arranged the whole thing, including faking the death of Edward II (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 198). But this section of the two books is so fantastic that I came away with the idea that maybe, after escaping, Edward II would have gone on to join Robin Hood's band — maybe, given

his height, he was the original version of Little John. And no, I am *not* advancing this hypothesis; I use it to demonstrate how far-fetched the Doherty/Mortimer hypothesis is. What is certain is that the cause of Edward II inspired great passion — so much of it that there was a serious attempt to have him canonized (Phillips, pp. 600–604).

We also note that Henry, the brother of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster died in 1345 (Ormrod, p. 27). Might this have freed Robin to visit his family in Lancaster — and resulted in his fatal willingness to go to Kirklees?

It is a sad tale. Not only did Robin die by violence, but he failed in his goals. Holt, p. 10, declares that the tale of Robin is "all very satisfying," since Robin brings proper justice — as well as being true to his word (unlike the sheriff), devout (unlike, seemingly, the established clergy), generous (unlike the abbot), courteous (unlike the cellarer). Holt sees Robin as winning the fight with oppression.

But the actual record is depressing. Edward II ended up deposed and murdered. The church would have to wait two more centuries for reform of the monasteries and the episcopal system — and, when Henry VIII did all that, he left the episcopal system largely intact and did away with the practice of extreme reverence for Mary shown by Robin. Yeomen did gain in rights after Robin's time — but that was due to the Black Death, not to the work of outlaws. Robin's story is one of a long, slow defeat. But that was the way of the Middle Ages. If he could not change the world, at least he "dyde pore men moch god."

The Music of the "Gest"

Every copy of the "Gest" consists of text only. Not only are there no tunes printed, there are no tunes indicated (that is, nowhere does it say "to the tune of").

Bronson, volume III, p. 13, examined the extant Robin Hood material and notes that melodic survivals are very few indeed. Of the seven and only seven ballads with any hint of being early, the record of melodies is as follows:

- The "Gest": No tunes (Bronson, volume III, p. 13); on pp. 14-15 he prints six tunes which might be tunes for *some* Robin Hood piece, but probably not this
- "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne": no tunes (Bronson, p. 16)
- "Robin Hood and the Monk": no tunes (Bronson, p. 17)
- "Robin Hood's Death": One tune, from Virginia, pentatonic, minor, shown by Bronson (p. 18) and Malcolmson (p. 110) in 6/8 time. Art Thieme also had a tune for it, but I don't know where he got it.
- "Robin Hood and the Potter": no tunes
- "Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar": Listed in broadsides as being to a "new northern tune" (Bronson, p. 21), but without any indication of what it is. Malcolmson, p. 36, uses Rimbault's tune; Bronson also prints Rimbault's melody (pentatonic, major, 4/4 time), but with strong indications of doubt.
- "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford": 3 tunes. Two are printed copies dug up by Rimbault (both major, 4/4 time, starting on the fifth and ending on the octave; one of these is used by Malcolmson, p. 94) and one collected in Dorset in 1906 (also major and in 4/4 time, but starting and ending on the tonic)

Does this add up to anything? One thing we know is that many of the later Robin Hood songs were sung to the same tune (typically called something like "Robin Hood and Arthur a Bland" or "Robin Hood and the Stranger"; Bronson, p. 28, thinks this is "Robin Hood and the Tanner"). However, the "Arthur a Bland" tune is in 6/8 and cannot possibly fit the "Gest."

Of course, the "Gest" is metrically irregular. But the basic pattern is the standard ballad 4/3/4/3 form. This begs for a tune in 4/4. If this admits of any of the known Robin Hood melodies, it is the one Bronson supplies for the "Curtal Friar." So if you really want a melody, it probably has to be this:

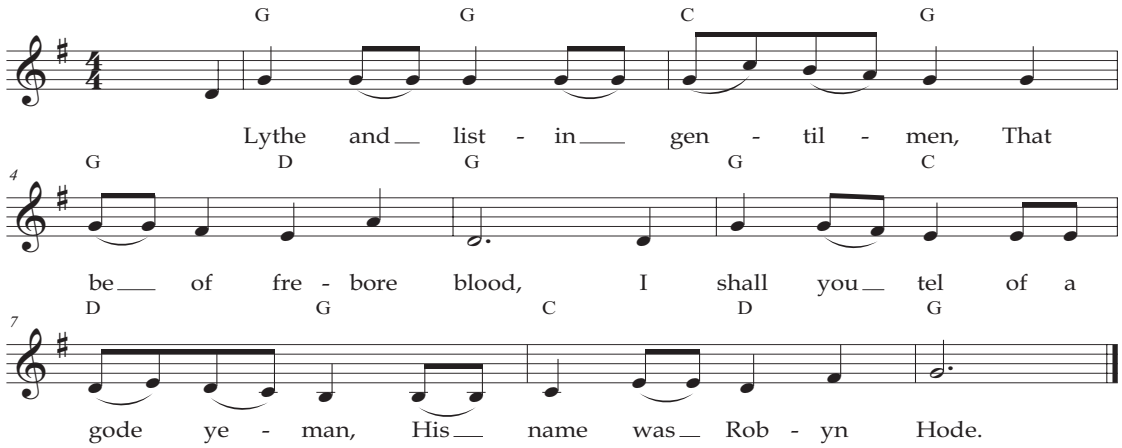


Figure 15: Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar(?): A Possible Tune for the "Gest" As adapted by Bronson from p. 436 of GutchII.

I note incidentally that this tune makes quite a good two- or four-part round. Bronson prints the song in the key of G; Malcolmson, p. 36, has it in A.

Commentary on the Contents of the "Gest"

With the above as background, let us look at the "Gest" itself, examining the contents in detail. What follows is a sort of "Annotated Gest"; I have noted passages which might help us discover its history, or which need explanation. The notes are assembled under Child's stanza numbers; I have also supplied Knight/Ohlgren's line numbers.

This is not a commentary on the state of the text, although I sometimes have had to make reference to textual issues. The textual commentary is separate.

I have tried to point out instances where the the "Gest" makes sense in historical context — that is, where an event or statement in the "Gest" could be a reference to something which actually happened in history. Let me stress that I do not think that the "Gest" is history. But it is surely based in part on historical memories.

The majority of these links are to events in the reign of Edward II (see the "The Presumed History of Robin Hood" above). This is perhaps slightly artificial — once I had enough parallels to the reign of Edward II, I was forced to research Edward II in detail, causing me to find far more parallels. And, obviously, I became convinced that the poem, or at least the source "Robin and the King," "targets" the reign of Edward II — that is, that the poet was setting his poem in that reign. The number of Edward II references is, frankly, rather overwhelming. Most of these are probably coincidence. But I include them all because, while most of the details are coincidence, there is no way of knowing *which* of them are coincidence. And I have tried to include links to other reigns as well.

❖ **Stanza 1/Line 1** ❧ The opening formula, "Lithe and lysten, gentylmen… " occurs thrice more, in Stanza 144 (beginning of the third fit), Stanza 282 (second stanza of the fifth fit), and Stanza 317–318 (beginning of the sixth fit). The latter three mark major transitions in the poem — very possibly transitions between sources. The break at the start of the third fit is a transition from the story of Robin Hood and the Knight to the story of Little John and the sheriff; the break in stanza 282 indicates the start of the archery contest in Nottingham; the break at the start of the sixth fit marks the start of the episodes of the Sheriff and King seeking to apprehend Robin.

It is interesting to ask whether these formulae were in the originals combined by the author of the "Gest," or whether he added them himself. They do not represent the most logical break points; on the other hand, those in stanzas 144 and 317 do represent roughly a third of the work. If we assume a typical recitation speed of five verses per minute, that would mean that each break comes after about half an hour. It would not be a surprise for a minstrel to take a halt after that period of time. The use in stanza 282 may have been imported from one of the sources, or an alternate break point.

As an alternative to the idea of the singer taking a break, Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 162, seems to suggest that the breaks built into the "Gest" are for phases of a feast. Ohlgren says that there "is a major meal in every fytte except fytte 6." This leads to the idea, suggested by Dean A. Hoffman (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 163) that the meals in the "Gest" might correspond to the serving of additional courses. But the meal in fit 3 is merely a hastily-grabbed snack, and several of the other references are short. And I doubt the minstrel and the cooks could coordinate that closely. I think it far more likely that the

performances were organized around the "Lithe and lysten" formula than about the meals.

The use of such an introductory formula is common, though of course not universal, in minstrelsy. Old English even had a word, "Hwæt," which we might informally translate as "Listen up and listen good!" It is the first word of "Beowulf" and "The Dream of the Rood" and doubtless much other Anglo-Saxon literature. In much later folk song, we still find opening formula along the lines of "Come all ye bold (something-or-others) and listen to my song." Even the Slavic epics, which surely have no genetic relationship to any in English, have formulaic openings (Lord, p. 45).

It is interesting to note the alliteration of "lithe" and"lysten," as well as the relatively strong L sound of "gentylmen." "Lithe" Is probably the imperative of "lythen," glossed by Knight/Ohlgren as "attend," hence "pay attention"; cf. Langland/KnottFowler, p. 279; it derives from from Old English *hlytha*, listen. "Lithe" and "lysten," although distinct words, are almost redundant; it would have been easy to use another word instead of "lithe" — except for the alliteration. Although the poem was probably compiled after the end of the alliterative revival which gave us "Piers Plowman" and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Benson/Foster, p. 5, notes that the "Stanzaic Morte Arthur" still delighted in alliteration, and this formula may derive from some source which does so also. There are a few other alliterative formulae in the "Gest," e.g. Gummere, p. 315, points out "wordes fayre and fre" in stanza 31. Burrow/Turville-Petre, p. 59, tell us that in the Middle English period "Rhymed verse frequently uses alliteration as an ornament of style."

The word "lithe" as a verb for "pay attention" does not appear to have been used by Chaucer (based on Chaucer/Benson, p. 1265), who rejected alliteration, but is found in "Piers Plowman" (see p. 279 in Langland/KnottFowler; p. 532 in Langland/Schmidt) and in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" (Tolkien/Gordon, p. 196), both alliterative. The word seems to have been fairly common in early Middle English, but by the fourteenth century it seems to have been largely confined to alliterative works.

This introductory formula survives in some of the later ballads; "Robin Hood and the Beggar, I" [Child 133] opens "Come light and listen, you gentlemen all"; "Robin Hood and the Beggar, II" [Child 134] preserves the form "Lyth and listen, gentlemen."

Compare also the Romance of Gamelyn, which opens "Listeth and lestneth and hearkneth aright" (Sands, p. 156), with similar formulae occurring several more times (line 169, "Lytheth, and listeneth, and holdeth your tonge"; line 289, "Now lithenes and listneth both yonge and olde," etc.).

The outlaw ballad of "Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly" [Child 116] has the lines "Now lith and lysten, gentylmen, And that of myrthes loveth to here" at the beginning of stanza 5.

"The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnall" opens "Lythe and listenythe the lif of a lord riche" (Hahn, p. 47; cf. Sands, p. 326, who uses a slightly different orthography).

The invocation of "gentlemen" would seem to imply an aristocratic audience. On the other hand, the formula might simply have been imported from some other romance targeting the upper class.

❖ **Stanza 1/Line 3** ❧ Right from the start we are told that Robin was a "good yeman," i.e. a "good yeoman." The other early sources also tend to call him a yeoman; in Stanza 3.3 of the "Potter" we read that "Roben Hood was the yeman's name"; in stanza 12.1 we see Robin and Little John described as "þese yemen too" ("these yeomen two").

The title "yeoman" has inspired some debate. The term "yeoman" is perhaps derived from "yongman," "young man," a usage found about seven times in the "Gest" (Pollard, p. 33, Knight/Ohlgren, p. 149; see the glossary for examples); this implies the sense "low fellow on the totem pole," and hence the meaning "royal servant." But those meanings split over time.

The word "yeoman" had two meanings in the period around 1400 — a small freeholder or a household officer. To some extent, this influences the dating of the poem. Keen, p. 140, thinks that the frequent mentions of Robin as a yeoman implies a late date (p. 140), presumably after Edward III, since this was the period when villeins (serfs bound to the land) were becoming free yeomen.

There is logic to this. Robin seems eventually to have assembled a significant band (see note on Stanza 229) — and, if the poem really would have us believe that they are all yeomen by birth, that effectively requires that the date be after 1400.

But there were always yeomen in England. It's just that the number increased after the Black Death, because the plague resulted in a labor shortage; men who previously had been bound to a particular property could now flee and work as free men, no questions asked, because the landowners needed someone to do the work. If the "Gest" comes from before the reign of Richard II (the time when most villeins became free), Robin and John and a few of the others could be yeomen, with the rest villeins. Indeed, it makes better sense to assume that most of them were villeins, and fled to the greenwood for lack of another choice (a free man could always seek work elsewhere). In the period from Henry II to Edward II, villeins — peasants — were bound to the land (there are cases of them being sold; Stenton, pp. 142–143).

The Black Death of 1349 (which took place about halfway through the reign of Edward III) changed that by producing a shortage of workers (Ormrod, p. 29). The nobility tried to halt the exodus of the peasants (Wat Tyler's rebellion of 1381 was largely against these restrictions; Wilkinson, pp. 158–164; Ormrod, p. 30), but more and more peasants were becoming free in the reign of Edward III, and almost all were free by the early fifteenth century. Wilkinson, p. 187, after listing some of the restrictive laws which tried to keep the villeins down, concludes that "Nothing, in the end, could resist a movement toward greater emancipation of the peasant" — indeed, the fact that, by the reign of Edward III, they all carried longbows made it difficult for the nobility to suppress them. They had a weapon that could defeat an armored man!

Pollard, p. 34, points out the "Statute of Additions of 1413," which required legal documents to state the class and occupation of those entering into a deal. This in effect made "yeoman" an official legal term. This is minor evidence for the belief that the "Gest" was written after that date.

Holt, however, is convinced that "The legend is.... not [about] the yeoman freeholder, but the yeoman servant of the feudal household" (p. 4). This gives us our

first faint link to the story of David and Saul, in 1 Samuel 25:10, Nabal complains about David, saying "There are many servants today who are breaking away from their masters."

Some support for Holt's contention that Robin was a royal yeoman comes from the "Monk," where the King makes John and Much yeomen of the crown for bringing the letter about Robin Hood (cf. Holt, p. 29).

Pollard, p. 41, also notes the interesting title of "Yeoman of the Forest," a title for foresters. Pollard, p. 43, points out that both Little John and Robin refer to Robin by the title "yeoman of the forest" (see, e.g., Stanza 222). And we find Robin called a forester's son in stanza 3 of "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valor and Marriage" [Child 149], as well as in "Robin Hood Was a Forester Bold," which is not included in the Child canon.

But there is no hint in the "Gest" of Robin having ever officially been called a Yeoman of the Forest. What's more, a typical forest had only about half a dozen active foresters, according to Pollard, p. 44. If Robin's band truly numbered in the scores, most of them had to be something different. And foresters had various duties, such as managing the trees, e.g. by trimming, pruning, and cutting, to make the forest yield particular types of wood (Kerr, pp. 148–149). There is no sign that Robin's men did any of these things.

In Stanza 14, Robin orders his men to spare yeomen who walk the greenwood. Pollard, p. 45, suggests that this means Robin intends his men to leave the foresters alone. If I were a forester, I probably wouldn't want to bet my life on that, but it's an interesting point. Pollard, pp. 46–47, argues that Robin sees himself as a sort of King of the Foresters, even to the point of trying to employ Little John as his bowbearer (the aid to the Keeper of the Forests) in the "Monk" (stanza 9). This strikes me as a little strong; Robin is simply saying, as he often does, that he needs only Little John as a companion. In any case, this theme does not appear in the "Gest."

Pollard also argues, p. 50, that Robin's men are fully aware of the terminology of forestry and hunting, but the examples he cites are vague enough that they might have come from the poet, or from second-hand knowledge of forestry.

By the late fifteenth century, a yeoman could be quite well-to-do; at least some earned in excess of the 40 shillings per year required to be permitted to vote for members of parliament (Pollard, p. 35; Lyon, p. 152). Even that figure is far less than the twenty marks which were bandied about as wages at several times in the "Gest" (Stanza 150, Stanzas 170–171, etc.; see the former for an indication of just how much money this represented).

The frequent mentions of yeomen in the "Gest" may be intended to appeal to a yeoman audience (which would be much larger in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, when the poem was probably compiled, than in the time of the Edwards) — but this does not mean that it is about a time when yeomen were common.

❖ **Stanza 2/Line 5** ❧ In addition to being a yeoman, Robin is a "prude (proud) outlaw." This does not mean he was a convicted criminal — or not exactly. "Outlaw" was a technical term for one who failed to answer a summons for trial (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 149). An outlaw had been charged but not formally judged — except by default. Robin and his men are several times called outlaws (this being the first time; his

men being called outlaws for the last time in Stanza 447, when Robin returns to them after his time at King Edward's court; Robin himself is called a "good outlaw" in the very last verse (Stanza 456), ironically immediately before he is said to have done much good for poor men.

Nowhere are we told what Robin's original crime was.

One thing that is worth remembering is that "outlaw" was, at this time, primarily a local term. The King might, of course, send out a warrant to watch for a particular criminal, but most judgments were passed in one particular area. "Men were frequently hounded for outlawry when they had no knowledge that they had in fact been outlawed, often in another county" (Pollard, p. 105). It is at least possible that we see a hint of this in Stanzas 331–332 of the "Gest," in the arrest of the knight while hawking.

It is true that the "Monk" calls Robin the "kynggis felon" (stanza 21), and in the "Gest" we will eventually see King Edward intervene in the case. But the King was usually more worried about rebellion than in what we would consider ordinary crime.

❖ **Stanza 2/Line 7** ❧ Robin, we are told, is a "curteyse" — that is, a courteous — outlaw. This is a word used in all parts of the "Gest."

The very fact that this word is used shows that Robin is not a Saxon rebel; Shippey, p. 129, says that the word is "post-Anglo-Saxon."

Courtesy in the Plantagenet period is more than manners; it is the specific rules of polite society — and is one of the most basic elements in the description of a hero. Sir Gawain, the subject of so many romances, "achieved a reputation as the most courteous of Arthur's knights. After the late thirteenth century, courtesy became the hallmark of knighthood" (Hall, p. 4). Chaucer's Knight "loved chivalrie, Trouthe and honouyr, fredom and curteisie" (Prologue, lines 45–46; Chaucer/Benson, p. 24). Of "Sir Orfeo" we are told that "Large and curteis was he" (line 4; Sands, p. 187). Examples could be repeated indefinitely. The theme of courtesy will recur many times in the "Gest," as Robin is called "courteous" (implying that he is as good as a knight or member of the gentry), while those of higher station fail of their courtesy. (Observe, e.g., the abbot's treatment of the knight in Stanza 103.)

Other examples: In Stanza 182, we learn that Little John is courteous. In Stanza 29, Robin courteously takes off his hood. In Stanza 108, the knight begs the justice for courtesy (and is turned down). In Stanza 115 and Stanza 121, the knight calls the abbot uncourteous. In Stanzas 151–152, Little John calls the knight (or maybe Robin) courteous. The sheriff's butler is uncourteous in Stanza 159. John greets the sheriff courteously in Stanza 182. Robin is courteous to the monk in Stanza 226; the monk is not so courteous in return. In Stanza 256 the monk calls Robin uncourteous. The knight greets Robin courteously in Stanza 263, and offers a courtesy gift in Stanza 270. In Stanza 295, the prize arrow is accepted courteously by Robin. In 312, the knight recalls Robin's courtesy. In 383 Robin addresses the disguised king courteously.

This theme of courtesy gives a fascinating link to the Gawain romances. Robin, as Child said, was a "popular Gawain." Gawain was the epitome of courtesy; Hahn notes on p. 2 that even Chaucer's oh-so-particular Squire refers to Gawain as the pinnacle of courtesy (V.95, or F.85; p. 170 in Chaucer/Benson).

In the Gawain legend, courtesy and chivalry have important effects. Hahn, p. 25, declares that "Repeatedly, Gawain exhibits a willing restraint of available force or a refusal of the authority of position, which separates him from non-chivalrous opponents and also from the arbitrary bullying or domineering impertinence of Sir Kay." The result is to maintain and strengthen the social order.

Compare Robin's treatment of his victims in the "Truth Or Consequences" game — and also the contrast between the courteous Robin and the uncourteous monk in Stanza 226. Robin's courtesy, like Gawain's, allows him to sometimes restrain the force he could otherwise use. Which probably allows him to survive longer than he otherwise would, and to bring about better justice. Robin is an exceptional outlaw just as Gawain (in the British tradition) is an exceptional knight.

It is interesting that Robin is praised for the virtue of courtesy but not for troth/truth — faithfulness, self-honesty, consistency, fulfilling his duties. This was the other great knightly virtue — as we saw, Chaucer's knight showed it, and it is the entire and whole point of Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale," which declares, in line 1479, that "Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe" (Chaucer/Benson, p. 187; for the vital importance of trothe, see Stevens, p. 63). Robin is courteous, but he does not always keep his trothe (he likely broke away from a lord when becoming an outlaw, and he certainly abandons the King's service in Stanza 442fff.). So the stress of the "Gest" is inevitably on his courtesy rather than his troth.

❖ **Stanza 3/Line 9** ❧ "Robyn stode in Bernysdale." In the "Gest," there is uncertainty over whether Robin was based in Barnsdale (Yorkshire) or in Nottinghamshire (the "Gest" does not mention Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, but it was the great forest of that county; if Robin indeed worked in Nottinghamshire, Sherwood would probably have been his base). The complicated question of Barnsdale, Sherwood, and Nottingham has exercised scholars for centuries; it is worth remembering that the early ballads tend to say Barnsdale. In the "Gest," the Robin and the Knight portions are clearly set in Barnsdale, and he wants to return there in Stanza 440; the other sections are, or might be, mostly set in Nottingham (Holt, p. 24) — evidence the author combined tales without cleaning up the inconsistencies.

It has been suggested (Baldwin, p. 44) that "Barnsdale" should be Bryunsdale in Nottinghamshire (near Basford). This would obviously solve many of the problems about Robin and Nottingham, but Bruyunsdale is a small and obscure place; it seems much more likely that "Bernesdale" means Barnsdale — particularly since other parts of the "Gest" are clearly set in Yorkshire,

There is even some dispute over whether Barnsdale is in Yorkshire or Rutland. (Knight/Ohlgren, pp. 149–150, based on the research of Knight). Rutland, and the town of Huntingdon which is also associated with Robin in some of the late tales, are in east-central England south of the Wash. The one thing going for Rutland is that, according to McLynn, p. 241, and Knight/Ohlgren, p. 40, etc., Rutland's Barnsdale was in the domain of the Earl of Huntingdon, which would make sense if Robin were shadow earl of Huntingdon — but not otherwise, since Rutland is in the wrong direction from Nottingham (to the southeast). There are some alleged Robin Hood relics in Rutland (Cawthorne, p. 34), but as usual there is no reason to think they are authentic.

The "Gest," as we have seen, largely ignores the foresters. Harris, p. 90, suggests that this makes sense for Barnsdale, which was not legally covered by the forest laws.

The place names in the "Gest" are informative. The following list shows (I believe) every place named in the Gest, with the stanzas where it is mentioned:

- Barnsdale: 3, 21, 82, 83, 134, 213, 262, 440, 442
- Blythe: 27, 259
- Calvary: 57
- Doncaster: 27, 259 / In connection with Roger of Doncaster: 452, 455
- Holderness: 149
- Kyrkesly, i.e. presumably Kirklees: 454 / In connection with the Prioress of Kyrke(s)ley: 451
- Lancaster or Lancashire: 53, 357
- London: 253
- Nottingham: 178, 205, 289, 325, 332, 337, 344, 354, 365, 369, 370, 380, 384. The Sheriff of Nottingham is given that full title in 15, 146, 282, 313,317, 329, 422, 423
- Plumpton Park: 357
- Sayles/Saylis: 18, 20, 209, 212
- St. Mary's Abbey: 55, 84, 233
- Verysdale: 126
- Watling Street: 18, 209
- York: 84

In addition, there may be an allusion to "Wentbridge" in 135.

For the locations of these, see the map. Calvary and London are, of course, not local cities and so do not reflect on the site of the action. Watling Street passes through many counties. Of the other names listed:

- In Yorkshire are: Doncaster, Holderness, Kirklees (near the Lancashire border), St. Mary's Abbey, Sayles, York (plus Wentbridge if that reading is accepted).
- In Yorkshire or Rutland are: Barnsdale
- In Yorkshire or Lancashire are: Plumpton Park
- In Lancashire are: Lancaster, Wryesdale (Verysdale)
- In Nottinghamshire are: Blythe (near the Yorkshire border), Nottingham

Thus we have five sites that are certainly in Yorkshire, and two more that probably are. Two, perhaps three, are in Lancashire. Other than Nottingham itself, the only place name mentioned in Nottinghamshire is Blythe, and it is just across the border from Yorkshire.

Thus we have no *specific* references to places in Nottinghamshire. All references to specific places are found in the Barnsdale sections, and all are in or near Yorkshire. The detailed data in the "Gest" all points to Robin being based in Barnsdale, and specifically the Barnsdale in Yorkshire.

Holt says that Barnsdale was known as a haunt of robbers as early as 1306. This hints that there were outlaws on the scene before Robin's arrival.

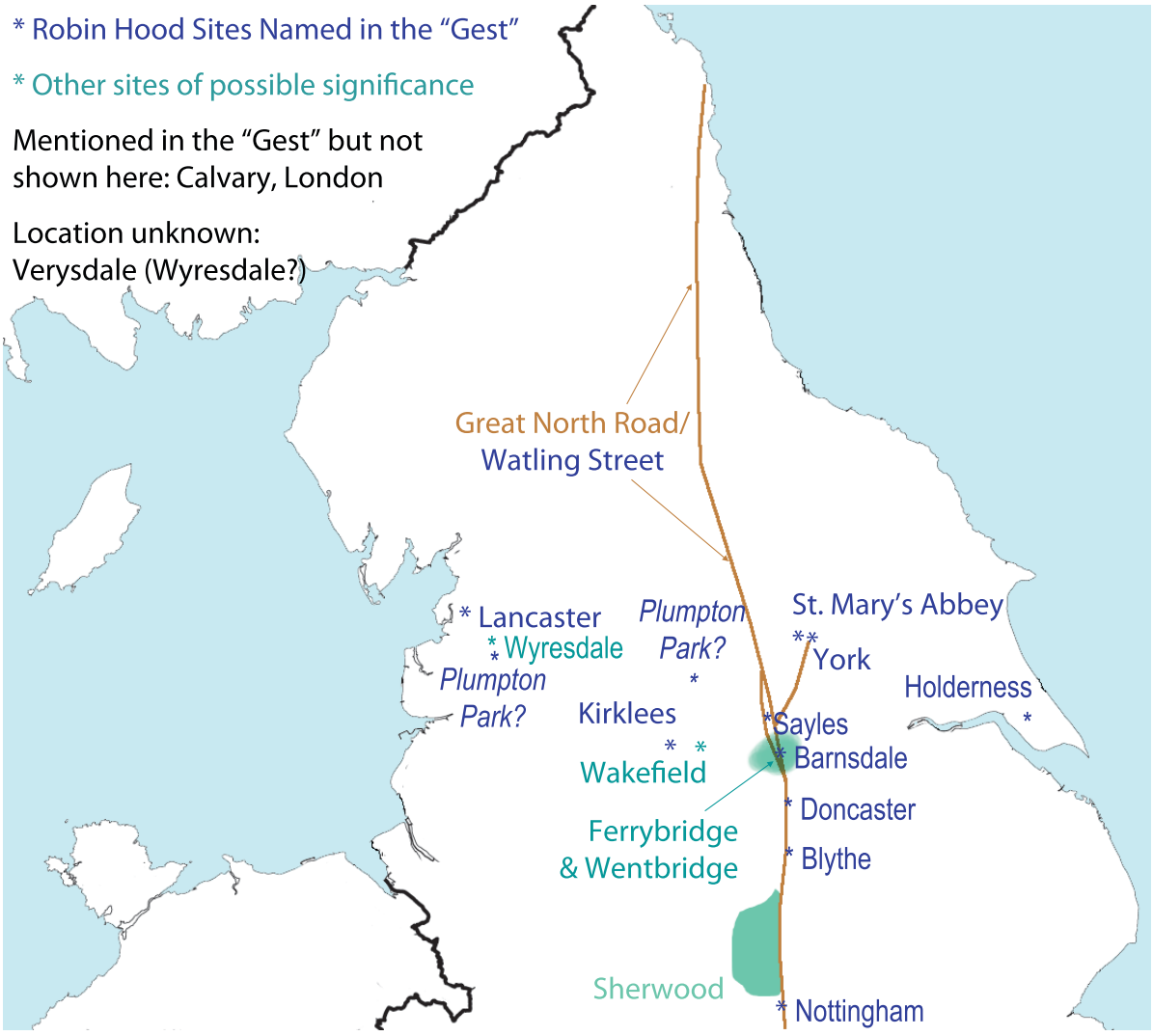


Figure 16: Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest"

Holt, pp. 73–75, makes the fascinating observation that, if we break up the material in the "Gest" into Nottingham and Barnsdale portions, the Nottingham parts are all parallels of earlier materials from the legends of Fulk and Hereward and such, while the Barnsdale portions (the tale of the knight, plus the death) are mostly original: "the nearer Robin gets to Nottingham the less authentic he becomes." This may be the best argument for a Barnsdale setting: It looks as if the Sherwood stories took older materials and just inserted Robin's name. But note that this still means that the adaptation of these materials to refer to Robin must predate the "Gest" — and must have had time to travel to Yorkshire to be combined with the Barnsdale stories.

❖ **Stanza 3/Lines 11–12** ❧ Like Robin Hood, Little John is called a yeoman at the very first mention of his name. This is the only information we have about his origin in the "Gest" (unless we count his story to the sheriff, where he calls himself Robin Greenleaf of Holderness; see the notes on Stanza 149). Unlike most of the other outlaws,

Robin and John seem to have been connected almost from the start; Wyntoun, the very first chronicler to mention Robin, wrote

Lytill Ihon and Robyne Hode
Waythemen were commendyd gude

(so Chambers, p. 131; Knight/Ohlgren, p. 24, and Dobson/Taylor, p. 4, have very different orthographies. The version in Holt, p. 40, is even more distinct, reading "Waichmen" for "Waythemen." This is not as absurd as it sounds; "i" and "y" were interchangeable at this time, and "c" and "t" looked almost identical in scripts of the time — a problem which also afflicts the manuscript of "Judas" [Child 23]. Also, the Digital Index of Middle English Verse lists nine manuscript copies of Wyntoun's chronicle, and six modern editions, so probably the differences lie in the edition cited. The only edition I've seen is David Laing's, part of which is in the Internet Archive).

Little John has his own more recent folklore — that he was so-called because he was huge, or because his birth name was John Little (Baldwin, p. 64); another account give his name as John Nailor. The story that he was a giant is the one which has survived. There is, however, no evidence of this in the "Gest," where he often serves as a trickster.

Based on the "Gest," I think it very likely that Little John was regarded as small, like many jesters, and as his name suggests. In stanzas 147–152 of the Gest, there is no hint that Little John is in any way unusual — surely, if he were really a giant, the Sheriff would have asked more questions! And in Stanza 307, Much carries Little John for a mile — hard to do if John were exceptionally large. Pollard, p. 13, calls John the "master of disguise," which also seems unlikely for a giant.

What is more, in Stanza 42, we see John counting money in a style perhaps reminiscent of the practices of the Exchequer, as if he were a clerk.

Alternately, although the word "little" in Middle English usually means "small" or "short" or "minimal," Skeat cited instances where it meant "deceitful" or "mean" (Harris, p. 58). Could it be that Little John means neither "John the small man" nor "John the giant" but rather "Tricky John"? It would fit. This would also explain why Much is called "Little Much" on several occasions. In that case, Robin's core band of Robin, John, Much, and Will S. would be Robin, Tricky John, Tricky Much, and Will the Lock-breaker. Not such as nice band as we like to envision, but it makes sense for an outlaw band! This is far beyond proof; it depends on a usage of "little" that was rare and vanishing. But there is a certain logic to it — and the name "Little John" predates the "Gest," so it could derive from the days when "little" meant "deceitful."

One might speculate that the idea of Little John as a giant derives from the romance of "Bevis of Hampton." In this as in many romances, the hero fights a giant — but it features the interesting twist that Bevis, after defeating the giant, takes him on as a servant (BaughConvention, pp. 131–132), just as Robin at one time would have John be his bow-bearer. This, obviously, is a romance idea which was not followed by the author of the "Gest."

As with most parts of the Robin Hood legend, there have been attempts to fit Little John into history. The one that fits best with our story is of a Little John who stole deer at Beverly in 1323; this same man may also have robbed Wakefield in 1318 (Phillips/Keatman, p. 106). There is, however, no direct connection to the Robin Hood legend.

❖ **Stanza 4/Line 13** ❧ Since "Will Scarlet," or some such name, came to be one of the standard members of Robin Hood's band, it is perhaps worth mentioning that in this verse he is not called "William" or "Will," but just by his surname — and his name isn't Scarlet. Scarlet/Scarlock/Scathelock is mentioned in 11 stanzas of the "Gest." In stanzas 17 and 208, he is "Wyllyam Scathelock." Other than that, it's just his surname, "Scathelock" or whatever (for the discussion of his actual name in the "Gest," see the textual note on Stanza 4).

That some such man was early associated with Robin Hood follows from the fact that "Guy of Gisborne," stanza 13, refers to "Scarlett"; the "Monk"has "Wyll Scathlok" in stanza 63, and the Percy text of the "Death" has "Will Scarlett" in stanza 2. There is also a parliamentary roll for Winchester in 1432 which some joker decided to pad out with the names of outlaws. In addition to the genuine citizens, it adds the names of "Adam, Belle, Clyme, Oclaw, Willyam Cloudesle, Robyn, hode, Inne, Grenewode, Stode, Godeman, was, hee, lytel Joon, Muchette Millerson, Scathelock, Reynold" — that is, "Adam Bell, Clym o' [the] Clough, William [of] Cloudesly," then a clear line from a Robin Hood ballad, "Robin Hood in the greenwood stood, [A] good man was he," then a list of his followers, Muchette the Miller's son, Scathelock, Reynold (Holt, p. 69, with an illustration on p. 70; cf. Cawthorne, p. 58). (This sort of trick, of padding out a list of names with random data, is not unique to that record; Crow/Olson, p. 293, gives examples of listed of mainpernors — people who stood surety for accused criminals, so people whose identity was important! — being replaced by similar lists: "Pye, Rat, Cat, Mous" or "God, Help, Alle, Men.")

There is also an instance in the Forresters book where a later hand has corrected "Will Stutley" to "Will Scathlock" (Knight, p. xxvi), but the manuscript also has "Scarlett" and (once) "Scarett."

Anthony Munday, who did so much damage to the tradition, made Scathelock and Scarlet into separate characters (see, e.g., the Cast of Characters on p. 303 of Knight/Ohlgren). Obviously both names were known in his time — but there is no reason to think that they were originally anything but one person.

"Scarlock" and "Scathelock" both imply a man who is good at getting past locks. He is the only one of Robin's band whom we might accuse of an actual crime: The name implies that he was a burglar. (At least, that's the general view; Alexander, p. 266, declares that the "'Scatheloke' version of his name suggests that he was red-haired," treating "loke" as referring to locks of hair rather than locks for doors.) It also makes it likely that "Scarlet" was a correction to make him less an obvious criminal.

But there is no obvious reason to prefer either "Scarlock" or "Scathelock." Child called him "Scarlock," at least in the places where the Lettersnijder edition exists, but the textual evidence in the textual note on Stanza 4 seems to indicate that"Scathelock" I the slightly stronger reading.

Harris, p. 82, who tries even harder than Hunter to make everyone in the "Gest" a real person, suggests that Scathelock was actually one Adam Shakelok who was involved in a court case in Crigleston in 1317. But even if you ignore the fact that the first names are different, and that there is no reason to assume *every* detail of the "Gest" is real, this hypothesis ignores the fact that "Scathelock"/"Scarlock" is obviously not his

surname, it's a description of what he does! What family, even if it somehow were given the name "Lockpick," would keep it? Similarly with a name like "Scathelock."

❖ **Stanza 4/Line 14** ❧ Much the Miller's Son, like Scathelock, is found in several of the early ballads; in stanza 8 of the "Monk" we encounter "Moche (th)e mylner sun," who joins Little John in robbing and killing the Monk; and he occasionally turns up in the later ballads. Interestingly, he is not mentioned in the parts of the "Gest" that derive from the source I've called "Robin and the King." As a personal name, "Much" has not been found elsewhere; it has been suggested that it is a nickname, although from what source is not clear (unless it's the Muchette of the Winchester parliamentary return described in the previous note, but that's not a common name either).

In "Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar" [Child 123], he becomes "Midge" (stanza 4 in Child's B text) or "Mitch" in the version in the Forresters manuscript (Knight, p. 72, line 14).

We can perhaps speculate on the origin of the name. In Stanza 73, we find Much complaining that Little John is measuring cloth too generously. As a wild speculation, could he have been called some nickname such as "Not So Much," because he was tight-fisted, and could this then have been shortened to "Much"? This also makes sense in light of the famous rapacity of millers expressed in songs such as "The Miller's Will (The Miller's Three Sons)" [Laws Q21].

Much is not named in the plays of Robin Hood prior to Munday's works (see pp. 275–296 of Knight/Ohlgren), but there are parts for unnamed outlaws. Many of plays of this era used had a few types of characters who went under different names but always played much the same part — as we see clowns in Shakespeare's plays, e.g. I wonder if Much might not have originated in such a play as a penny-pinching cheapskate who became an object of fun. Anthony Munday made him a clown (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 303).

In this first instance of his name, there is variation in the prints on whose son Much was; see the textual note on Stanza 4. This is the *only* time in the "Gest" that Much is referred to as "the Miller's Son"; everywhere else, he is simply "Much" or "Moch."

Much is called "little Much" on several occasions (Stanza 69 in my text though not in **a**; Stanza 73; stanza 77). The significance of this is unclear. Maybe the description "Little Much" explains the designation "Midge" used in the "Curtal Friar" — perhaps it is used because it means a small person. On the other hand, maybe "Little" is used in the sense of "tricky" or "sneaky," as also in the case of Little John; see the second note on Stanza 3. The idea of Much as a tricky man makes sense for the son of a miller, since millers were considered particularly dishonest — as every student of folk song will know!

The end of the stanza says that every inch of Much's body was worth a "grome." Is this an indication that Much was short but capable? "Grome" is a difficult word; Knight/Ohlgren in this place gloss it as "man," and Gummere, p. 314, interprets the line as meaning that every inch of him was worth an ordinary man. But grome is also used in stanza 224, and there it almost certainly means "groom" (and is so glossed in Knight/Ohlgren). The word has several meanings in Middle English. One is anger (Emerson, p. 377; "gromful" is "fierce," according to Dickins/Wilson, p. 273). Sands, p. 384, lists "grom" as meaning "man," perhaps derived from "growan," "grow"; and Langland/

KnottFowler, p. 272, list "man" as the meaning of "grome"; Langland/Schmidt, p. 526, gives "fellows" as the meaning of "gromes." Turville-Petre, p. 233, suggests "servant, attendant" as a meaning for "grom" (perhaps from "groom"?). Davis Et Al, p. 70, suggest "boy, lad." The exact meaning thus eludes us; I might suggest that the idea is that every one of Much's (relatively few) inches was worth a (taller but) lesser man — or, alternately, that Much, being a free man, is worth more than any number of servants. Or just possibly we should emend "grome" to "grote," "groat." This would be an easy emendation (it would spoil the rhyme, but the rhyme is already imperfect!), except that a groat isn't much money — such a reading would be more insult than praise.

An even wilder speculation derives from a use of "grome" in Chaucer. He rarely used the word (based on Davis Et Al, only twice, in the *Romaunt of the Rose* and the *House of Fame*; in most texts of the *Canterbury Tales,* it does not occur at all0. But there is a odd reading in the "General Prologue," in the description of the Pardoner (starting in line 669). In most texts, lines 671-674 read something like

That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he soong, "Come hyder, love, to me,"
This somonour baar to him a styf burdoun;
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.

In other words, the Pardoner was come from Rome, and he sang... some song... with the Summoner joining in on the burden. Since the General Prologue is in couplets, the text of line 672 ought to rhyme with "of Rome" — but it doesn't (unless you read "Rome" as "Ro-mee" or some such absurdity). Most of the copies of the text, and most editors, accept the reading "Com hyder, love, to me" anyway (it certainly sounds like a good song title) — but several manuscripts cited on p. 192 of Chaucer/AndrewEtAl read some variation on "grome" (e.g. "come hyder, leve grome," i.e. probably "[my] love [the] grome") These manuscripts are of low value; the reading almost certainly is not original. But it raises the question what those manuscripts meant by "grome." There has been discussion from Chaucer's time to today about whether the Pardoner was a physically normal heterosexual man. And if a whole man but not heterosexual (one possible explanation of Chaucer's comments, though not the only one), were he and the Summoner a couple? Chaucer assuredly doesn't say. Anything we say is speculation, but... might "grome" in that case be a word for homosexual partner? And in *that* case, might Much be a gay man, and perhaps the partner of Robin or John or Scathelock? That's an incredible load of freight to pile on a minor variation in the text of the *Canterbury Tales* — more than I personally find believable — but it would explain why there are so few references to women in the "Gest"!

Other than Robin and John, plus sundry saints, only seven people are given personal names in the "Gest" (many others, such as the Sheriff of Nottingham, the Abbot of St. Mary's, the Cellarer of St. Mary's, and the Prioress of Kirklees, have titles — but no names; they are just placeholders). This is perhaps not as surprising as it sounds; if we look at the medieval mystery plays, they often cast characters as placeholders as well; except those found in the Bible, relatively few names are given. In the "Gest," the list of people with names is as follows:

(King) Edward: Stanza 353, 384, 450

Gilbert (of the White Hand): Stanza 292, 401, 404
Much /Moch (the Miller's Son): Stanzas 4, 17, 61, 69, 73, 77, 83, 208, 214, 223, 293, 307
Reynold: Stanza 293 (also adopted as an alias by Little John in Stanza 149, 150, 157, 183, 189, but stanza 293 is the only mention of Reynold as a distinct member of Robin's band)
(Sir) Richard at Lee: Stanza 310, 331, 360, 410, 431
Roger (of Doncaster): Stanza 452, 455
Scarlock/Scathelock: Stanza 4, 17, 61, 68, 74, 77, 83, 208, 293, 402, 435
Note that Much is mentioned 12 times, and Scathelock in 11 — and nine of the mentions of Much's name (including the first eight) are in the context of Scathelock, and similarly the first nine mentions of Scathelock are in the context of Much. The only exceptions are in stanza 214–223, where Much helps John take the Cellarer; stanza 307, where Robin and Much refuse to leave Little John in the hands of the Sheriff; stanza 402, where Scathelock but not Much is involved in the archery contest before the King, and stanza 435, where Scathelock stays with Robin in the King's service when everyone else except Little John abandons him. It would appear that Scathelock was found in the tale of Robin and the King, but Much was not. The rest of the time, it is almost as if they are a comedy team — e.g. in Stanza 73 Much complains about John's generosity with cloth, and Scarlock replies (in effect) "Why not? It didn't cost *us* anything."

Although Robin is said to have seven score men (Stanza 229), only five of them (Robin, John, Much, Scathelock, and Gilbert) have speaking roles, and the role of Gilbert is small (and he is not mentioned in the tale of Robin and the Knight;). At the beginning of the "Gest," we might speculate, Robin's band is quite small — perhaps just the four we see here (Robin, John, Scathelock, and Much), or these four plus a few cooks and wives and craftsmen. See also the note on Stanza 17, or the note on "Merry Men" in Stanza 205. The likeliest explanation is probably that these four were the only four in the source for the story of Robin and the Knight; the mentions of many followers are from other sources.

❖ **Stanza 5/Lines 19-20** ❧ This is the first of several occasions on which Little John reminds Robin about the need to eat. For another, see Stanza 206, and also note that John gets into a fight with the sheriff's servants in Stanza 156 when he isn't fed. Is this a comic twist about Little John always being hungry?

❖ **Stanzas 6–7/Lines 21–28** ❧ Robin will not eat until he entertains a guest. This idea of not eating until something notable happens is common in romances, particularly Arthurian romances. We see it also in the ballad of "The Boy and the Mantle" [Child 29]; Child's notes to that piece list several parallels, although many are French or Latin rather than English.

One romance which contains the idea is the famous "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," where the Green Knight supplies the interesting event. The theme is far too common to suggest literary dependence (although see the note on Stanza 185), but it is worth remembering that the manuscript of "Sir Gawain" is generally dated to c. 1400 (Tolkien/Gordon, p. xxv), with the poem probably composed not too many decades before that — in other words, probably a bit less than a century before the "Gest." Also, it is generally accepted, based on the language, that "Sir Gawain" comes from

somewhere in the north or north-west of England, quite possibly in Lancashire (Tolkien/Gordon, p. xiii), right in the area where Robin Hood was allegedly active.

The romance of *The Turk and Gawain,* which also features the pluck-buffet contest (see Stanza 424) at another point sees the Turk ordering Gawain to fast (lines 48–59, 83–88 on pp. 341–343 of Hahn). This romance is also considered northern, although it is probably later than the Green Knight.

Thus we know that this motif was in circulation in the area where Robin supposedly lived, in the time when his legend was coming into being. See the section on "The Romance of the Gest and Its Sources"

The author of the "Gest" would probably not like the comparison, but it is noteworthy that King Saul, who could not save Israel and was overthrown by the Philistines, also had a tendency to fast and even to order his men to fast; see in particular 1 Samuel 14:24 and following.

Robin will again wait for a guest in Stanza 143.

❖ **Stanza 7/Line 25** ❧ The line that begins Stanza 7 is lacking in all texts; see the textual note on Stanza 7. We might conjecture that it says something about awaiting some rich prisoner — perhaps, if Robin is a prophet, an abbot or a cellarer.

❖ **Stanza 7/Line 28** ❧ "That dwelleth here by west." If this line is correct, it can hardly refer to Nottingham; perhaps West Yorkshire or Lancashire is meant. Perhaps we should understand it as "from the west" — which might (might!) refer to a follower of the Earl of Lancashire, the enemy of Edward II, and hence possibly of Robin himself.

❖ **Stanza 8/Lines 31–32** ❧ According to this stanza, Robin heard "thre messis," i.e. three masses, before meals. This is the first indication of Robin's intense religious devotion (and his Catholicism). The next is in Stanza 10, where we hear that he loved "Our dere Lady" above all others; the last instance, not so clear, is in Stanza 440, where he claims to have built a chapel to Mary Magdalene (though his statement is a claim we cannot verify. And why Mary Magdalene and not the Virgin Mary? Probably because that's a different source; Robin's love of the Virgin Mary seems largely confined to the Robin and the Knight; source).

For the possibility that Robin's devotion represents some sort of contrast between the pure piety of the countryside and the weakened religion of the towns, see the note on Stanza 54.

It is worth asking who officiated at the masses, however. In "Robin Hood and the Monk," we find Robin deciding to go to Nottingham because he has not heard mass for two weeks (Holt, p. 28). Did Robin at some point acquire a priest? How, and who was it? Or does the reference in the "Monk" refer to a high mass *(Missa solemnis*, featuring deacon and subdeacon and others singing and performing ancillary tasks), whereas the "Gest" refers to a low mass, requiring only an officiating priest? (DaviesLiturgy, p. 364).

I do note the curious fact that Henry VIII heard three masses a day when he went hunting, and sometimes as many as five on other days (Williams, p. 40). Since Henry VIII did not take the throne until 1509, we know the "Gest" cannot refer to him — but since Henry played at Robin Hood, could he have been influenced by the "Gest"?

❖ **Stanza 9/Lines 33-35** ❧ Robin's three masses are interesting: One in the name of the Father, one in the name of the Holy Ghost, one in the name of the Virgin Mary —

and *none* in the name of Jesus. In fact, the name "Jesus" is never used in the "Gest." We find four mentions of "Christ" (57.1, 177.2, 183.2, 456.1; spelled "Cryst" in **b**, "Criste" in **a**). There are dozens of mentions of God and the Virgin. The mention in this verse of the Holy Ghost is the only one to that person of the Trinity. Is there significance to this curious omission? I do not know. For more on Robin and the Trinity, see the note on Stanza 180; also Stanza 240.

❖ **Stanza 10/Line 378** ❧ The reference to "dedely synne," deadly sin, is perhaps a very distant allusion to 1 John 5:16, which in the Vulgate refers to *peccatum ad mortem,* i.e. *sin (un)to death,* but it is probably just a reminiscence rather than a direct reference.

❖ **Stanza 10/Lines 37–40** ❧ For love of "Our dere Lady," i.e. the Virgin Mary, Robin will never hurt a woman. We also see this paralleled in the "Monk" (in stanza 34, Little John says that Robin has "servyd Oure Lady many a day" and expects that she will protect him; Wells, p. 23; Holt, p. 29) and more specifically in the "Potter"; in stanza 3.3-4 we read that "Ffor the loffe of owre ladey, All wemen werschepyd he" ("for the love of Our Lady, All women worshipped he").

Robin's (extremely Catholic) devotion to the Virgin is even more explicit and significant in "Guy of Gisborne": in stanza 38, Guy succeeds in wounding Robin in the side, and seems to have won their battle. But in stanza 39, Robin invokes the "deere Lady" who is "both mother and may" — and goes on to win the fight (cf. Holt, p. 32). This "mother and maid" theme is quite common in Middle English poetry; it occurs explicitly in the well-known poem "I Sing of a Maiden That Is Makeless" (last stanza; Luria/Hoffman, p. 170) and implicitly in much of the vast quantity of Marian poetry (see pp. 170–189 of Luria/Hoffman).

The parallel in the "Death" is quite close to the "Gest"; in stanza 25 of Child's "A" text, from the Percy folio, Robin declares that he will not hurt any widow at his end; in stanzas 15–16 we read, even more explicitly, "I never hurt woman in all my life, Nor men in woman's Company.... I never hurt fair maid in all my time, Nor at mine end shall it be."

The protection of women was a common theme in the period; Mortimer-Angevin, p. 23, says that 'Those accused of murdering women were noticeably less likely to be acquitted than those accused of killing men — there seems to have been a strong disapproval of violence by and against women, while that among men was normal."

Reverence of Mary was common; the Virgin was often loved with a desperate, sometimes surprisingly erotic, love. The aforementioned "I Sing of a Maiden That Is Makeless" is a typical example. Mary is makeless — both matchess and without a mate (Steven Manning, in Luria/Hoffman, p. 331). Even though Greene, p. 2, is adamant that it is an Annunciation song, there is a strong sense of physical intimacy (Thomas Jemielity, in Luria/Hoffman, p. 326), even if the intimacy is with God. Other poems of this period have lines such as "Upon a lade my love is lente" (Luria/Hoffman, p. 177) and "With all my lif I love that may" (Luria/Hoffman, p. 183). Idolatrous, and even perverted, as the idea seems to Protestants, it was (and is) deeply ingrained in many Catholics.

The Virgin Mary was strongly associated with Robin's virtue of courtesy (see note on Stanza 2). The famous poem "Pearl," for instance, has a whole section on Mary as the

"Queen of Courtesy": the poet declares her "'Cortayse Quen.... Makele3 Moder and myryest May" (lines 433, 435; Gordon, p. 16 — note again the "mother and may" theme, and the reference to her being "makeless"); in lines 432 and 456 she is the "Quen of courteysye." Since the Pearl-poet also wrote *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* this also gives us another minor link to the Gawain cycle.

It is fascinating to observe that, in medieval times, one of the roles of queens was to serve as a sort of symbol of the Virgin Mary (Saul3, p. 160, and repeatedly in Laynesmith) — and yet, when we meet the King later in the "Gest," there is no hint of a queen. This might even be another hint at a dating in the time of Edward II — although all four Edwards who reigned prior to the publication of the "Gest" were married for most of their reigns, Edward II was literally at daggers drawn with his queen at the end (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 166), whereas Edward I was very faithful, Edward III seems to have been close to his wife all his life, and Edward IV emphatically married for love.

There is, of course, no basis in the Bible for Mariolatreia such as Robin exhibits, and it developed in the Catholic Church only slowly (and was ruthlessly pruned out of most Protestant sects). We see some hints of it in Irenaeus at the end of the second century (WalkerEtAl, p. 192), but the creeds barely mention the Virgin Mary — both the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds mention her only as the mother of Jesus, and both in both cases we see the reference to her starting only in about the fifth century (in the case of the Nicene Creed, Mary was introduced when the Council of Chalcedon rewrote it; in the case of the Apostles' Creed, the creed itself only dates from about the fifth century. See Bettenson, pp. 21–26).

It was not until the time of Duns Scotus, who died in 1308, that we see Mariology become clearly defined (McGrath, p. 52). This brought about a debate over whether Mary was a co-redemptrix along with Jesus — a view with absolutely no scriptural basis, but which Robin seems to share.

This was typical of Scotus's views; Scotus, in his opposition to Thomas Aquinas, came to a position of extreme doubt toward the power of thinking; "he according enlarges the number of doctrines already recognized as capable of being apprehended by faith alone" (CHEL1, p. 211). Mariolatreia, for which there was no evidence even in the Thomist sense (and a modern empiricist will find even Aquinas far removed from rational thought, with Scotus being pretty close to incomprehensible), was a typical Scotist doctrine.

Once the Marian cult took off, though, it took off like wildfire. To give a semi-random example, Hewitt, pp. 182–186, gives a list of the ships impressed by the British government to take an expedition to France in 1345. In all, 148 ships participated — and 23 of them were named *Seynt Marie* or some variant!

Thus, the later the "Gest," and the source for this fit in particular, the better the match for Robin's extreme devotion to the Virgin. Still, the "Gest" shows no hint of (e.g.) the Immaculate Conception, another non-Biblical belief which was popularized by Duns Scotus but which did not become official Catholic doctrine until 1854 (McGrath, pp. 46–47; WalkerEtAl, p. 351). So we cannot absolutely rule out an early date; we can only say that Robin's views are more typical of a late date than an early.

There are several sites in Yorkshire with strong Marian associations. St. Mary's Abbey is the most obvious, but Kerr, p. 185, notes a bridge chapel of St. Mary's at Wakefield — a place which Robin would surely have been tempted to haunt! It was built and consecrated in the reign of Edward III, however.

Ohlgren, who is convinced that the "Gest" has ties to the English guild system, tells us that four important guilds chose Mary as their patron saint (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 151; the guilds were drapers, clothworkers, mercers, skinners). And we see John as a draper in stanza 73, and Robin offering up cloth in stanzas 70fff. and in 418. Interesting, but I don't find it as compelling as Ohlgren.

For more on Robin's piety, see the note on Stanza 8. For a further example of Robin's devotion to the Virgin, see the note on Stanza 65.

❖ **Stanzas 11–12/Lines 41–48** ❧ In these stanzas, Little John asks instructions on how to live his life — an oddity for someone who presumably has been part of Robin's band for some time. But it lets us learn Robin's philosophy; so it's useful to the poet and reader. The whole business reminds me a bit of Judges 13:12, in which Samson's father Manoah asks about his son's future career: "What is to be the boy's rule of life? What is he to do?" Compare also the way the disciples questions Jesus in the New Testament (see, e.g., the way in which they ask how to pray in Luke 11:1), but this similarity is probably just a coincidence, the result of people who have heard Catholic preachers read the same lessons over and over again.

❖ **Stanza 13/Line 49** ❧ "Thereof no fors." To a modern reader it may appear that Robin disclaims force here, and will disclaim it in much the same words (although possibly with a different meaning) in Stanza 227, but he will certainly use violence, e.g., against the Sheriff; see Stanzas 347–348. Probably "Thereof no force" should be understood as "that has no force/power," i.e. "no matter." We see Chaucer use the same idiom as early as *The Book of the Duchess*, "'A, good sir, no fors,' quod Y" — "'Oh, good sir, it doesn't matter,' I said" (line 522; Chaucer/Phillips, p. 86; Chaucer/Benson, p. 336). Chaucer/Benson and Chaucer/Phillips both gloss "no fors" as "it does not matter." ChaucerGlossary mentions three other uses of the phrase.

❖ **Stanza 14/Line 56** ❧ Robin's instructions say not to bother knights or squires who would be "a gode felawe." "Felawe"/"Fellow" is a word which occurs relatively rarely in the "Gest," but, as Pollard points out on p. 144, is extremely common in the "Potter." It also occurs in the "Monk," stanza 80.3: Little John, having rescued Robin, turns down Robin's offer to make him chief of the band and asks that he remain "a felow."

Pollard, pp. 134–142, extensively discusses Middle English uses of the word "fellow," but his conclusion boils down to the fact that it was even more ambiguous then than it is now. It might mean a servant or low-born person (compare the usage in some texts of the "Edward" [Child 13]/"Lizie Wan" [Child 51] type in which the mother fears that the son has done "some fallow's deed"), or even a member of a gang of robbers, but typically it means something like a comrade or equal.

On p. 142, Pollard points out the common equation between a fellowship and a meine/meyne, a band of followers — a word of course used in the title of the "Gest" in some of the prints, as well as being used three times for Robin's band (see the Glossary).

"Felawe" occurs in stanzas 14, 171, and "felaushyp"in 229. "Meyne" is in 31, 95, 97, 262, 335, 419. Pollard, p. 143, appears to suggest that "fellow" refers to someone willing to join Robin's band, but it seems to me that Robin's actual followers are his "meyne," and his "fellows" are allies but not close followers — the Knight is a "fellow" but doesn't even keep in touch with Robin's band.

Despite the concept not being used often in the text, it is clearly extremely important: fellowship is what binds together Robin's band, and his allies. Moreover, Robin seems to regard it as a binding obligation: you don't leave a fellow behind, as Much and the band rescue John in Stanza 307, and the Knight takes in Robin and his men in Stanza 311, and Robin rescues the Knight starting in Stanza 341.

❖ **Stanza 15/Line 57** ❧ Robin declares that his men can "beat and bind" bishops and archbishops. This is a shocking statement in the context of the time. As Southern says on p. 21, "There was no liberalism in the Middle Ages." The church was everything. Everyone knew that many of the clergy were corrupt — but they still respected the hierarchy. Robin does not. This truly sets him outside the social order.

The mention of archbishops (plural, which is interesting given that England had only two) is perhaps a slight hint of a setting in Barnsdale rather than Sherwood/ Nottingham. York was, obviously, the city in which the Archbishop of York resided; Nottingham had no such exalted cleric. Surely a Yorkshireman would be more likely to think of archbishops than a resident of Nottingham.

We can say confidently that Robin wasn't referring to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was very rare for an Archbishop of Canterbury to go to Yorkshire, so presumably if Robin really expects to catch an Archbishop, it is the Archbishop of York. The Archbishops of York in the period from 1300 to 1500 were Thomas of Corbridge (1300-1304), William Greenfield (1306-1316), William Melton (1317-1340), William le Zouche (1342-1352), John of Thoresby (1352-1373), Alexander Neville (1374-1388), Thomas Arundel (1388-1396), Robert Waldby (1396-1398), Richard Scrope (1398-1405), Henry Bowet (1406-1423), John Kemp (1425-1452), William Booth (1452-1464), George Neville (1465-1476), Lawrence Booth (1476-1480), and Thomas Rotherham (1480-1500). Few of these are particularly historically important. There were only two in the reign of Edward II: William Greenfield and William Melton. Greenfield, who was appointed under Edward I rather than Edward II, doesn't seem to have been particularly politically significant. Melton was another story: Made Keeper of the Privy Seal soon after Edward II ascended the throne in 1307 (Phillips, p. 87), he was Treasurer of England 1325-1326 and 1330-1331, as well as a diplomat and general against Scotland (Phillips, pp. 348-349). He took no part in the deposition of Edward II, to whom he seems to have been loyal, and later performed the marriage of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault (Phillips, p. 512 n. 352). Extraordinarily, robbers stole his pallium and other episcopal ornaments! (Haines, p. 168), but because of his alliance with Edward II, he seems an odd target for Robin Hood. Nonetheless there might have been a memory that an Archbishop of York was robbed in Edward II's time.

By far the best bet for Bishop of York at the time the "Gest" was composed (that is, in the middle to late part of Henry VI's reign) is John Kemp, who was a significant political figure: he was a cardinal, and Chancellor of England 1426-1432 and 1450-1454,

and was made Archbishop of Canterbury 1452-1454; he died in the latter year. Because of his numerous other jobs, he was not often in his diocese (Cannon, p. 541). On the other hand, he had extensive lands in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, and these suffered extensive raids by outlaws, particularly in the period 1440-1444 (Griffiths, p. 578). He can't be the Archbishop alluded to in the "Gest," because he was active in the reign of Henry VI, but maybe his troubles set the author of the "Gest" thinking.

For Archbishop of York Richard Scrope, see Appendix IV: "By Saint Richard!": Richard Scrope and the Abbot's Oath.

There were dozens of bishops and bishoprics in England at this time, so we can hardly hope to list all the bishops that Robin might have robbed, but it is worth noting that "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford" [Child 144] seems truer to the early Robin Hood legend than any of the later ballads, and that Adam Orleton, Bishop of Hereford, was a particular enemy of Edward II.

❖ **Stanza 15/Line 58** ❧ "Ye shall them bete and bynde." We will see the High Cellarer of St. Mary's claim that Robin's men beat and bind him in Stanza 257.

❖ **Stanza 15/Line 59** ❧ It is in this stanza that we first meet the Sheriff of Nottingham, who eventually became the primary bad guy of the cycle.

There is no explanation offered for why the sheriff is Robin's enemy (Holt, p. 9), unless it's just the fact that he is a sheriff. This hardly seems sufficient in a Barnsdale context — perhaps the Sheriff of Yorkshire, or the Sheriff of Lancashire, might be Robin's enemy, but why Nottingham?

Clawson, pp. 90–96, discusses some possibilities, most of which center around the events of fits III, V, and VI, including the Sheriff's breaking of his oath to be Robin's friend (see the notes on Stanza 202, Stanza 204, Stanza 287). This would make sense if the poem were arranged differently. But these events, in the context of the "Gest," took place *after* this speech.

Another possibility that occurs to me is that the sheriff might have been one of those clerics Robin so hated — e.g. we know that William Longchamp, the despicable Bishop of Ely, and Archbishop Geoffrey of York, illegitimate son of Henry II, staged a bidding war over who would be Sheriff of Yorkshire in the reign of Richard I.

Pollard, p. 106, comments that "[W]e are never told why Robin Hood was outlawed. It is implied that he is the victim of malicious litigation by others for personal gain, in which the sheriff has colluded." This certainly would explain the hostility, but there is no actual mention of such litigation that I can see.

Alternately, if we accept the idea that Robin was a forester or descendant of foresters — a notion found in some of the late ballads although not the early — it might be that the hostility derives from the conflict between forest and non-forest officialdom. When a murder was committed in the forest, it led to problems between sheriff and forester, and disagreements over authority also arose when it was unclear whether a lesser crime had been committed inside or outside the forest (Young, p 93). Perhaps we might envision the Sheriff stepping on Robin's family's perceived rights one too many times.

Holt mentions that Robin might have been outlawed by a group of false jurors, which would have been assembled by the Sheriff. This closely resembles a key element of "The Outlaw's Song of Trailbaston," a piece written *c.* 1305 and surviving in a unique

copy of *c.* 1341 (Ohlgren, p. 99), copied perhaps in response to Edward III's attempt to use the law of trailbaston as a source of revenue for his wars (Ohlgren, p. 102).

It is written in French, and is the complaint of a man who claims to have served under the King (presumably Edward I), but who was hauled before the judges allegedly for hitting his servant a few times (Prestwich1, p. 286). Edward I's trailbaston law, promulgated in 1305 (Powicke, pp. 345–346), was designed to control thugs who went around beating and intimidating people (a "baston" is a club), so the idea of trailbaston courts was good (this sort of lawlessness seems to have been extremely common in 1304, and the trailbaston courts did a good job of cleaning it up, according to Prestwich1, pp. 285–286) — but, in the Outlaw's Song, the singer declares that anyone is subject to fine or imprisonment by the courts. Being an archer, he faced a forty shilling fine or imprisonment (Prestwich1, p. 287), and so was forced to the woods instead. He recorded his complaint in writing and tossed it onto a highway so that the wider world might hear it.

The similarity to the conception of Robin Hood is obvious: An archer, probably a yeoman, forced into outlawry without cause, who flees to the woods. (Although the *Trailbaston* author does threaten to kill his judges in stanza 10 — Ohlgren, p. 103 — which doesn't exactly make him sound like the image of meekness.) And, of course, Robin has ordered his men to "beat and bynde" their enemies in Stanza 15.

Alternately, the hostility might be a side effect of the "Tale of Gamelyn," where Gamelyn's older brother becomes sheriff and uses his authority against Gamelyn (Baldwin, p. 178).

Or maybe it's just the idea that a hero must have a worthy adversary (cf. Ohlgren, p. 109). In the early ballads, Robin has only two real adversaries: The Sheriff, and Guy of Gisborne. Guy, while a valiant fighter, is only a yeoman, meaning that he belongs to Robin's social class. Plus he winds up dead. The sheriff winds up dead, too, but since he doesn't have a name, he is replaceable. And he is also probably of the gentry or higher. So he becomes Robin's most available opponent — even if he is in the wrong county!

The office of Sheriff (Shire-Reeve) went back to Saxon times, and gained in importance under the Normans — "Norman kings, like Anglo-Saxon rulers, needed a link between the central power and local authorities.... It was upon the sheriff, so similar to the Norman *vicecomes* on the continent, that the mantle of local power fell.... Usually the strong central authorities appointed outstanding feudal barons in the shires as sheriffs" (Smith, p. 73). Bradbury, p. 128, notes a case in the reign of King Stephen, during which Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, was sheriff of Essex, Hampshire, London, and Middlesex! In the time of William II, many counties did not have a baron or earl; it was the sheriff who ran the county (Barlow-Rufus, p. 160).

At their peak, the sheriffs were without doubt the most important royal officials. Barlow-Rufus, p. 72, believes that in the near-civil-war between William II and his older brother Robert Curthose, it was the support of the sheriffs that allowed William to keep his throne. On p. 190, Barlow-Rufus describes them as responsible for "Revenue, justice, defense and the execution of many administrative orders."

After Norman times, the office declined. By the fifteenth century, the rewards were so small that it became a post to be avoided at all costs. The clipping of its powers began

with the creation of the Justices of the Peace — figures who do not appear in the early ballads in any form (Dobson/Taylor, p. 14). First created in the early fourteenth century, they were given broad powers by parliament in 1361 (Prestwich3, p. 234; Lyon, p. 154). Sheriffs began to be locally appointed in 1338, and in 1371 Edward III finally gave in to pressure and accepted that sheriffs should be appointed annually (Ormrod, p. 146). There was some backsliding on this (Richard II started appointing his own sheriffs in 1397; SaulII, pp. 383–384), but there was no going back to the days of the over-powerful sheriff.

Smith, p. 75, says that "the golden age of the sheriff was in the early part of the twelfth century. The thirteenth century saw many of his duties distributed among other men or abolished entirely. In still later times, especially under the Tudor monarchs (1485–1603), the lords lieutenant of the counties and the justices of the peace.... assumed the main burdens of local government. The once proud sheriffs found that their stepping stones to power were cracked and crumbled by the new forces and new men." Similarly Pollard, p. 103: "By the fifteenth century the sheriff's remit was much reduced from earlier times. The great era of sheriff as the king's viceroy had been the twelfth and thirteenth centuries."

Pollard, p. 104, does however note that, even in the fifteenth century, the sheriff's office was important enough that corrupt sheriffs could be a real problem — this was one of the complaints during Jack Cade's rebellion. But Pollard cannot accept Robin's sheriff as a fifteenth century official: "He is, anachronistically, the king's viceroy, occupying the office at the King's pleasure, and in regular communication with him. He resides, it seems permanently, not as a fifteenth-century sheriff would in his manor house, but in the royal castle of Nottingham. He displays many of the characteristics of a great lord. He keeps a great household, under the direction of his steward and butler. He retains [hires retainers] on a grand scale...." (Pollard, p. 106). Pollard, who wishes to place every attribute of the "Gest" in the fifteenth century, simply rejects the description of the sheriff — but what he really proves is that the portrayal looks back to an earlier time.

The fact that the Sheriff of Nottingham is a powerful official is, therefore, an argument that Robin must date from the reign of Edward III or earlier. However, there is a secondary argument against Robin living in the time of Richard I and John or earlier. He could not have lived in Norman times — if he had, the sheriff of Nottingham would have been called by his feudal title, not "sheriff." Smith, p. 73, implicitly notes that the barons were still sheriffs in the era of the earlier Plantagenets, but that "in John's reign (1199–1216) considerable confusion in the counties resulted when no strong man would take the office of sheriff. After all, many barons in John's day were among the king's enemies."

Another change began in 1236, when the various counties were carefully surveyed and re-valued with an eye to increasing the royal revenue (Prestwich1, pp. 95-96). This allowed Henry III to force the sheriffs to operate on what we would now call a "percentage basis" — instead of paying the king a flat fee and then being allowed to collect whatever they could make the county yield, they had to pay the king a fraction

of the revenue (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 43). It took some time for this to become permanent, but this once again made the office of sheriff less popular with the nobility.

Holt, p. 25, notes that we meet the sheriff twice, in fits III and V, and his character seems to change dramatically: "The sheriff of fytte five is menacing and villainous. The sheriff of fytte three is a laughing stock." This might just be an indication of different sources, but it might be an indication of the high turnover of sheriffs which often happened in periods of unrest — although we should add that Robin seems to treat the sheriff as the same man (see the notes on Stanza 204 and Stanza 287).

To sum up: the role of the Sheriff, as seen in the "Gest" and elsewhere in the Robin Hood corpus, argues for a date in the reign of Henry III, Edward I, or Edward II; prior to the reign of Henry III, the sheriff was a noble, and after Edward III, the sheriff simply didn't have the power to act as the sheriff does in the "Gest" and elsewhere.

The fact that the sheriff is, supposedly, a bad official is no argument as to date. Edward I had at one time made a top-to-bottom survey of his officials. We have only partial results, but they are indicative. Prestwich1, p. 95: "The Lincolnshire returns are particularly full. In the wapentake (the local equivalent of the hundred) of Aswardhurn the jurors listed eleven recent sheriffs and eighteen lesser royal officials, along with five seigneurial officials, and accused them of a range of offenses."

At least some of them were creative. According to Prestwich1, p, 95, one thieving sheriff claimed that he had confiscated chickens to prevent them being used to drop incendiaries on London!

As time passed, the sheriffs became more closely tied to the court. Wolffe, pp. 98, notes that "in 1448 alone fourteen of the thirty-six counties of England had household men as sheriffs." This might explain why the Sheriff of Nottingham, in the latter part of the "Gest" and in the "Monk," has such access to the King: Perhaps, after getting rid of the sheriff of the early part of the "Gest" and of the "Potter," the King replaced him with a man who was closer to him.

In the year after Bannockburn, King Edward II replaced no fewer than thirty sheriffs — although, surprisingly, the sheriffs he chose often were not closely tied to him; in 1326–1327, when Isabella and Mortimer were trying to clear out Edward's adherents, they saw need to replace only nine of 24 sheriffs (Phillips, p. 446).

Baldwin, p. 70, says that during some of the period in which we are interested, there was no actual sheriff of Nottingham (compare Pollard, p. 106, who declares that the title should have been "sheriff of Nottingham and Derby"), but on pp. 70–71 he lists a number of officials who might have been treated as the sheriff: Philip Mark, sheriff of Nottingham and Derbyshire 1209–1224, Brian de Lisle, chief forester of those shires 1209–1217 and with other local posts of importance (including sheriff of Yorkshire) until 1241 (these first two were first suggested by Holt; Holt, p. 60); Eustace of Lowdham, sherriff or under-sheriff of Yorkshire 1225–1226 and of Nottingham and Derby 1232–1233; Robert of Ingram, of Nottingham and Derby intermittently from 1322–1334 and occasional mayor of Nottingham (cf. Dobson/Taylor, p. 15); and Henry de Fauconberg, to whom we shall return. Harris, p. 89, has a list of Sheriffs of Nottingham and Derby from 1323 onward, but apparently no one served in the role from the time de

Fauconberg vacated the office in 1323 until Robert de Ingram held the job in 1327, after Edward II was out of power.

On the other hand, Holt found few Sheriffs of Nottingham with any responsibility for forests (Dobson/Taylor, p. 15), so why was this Sheriff even interested in what Robin Hood was up to?

Of course, the title "sheriff of Nottingham" might be a disguise. In the second reign of Edward IV, for instance, Lord Hastings became Constable of Nottingham Castle and steward and keeper of Sherwood Forest. Close enough to a sheriff for a ballad. And Hastings was also Edward IV's chamberlain — meaning that he controlled who had access to the king. It is possible that Robin might have been a Lancastrian outlaw — perhaps even Robin of Redesdale or Robin of Holderness, mentioned above — whom Edward IV tried to suppress and then offered a pardon. Possible — but highly unlikely; there just aren't enough specifics in the "Gest" to suggest that the poet was writing about current political controversies — and he probably wrote before Edward IV's reign anyway.

If we date Robin Hood to the reign of Richard I, then the sheriff involved would likely be Edmund Deyncourt, according to Phillips/Keatman, p. 3 — but, as they admit, there is no evidence of a conflict with Robin in Deyncourt's history, and in any case, a dating in the time of Richard is impossible.

"A strong argument has linked the fictional sheriff of Nottingham in the Robin Hood stories with the real holder of that office in the 1330s [early reign of Edward III], John of Oxford. He was guilty of a long catalogue of acts of arbitrary imprisonment, extortion, fraud and other offenses" (Prestwich3, p. 232). Baldwin, p. 72, refers to him, under the name "John de Oxenford." Holt, p. 60, also mentions this identification (first made by Maddicott, who thinks the "Gest" referred to events of 1334–1338) with some approval (while expressing strong doubts about Maddicott's other identifications), and Pollard alludes to it on p. 185, although without enthusiasm. Hicks, p. 83, declares that "John Oxenford's 'eccentric and yet typical career' so vividly illustrates the scope for corruption in local government that he has been proposed as the model for the sheriff of Nottingham in the ballads of Robin Hood."

Hicks, p. 84, lists among Oxenford's offenses accepting a bribe to set a prisoner free, extortion of various types (charging more than the accepted rate for receipt of writs, collecting fees twice, etc.), and having himself fraudulently elected to parliament. Despite this, he seems to have died in poverty and obscurity. Hicks, p. 85, concludes, "His origins and fate are thus unusual, but his misconduct in office was exceptional only in scale and fully explains why 'men still had a justifiable distrust' of sheriffs."

I am inclined to think, however, that memories of the vile John of Oxford are more likely to have caused the Robin Hood legend to be transplanted to Nottinghamshire and Sherwood Forest, where it was not native, than to have originated the legend.

If John of Oxford is the actual sheriff of the source story, then Thomas de Multon was perhaps the Abbot of St. Mary's and Geoffrey Scrope the justice (Baldwin, p. 73; Pollard, p. 185–186, who observes that Ohlgren and Aytoun also thought these events contributed to the legend; Holt, p. 60; Bellamy, p. 112). But I suspect that this is being too specific, and Holt agrees, particularly with respect to Scrope; had the author of the

"Gest" known all these details, he would have used them. John of Oxford may have been the model of the sheriff, but it is unlikely that he actually *was* the sheriff.

Pollard, p. 107, proposes that the fifteenth century model for the sheriff might be Ralph, Lord Cromwell of Tattershall, who in 1434 became Constable of Nottingham Castle and Steward of Sherwood Forest. A veteran of Agincourt, he also was Chancellor in 1433 (Kerr, p. 131).

This again strikes me as highly unlikely. Cromwell would have been mostly an absentee landlord; he was for many years treasurer of England (Wolffe, p. 73), and had to deal with the financial disasters of Henry VI's reign. And he had lands far outside Nottinghamshire — Tattershall is in Lincoln, he built a fine manor at Wingfield in Derbyshire (Kerr, p. 131), and his manors of Wressle and Burwell were in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire (Gillingham-Wars, p. 77). It is true that Wolffe, p. 274, calls him acquisitive, which fits, and Wolffe, pp. 121–123, shows how badly justice was distorted in the reign of Henry VI — but Cromwell lived until 1456, and his death was natural (Wolffe, p. 357). And he would have been a contemporary of the author of the "Gest" — yet the author of the "Gest" gives us almost no personal details about him. It is, I suppose, possible that the author wanted to slander him and be safe from persecution, but he could still have supplied *some* personal details.

If we assume that the actual sheriff involved is the man who was sheriff of Nottingham and Derbyshire in 1323 when Edward II came north, John Bellamy suggested that this would have been Sir Henry de Faucumberg/Fauconberg, Sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in 1318–1319 and 1323–1325, and sheriff of Yorkshire 1325–1327, 1328–1330 (Cawthorne, p. 198; Phillips/Keatman, p. 84). Cawthorne speculates that Fauconberg was actually transferred from Nottinghamshire to Yorkshire when Robin left court, in order to keep track of the outlaw. But, of course, he didn't end up dead while fighting Robin. The dates above, in fact, show that he was still alive long after Robin's pardon of 1323, which simply does not fit the "Gest."

Fauconberg does appear, based on Cawthorne, p. 199, to have had sticky fingers (Phillips/Keatman, p. 167, note two instances of him being fined for stealing wood from the King's forest), and to have been sustained by Edward II because he had fought against Thomas of Lancaster. This, theoretically, might have made him Robin's ally if we think (as I do) that Robin was an enemy of Lancaster. But this isn't really the right sheriff. It appears to me that we want the sheriff of 1317 and 1322, not 1318 and 1323.

It is interesting to learn that Fauconberg may have come from Holderness (see the note on Stanza 149); Phillips/Keatman, p. 85, say he was from Catfos but held land in Holderness.

But the bottom like is, I really don't think we should seek too hard for the historical Sheriff. Unlike the King, there were few chronicle stories about sheriffs that our poet could use as a reference! The author of the "Gest" may have known the Sheriff of Nottingham as Robin's enemy, but the Sheriff he describes probably derives primarily from the poet's imagination and the source used for the tale of Robin and the Sheriff.

❖ **Stanza 17/Line 68** ❧ "And no man abyde with me." Robin has just ordered out Little John, Much the Miller's Son, and Scathelock. Does sending forth these three indeed leave him with no other men? Or has Robin sent all the others elsewhere? In

Stanza 61, we also find references to Robin, John, Much, and Scathelock as if they are the only ones present. We cannot be certain, but this is another indication that Robin's band may at this time have been small; see also the note on Stanza 4/Line 14.

To this stanza compare the parallel in Stanza 208.

❖ **Stanza 18/Lines 69–70** ❧ "Sayles" ("Saylis" in **a**) and "Watlynge Strete." "Sayles" is generally believed to be Sayles, near Pontrefract, in the Barnsdale area, a holding listed by Baldwin, p. 43, as a tenth of a knight's fee. This identification was first made by Hunter (Dobson/Taylor, p. 22). Other than localizing Robin to Barnsdale rather than Sherwood, it has no evident significance, but Baldwin does say that "its value as a look-out position over the Road is apparent, even today." In particular, it overlooks the bottleneck at Wentbridge where travelers had to cross the river Went (Holt, p. 83). According to Dobson/Taylor, p. 22 n. 4, it is fully 120 feet above the plain, making it a good place to watch not only Watling Street but anyone who would approach Barnsdale from the north or east.

It is interesting that in every use (stanzas 18, 20, 209, 212) it is "the Sayles," not "Sayles." This sounds like it refers to a residence, not a village — which would make sense if it were someone's holding. And, indeed, Dobson/Taylor, p. 22, note that the spot is still known as "Sayle's Plantation."

A web site managed by Tim Midgely, midgleywebpages.com, in 2006 offered a new suggestion, that Sayles could be the Sales wood and quarry found on an 1854 ordinance survey map near "Barnsdale Summer House." It is in the vicinity of Skellow in the borough of Doncaster. This is not too far from the Roman Road, so it is possible, but it relies on very late names and maps, and on various legendary Robin Hood landmarks, so it remains only a possibility.

Watling Street was the single most important Roman Road in England, running from London to the north. Its mention is no help as to location, since it runs through both Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. Holt, pp. 84–85, observes that Watling Street changed route in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the "Gest" seems to match the situation in the latter. This is more evidence for an Edwardian date, although it might come from the poet rather than the legend.

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 151, object that this section of the Great North Road — now the A1 — was properly called Ermine Street. and that Watling Street in fact runs to Chester (an observation first noted made Ritson). They're technically correct, but Dobson/Taylor, p. 22, point out that the name was used for many Roman roads — and the name "Watling Street" was used for the road toward Pontrefract in Yorkshire from at least the thirteenth century. We should simply understand the name to refer to the Roman Road running from London to Yorkshire.

The use of the name is a minor dating hint; Weinreb/Hibbert, p. 934, say that the name "Watling Street" is first attested in 1230 for the road that in Anglo-Saxon times was known as Athelyngestrate. The road of course is older than this, but the use of the name "Watling Street" is strong evidence that the poem cannot be earlier than the reign of Henry III.

Robin's men are again ordered to Saylis and Watling Street in Stanza 209, and they reach Sayles in Stanza 212.

❖ **Stanza 19/Lines 73–74** ❧ "Erle or ony baron, Abbot, or ony knyght." It may be coincidence, but the list of titles (Earl, Baron, Knight) is interesting. The titles "Earl," "baron," and "knight" went back to Norman times (although it took some time to establish fixed duties and titles). Note the absence of what became the two highest titles of the nobility, Duke and Marquis.

Edward III created the first dukes, beginning with his son the Black Prince (Barber, p. 20) and notably including Henry of Grosmont, the nephew of the enemy of Edward II, who became the first Duke of Lancaster — a significant award because Lancaster had power in the region near Barnsdale and was given palatinate powers (Cannon, p. 556). York also became a dukedom at an early date; Edward III's fourth son Edmund was Duke of York. Richard II created the title of marquis in 1385 for the de Vere Earl of Oxford (Cannon, p. 620).

The failure to mention the titles of duke and marquis does not require us to accept a date prior to the reign of Edward III — dukes were not common, and marquises were very rare. But the lack of those titles is at least a minor support for a date before Edward III.

We don't actually *meet* any Earls in the "Gest." The title exists, but they aren't coming out of the woodwork they way they are in the twenty-first century. It is perhaps worth noting that the number of earls declined significantly in the reign of Henry III (Jolliffe, p. 283) — and that neither Nottinghamshire nor Yorkshire had an earl at the end of that reign, nor generally in the next few decades; York became an earldom in the late Edwardian period.

Turning to abbots, Cawthorne, p., 171, notes a scene in the Tale of Gamelyn where Gamelyn, who is pretending to be a prisoner, is ignored by a number of clergymen. Gamelyn, in lines 489-492, then curses all abbots and priors

"Ow!" seide Gamelyn, "so brouk I my bone!
Now have I aspied that frendes have I non
Cursed mote he worthe both fleish and blood,
That ever doth priour or abbot eny good!"

Could that passage have influenced this?

Although secular law generally did not apply to clergy in the middle ages, there was an exception: by special agreement with the Pope, forest law *did* apply (Young, p. 24). This is significant in light of the fact that Robin made his own version of forest law apply to high-ranked monks.

Clawson, p. 17, claims that "Hostility to wealthy and powerful churchmen was a natural attribute of the mediaeval English outlaw," but as evidence he cites only the fight of Hereward the Wake against a Norman abbot, plus the tale of Gamelyn and the later Robin Hood ballads. Other than the case of Hereward, which was political and far too early, he seems to have no historical examples.

There is an interesting footnote in the forest laws: "Every archbishop, bishop, earl, or baron traveling through the forest may take one or two beasts by view of the foresters or he may blow a horn to give notice if they are not present" (Young, p. 68). Observe that Robin does almost exactly this in Stanza 447. Thus one might argue that the higher clergy and nobility were given the right, first, to interfere with Robin's livelihood, and

second, that they used his patented horn calls. One wonders if Robin's use of the horn might not have been inspired by this. (We see Robin use a horn in stanzas 229, 389, 447 of the "Gest"; in the "Potter" in stanza 65.1 — and far more common in the "Robin Meets His Match" class of ballads; the use of the horn is considered one of the characteristics of the Robin Hood legend.)

The fact that Robin so dislikes the higher clergy is perhaps another slight argument against the king of the "Gest" being Edward IV. Bishops in the middle ages were political figures, and often appointed from noble families — e.g. the Bishop of York in 1470 was George Neville, the son of the late Earl of Salisbury and the brother of the Earl of Warwick (Wagner, p. 174) and the Archbishop of Canterbury was Thomas Bourchier, brother of the Earl of Essex and half-brother of the late Duke of Buckingham (Wagner, p. 35). But both these two were made bishops before Edward IV came to the throne (George Neville became Bishop of Exeter at the age of 23!). According to Ross-Edward, p. 320, the bishops appointed by Edward IV were, almost without exception, highly educated, and from gentle rather than noble families. This does not mean that they were saints, but certainly they set a much higher standard than the bishops of previous reigns.

Given Robin's hostility to the clergy, we should perhaps also note that the Catholic church was in rather bad shape in this period. The reigns of Edward II and Edward III almost exactly overlapped the so-called "Babylonian Captivity" (1305–1377), when the Popes, instead of being based in Rome, were living at Avignon, and hence regarded as unduly influenced by France. (This was in some ways better than being influenced by the Italian mobs, but to an Englishman, the French would presumably be The Enemy, and Rome just some faraway place.) There was also a papal schism in the 1180s, and various schisms in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is easy to imagine an outlaw, who could not possibly know which Pope was actually canonically elected (especially since, in this period, the elections were often anything but honest), thinking something like "a plague on both your episcopal hierarchies."

It is perhaps worth adding that the Black Death decimated the clergy to a greater extent even than the population as a whole (Ormrod, p. 116; KellyJ, p. 191), dealing a severe blow to monasticism in England and even weakening the bishops. The strong disdain of the higher clergy shown in the "Gest" appears to make more sense in the half century before the Black Death than in the period immediately after (although the hierarchy of course went back to its bad old ways thereafter).

❖ **Stanza 20/Lines 77– 80** ❧ This search for a victim has a precise parallel in Stanza 212; the only difference between the two stanzas is in the spelling of the word "see." The parallel continues through the first line of stanza 21 and stanza 213, except for a textual variant; see the note on Stanza 213.

❖ **Stanza 21/Line 82** ❧ John and his companions know a "derne" (hidden; by implication, secret) street — an indication that they know the forest well. This is a curious contrast to Stanzas 11–12, where Robin gives his men their instructions as if for the first time.

Pollard, pp. 58–59, objects that the mention of a derne street makes little sense, because the forests of England in the Middle Ages were relatively tame places, often

filled with little towns and farms, and easy to travel. This is, of course, true, but that is little help to a traveler who does not live in the forest and know these side paths. Though it's valid to ask how someone not from the area would find the street.

In the parallel in Stanza 213, John and his men look down the highway, i.e. Watling Street, not the derne street. Does the difference matter? Perhaps; the knight, who is alone, can travel a path, but the monk of Stanza 213, who has a large company, needs to follow the road.

Fans of J. R. R. Tolkien may wish to look up the linguistic note on the word derne.

❖ **Stanza 21/Line 83** ❧ Here we first meet the Knight who, after Robin and John, is the most important character of the "Gest." We will later be told that his name is "Sir Richard at the Lee," but in these introductory fits, his name is ever used; some have suggested that he had no name in the tale of Robin and the Knight, the source for this part of the "Gest." I think they may well be right.

As we will see, he is currently very poor but will be restored to wealth by Robin. This plot is considered the most original part of the "Gest," but Bennett/Gray, p. 149, declare that the "bankrupt knight is in fact a surprisingly frequent figure in medieval story: the prototype being the Theophilus of legend, who has to sell his soul to the Devil, much as Launfal has to redeem himself by his pledge to the Lady Triamour." For Theophilus, see the section on The Bible and the Miracles of the Virgin, the description of Theophilus and the Devil, and the section The Knight's Story as a Miracle of the Virgin.

❖ **Stanza 24/Line 94** ❧ For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanza 25/Line 99** ❧ All four witnesses place "Syr" at the beginning of 25.4, and all the modern editions follow it, but this produces an excess stress in line 25.4. So I have put the word on line 25.3 to smooth the meter.

❖ **Stanza 27/Line 105** ❧ "I graunte." Note that the knight does not *agree* to go with the outlaws; he *grants* it — as a superior to an inferior. As of this stage, he doesn't know Robin, with whom he will become friendly (and to whose social level he will arguably fall, when he becomes an outlaw). But he presumably sees that John and company are carrying bows. That makes them yeomen or lower, and hence his social inferiors. So he graciously *grants* that he will go with them.

❖ **Stanza 27/Line 108** ❧ "Blythe or Dancastere" ("Blith" in **a**) — towns along Watling Street/the Great North Road, now typically spelled "Blythe" and "Doncaster." We will meet Roger of Doncaster at the end of the "Gest," when he is involved in Robin's murder. The two towns are between Nottingham and Yorkshire (Doncaster is now a fairly major town, Blythe a hamlet somewhat to its south), so they are no help on the question of whether Robin is based in Barnsdale or Sherwood — although, if the knight is truly planning to go on crusade (see the notes on Stanzas 56–57, he would presumably head south to London to start. If he is indeed headed south, that is additional support for Robin being in Barnsdale, not Sherwood, since the knight has not yet reached Doncaster.

We will meet these two places again in Stanza 259, in the story of the robbing of the Cellarer of St. Mary's, where the implication of a setting in Barnsdale is even stronger.

The mention of Doncaster supplies some vague evidence against the contention (highly unlikely on other grounds) that the King Edward of the song is Edward IV. During the 1470 conflict that led to his temporary deposition, the Marquis of Montague was moving to attack Edward IV at Doncaster when Edward fled the country (Wagner, p. 179). This being Edward's strongest connection to Doncaster, and surely well-known at the time, could a contemporary author have failed to note it were Edward IV the hero of the "Gest"?

Blythe did host a meeting between Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1158 as Henry was heading south from the Scottish border (Boyd, p. 152), but this is too early for a meeting with Robin Hood even if Richard I was Robin's king.

❖ **Stanza 29/Line 113** ❧ Robin and his men are here described as having a "lodge." Pollard thinks this is the same place as the trystel tree (for which see the note on Stanza 176), which is the more usual meeting place; the only other time Robin meets someone at the lodge is in Stanza 225. It is possible but by no means automatic that they are the same; indeed, it would make sense for outlaws to have several meeting places in the forest and not bring outsiders to their main base. The existence of a lodge does indicate that Robin and his men have been here for a while (again making Stanzas 11–12, where Robin has to give his men elementary instructions, seem odd), and also argues against the claim by some critics that it is always summer at his camp (for this improbable claim see Stanza 176). A lodge is far more important in winter than summer.

Note also the Sheriff's statement in stanza 198 that the life of the outlaws is harder than the requirements of "any" order of anchorites or friars. If it is always summer, it's not a very comfortable summer.

A faint possibility is that the Barnsdale/Sherwood confusion is caused by seasonal change — Robin lives in one in the summer and the other in winter (probably Barnsdale in summer and Sherwood in winter, since Nottinghamshire would have better weather, and more travelers, in winter). But the much higher likelihood is that the confusion is just that: Confusion.

If the lodge is an actual building, its construction is probably another violation of the forest laws; Young, p. 109, says that the usual penalty in the early medieval period for an illegal building was twelve pence (a large fine for a villein) but that in some cases the building might be razed.

❖ **Stanza 29/Line 115** ❧ Note that, although Our Hero is called Robyn Hode/Robin Hood, this is very nearly the only reference to him wearing a hood. Hood is, of course, an English surname, and Hoods did live in the north country in Edwardian times; Hunter located records of several, and even tried to contend that one was "the" Robin Hood (Holt, pp. 45–46). We really have no evidence whether the author of the "Gest" thought "Hode" a surname, or a name given for Robin's apparel — or whether he even considered the question. Here, the hood is simply used as a demonstration of manners: Robin is courteous enough to take off his hood. For "courtesy" see the note on Stanza 2.

We will again see Robin doff his hood to a guest in Stanza 226.

❖ **Stanza 32/Line 125** ❧ Knight/Ohlgren, pp. 76, 152, suggest that the act of Robin and the knight washing together (paralleled in Stanza 231, and also the "Potter," Stanza 41.4, and compare the "Tale of Gamelyn," line 439), is a demonstration of "civilized" or

courtly behavior: People eating at a communal meal were expected to have clean hands. Salisbury/Weldon, p. 144, support this, suggesting that some romances were intended to teach courtesy, and observe instances of washing before a meal in the romances of "Lybeaus Desconus" ("The Fair Unknown"), "Emare," and "Le Bone Florence of Rome" as well as in the Robin Hood corpus. Indeed, the reference in the "Potter" comes just one stanza after we are told that Robin "cowed [could] of courteysey" (40.3). Knight/Ohlgren add that the custom became increasingly common in the fourteenth century — in other words, it is a custom from the reign of Edward II or later. It should be kept in mind, however, that washing of hands is a custom which goes back to pre-Christian times — although one which Jesus declared not necessary from a religious standpoint (see, e.g., Mark 7:1-8).

❖ **Stanzas 32–33/Lines 127–132** ❧ Although outlaws are usually said to poach deer, and indeed the state of the king's deer park becomes an issue in Stanzas 357–358, and Robin admits in Stanza 377 to living by the King's deer, note that the menu here consists of bread, wine, "noumbles" of the deer (i.e. probably organ meat), swan, pheasant, and other birds (probably including duck).

Phipson, p. 175, says that in the period before 1600 "the list of birds reserved exclusively for his lordship's table includes many species which would in modern times be discarded as worthless." Similarly, Mortimer-Angevin, p. 19, says of the Plantagenet period that "Wild birds were an important component of the diet; the number of species and quantity of bones found archaeologically in medieval contexts is considerably greater than in any earlier period since the advent of farming. Species excavated or known to have been sold include swans, cranes, rooks, pipits, larks, crows, jackdaws and plovers, as well as wild ducks and, of course, quantities of blackbirds which were presumably baked in a pie."

This varied diet was common throughout Europe. Boyd, p. 21, in discussing Eleanor of Aquitaine's first wedding feast, notes that "Banquets in Aquitaine often included eighteen dishes of venison, wild boar, game birds, river and sea fishes washed down with spiced wine and ending with fritters and wafers." Among the birds he mentions are bustards, swans, cranes, partridges, ducks, capons, geese, chicken, and peacocks.

On the evidence, the outlaws were not particularly reliant upon deer. Observe however that no plant matter of any kind is mentioned except bread and wine — both of which can be stored for long periods (at least, flour and wine can). It sounds like a scurvy-inducing diet (assuming the deer organs are cooked, anyway), and makes me wonder if the meeting really took place in summer (see note to Stanza 176). This is winter food.

We also note that rabbit is not mentioned in this extensive catalog of animals which could be caught in a forest. This is not proof of anything, but rabbits were not brought to England until the thirteen century — where they soon became a major part of the diet. Had they been mentioned, it would have been a strong hint of a late date.

❖ **Stanza 34/Lines 135-136** ❧ The knight has great praise for his meal, supposedly the best he's had in three weeks. Presumably, poor as he will prove to be, it's not because he's starving. Apparently the dinner is good (or, at least, he wants to butter up Robin). It is an interesting question as to who cooks this dinner. Robin said in Stanza 17

that no "man" was abiding with him. Did Robin cook the meal? Was there a woman or a cook hiding in the shadows somewhere? Little John will eventually recruit a cook (Stanza 163 and following), who joins Robin's band and disappears, but that's later, and it's almost certainly from another source anyway. I think we just have to regard the question of who did the cooking as a mystery.

❖ **Stanza 37/Lines 145–148** ❧ "But pay or ye wende." In modern English "pay before you leave." Robin, to be blunt, shakes down the knight, on the grounds that a yeoman should not pay for a knight's meal. In Robin's case, this becomes a "Truth Or Consequences" game — those who admit their wealth are not robbed. (Of course, as Holt points out on p. 11, only the rich had any reason to lie about their wealth, so the social justice aspect of this can be exaggerated.)

Child, p. 53, says that in the tale of Eustace the Monk, Eustace too asked, more directly, how much money his victims had. He then searched them, and confiscated everything above the amount they confessed to (e.g. the Abbot of Jumièges claimed to have four marks but turned out to have thirty; Baldwin, p. 38; Cawthorne, p. 126). A summary of Eustace's methods is found on Cawthorne, p. 125. The parallel to the tale of Eustace is also mentioned by Knight/Ohlgren, pp. 2–3, and Ohlgren, p. 316 n. 12, plus they note something parallel in the tale of Fulk FitzWarren.

In this case, the knight will admit (genuine) poverty. We shall see Robin ask this question again in Stanza 243; in that case, he will receive a false answer.

❖ **Stanza 38/Line 151** ❧ Robin orders Little John to search the knight's baggage. This is a standard stage of the "Truth Or Consequences" game, and will happen again in Stanza 247 (searching the Cellarer of St. Mary's); oddly, we do not see the King searched in Stanza 382 — perhaps a hint that another source is involved.

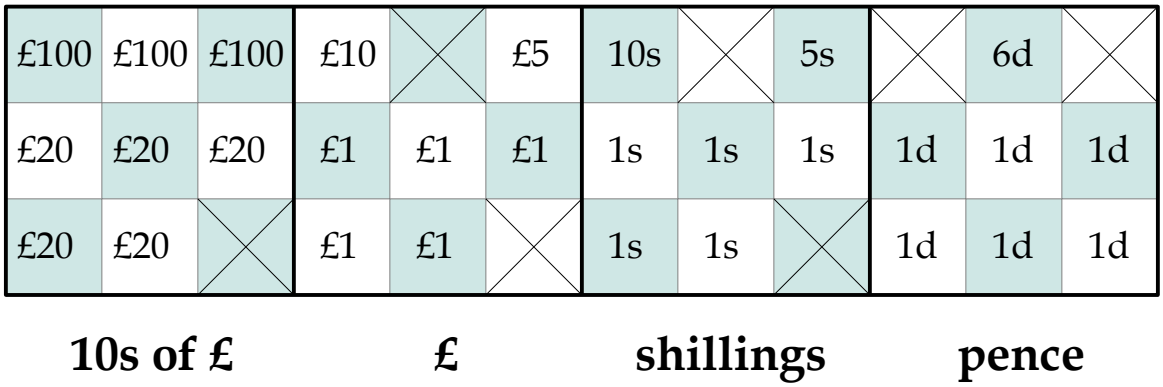
Ohlgren on p. 158 of Ohlgren/Matheson says that guilds had the right of search of their members, and — given his efforts to prove that the "Gest" is targeted at the guilds — claims this as evidence of origin. But the source tales of Hereward and Eustace involve searches of prisoners, and we also see it (e.g.) in the later tales of Dick Turpin. An outlaw who did not search his victims would not be very successful!

The interesting aspect of this is that Robin delegates the job to John. John will also count the money, and he apparently commands Much and Scathelock when Robin isn't around. What skills does John *not* have (other than bearing hunger patiently, anyway)?

❖ **Stanza 41/Lines 161-162** ❧ As mentioned in the preceding note, John will again be called upon to search a visitor when the Cellarer of St. Mary's comes to Barnsdale. The description of that search is even more explicit, giving the impression of a customs office; see the note on Stanza 255.

❖ **Stanza 42/Lines 165–166** ❧ "Lyteell Johan spred downe his mantell." Little John will also spread out his mantle and count in Stanza 247. (An incident copied in the Forresters version of "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford"; on p. 42 of Knight, we read that "Little John hee dofte of a shepherds Coate And spred it theire on the ground And straight way forth of the bishops male Hee tould three hundreed pound.") Might this be an indication that John is the most educated of the band? We don't have clear evidence either way, but it's interesting that he seems to be in charge of calculations — not a trivial skill in a time of non-decimal money and before Arabic numbers became

common. Even moderns can forget their totals as they count — which makes the ability to count with a cloth useful: You can always read off the total.



A filled-in exchequer cloth, showing the values on each square. The function is somewhat like an abacus, but with different numbers. One places pennies on the bottom right squares. Once six pence are in place, they are moved to the sixpence square. When there are two sixpence, it is transferred to the shillings column. Five shillings go to the 5s square. Once there are 20 shillings in all, it is moved to the £1 square. Etc. Once the counting is done, the total can be read off the squares. For example, the table below would have value £236 12s 10p.

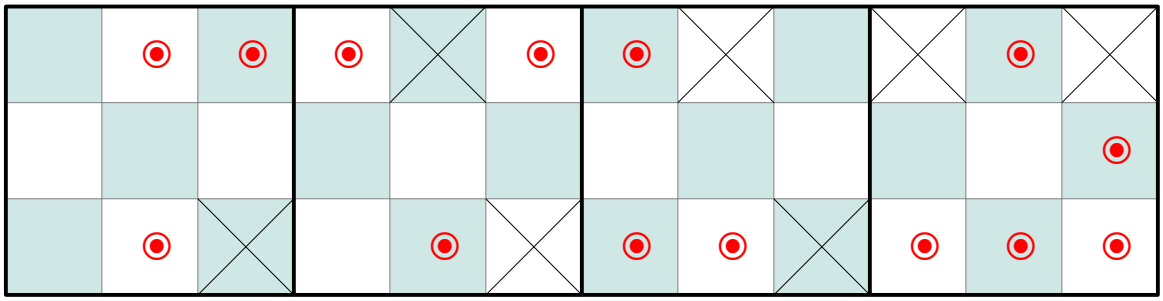


Figure 17: Counting on a checkered cloth

What's more, the use of his mantle for counting seems to relate to the practice of the Exchequer (a procedure which presumably would have been used by others doing counting). According to Mortimer-Angevin, p. 66, the Exchequer was so-called because its offers sat at a table with a checkered cloth when they examined the accounts of sheriffs and other officers.

Mortimer-Angevin, p. 67, adds, "The calculations were performed by using the columns of the checked cloth to represent pence, shillings, pounds and so on; little heaps of coins representing the sum due were piled on one row of squares, and others representing sums actually paid put in the row below.... This means of calculation had the advantage of easing the problems of doing elementary arithmetic in roman numerals, by introducing what amounted to a zero."

(It should be noted that this still didn't solve the problem of solving algebraic equations, e.g. figuring out what a tax should yield. Some such calculations were incredibly inaccurate in this period; Tuck, p. 166.)

If John is indeed the most literate of the band, this is perhaps a minor argument for an early date; Saul3, p. 184, claims that by the last quarter of the fourteenth century, "all of the upper and middle classes and many of the peasantry could read." In other words, if John is the only literate one in the band, it suggests a setting before 1350.

❖ **Stanza 43/Line 169** ❧ The statement "Little John let it lie full still" occurs also in Stanza 248.1. Presumably the purpose is to show what he has found. Was this a procedure used so that someone could check his results?

❖ **Stanza 43/Line 172** ❧ To the factually correct statement here that the knight is "trewe inough," i.e., told the truth about his assets, compare the ironic statement in Stanza 248 that the monk is "trewe ynowe" not because the monk told the truth but because he has brought twice the payment Robin Hood expected from the knight.

❖ **Stanza 45/Line 179** ❧ In this verse, Robin, trying to understand why the knight is so poor, remarks, "I trowe thou werte made a knyght of forse" — in other words, that the knight was compelled to become a knight.

This is clearly a reference to the phenomenon called "distraint of knighthood" (cf. Child, p. 45), under which the King forced a man with sufficient income to become a knight. (Realize that the picture of a knight from King Arthur television shows bears little relation to reality — a knight was not a chivalrous soldier; a knight was a person with certain clearly-defined duties within the state.) Distraint was primarily a revenue-raising measure — during a war, the King could demand feudal service of a knight, or payment in lieu of it. Urban, p. 38, puts the situation bluntly: The duty of a knight to the king "was first to pay the fees that accompanied the ceremony [of knighthood], and second to pay scutage [the fee in lieu of service]. Whether they ever appeared in person, equipped for battle, hardly mattered."

Yes, knights were often fighters, and Sir Richard will proudly assert his tournament record in Stanza 116. But a knight was a social rank, a member of the gentry: below the lowest order of nobility (the baron), but above esquires (who were also gentry, more or less) and certainly above yeomen. And this status was awarded based largely upon income. (Though it also determined what weaponry one carried in battle — the nobility and the gentry, including both knights and esquires, wore armor and used weapons such as swords; yeomen and below were at most lightly protected and used bows and shorter edged weapons such as daggers. Also, to be a knight was to be "armigerous" — to have, or at least have the right to, a coat of arms, and to carry the appropriate arms.)

According to Cannon, p. 296, it was Henry III who first used distraint of knighthood, demanding that those with income of twenty pounds per year become knights (cf. Ohlgren, p. 316 n. 13). Edward I made those with forty pounds knights in early 1296, then lowered the bar to thirty pounds late in the year when he needed more cash (Tuck, p. 35). The standard soon became forty pounds (Prestwich3, p. 138; Ormrod, p. 151, says that land valued at forty pounds annually was the standard in the reign of Edward III), which better suited the genuine demands of knighthood.

It was Edward I, not Henry III, who really made distraint of knighthood common, starting in 1278 (Ohlgren, pp. 316–317, n.13). This was part of a massive housecleaning campaign which Edward embarked upon to regularize the government and improve his revenue; he also replaced almost all the sheriffs (Prestwich1, p. 278) so that he could more easily enforce the changes — and also better learn who had the money to become a knight.

Even as late as 1471–1472, in the reign of Edward IV, an examination of the tax rolls showed that the annual cost of a knight's household was one hundred pounds, a baron's five hundred pounds, and a viscount's one thousand pounds (Ross-Edward, p. 262). Magna Carta had fixed the "relief" owed to the crown for a knight's fee at five pounds (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 46). The "relief" was the amount a new possessor had to pay the monarch to enter his estate — in effect, an inheritance tax. A baron, by contrast, owed one hundred pounds. This is further evidence that a knight's normal income was in the range of a few tens of pounds.

Dobson/Taylor, following Child and an article by Holt, argue that distraint of knighthood points to the reigns of Henry III or Edward I. But in 1316, Edward II followed in his father's footsteps: "On 28 February every landholder with land worth [£50] or more was ordered to take up knighthood" (Phillips, p. 268).

Thus Robin's remark is clear evidence for the reign of Henry III or later — and probably the reign of Edward I or later. In fact, it is a pretty strong argument for the reigns of Edward I or Edward II, because Edward III didn't bother with making many knights. The evidence of the campaigns in the Hundred Years' War is that the number of knights fell dramatically in his reign (Prestwich3, p. 139; Reid, p. 219, argues that there were 870 knights on Edward III's expedition of 1359, but this seems to be too many knights compared to the number of archers).

The memory of distraint of knighthood would still be alive in the late fifteenth century, though; the government of Henry VI used it in the late 1450s to raise revenue when they were trying to run England without summoning parliament (Tuck, p. 311; Wolffe, p. 308). The practice was not formally eliminated until the time of James I (Kenyon, p. 59), long after knighthood had outlived any military usefulness.

If we assume assume that the King's visit to Robin took place in 1322/1323, as seems the likeliest explanation (see the introduction and the note on Stanzas 357–358), and we know that his son is now twenty or twenty-one (based on Stanza 52), then it is quite likely that the knight was dubbed on May 22, 1306. According to Mortimer-Traitor, pp. 22–23, no fewer than 267 knights were made on that day, including the soon-to-be King Edward II. The fact that they were dubbed on the same day might explain why the knight seems to trust so strongly in the King's judgment (see note on Stanza 321); they were, in a way, part of a Band of Brothers, though the Knight, in that case, would have been some years older than Edward II.

❖ **Stanza 47/Line 187** ❧ "An hundred wynter here before My ancestres knyghtes have be." The knight's statement means his family had held his land for a hundred years — a significant boast. The failure to produce sons was a continuous problem in the Middle Ages, when infant mortality was high. Storey, p. 22, counts thirteen English earldoms in 1422; of these, only one (Warwick) had been in existence since the eleventh

century, and only three more (Arundel, Devon, and Oxford) since the twelfth — and of those four, only one (the de Vere earldom of Oxford) was held by a direct male heir of the original holder. The other nine earldoms, and the four active dukedoms, were all less than a century old — and three of the four dukedoms went extinct with their original holders. I read somewhere that there were five thousand tenured knights mentioned in the Domesday Book, and that not one of those lineages is still in tenure. To maintain a line for a hundred years — probably four generations — was not insignificant.

The statement of a hundred years as a member of the gentry is even more significant in the context of land tenure (and, perhaps, Robin's outlawry). At first glance, this requires only that the year be 1166 or after (since effectively no Englishmen continued their land tenure after the Norman Conquest; it all was given to Frenchmen). This means the date could be as early as the reign of Henry II. (Indeed, we see proclamations at the beginning of Henry II's reign saying, in effect, that tenants had to prove that they had held their land at the end of Henry I's reign in 1135; changes in the two decades since were illegitimate; Mortimer-Angevin, p. 7).

However, William the Conqueror's writ ran only weakly in northern England — Cumbria and Northumberland were considered part of Scotland in this period. William just didn't have enough followers to control the area (Barlow-Rufus, p. 297). A few Normans were established in Lancashire and Yorkshire, but the English kings did not really begin to assert control until the reign of William Rufus beginning in 1087. And Henry II died in 1189, just barely more than a century later. Thus, while not impossible, it is highly unlikely that a knight from Lancashire or Yorkshire could have claimed a century's tenure in the reign of Henry II.

But the hundred year tenure becomes dramatically significant if we assume that the time is that of Edward I or after. Even as Edward I was making new knights, he was also doing his best to reclaim land for the crown. Edward clawed back land using something called "Quo Warranto" proceedings (Prestwich1 has many pages on this, e.g. p. 347). This required landholders either to show a valid deed *or* to show actual possession of the land for the period from 1189 to 1290 (the latter being the year in which the investigation took place). Theoretically this was an advance in law — Hollister, p. 260, observes that Edward was converting England from government by custom to government by written law and record — but the conversion was difficult.

Edward also made changes to something called "novel disseissin" (Prestwich1, p. 271. For the rule of ownership called "seisin," see the note on Stanza 356). Combining what Prestwich1 says with what Smith says on p. 167, it appears that the changes made it easier to update an old writ — and, hence, use out-of-date charges to dispossess a landowner. Since a deed might have been lost in the interim, the re-issuing of the writ, and the convening of a jury, would make it easier to evict the tenant.

Thus, for the knight to claim a hundred years' possession was to say that he had met the requirements of Edward I's land tenure requirements. An owner might speak with pride of a century's possession before Edward I came along — but after Edward I's time, he was making a *legal* claim of right.

Edward I's laws were very hard on smallholders. To an illiterate peasant, the papers would easily be lost, and a century of possession was hard to prove. Many tenants must have lost their land.

Corrupt officials made the problem of maintaining tenure worse; Edward I eventually tried to clean this up in 1298 (Prestwich1, pp. 431–432), but the bad precedent would continue for the rest of his reign and into the next. The victim of this fast dealing might not be a criminal — but with no land, he had no livelihood. We have no information on how Robin Hood came to be displaced from his property — but it is quite possible that he lost it due to one of Edward I's land-grabbing tricks. Kelly.J, p. 56, notes a substantial decrease in the area of land being cultivated starting around 1300; some of it was bad weather, but land laws were also driving tenants away.

❖ **Stanza 48/Lines 189–190** ❧ In effect, the knight declares that he is poor because "time and chance happen to them all" (Ecclesiastes 9:11). There is nothing at all unusual about this view of fate; this was the standard pre-modern attitude; the turning of the "wheel of fortune" was expected. It is the whole theme of the Book of Job; who was a "blameless and upright man… who feared God and turned away from evil" (Job 1:1).

What is noteworthy is not the knight's attitude but the fact that Robin does not say something to the effect that it happened to him, too. This is additional evidence, were it needed, that Robin in the "Gest" is not a fallen nobleman. The result also differs from the Book of Job, where Job's three friends start out trying to comfort him and then turn on him when he persists in declaring himself innocent (in 16:20 Job openly declares that "my friends scorn me"). Robin asks pointed questions to get to the heart of the matter — but, having been satisfied with the answers (as Job's friends were not), he resolves to help the knight. The statement at the end of the stanza that God "may amend his state" is again reminiscent of the Book of Job, where, after much suffering, God restores Job's wealth, and then some.

❖ **Stanza 49/Line 195** ❧ "Four hundreth pounde of good money." This is noteworthy: Four hundred pounds a year was ten times a knight's fee — this makes the Knight the equivalent of a fairly comfortable baron. Which poses several problems.

We see large sums of money at several points in the "Gest" — in Stanza 247, the monk carries eight hundred points. In Stanza 120, we see that the knight and Little John between them could carry "Four hundred pound." In Stanza 176, John and the cook carry off three hundred pounds plus plate. (We also read, in stanzas 23, 44 of the "Monk," that Robin took a hundred pounds from that monk.)

But no horse can be expected to carry eight hundred pounds of silver, even taking into account the fact that the pound sterling is only three-quarters of a pound Avoirdupois. (For the weight and volume of a sum of four hundred pounds, see the note on Stanza 120.)

And, even though the knight in Stanza 121 tells the abbot "have here thy golde," money almost had to be kept in the form of silver. Prior to the reign of Edward III, the only coinage in England was the silver penny (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 68), which went back all the way to King Offa of Mercia in around 770 (Brooke, p. 59). There had been a brief attempt to introduce gold coins in the reign of Henry III, but it was withdrawn due to being undervalued (Cannon, p. 223). But to carry value equivalent to eight hundred

pounds would seem to require gold coinage (the exchange rate of silver and gold varied, but it is safe to say that eight hundred pounds sterling of silver would be no more than fifty pounds avoirdupois of gold).

To be sure, the value of coin came from the metal it contained, so foreign coins were perfectly good money in England. The knight could pay with French or Flemish or other gold coins. But could he come up with that many foreign coins?

There is also the problem of counting four hundred pounds, or even more extremely, eight hundred pounds. Eight hundred pounds at 240 silver pence to the pound is 192,000 pennies. (Could Little John count that high? If he could, is this the reason why he is always the one who counts the cash?) Even twenty marks, the amount the monk claims in Stanza 243, is 3200 pence.

The number four hundred pounds does have a peculiar significance. Tyerman, p. 245, shows a diagram of the checkered tablecloth used by exchequer clerks to count money (see "Counting on a checkered cloth" above). Based on this layout, the maximum that could be counted was four hundred pounds (properly, £439 and some change, but four hundred pounds in round numbers). That makes it the largest amount that could be counted in one sitting.

It is true that, early in the reign of Edward IV, we hear of travelers being robbed of two hundred pounds, three hundred pounds — even, in two unusual cases, of seven hundred pounds and one thousand pounds (Pollard, p. 92). But even if these reports are accurate, this is almost a century after the death of Edward III, and a century and a half after the reign of Edward II. Given inflation, those amounts appear to be less than is being bandied about here. Plus, by then, there were gold coins.

Odds are that the figures mentioned here are simply exaggeration — very likely the author of the "Gest" had no idea of what £400 was worth; it was almost like a child saying something like "four zillion dollars" — and that most of the money the knight used was actually letters of credit or something equivalent. Otherwise, it would be hard even to *find* that much coin. Prestwich1, p. 408, estimates that the total currency in *all of England* at only about a million pounds in the 1290s. On p. 568 Prestiwch1 tells us that a tax audit of the clergy from 1291 (reign of Edward I) calculated the net income of the entire English church — which held a huge chunk of the land plus tithes — as £210,000. The Estimate of Edward III's Annual Revenue in the supplementary documents shows that the King's revenue, even in a time of extraordinary demands on the population, was in the range of £120,000. No one but the crown and a few of the very richest earls and clergymen could have hundreds of pounds — even the King had only about £25,000 of revenue in the twelfth century (Barlow-Rufus, p. 224), and only three peers (the Duke of York, the Earl of Stafford, and the Earl of Warwick) had income in excess of about £2000 in 1420; only about eleven other peers (the Dukes of Gloucester and Norfolk, the Earls of Suffolk, Huntingdon, Salisbury, Somerset, and Northumberland, and Lords Cromwell, Lovel, Talbot, and Tiptoft) had more than £1000 (Storey, p. 23). The largest military campaign of the fourteenth century, Edward III's two year Crécy/Calais campaign, cost only about £150,000 (Tuck, p. 147), much of it not paid as coin.

But we need only assume the monk was carrying a substantial amount of money (even the twenty marks, or thirteen and a third pounds, he claimed at the outset) for

this to be a dating hint. Smith, p. 126, says that "coined money had become more widely available in the twelfth century," leading to more use of coinage in the reigns of Richard and John, but the first real reform of the coinage came under Edward I in 1279–1280, who introduced the farthing and groat and regularized other coinage (Cannon, p. 223). And coining was carried out only periodically, meaning that there was often shortage of coin. This was true for much of Henry III's reign, and late in Edward I's reign because of the high taxation for his wars (Prestwich1, p. 405). And Edward I hit the church particularly hard, because that was where the money was (Prestwich1, p. 418). Prestwich3, p. 236, and Ormrod, p. 156, also note currency crises in the early reign of Edward III. Thus, if there really was coined money being used in Robin Hood's time, the reign of Edward II is a very good bet.

On the other hand, it wasn't a bad rule of thumb to assume that the value of land was ten times the income — in other words, if the knight had four hundred pounds of land, then he would have income of forty pounds a year. Which matches the forty pounds of income eventually expected of a knight. The knight may even have had a little more than four hundred pounds of land, since the abbot (based on his evident greed) very likely wanted securities worth more than the amount he was lending.

To further put this in perspective, Mortimer-Angevin, p. 80, says that in the reign of Henry II, "few lords" earned as much as five hundred pounds per year. Tyerman, p. 305, estimates the average baron's income in the reign of John as two hundred pounds. In the aftermath of the Poitiers campaign — when Edward the Black Prince captured the King of France, so the rewards were particularly great —the largest prize granted to any participant was a pension of £400. And this random knight is well enough off to have income equal to that?

In 1436, according to Storey, p. 13, about 7000 commoners had an income of five pounds or more, 1200 had income of 24 pounds or more, 750 had on the order of 60 pounds, and 183 were in the range of 208 pounds (don't ask me why 208).

Laynesmith, p. 202, says that even in Edward IV's time, the expected income for an earl was only a thousand marks — £667. According to Ormrod, p. 141, a knight banneret in Edward III's armies in the Hundred Years' War was paid four shillings a day (about seventy pounds per year), and a knight bachelor two shillings a day (thirty-five pounds per year). Seward, p. 269, gives figures for expected incomes in 1436: £865 for a baron, £208 for a "well-to-do knight," £60 for a lesser knight, £24 for an esquire. Prices had of course inflated substantially in the period since the reign of Edward III; it is safe to assume that these values would have been at least a third less in 1345.

Which makes it curious to see the monk in Stanza 92 declares the knight's lands to be worth four hundred pounds per year. As the above numbers show, that is the income of a baron (if a rather impoverished one), not a knight. It is probably an error — either by the monk or the poet. More likely the latter. He just didn't understand big money. (Note that, in Fit Eight, Robin will find spending £100 a severe burden.)

❖ **Stanza 52/Lines 205–206** ❧ To this tale of the lost son compare the Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11–32, although the Prodigal Son, unlike the knight's son, was not his father's heir. (Also, the Prodigal Son didn't kill anyone; he just destroyed a big chunk of his father's property in loose living.) It is curious to note that, although the

story of the knight is the fullest episode in the "Gest," we never find out the youth's fate. Did he flee the country, leaving his father on the hook for his bail? Note that the reading of the text is "I *had* a sone," not "I *have* a sone," and there is no variation in the text (except that Child for some reason read "hade" for "had," but that affects nothing). It's as if the boy simply vanished. Which, to be sure, would explain why the Knight's bail money vanished.

❖ **Stanzas 52–53/Lines 208–210** ❧ It is possible that there is a dating hint in stanzas 52–53, describing how the knight's son killed a knight and a squire. Stanza 52.4 states that the young man killed them because he "In felde wolde iuste full fayre." Ohlgren, p. 223, takes "iuste" to mean "joust," which is certainly the likeliest reading (it's also the interpretation in Dobson/Taylor, p. 82, and Knight/Ohlgren, p. 96), and therefore concludes that the boy killed them in a tournament. This certainly makes better sense than reading "iouste" as "just" — but, since i/j were not distinguished at this time, and spellings not standardized, we really can't take it as certain.

For another mention of jousts, see Stanza 116. Note that, there, the knight refers both to jousts and to tournaments, as if they were separate things.

Also: while the youth might have killed one man in an organized tournament, what are the odds that he killed two?

Perhaps better than we might expect. Tournaments, especially in the early days, could be quite deadly. Mortimer-Traitor, p. 21, mentions an event in 1241 in which more than eighty participants were killed. On the other hand, if it were that sort of event, killing two men would hardly be exceptional! The first jousts, reported from the twelfth century, consisted of a man taking a spot of ground (say, the entrance to a bridge) and defending it from attackers (Reid, p. 33). They had no resemblance to the organized tilting of Malory; they were just mad scrambles. If more than two fighters were involved, they were often called "melees." To see one man kill two in a joust is an oddity — but killing two in a melee tournament is not impossible.

Tournaments were disliked by the Church because they promoted fighting and sometimes killed people. Edward I, as a favor to the Church, banned them (Prestwich3, p. 37). This did not prevent people from organizing them, of course; they were too popular. But the fact that they were illegal made it murder to kill someone at one. The ban ended in the reign of Edward III, who "was a great patron of tournaments" (Prestwich3, p. 205), and indeed a highly successful competitor. Richard II, although not himself much of a fighter, also organized tournaments for their diplomatic value (Saul3, p. 95). So if the knight's son was accused of murder for killing people in a tournament, it implies a date in the reign of Edward I or Edward II — or else a very late date, in the reign of Henry V or VI; there was another thirty year hiatus in tournaments in that period (Laynesmith, p. 188. One might speculate that the resumption of tournaments at that time might have helped inspire this part of the "Gest.")

We might add that Richard I was a strong promoter of tournaments, for two reasons: They trained soldiers and they raised money — tournaments in his reign were licensed (Saul3, p. 90). Given Richard's reputation, his tournaments became especially famous. This might perhaps be another reason why the Robin Hood story was attracted to his reign.

If the knight's son did kill a couple of people in a tournament, then their families might have sought to have him punished, and while ordinarily being in a tournament would have protected him from a charge of murder, in the corrupt justice system that Edward II tolerated, a family with an urge for revenge might have been able to punish the boy.

But the idea that he killed them in a tournament ignores the fact that the boy wanted to joust "in felde" — in the field. Maybe it means a tournament field, but I suspect both parties were just out traveling somewhere, and ran into each other — and the boy perhaps challenged them to take a tilt or two. And, being a little too deadly for his own good, he perhaps killed one — and then had to kill the other because the survivor became so upset. This is a lot of speculation, but it would better explain the situation: Two men dead, and the survivor lamely saying, "We got into a fight." Suspicious at best.

It is also possible that there is a political subtext here, since jousts were sometimes used as an excuse to raise private armies (Barber, p. 18). Politics might also explain the decision to haul the youth before the judges; prosecutions for murder in a melee were rare except for political reasons. Or perhaps it was a rigged event which didn't come off properly — it was not unknown for one side in a tournament to abandon a rich but inexperienced fighter, allowing him to be captured and held for ransom (Boyd, pp. 188-189). Perhaps someone expected the boy to fight poorly, and instead he defended himself too well.

The very uncertain text of this passage (see the next note) makes things it hard for us to be certain: Did the boy kill a knight of *Lancaster* or of *Lancashire?* My text reads "Lancastshyre," which is about as wishy-washy as one can get — but it emphatically matters. If the text read "Lancashire" (which is likely what **bc** meant), then the encounter was probably a chance meeting — but if the text read "Lancaster" (as in **a**), then the matter becomes very political. Probably the conflict of Lancaster and York had not reached its full height at the time the "Gest" was written, but the quarrel between Edward II and Thomas, Earl of Lancaster was in full swing in the early 1320s — and Robin, by all indications, was on Edward's side. If the Knight and his son were also Edwardians, perhaps no wonder that the son got into a fight with a knight who was pro-Lancaster. (We should remember, though, that the references to "King Edward" all come from a different source than the tale of the Knight.)

This is, once again, a tremendous amount of weight to throw on a passage where the text is uncertain at one point and the meaning at another, but it would do much to explain why the knight's son was in trouble. The only question left is why Edward II didn't defend a boy who fought for his honor. But Edward II was good at forgetting.

See also the note on Stanza 116.

❖ **Stanza 53/Line 209** ❧ Child's text, in line 53.1, says "He slewe a knyght of Lancaster;" so too Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren. This is one of the most important variants in the "Gest," with various witnesses reading "Lancaster," "Lancashire," "Lancasesshyre," and "Lancastshyre," the last of which is much more likely to be the original reading than "Lancaster" (see the textual note on Stanza 53). Sadly, too many scholars (e.g. Bellamy, p. 138 n.1) ignore the uncertainty and base large

conclusions on Child's reading "Lancaster" — a completely unjustified procedure. The distinction is potentially significant. "Lancashire" is without question a place designation. "Lancaster" might be — but it is more likely a political designation, referring to a follower of the earl or duke of Lancaster or the House of Lancaster. For the possible political significance of this, see the discussion above about Stanzas 52–53.

❖ **Stanza 53/Line 211** ❧ "For to save hym in his ryght." For more background on this, see the discussion above about Stanzas 52–53. Turning specifically to a legal defense from the charge of homicide, Brockman, p. 701, says, "Since the twelfth century, English law had looked upon homicide in three ways: As culpable and therefore capital; as excusable and therefore pardonable; and as justifiable and therefore acquitable." But Brockman goes on to say that although these three "tiers" were recognized, there was no formal law to recognize which killings were of which type. The result was that offenders, particularly in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, would often scramble for (not really justified) royal pardons. And, of course, the best way to secure a pardon was to use money to convince someone at court. One suspects that is what happened here — although we never hear of the son again. Again we ask: Was he executed after all? Was his sentence commuted to something like exile? Had he fled the country and his father's money forfeited? Was he pardoned? We don't know.

Does it matter that the slain main was was from Lancaster/Lancashire? Just possibly. Lancashire was a County Palatinate — the King's Writ did not run there, so justice was different.

❖ **Stanza 54/Line 216** ❧ Gummere, p. 315, explains the odd form "Saynt Mari Abbay" as a genitive, "Mari" meaning "Mary's." There are few other such inflected forms in the "Gest," but not many; perhaps most of the rest have been modernized. This may be one of the reasons why some scholars have suggested early dates for the "Gest."

St. Mary's Abbey was in York. It was founded by Alan the Red, a close companion of William the Conqueror, who was one of the chief rulers of the north of England (Barlow-Rufus, p. 313). William Rufus, the Conqueror's son, seems to have been present at the turf-cutting, presumably as part of his campaign to secure the throne he had just taken (Lack, p. 43). Henry I would also endow it (Barlow-Rufus, p. 432), so it was well-established and well-endowed by Plantagenet times.

After the Reformation, it naturally failed, and the buildings are in ruins; what is left can be seen in the gardens of the York Museum (Kerr, p. 187).

According to Pollard, p. 123, St. Mary's wasn't particularly popular with the local people: "There had been bitter and much publicised conflict between the abbeys of Bury St Edmunds, St Albans, and St Mary's and the townsmen on their doorsteps in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." Pollard in fact reports that the conflict between St. Mary's and York, about who controlled certain lands, was at its height in 1326–1327, at the very end of Edward II's reign.

On p. 128, Pollard adds that "St. Mary's would appear to have been one of the most active of the great Benedictine monasteries in the land and money market in the early fourteenth century." In other words, in the reign of Edward II, it was a strong candidate to be trying to acquire lands!

This wasn't the only time in the reign of Edward II that St. Mary's was "in the headlines." It came to particular prominence when the King's favorite Piers Gaveston was to be housed there in 1312 while the peers decided what to do with him (Phillips, p. 188). People in the north of England would likely have been aware of this, but since no one except Edward liked Gaveston, I'm not sure what significance, if any, the fact might have had.

In addition, St. Mary's was supposed to have been the original home of the "hedge priest," John Ball, the prophet of Wat Tyler's Rebellion of 1381 (Hicks, p. 153). Again, I'm not sure how this might relate, but perhaps it inspired our author to think of St. Mary's as producing populist outcasts.

On the other hand, Southern, pp. 46-47, makes the interesting note that, in the fourteenth century, "lay opinion about religion, often crude and generally subversive, began in the towns." St. Mary's was in York, the largest town of the north. Could the author of the "Gest" be contrasting the greenwood resident Robin, with his three masses in one day (Stanza 8), with the corrupted monks of St. Mary's, who lived in York?

For the act of borrowing based on land as collateral, and for St. Mary's right to acquire lands when most abbeys were barred, see the note on Stanza 55.

❖ **Stanza 55/Lines 219–220** ❧ The knight borrowed four hundred pounds from the Abbot of Saint Mary's, offering his land and holdings as collateral.

That is normal today; it wasn't in medieval times. The church, and hence the secular law, forbid usury. Which was defined as taking interest — any amount of interest. Which was all well and good on paper — but sometimes people needed loans. (As this case proved.) There had been a time when the Jews had served this function, because they could take interest from gentiles; they just couldn't take it from each other. But Henry III and Edward I had taxed away all their cash — and then Edward I had expelled them from England in 1290 (Cannon, p. 532).

But people still needed loans, so a fiction arose: The lender would lend the borrower a certain sum, theoretically without interest, so the usury laws were not violated. Then, when it came time for the borrower to repay, he would repay the loan and add a separate "gift" — nominally just that, but in fact it was the interest on the loan. It's just that, nominally, the gift was voluntary and not part of the loan. In fact, of course, the gift was agreed in advance. But the fact that the gift was nominally voluntary and not part of the loan would be important in Stanza 121.

The deal the knight struck with the Abbot is typical for the period. In 1093, for instance, we read of an abbot's son-in-law charged with some sort of financial crime. The abbot and others put up sureties worth five hundred marks — and lost them when the fellow fled to Flanders (Barlow-Rufus, p. 252). One has to suspect, given the sum, that the Knight had to accept a rather raw deal because he needed cash fast.

Holt, p. 75, calls the idea of the church gaining the knight's land the one original theme of the "Gest," not found in any other early romance. He observes that this violates the law of mortmain, passed by Edward I in 1279, which largely forbade the turning over of secular land to monastic organizations. He argues that, because of

mortmain, the thirteenth century is a better date for the events of the "Gest" than some later time.

This need not follow. For one thing, prior to 1290, the Knight could have gone to the Jews, and very possibly gotten a better deal. Also, mortmain was a tricky law. The fourteenth century was a time of significant debate over the wealth of the clergy — and the debate was largely ended in 1323 when the Pope condemned the extreme poverty of the Franciscans (Southern, p. 44). This by itself would have weakened the power of mortmain. In any case, Edward I seems to have proposed mortmain as a curb on Archbishop John Peckham of Canterbury (Prestwich1, p. 251; Tuck, p. 16). After Edward I's time, kings allowed so many exceptions to mortmain that it was almost a dead letter (Powicke, p. 325). According to Smith, p. 186, "The intent of the Statute of Mortmain soon came to be widely evaded. For political and other powerful reasons, kings sometimes granted licences permitting the alienation of lands to the church." Smith also mentions a system known as "uses," where the land was handed over to a secular entity but the church enjoyed its use — i.e. its income. ("Uses" also permitted some fiddling with the law of inheritance, making provision for children other than the heir; Tuck, p. 153.) The law was not rewritten to prevent this until 1391, in the reign of Richard II (Smith, pp. 186–187), and uses were not entirely stamped out until 1535, when Henry VIII imposed the Statute of Uses (Lyon, p. 170).

Pollard, p. 126, seems to suggest that the transfer of land was in fact illegal due to mortmain and that Robin was upholding the actual law. I can see no hint of this in the "Gest," and find it hard to believe that the crafty abbot would not have covered his bases.

One suspects that most kings would allow the handover — provided they got their cut. We know that that was what was required in the 1450s, e.g., when John Fastolfe was denied the right to found a chapel after refusing to pay off Henry VI's government (Castor, pp. 118–119). And a clever lawyer might have gotten around even the loosened requirements. Holt's real objection is that the Abbot shows no signs, in the "Gest," of trying to evade mortmain — but there is another point, and an astounding one: the abbot of St. Mary's had unusual privileges for an abbot, he was allowed to wear a mitre and had a seat in parliament like a bishop (Tatton-Brown/Crook, pp. 61–62). And he had the right to administer secular justice on his own lands (Tatton-Brown/Crook, p. 62). This made him so unpopular that the abbey had to be fortified in 1318.

(In the department of Really Strange Footnotes, I can't help but mention that I have dated the incident of Robin Hood and the Knight to 1316–1317 — and Saint Mary's was fortified in the next year. Could the abbey have been fortified to guard against Robin? Of course, the tenants — and the Scots — were the real reason.)

And St. Mary's had another amazing privilege: It had been given a special exemption to mortmain. Starting in 1301, they were allowed to take up to two hundred pounds per year in property (Pollard, p. 128; Baldwin, p. 47). This privilege continued through most of the reign of Edward II, and we have records of the Abbot in the 1330s making loans. To be sure, the knight's lands were worth four hundred pounds, which is more than two hundred — but remember that the loan was made in one year and paid in another. Given the legal nature of loans at the time (which were more like

corporations pooling property), a good lawyer could certainly write the deed so that half the land was acquired when the loan was made and half when it failed to be paid.

Another chronological point: in 1311, Edward II was forced to submit to the Ordinances — a series of acts meant to control the government (and get the finances in better order). In effect, a committee of overseers — the Ordainers — was appointed. One of the Ordinances required "that no gifts of land, revenue, franchises, or wardship and marriages were to be made without the approval of the Ordainers" (Phillips, p. 172). The Ordinances never really worked; they contained some good ideas, but no functional enforcement mechanism (Phillips, pp. 179–180). But in the north of England, where the Earl of Lancaster (a chief sponsor of the Ordinances) had great influence, no doubt the form of the ordinances had to be followed closely.

These laws very likely explain why the "justice" was present: He was to write a transfer which met the requirements of mortmain — or, perhaps, he would be the one granted the "use" of the land. He might also have been present to grant Ordainer approval. This is, perhaps, an argument that the "justice" was in fact the Chancellor, or at least associated with that office: "Chancery was not primarily a court for the poor and needy... It was rather a tribunal for landowners who wished to escape the restrictions imposed by common law upon their freedom to deal with lands as they wished" (Chrimes, p. 165).

The passage of mortmain was a part of a war between church hierarchy and king that was characteristic of the reign of Edward I (Prestwich1, p. 253; on p. 256, he lists the clergy's grievances). This fits rather well with the attitude of Robin Hood, who was a friend of the church and of the King but who despised bishops. But this doesn't help with dating. King John had such bad relations with the church that the Pope interdicted England (an argument, in a way, against placing Robin in John's reign — Robin would largely have agreed with the anti-episcopal John). Henry II's reign saw the murder of Becket, whom Henry had nominated Archbishop because of his trouble with other clergymen. Stephen not only arrested several bishops, he actually tried starving them (Matthew, p. 91). Conflicts between King and bishops were so common that they tell us very little.

❖ **Stanzas 56–57/Lines 223–226** ❧ "Hastely I wyll me buske... Over the salte see. And se where Cryste was quycke and dede, On the mounte of Calvere." ("Hastily I will set myself forth Over the salty sea And see where Christ was alive and died On the mount of Calvary"). There is a hint in these verses that the knight is going on crusade , or at least on pilgrimage — the description here could fit either, and the Prior of St. Mary's in Stanzas 88–89 believes that the Knight is overseas. But it is unlikely that a man who needs money would go on an ordinary pilgrimage; pilgrimage was expected to be costly. Crusading was a different calling (though neither was cheap); Crusaders were given financial protection from creditors that ordinary people did not receive. Ohlgren, p. 317 n. 18, makes the unlikely suggestion that Sir Richard was going to participate in the Hundred Years' War (which fits Ohlgren's chronology, since he thinks the "Gest" is set in the reign of Edward III; it does not fit in the reign of Edward II, since the War did not begin until a decade after Edward II's deposition). Ohlgren even suggests in n. 23 that he was getting money from the crown. But this simply does not fit with a visit to

the land where Christ died; the text clearly specified a visit to Palestine (note that the knight is going to Calvary). The Hundred Years' War was fought in France, England, and Flanders, not Palestine!

Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, John 19:17 give the name of the place where Jesus was crucified as "Golgotha," a Semitic word for "skull," which came into Greek as κρανιον, *kranion, skull.* Luke 23:33 doesn't bother to call it Golgotha, simply calling it the Place of a Skull. The Greek κρανιον went into the Latin of all four gospels as *calvaria, skull,* and since the Roman Catholic church used the Latin Vulgate, this became "Calvary" in English, even though there is no actual warrant for the name, especially in English. Medieval Catholics, who heard the Bible in Latin, would know the name as "Calvary," and so do many Protestants, since the King James Bible chose to insert the name as "Calvary" in Luke 23:23 (although it does not use the word elsewhere; it is in any case an interpretation rather than a translation, based on the Latin) But not even Catholic Bibles use the name today.

Not only is the name "Calvary" wrong, but there a no warrant for calling it a "mountain"; Jerusalem is on a high hill, but Golgotha/Calvary is simply called a "place" in the Gospels. There is no indication of where it actually was. The common belief that it was on a "mountain" may derive from its traditional location in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, or perhaps from the fact that the site of the crucifixion was visible from a distance (Mark 15:40, etc.; InterpretersDict, vol. II, p. 439). Despite this lack of evidence, the tradition that Golgotha was an elevated place is strong.

Can we use the idea of going to the Holy Land as a date peg? Not with certainty — after all, people had been going on pilgrimage as early as the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great (Runciman1, p. 39), and by the tenth century, pilgrimages were common and were sometimes given as penances (Runciman1, pp.43–44). But Stanzas 88–89 hint that the knight will not just travel to Jerusalem but fight there. If the Knight were going as part of a larger English expedition, this would at first glance seem to point to either the Third Crusade, led by Richard I (hence *c.* 1190; this is the implication of Holt, p. 193) or Prince Edward's crusade (*c.* 1270). Those were the only two occasions on which English kings or princes went to the Holy Land

This is not conclusive, however; there were other times when an Englishman might reasonably expect to go crusading There weren't many English involved in the First Crusade, but one of the major leaders was Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy (Lack, p. 75), the son of William the Conqueror who arguably should have become King of England in 1087 when the Conqueror died, and who certainly should have become King in 1100 when William Rufus died. The Second Crusade, almost purely a French matter, was a washout, but the Third, the Crusade of Kings, was a very large affair. Several other Crusades followed; all were flops, but all attracted at least a few zealous followers (e.g. Henry III's brother Richard of Cornwall took the cross in the late 1230s).

Although Edward I's Crusade has the advantage of being relatively late, which makes it a better fit for the "Gest" than the First and Third Crusades, it isn't really a good candidate. It was a small expedition. Prestwich1, p. 71, thinks Edward took fewer than 1000 soldiers, and many of those were paid at least partly by the French. Since most of those men were retainers, not knights, the number of knights involved must

have been counted only in the low hundreds — or perhaps in the dozens. And Prince Edward was not yet Edward I when he set out; Henry III died while Edward was still on his way home (after a valiant but futile trip; the French crusade had bogged down outside Tunis — Prestwich1, pp. 73–74 — and while Edward went on to Acre, he had too few men to accomplish anything except rebuild a tower and manage a few raids.)

But although Edward I was the last serious English crusader, that was not the final end of the Crusading impulse; "The crusade was preached again and again" (Powicke, p. 232). Edward I himself took the cross a second time in 1287 (Prestwich3, p. 23), but the fall of the last Crusader city, Acre, and its dependencies, in 1291 (Runciman3, pp. 412–423) and then internal troubles kept him from fulfilling the vow. Edward managed to send a few soldiers, according to Runciman3, p. 413, but they were too few to make a difference and the King was too occupied to come himself.

Nonetheless, toward the end of the reign of Edward I, Clement V — who was a Gascon and hence a subject of Edward I — became Pope, and one of his chief goals was to restart the Crusades.

Clement worked very hard to heal the rift between England and France in hopes of enabling the Crusade (Phillips, p. 108). Clement in fact appointed Anthony Bek, the Bishop of Durham at the beginning of Edward II's reign, titular Catholic patriarch of Jerusalem in 1306 (Phillips, p. 51n.), a title he held until his death in 1311 (Phillips, p. 174). If anyone had an interest in restarting the crusade, it was obviously Bek! And Durham (just south of Newcastle) was a northern Bishopric, and one with palatinate powers. As a wild hypothesis, what Sir Richard might have meant is that he would have joined the retinue of Bishop Bek (or, more likely, his successor) with the eventual expectation of joining Clement's proposed crusade — which however never got off the ground.

Edward II was at least theoretically supportive of Clement's attempts; Edward and his father-in-law Philip IV of France took the cross in 1313, as did Edward's wife and Philip's daughter Isabella (Phillips, p. 210). Nothing came of this, partly because of tensions between the two and partly because of Bannockburn, but the knight might have been expecting more. Runciman3, p. 434, in fact suggests that Philip's sole purpose in taking the cross was to get his hands on the cash that would have gone into the Crusade — certainly his plundering of the Templars in this decade (Phillips, p. 211) had been for purposes of getting his hands on their money (Runciman3, pp. 434–438). But Edward II was likely sincere. We even find a reference to him fighting the Saracens in the third of "Adam Davy's Dreams about Edward II" (Emerson, p. 230), although that is probably more a pious hope than a reflection of Edward's actual plans.

(I have to note a very folkloric touch here: Philip IV eventually had the Grand Master of the Templars, Jacques de Molay, burned at the stake, since the Templars were being accused of being heretics. From the flames, de Molay was said to have called Philip IV and Pope Clement V to meet him at God's tribunal, and to have cursed Philip's line; Doherty, p. 58. And Philip and Clement both died within a year — and Philip's three sons all died without male heirs, and there is evidence that they were cuckolded anyway; Phillips, p. 222. Thus the Capetian line died out, except for Isabella the wife of Edward II. With the Capetian line extinct, the Valois inherited the Kingdom

of France — and as a result had to fight the Hundred Years' War against Edward II's and Isabella's son Edward III and his heirs; Isabella was closer to the throne than the Valois. This, as I shall argue below, was the backdrop of the latter part of Robin's legend.)

Edward II was formally committed to the crusade from 1313 to 1316. In the latter year, with his reign having been blighted by Bannockburn and crop failures and fights with his barons, he formally asked the Pope to let him put off his crusade (Phillips, p. 284); the postponement was granted in early 1317 (Phillips, p. 287). So the most likely period for a knight to consider crusading was 1313–1317.

If we accept the 1306 date for the Knight's dubbing (see note on Stanza 45), we can offer as additional support the fact that Edward I, on that date, had sworn to return to the Crusade once Scotland was conquered. So it makes sense that some of the knights dubbed then would also have considered crusading.

Even the time of Edward II is not the last possible date for mentions of trips to Calvary. As late as the reign of Edward III, the King of England talked about going on crusade with the King of France (Perroy, p. 88; Seward, p. 28). And even after that, there were still Crusades; they just didn't go to Palestine. As Saul3, p. 101, declares, these later crusades were "virtually all in peripheral locations"; he points to expeditions to Prussia and Lithuania. Similarly, in 1385, Bishop Despenser of Norwich was allowed to use money from crusading indulgences to pay for a cross-channel expedition in Flanders; this war on fellow Catholics was called a crusade because there were two different popes at the time (SaulII, pp. 105–106). Again, when Henry of Bolingbroke (the future Henry IV) first went abroad, he went to fight pagans in northeastern Europe, and was considered to have gone on crusade (Saul3, p. 103). A crusade against the Turks was destroyed at Nicopolis in 1396 (Tuck, p. 200).

Even Richard III, who reigned after the "Gest" was written and even, just possibly, after it was first printed, talked of crusading and fighting the infidels (Saul3, p. 106); one account of his final speech to his troops said that, if he won at Bosworth, he would go to fight the Ottoman Turks. And his brother's brother-in-law Anthony, Lord Rivers, had talked of going to fight the infidels in Portugal (Laynesmith, p. 189).

As Southern, p. 43, says, the higher nobility "thought of participation in a Crusade as their final goal, often indeed postponed but never relegated to a never-never land."

To be sure, there is no hint that the knight is joining a larger expedition. It sounds as if he plans to go on his own. This suggests the possibility that the knight, instead of going on crusade, meant to join one of the crusading orders — the Templars or the Hospitalars. But the Templars were suppressed during the reign of Edward II — and Edward II promised to take the cross to fill the void left by their destruction (Doherty, p. 56). The Hospitalars lasted much longer, but after 1291, they had no place in Palestine. Thus the knight could not reach Calvary by joining the orders — and besides, the members of the orders were supposed to be unmarried, and we know the knight has a wife.

The most logical guess, adding all this up: The knight was considering joining an organized crusade (probably Edward II's), but was prepared to go even if there was no crusade.

If the Knight did plan to go on crusade, it does give us a parallel to an actual story which, however, had an unfortunate ending. In the 1140s, Sir Simon de Novers took part in the Second Crusade — a disastrous flop; no one brought home any booty. Sir Simon came back bankrupt and with loans to repay and no way to do so. So he "daily renewed his requests to defer payment." Clearly he did not get an extension — but his allies came up with a much more brutal solution to his problem than our Knight: they murdered the Jewish banker who had given him the loan (Rose-William, p. 68). This seems to have given rise to the so-called "Blood Libel" legend and stories like that of little Hugh of Lincoln; compare to this the ballad of "Sir Hugh, or, The Jew's Daughter" [Child 155]. Thankfully, Robin gave our Knight a better answer to his problem!

❖ **Stanza 57/Lines 227-228 (repeated in Stanza 58)** ❧ "Farewell, frende, and have good daye." To these sad words of farewell compare Little John's words to Robin in stanza 78.4 of the "Monk" (in which John and Much have rescued Robin, and John, having been slighted by Robin before, prepares to bid farewell): "'I have done þe a gode turne,' seid Litull John, 'For sothe as I þe say; I have brought þe under the grene-wode lyne; Fare wel, and have gode day.'"

❖ **Stanza 59/Line 233** ❧ **"**Where be thy frendes?"The language here is again vaguely reminiscent of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11–32, where "no one gave [the prodigal] anything." It is probably not an allusion but just one of those things people heard repeated.

There is also Job's complaint against his friends: "Miserable comforters are you all" (Job 16:2) and Job's general complaint against his three friends who see his misery but, instead of offering any help, lecture him about how he *must* have been a sinner to suffer so much, because (they say, obviously falsely) that God never lets good people suffer.

See also the note on Stanza 60 below.

❖ **Stanza 60/Line 237** ❧ "And now they renne away from me...." To these lines about the knight's former friends running away, compare Job 30:1, "But now they make sport of me, those who are younger than I."

Compare also Wisdom of Sirach 12:8–9: "A friend is not known (i.e. shown to be true) in prosperity, nor is an enemy hidden in adversity. One's enemies are friendly when one prospers, but in adversity even a friend disappears."

Finally, Sirach 29:10 advises, "Lose your silver for the sake of a brother or a friend" — advice which only Robin follows.

It is noteworthy that Robin never asks the knight about his feudal overlord, who would in the Norman and early Plantagenet periods have been the person to whom anyone would naturally apply for help. I cannot see, anywhere in the "Gest," any sign of feudal relations. Feudalism was never dismantled; it just slowly faded, and was replaced by "bastard feudalism" — in which affinities, or personal and contract relationships, took the place of the former relationships based on tenure and social order (Wagner, pp. 19–20). By asking about friends, the text strongly implies a date in the era of bastard feudalism.

The change from feudalism to bastard feudalism was gradual, but the dividing line is usually placed in the reign of Henry III (Jolliffe, p. 331). Thus this comment fits well in

the era of the three Edwards — and fits not at all with the time of kings Henry II, Richard I, and John.

❖ **Stanza 61/Lines 241–242** ❧ Note that only four outlaws are mentioned as hearing the Knight's story: Robin, John, Much, and Scathelock. For the possibility that these are the only members of the band at this stage, see the note to Stanza 17.

❖ **Stanza 61/Lines 243-244** ❧ To Robin's reference to filling (a cup) with wine, which is a "simple cheer," compare the "Monk," stanza 82.1, "They filled in wyne and made hem glad."

❖ **Stanza 62/Line 248** ❧ "God that dyed on (a) tre(e)." Although we usually say that Jesus died on the cross, the New Testament contains a number of places where he is said to have died on a tree (Greek ξυλον, *xylon*, which means both "tree" and "wood"): Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, 1 Peter 2:24. Thus the expression here is quite natural.

It is fascinating to note that every use of the word *Dyed/died* in the "Gest" refers to the death of Jesus on the cross, either in variants on the phrase "God that died on a tree" (62.4, 101.4, 110.2, 123.4, 147.2, 303.4, 307.2, 341.2) or "him that died on rode/rood" (333.2, 340.4, 456.2). Even when Robin is slain, we are merely told that he is betrayed (455.3) combined with a hope for mercy on his soul (456.1).

The phrase also occurs in the "Monk" (4.2, "By hym þat dyed on tree") and the "Potter" (79.2, "And swhare be hem þat deyed on tre").

❖ **Stanza 63/Line 252** ❧ Robin's refusal to accept Peter, Paul, or John as a guarantor of a loan is rather ironic, although probably not intentionally so. There isn't much mention of commerce or moneylending in the New Testament, but what there is mostly involved with Peter and Paul. Paul, when the slave Onesimus ran away from his owner Philemon, tried to induce Philemon to free Onesimus voluntarily on the grounds that Philemon owed him for bringing salvation, but if Philemon refused, Paul promised, "I will repay it" (Philemon 19). Furthermore, we know that Paul worked for a living, rather than letting other church members pay him for preaching (1 Corinthians 9:3-18).

The case of Peter is not so explicit, but when the question of the Temple Tax came up, Jesus told Peter to take a hook and catch a fish, which would contain the money to pay the tax (Matthew 17:24–27). And when Ananias and Sapphira tried to cheat the church, it was Peter who called them out, resulting in their deaths (Acts 5:1–11). Thus Peter and Paul, whom Robin disdains, are the primary New Testament examples of financial integrity. Mary — who as a woman would have had no control over money — is never mentioned in a financial context.

Is it possible that the "Gest" is making a backhand comment on the *Canterbury Tales* here? In the "Squire's Tale" (line V. 596, p. 176 in Chaucer/Benson), we read

And took hym by the hond, Seint John to borwe,

In other words, in the tale, John was considered an acceptable borowe/guarantor.

Interestingly, there is no mention here of Matthew, the patron saint of bankers, moneylenders, tax collectors, and accountants (DictSaints, p. 163).

❖ **Stanza 65/Line 259** ❧ Having admitted that he has no other securities (a strange statement, since if he could pay his debt to St. Mary's Abbey, he would have his land back, and the land would be security), the Knight offers "Our dear Lady," i.e. the Virgin Mary, as security — a guarantee which Robin at once accepts. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 82,

declare that this must be based on the common motif of Miracles of the Virgin (see the section on sources), although a precise parallel to this particular tale has not been found. But there is significant similarity to the Miracle of the Virgin known as "The Merchant's Surety." See also the section The Knight's Story as a Miracle of the Virgin.

Similar in another way is the German tale of "Schimpf und Ernst," described on pp. 35–36 of Clawson, in which a man is captured, then released to raise his ransom based on a promise held by "got den herren" — "God the Lord." The man cannot raise the funds, but his captor meets a monk who says God is his Lord. The captor robs the monk and takes what he finds as the ransom. The similarity in plot to the tale of Robin and the monk in Fit Four is obvious, but the transfer from God as guarantor to Mary as guarantor significantly reshapes the story.

For more on Robin's devotion to the Virgin, see the note on Stanza 10.

It is just possible that this Miracle of the Virgin is a dating hint. As noted in the section on sources, Miracles of the Virgin were often anti-Semitic. But that theme does not show up here at all — the "Gest" is anti-church hierarchy, not anti-Jews. This makes sense in the context of Edward II, because Edward I had expelled the Jews from England in 1290 (Cannon, p. 532; Powicke, p. 322; Prestwich1, p. 346; or see the note on Stanza 55). The absence of Jews in the tale may be because the author lived in a time after the Jews were expelled, but it might also be because the original tale came from a time after the Jews were expelled.

The miracle theme does perhaps argue for a fourteenth century date, because of the breakdown in society in this period: "In light of.... the chronic lack of confidence in human agencies of justice, it is not surprising that divine intercession was often the only means of restoring equity" (Goodich, p. 44). It is perhaps a subtle irony by the author of the "Gest": all miracle collections of this period featured tales of ordinary folks victimized by brigands whose goods were restored by miracles (Goodich, p. 46); the "Gest" turns that on its head, with an ordinary knight being victimized by society and rescued by a brigand!

We should also remember that, in this period, most people's knowledge of Christianity came partly from sermons and partly from performances such as the mystery plays. Ordinary people were too poor to own a Bible, and there were no English translations anyway except Wycliffe's supposedly-heretical version. This definitely could cause people to develop peculiar notions — the York play cycle, for instance, had three Marian plays with effectively no Biblical basis, including two with strong miraculous elements: the Appearance of Mary to Thomas and the Assumption and Coronation of Mary (Cawley, p. 256). And Robin, as an outlaw, might not have much access to the regular clergy (despite the "three masses" of Stanza 8), but probably could see the mystery plays.

I mention this because the mystery plays seem to have been particularly popular in Yorkshire. We have four cycles of mystery plays plus odds and ends (Happe, p. 10). Two of the cycles are from Yorkshire: The York cycle itself, and the so-called Towneley cycle, which is from Wakefield (a well-known Robin Hood site); this is the cycle which contains the famous Second Shepherd's Play. A third cycle is from Chester, not too far from Robin's haunts (the source of the fourth is uncertain). So Robin might have

derived much of his knowledge of theology from this limited source — one in which the Virgin Mary is one of the few female characters to come off well. These plays were in production at about the same time as the writing of the "Gest"; the manuscript of the Towneley/Wakefield cycle is from the early fifteenth century (Rose-Wakefield, p. 9).

(On the other hand, we have no evidence of the use of mystery plays before about 1375; Happe, p. 13. Indeed, the plays were associated with the feast of Corpus Christi, and that was not promulgated until 1311 and did not become common in Britain until 1318, according to p. 19 of Happe. Thus the "real" Robin is unlikely to have learned anything from the mystery plays — but the author of the "Gest" might well have.)

❖ **Stanza 67/Line 268** ❧ The "modernization" of the "Gest" by Maud Isabel Ebbutt, quoted on p. 176 of Mersey, interprets the phrase "well tolde it be" to mean "well counted, with no false or clipped coins therein." This obviously assumes coinage (see the note on Stanza 49). And coin clipping certainly happened in Edwardian times (there were actually pennies that were designed to be cut into quarters!), and there were poor imported coins with less silver content than English pennies. But all Robin says is that John is to be sure the knight gets the right amount.

❖ **Stanza 68/Lines 271–272** ❧ Here we see the actual loan paid out. The calculation of the total is curious; see the textual note on Stanza 68. None of the versions of the text left to us seem to add up to four hundred pounds. Probably it's a textual error, although we should not ignore the possibility that the poet does not know that four hundred pounds is twenty score of pounds; we're so used to multiplication today that we don't realize that it was hard to do with Roman numerals! See the note on Stanza 69.

❖ **Stanza 69/Lines 273** ❧ Based on Much's complaint, it sounds as if John may have paid more than £400. No checkered cloth for detailed counting here! Maybe **a**'s reading that John counted out 28 score pounds, i.e. 560 pounds, is right after all. (But in Fit IV there is agreement that the amount was 400 pounds.)

❖ **Stanzas 70–72/Lines 276–286** ❧ Little John points declares to Robin that they must give the threadbare knight "a lyveray" (livery), suggesting scarlet and green (Lincoln Green being Robin's color in Stanza 422). Robin gives him three yards of "every colour." Despite this, Knight/Ohlgren, p. 281, suggest that the original reading should be "scarlet in graine," i.e. "scarlet dyed in the grain," a high grade scarlet cloth. There seems little point to this emendation except that it parallels a line from the *Canterbury Tales,* which declares that Sir Thopas's "rode is lyk scarlet in grayn" (fragment VII, line 727; Chaucer/Benson, p. 213). But "rode" in that connection is glossed by Benson as "complexion," not "clothing" (and no one seems disposed to emend "rode" to "robe").

A better explanation may come from Finlay, p. 147, who says of scarlet that "A fashion statement in medieval Europe was to wear clothes made of a new cloth, imported from central Asia. The new cloth was called 'scarlet....' [It was] vastly popular.... but.... extremely expensive — at least four times the price of ordinary cloth. But the curious thing is, scarlet was not always red. Sometimes it was blue or green or occasionally black, and the reason that in English 'scarlet' means 'red' and not 'chic-textile-that-only-socialites-can-afford-but-we-all-aspire-to' is because of kermes [a red dye]." In other words, "scarlet" was originally the name of the cloth, and only

secondarily came to apply to the color of most expensive and prized hue of all types of scarlet.

Green cloth will appear as Robin's color in Stanza 422. The reference to scarlet is more interesting, since kermes, the best red dye of this period, was "a red coloring obtained from insects living on evergreen oak trees in lands bordering the Mediterranean," according to Backhouse, p. 32; it is related to carmine and cochineal, and is said to be the origin of the word "crimson." It was expensive even in southern Europe, since harvesting it was labour-intensive, and very expensive in places such as England where it had to be imported.

So perhaps the best explanation of the line is that John suggests scarlet-type cloth dyed green, and Robin says scarlet-type cloth in all colors. If scarlet (kermes) is genuinely meant, as opposed to a poorer grade of red, this is an indication that Robin is giving gifts like a nobleman, and perhaps taking the role of a liege lord. For another use of "scarlet,"with the same ambiguity, see the note on Stanza 230.

Knight, p. xix, tells us that no fewer than nine of the ballads in the Forresters Manuscript refer to Robin's men wearing green; two also refer to Robin himself wearing scarlet.

We might note as a sidelight that we find the Paston family also debating the use of a red dye in their livery (Castor, p. 75).

The gift of cloth agrees with the mention of livery (although the knight is not given a livery badge, just cloth). In Stanza 133, when the knight comes to return Robin's money, he wears white and red. The red might be Robin's color, but there is no evidence that white is.

Is the mention of livery a dating hint? Keen (pp. 137–138), referring to the general greenwood legend, strenuously argues that it must date from the fourteenth or fifteenth century, because of references such as this (as well as in some of the other early ballads) to livery and its misuse. As documentation of the problem he points, e.g., to certain sections in *Richard the Redeless* on this theme.

There is no question but that livery was a much-discussed issue; Barr, pp. 19–20, says that *Richard the Redeless* goes so far as to identify various characters by their livery badges. (Badges, not colors, note.) SaulII, pp. 200–201, says that the commons regularly petitioned about this in the reign of Richard II — this even though Richard at one time withdrew the use of his own livery (Lyon, p. 116). One petition asked that "all liveries called badges, whether given by the king or the lords, of which use has begun since the first year of King Edward III (1327), and all lesser liveries, such as hoods, shall henceforth not be given or worn but shall be abolished upon the pain specified in this document."

Richard made multiple attempts to deal with the problem in 1388-1390 (Tuck, p. 293). The attempts at a fix did not work; the Lords and Commons could not agree; the Lords wanted to maintain liveries, the commons wanted the practice controlled (Tuck, p. 197). Parliament would still be bugging the crown about abuses of livery in the reign of Edward IV (Ross-Edward, p. 349).

The nature of the petition to Richard II implies that the problem was not believed to go back more than a reign or two. And Robin was legendary by 1377. Thus Keen's

argument agrees with the "Gest" in dating Robin to the reign of one of the Edwards — with Edward II and Edward III being the best bets. Livery was simply not an issue in the reign of Henry III, let alone the earlier kings.

The green and red cloth have another dating significance: They are another argument against the reign of Richard I. That king so despised common people that he restricted those of lower classes to gray clothing; colors were reserved to the upper classes (Finlay, p. 365). Thus if this incident took place in the reign of Richard I, giving the knight colored cloth might be making him guilty of a crime. And Richard I, if he came to see Robin, would probably refuse to see a man clothed in Lincoln Green.

Robin also acts as a cloth merchant in Stanza 418, and Ohlgren thinks this ties him to one of the cloth guilds; see the note on Stanza 10.

Observe that Robin *gives* livery to the Knight but is asked to *sell* it to the king (Stanza 418). This is noteworthy because, in the reign of Edward II, soldiers were required to wear uniform but had to pay for it themselves (Tuck, p. 141).

❖ **Stanza 71/Lines 283–284** ❧ John declares that no merchant in England is as rich as Robin. This screams for an early date, before "bastard feudalism" and the rise of the merchant princes, who could be immensely rich. An obvious example is the de la Pole family of Hull. William de la Pole's birth was so obscure that we don't even know his father's name (Hicks, p. 93), but his wealth was great enough that he and his son Michael became major financiers of Edward III's campaigns in the Hundred Years' War (Cannon, p. 575) and William still had enough left over to found major memorial institutions at his death while leaving his family well-off (Kerr, p. 159). That money eventually allowed his son to become Earl of Suffolk in the reign of Richard II (SaulII, p. 117) — only to be chased from the country just two years later (Reid, p. 506, although that was mostly because of his deeds as Chancellor; Tuck, p. 188. He was, in effect, fleeing his trial; Tuck, p. 192).

By 1386, Michael de la Pole was earning more than four hundred marks per year (Maxfield/Gillespie, p. 229), and while some of this was from lands Richard had granted him, much was from his merchant activity. The de la Poles were not the only merchants to (in effect) buy their way into the gentry (although Hicks, p. 94, does say that they were "the only great noble family based on trade in the later middle ages"); Richard Lyons was another merchant prince, who may have lent as much as £50,000 to the crown (Tuck, pp. 164–165); he too lived in the reign of Edward III. So if John is right and no merchant can compare with Robin, this strongly implies a date before the time of Edward III, when men like the de la Poles started to arise.

Ohlgren/Mathison, p. 25, claims that the reference to merchants is evidence that the poem was created for one of the merchant guilds. But how would the guild have reacted to Robin being richer than they?

For the idea of Robin hiring his men, as a merchant would, see the note on Stanzas 170–171.

❖ **Stanza 72/Lines 287–288** ❧ For the use of a "bowe-tree" as a measure, see also the end of the Percy version of "Robin Hood's Death": "Lay my yew bowe by my side, My met-yard [measuring rod] wi… " (Stanza 27 of the A text).

❖ **Stanza 73/Lines 291–292** ❧ For "Devylkins" ("devil" with diminutive ending) see the glossary entry for that term. For a (barely possible) explanation of Much the Miller's Son's complaint about Little John's generosity, see the note to Stanza 4 about Much.

Ohlgren, p. 24, suggests that reference to John as a draper ("drapar" in his text) — is another indication that the "Gest" was intended for an audience of a guild, perhaps the guild of drapers. I would be more inclined to think the line is a joke.

Still, there were a lot of drapers and such in the north at this time. Based on the evidence of the mystery plays, the cloth guilds were strong in York in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Cawley, p. 9). Wakefield was also known for cloth manufacture (Cawley, p. 76).

❖ **Stanzas 75–77/Lines 297–308** ❧ If Robin is giving away horses, he must have horses to give. What is Robin doing keeping horses — fine horses, in fact — in the greenwood? This may be an indication of date; it was not until the reign of Edward III that it became customary to mount archers. But how could the outlaws keep them fit while living in a forest?

I consulted with horse expert Martha Galep about the keeping of horses in forest conditions. While the evidence is inadequate, she suggests, "I am going to assume that our horse in question was of Spanish origins, and was a lighter boned and more agile [breed]. This means it would probably require more quality feed/pasture/forage.... The 'rougher' the breed, the less they require quality food. So, I would guess that this horse would not maintain his 'fineness' for an extended period under those conditions, unless of course, he was fed accordingly, that is, his rations supplemented with corn, oats, beets, etc.... but let's assume our horse was *not* treated to goodies and had to fare like the others. At leisure, he would probably keep his condition for a few weeks, but if worked moderately to heavily, his condition would probably go downhill quickly. So I am going to guess about two to four weeks.... So, a month at the most under the conditions you describe, and certainly less if the horse was being used for work (riding, battle, night raids, hauling around Lady Godiva, etc…)."

Also, where could Robin have come across such fine beasts as these were said to be (in Stanza 100, the porter praises the animals highly)? At this time, even horses were divided into yeoman's horses and gentleman's horses (Pollard, p. 36). According to Allmand-War, p. 45, a horse that a man-at-arms would ride would cost him between half a year's and two years' wages, and a knight's horse might cost twice that much. One suspects that the animals had recently been taken from some relatively high-ranked person, and that Robin was willing to give them away because he had no good way to keep them.

Note that Robin gives the knight both a courser (Stanza 76) and a palfrey (Stanza 77). To oversimplify, the courser or destrier was a fighting horse ("a name sometimes given to horses employed in tournaments"; Phipson, p. 108) and the palfrey a riding horse (often a woman's riding horse, but a knight when not expecting battle might well ride a palfrey to avoid wearing down his warhorse). We may see this palfrey again in Stanza 263. We see Robin give a white palfrey to the sheriff's wife in stanzas 73-74 of the "Potter." We will meet another sort of horse, baggage horses or sumpters (slower but usually able to carry a heavier load) in Stanza 216.

The fact that the knight apparently lacks a good horse may possibly be an indication of just how hard he has been squeezed by his creditors. "When a knight's creditors foreclosed on him and his belongings were sold, he was to be left a horse — unless he was a fighting knight.... in which case he was to be left his armour and several horses" (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 26).

A quality horse, incidentally, was a significant addition to Robin's gifts. In the reign of Edward III, horses which were taken to France for the war were assessed before being shipped, and the minimum assessment was eight marks and the maximum ten pounds (Hewitt, p. 87) — vastly more than the annual income of a plowman, e.g. Given that the horse is said to be extremely fine, it presumably is worth at least ten pounds.

❖ **Stanzas 80-81/Lines 317–324** ❧ Robin offers Little John as a servant on the grounds that a good knight should have one. This is certainly true — but why pick his right-hand man, who might be highly recognizable (if he is indeed a giant, though as we saw in Stanza 3, it's not really likely that he was a giant), a very good fighter, and the man who counts the money? Some have seen an ongoing quarrel between Robin and John in the "Gest," but their relations strike me as good.

Clawson, p. 56, suggests that the purpose of having Robin appoints John to the post so that John would be in better position to insinuate himself into the Sheriff's entourage. But given how little emphasis there is in the third fit on the knight being John's master, this hardly seems necessary.

My guess is that it's significant John is the expert on handling money. Is it possible that Robin chose John to watch over the knight and make sure he wasn't pulling a fast one? This might explain the curious events of Stanzas 151–152, where the knight allows the Sheriff to take John as a servant: the knight is happy to not be watched.

Another possibility that occurs to me is that, since John seems to be Robin's accountant (see the notes on Stanza 38, Stanza 67, etc.), Robin is sending him to make sure that the knight has a good money manager with him when he goes to St. Mary's. This would be standard practice today. But would someone have thought of it then?

❖ **Stanza 84/Line 334** ❧ Clawson, p 45, makes the interesting observation that, although Little John has been made the Knight's servant, this is the last time John is mentioned in the second fit. (I have conjectured a mention in Stanza 98, but this is pure conjecture.) The Knight mysteriously acquires an entourage to come with him as he repays his loan (see the note on Stanza 97), but there is no indication that John is part of the group. This even though the comic potential of having John present is obvious. Clawson therefore suggests that most of the scene between the Knight and the abbot is based on the tale of a crusading knight rather than a Robin Hood story — which makes some sense in light of the hints that the knight was considering going on crusade (see the note on Stanzas 56–57).

Clawson, who is always seeking ballad parallels, also suggests on pp. 45–46 a comparison to "The Heir of Linne" [Child 267]. In the latter, the Heir is rescued from his profligacy by a gift from his forethoughtful father; there isn't much real similarity except that a surprise legacy allows the Heir to pay off debts otherwise beyond his ability to pay.

❖ **Stanza 88/Line 349** ❧ "'It is full erely,' sayd the pryoure." Ritson, cited by Gummere, p. 88, notes that the prior of an abbey was the most senior official after the abbot, and hence the one in best position to cross the abbot — which would explain the abbot's complaint in stanza 91 that the prior is always in his beard.

Not even the prior could do much to interfere with the abbot, however; the rule of Saint Benedict gave absolute power of decision to the abbot after he had consulted with the monks (see "On Calling the Brothers to Counsel" in the Appendix). And the Benedictine Rule absolutely forbid disobedience or "murmuring" against the abbot (Southern, pp. 219-220).

I do make one interesting note: Tyerman, p. 116, says that the founder of Fountains Abbey (the supposed home of Friar Tuck), Richard of Fountains, was prior of St. Mary's Abbey before breaking away. In the second fit of the "Gest," the Abbot is against the Knight, the Prior approves of him. Could the tale in the "Gest" be a faint echo of the conflict between the two which took place in 1132, and could this explain how a friar of Fountains came to be friendly with Robin Hood?

❖ **Stanzas 88–89/Lines 351–356** ❧ The last two lines of stanza 88 ("I had lever to pay an hondred pounde and lay downe anone") make nonsense and are likely corrupt. Even if we amend to "lay *it* down," we are not told what to lay it down for. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 154, suggest that the Prior means "If it were me, I would rather pay the hundred pounds right away." But this must be taken in the light of the next stanza. The knight, according to the Prior, has been beyond the sea — another hint at a crusade (compare the notes on Stanzas 56–57). Might the Prior — the one sympathetic person at St. Mary's — have known that the knight was considering going on crusade? This seems unlikely. But there is another possibility: Maybe the Prior didn't know that the knight had had to go bail for his son, and had to guess why the knight needed so much cash. Raising money for a crusade would have been a typical reason to seek a loan — crusading was very expensive, and often consumed many years of a noble's revenue. Remember that a normal knight made £40 per year. So £400 would be ten years' worth of income — an amount that only a crusader would be likely to need. (The problem of course being that there were no crusades after1272, long before the earliest possible date of the "Gest." But there were still enterprises that were called "crusades" — the future Henry IV went on one against the pagans of northeastern Europe during the reign of Richard II. Such crusades were still expensive, though not as expensive as a crusade to Palestine!)

But one of the rules of the crusades was that the Crusader's lands and debts were to be safe while he was on Crusade — even if he was delayed. So the Prior might be saying, "We have to wait." Alternately, perhaps, "Better to take a hundred pounds than get nothing" — which might be what happened if the Abbot forced the knight on crusade and he died there.

There is one other interesting possibility: The church generally forbade usurious mortgages — but was likely to allow them for Crusaders, because it was the only way Crusaders could raise cash quickly (Barlow-Rufus, p. 363, which points out that William the Conqueror's son Robert of Normandy was one so victimized.) Could it be that the knight claimed he was going on crusade in order to get the loan he had to have, on usurious terms, since he could not raise the money any other way? And then, when he

failed to earn the money he needed to pay off the load, did he consider going crusading anyway?

The second line of stanza 89 is also probably troubled, and has caused some editors to fiddle with the text (see textual note on Stanza 89). Surprisingly, given the uncertainty of the text, scholars have tried to hang large conclusions on the meaning of this line. This is particularly surprising since they are adopting a very weak reading: "In Englonde is his ryght" of **fg**. This reading, if original (which it almost certainly is not), is probably to be understood "fighting for England's cause" (although Pollard, p. 250, thinks it refers to the knight's English estates). This reading is the one piece of supporting evidence for Ohlgren's claim (for which see Stanzas 56–57) that the knight had been fighting in the Hundred Years' War — a battle in France was far more a battle on behalf of England than a battle in the Holy Land. And a knight could hardly hope to go to Palestine and back in a year, whereas it was at least possible to make a one year trip to France. But, first, the knight is in fact in England, not France or Palestine; second, the knight never mentions any fighting in France; third, while a man might bet his land on the proceeds of war (which often had a large payoff in booty), he would never gamble on a one year loan — there was too much risk that he could not get back in time. Ohlgren's explanation is not quite impossible, but this one conjectured line is not a sufficient basis for an understanding which causes so many difficulties.

Clawson, p. 43, considers there to be a contradiction here: He argues that the original source had the knight actually going on crusade, which of course is impossible in light of his meeting with Robin in the first fit but which might have been true if the poet borrowed the lines. This is in fact what Clawson thought; he suggests that this has floated in from some lost ballad. However, the simplest explanation would appear to be simply that the knight in the first fit had talked about crusading, and that the Prior (who presumably had heard of the knight's plans from some other source *before* the knight met Robin) thought he had actually made the trip.

But, to repeat, all this is based on the probably-inaccurate reading "In Englonde is his ryght." The best available text in fact reads "In Englonde he is ryght," which makes nonsense. My guess is that it has something to do with rights the Knight has in England. But what rights? I have no idea.

❖ **Stanza 91/Lines 361-362** ❧ The conflict between the Prior and Abbot. Interestingly, it's said that Saint Benedict wasn't fond of having a prior in an abbey, because he foresaw conflicts of this type.

The abbot swears by "Saint Rycharde" (see textual note on Stanza 91). This has bothered commentators since the time of Ritson, because there's no significant saint named Richard. So scholars have desperately sought someone who makes sense. (In this context it is worth noting that "Gamelyn," line 357, reads "For, brother, thou hast i-had, by seynt Richer.") I believe I've solved this conundrum: Saint Richard is Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York. But let's look at other suggestions people have made:

Ohlgren, p. 224, expands the reading of the "Gest" to refer to "Saint Richard of Chichester," described in a note as Richard de Wych, 1197–1253.

The only real support for Ohlgren's suggestion is the lack of other saints named Richard (see p. 977 of the list of saints in Benet or pp. 211–212 of DictSaints). Ritson

managed to find three Saints Richard, but all are quite obscure. Ritson's candidate is a "S. Richard king and confessour, sonne to Lotharius king of Kent, who, for the love of Christ, taking upon him a long peregrination, went to Rome for devotion to that sea, and in his way homward, died at Luca, about the year of Christ seven hundred and fifty, where his body is kept untill this day with great veneration, in the oratory and chappell of S. Frigidian." Ritson got this from something he calls "English Martyrologe, 1608." I frankly doubt that a king of Kent in the eighth century would have a son named Richard, and there was no king of Kent named Lothar/Lotharius, although there was a "Hlothere." But Hlothere died violently in 685, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, so forget that one.

There was a Saint Richardis who lived in the ninth century, according to DictSaints, p. 211, but she had no obvious English connections. OxfordSaints, p. 454, mentions a Saint Richard who died in 720 and *was* English — but the name isn't actually his, and his family was Anglo-Saxon and probably forgotten.

Richard of Chichester is the only Saint Richard likely to have been known in England. He was canonized in 1262 (Cannon, p. 805; Dobson/Taylor, p. 85). Obviously, if he is the saint intended, the use of such an oath implies a date after 1262 (late in the reign of Henry III). This is more evidence for a date in the reign of one of the Edwards. But there is no reason why the abbot would swear by that Saint Richard — he was not a Northern saint, being associated (naturally) with Chichester and Sussex. Maybe it's just that "Richard" is a Southern (indeed, a French) name, and the poet wanted to suggest that the Abbot wasn't a local?

Or was Saint Richard suggested by the fact that the Knight is named Richard? This suggestion is weakened by the fact that we don't yet know the Knight's name, which is not mentioned in the material from the "Robin and the Knight" source; we won't encounter the name until Stanza 310.

Alternately, perhaps it's supposed to be ironic, since Richard of Chichester spent time in poverty, and "denounced nepotism and simony, insisted on strict clerical discipline, and was most at home in the company of the poor and needy" (DictSaints, p. 211), whereas the Abbot lives richly and seeks wealth in ways that are, at best, grasping.

If Richard of Chichester is indeed meant, then we might guess that the visit to St. Mary's took place on April 3, Richard's feast day. And there is no other significant saint associated with that day (DictSaints, p. 290).

But I really don't believe it's Richard of Chichester. He just isn't significant enough.

When I first wrestled with this problem, two other possibilities occurred to me. One was Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury following Becket. Warren-Henry, p. 536, declares that "Richard of Dover was no time-server, and was to be one of the leaders in a remarkable efflorescence of interest in the development of canon law in England.... he gave first place to the reform of the clergy."

Johnson, p. 211, declares that he "gave first place to the reform of the clergy and cooperation with the State." He of course was not canonized — but canonization was rarely formal at this time (Richard of Chichester was noteworthy mostly because a real pope canonized him). People were called saints who never made it into the calendar of the church. Richard of Dover seems to have been a reasonably good man — and it

strikes me that the compiler of the "Gest" might have been subtly ironic to have the very unholy Abbot of Saint Mary's swear by a reforming bishop.

Tyerman, p. 231, says that Richard of Dover was an "unlikely choice as Becket's successor. A previously obscure mediocrity, he nonetheless demonstrated, to the dismay of the Becketeers, that effective cooperation with the king was possible," and adds on p. 232 that "it was Richard's policies, not Becket's, which charted the relationship between the English church and state for the rest of the Middle Ages."

A wild possibility that came to me was that "Saint Richard" was King Richard II. There was a tendency to turn important major politicians into martyrs (it happened with both Edward II and with his opponent, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster). Such a push wouldn't go anywhere in Richard II's case — he was just too lousy a person — but it probably was talked about.

Another possibility is to abandon the name "Saint Richard" and engage in radical emendation. Several possibilities spring to mind, e.g. to change "Saint Richard" to "Saint Edward." They scan the same, and end with the same syllable, and Edward the Confessor was particularly popular with King Richard II (Saul3, p. 174) — i.e. not too long before the time the "Gest" was coming together.

Another possibility, less phonetically suitable but more interesting, it to change "Saint Richard" to "Saint Robert." Robert of Knaresborough (in Yorkshire!) lived in the forest with a fugitive knight (Young, p. 59), and according to web sources, he died in 1218. The resemblance to the situation in the "Gest" is obvious. What is more, he was the subject of an obscure but long poem, almost like a romance (DIMEV #5830, 1168 lines, in couplets). Indeed, I wonder if his situation might not have been one of the things that attracted the Robin Hood tale to the era of Richard I and John. If the Abbot did swear by Robert of Knaresborough, the irony would be exquisite.

Some other Saints that occur to me are "Saint Cuthbert," "Saint Roch/Rocco," and "Saint Hubert"; see the textual note on Stanza 91.

But there is actually an argument for "Richard" as the original reading, although it is extremely subtle. Richard II gave out as his badge the white hart — and the name Richard was often pronounced "Richart." Thus the hart as a badge was a reference to that king (Saul3, p. 95). A "rich hart" could also refer to Robin, who was rich with the King's deer — and is even called a hart in Stanza 188. So the abbot might be swearing by a saint close to Robin. This is, of course, so tenuous that we should not make anything whatsoever of it.

Having mentioned all those highly unlikely possibilities, I think I have found the answer: Saint Richard is Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York, who was executed by King Henry IV in 1405 on a definitely exaggerated — and probably false — charge of rebellion. The reason no one suggested Scrope before is presumably because people were looking at lists of saints and he's not there. Certainly he was never canonized.

But to the people of Yorkshire, he was a saint. The supporting evidence for this is very strong. He was executed by Henry IV in the context of a protest which Henry treated as a rebellion and punished far more harshly than it deserved, so he suffered alongside, and on behalf of, his flock. He seems to have been a genuinely pious man, not one of these worldly bishops; Robin might actually have approved of him. Quite a

few miracles were attributed to him after his death, even if they are the usual dubious sorts of cures and visions and such. The fact that Rome never noticed is beside the point; to repeat, canonization at this time was a little informal. It is not unlikely that, if the Yorkist dynasty had stayed on the throne and England had stayed Catholic, Scrope would be a saint today. In any case, *the people of Yorkshire regarded him as a saint, and called him a saint, and treated him as a saint.*

And Robin was a Yorkshireman, and the author of the "Gest" was a Yorkshireman, and if the poet wanted a Yorkshire saint in the 1440s, that was just when the Scrope cult was at its height. Saint Richard is not merely a *plausible* saint for the Abbot to swear by, he was, at the time the "Gest" was written, a *logical* saint to swear by — even if it involves us in a serious anachronism because Saint Richard lived after Robin's time.

I shan't summarize the life of Richard Scrope here; see instead Appendix IV: "By Saint Richard!": Richard Scrope and the Abbot's Oath.

There is one interesting sidelight on this: If the Abbot is swearing by Saint Richard, what does it say about his politics? Richard Scrope was not a political archbishop, but he was executed for political reasons. This means that he became a Yorkist saint, and was regarded as hostile by the Lancastrian dynasty. But the "Gest" was probably written in the reign of Henry VI. That would make Scrope still someone opposed to the dynasty. By swearing by him, was the Abbot declaring himself an opponent of the regime? But this gets complicated, because the Knight's son had killed a knight who might have been a Lancastrian. Trying to figure out who was on which side, in a case where all the clues are so faint, is probably futile — but a political subtext is possible.

The same sort of subtext is even more possible on the faint chance that Saint Richard was Richard II. In that case, the abbot is *clearly* expressing opposition to the Lancastrian regime, and is marking himself as a rebel. There certainly were churchmen who opposed the Lancastrians.

Whoever the abbot is swearing by, it is interesting to see a churchman utter so many oaths (in stanza 91, he swears by God and Saint R… ; in 92, by God that bought him dear, in 110, by God that died on a tree). The form of the oaths is pious, but the way the abbot emits them comes close to blasphemy.

❖ **Stanza 91/Line 364** ❧ A "fat-headed monk." In the "Monk," stanza 19, it is a "great-hedid munke" (great-headed monk) who recognizes and betrays Robin.

❖ **Stanza 92/Line 368** ❧ "Four hundred pounde by yere." Usually understood as "four hundred pounds per year," i.e. land yielding an income of four hundred pounds annually. If this is what the monk meant, it may be an error, perhaps for forty pounds annually, perhaps for four hundred pounds total value of the land. See note on Stanza 49.

❖ **Stanza 93/Line 369** ❧ The "hy selerer," or "high cellarer," was responsible for provisioning the abbey, and for bringing in supplies from outside. This position would vary in importance — some abbeys raised most of their own food. But, clearly, the abbot of St. Mary's is fond of fine food, meaning that the cellarer would be responsible for getting him what he wants. This doubtless means that he is responsible for a large budget as well. Indeed, an abbey's cellarer typically had responsibility for collecting revenue — at Bury St. Edmunds, for instance, he was the official in charge of the

abbey's manors, and collecting the revenue associated with them (Jocelin, p. xxii). It may be that this high cellarer also has a role in managing the abbey's manors; see the note on Stanza 254.

We will meet the cellarer of St. Mary's again in Stanza 233, in very interesting circumstances.

❖ **Stanza 93/Line 371** ❧ Child's text reads "The [hye] justyce of Englonde"; the better text is probably to omit "hye," making it the "justyce of Englonde." This is one of the more significant textual problems of the "Gest" (see the textual note on Stanza 93), because neither reading makes good sense. (Clawson, p. 52, who thinks that this scene was adopted from an existing ballad by the compiler of the "Gest," suggests that the justice was an insertion by the compiler, which might help explain the confusing reference.) We probably need to consider possible meanings of both readings.

If we omit "high," we have to explain why this man is called *the* "justice of England." To be sure, Knight/Ohlgren, p. 155 (note on line 416) explain that the title "justice," without a descriptive, refers simply to a "professional lawyer.... the agent of a powerful lord — the abbot in this case," and note that justices had many functions in local courts. This would also explain why the justice has taken "clothe and fee," i.e. livery, from the abbot (Stanza 107) — the chief justice would never wear another's livery. But that still leaves us with the problem of "the justice of England."

Could this simply be intended to mean a *royal* justice, as opposed to a local justice? Royal justice came to be more important in the period after Henry II (Saul3, p. 203), so this is a reasonable possibility, but it's very strange phrasing.

We might speculate that the line is meant to be understood that the abbot had control of justice in England, but this doesn't wash because we see in stanzas 94, 96, etc. that this justice was an actual person.

But "the high justice of England" is no better. There was no such office. (After the deposition of Richard II, there was a suggestion that the new King Henry IV become the "chief judge" of the current parliament; BennettM, p. 200. But that was a unique situation — and it doesn't seem to have happened anyway.) The number of courts and jurisdictions was extremely large in the early Plantagenet period — a side effect of the fact that, until the reign of Edward I, legislation was essentially ad hoc. Edward I finally settled on the statute as a method of imposing laws, but even he had no standard legal format; some statutes were in Latin, some in French (Prestwich1, p. 268, or see the documents in Crow/Olson, which are all in one of those two languages). English did not become the standard language of law until the reign of Edward III, and even then, most of the legal paperwork was in Anglo-Norman.

Although we begin to see a professional class of judges starting around 1200 (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 73), the title Lord Chief Justice did not evolve until later. There was a court *coram rege* ("with the king") from an early date (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 53), which became the King's Bench in 1268, but did not operate independently of the king until the time of Edward III (Cannon, p. 547). What's more, in the reign of Edward IV, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench was paid 215 pounds in a year (Ross-Edward, p. 329). Even allowing for inflation, could the Abbot have taken a big enough cut from the profit of the knight's land to make it effective to bribe such an official? It seems unlikely.

To be sure, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench would have been in the north frequently during the Scottish wars of Edward I and Edward II, so perhaps the Abbot could have borrowed him. But, since the Justice followed the King, the Abbot couldn't count on that. He might give the Justice a fee, but livery?

The other major early court was the Court of Common Pleas, but it was permanently based at Westminster (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 61); a justice of Common Pleas would have had no actual jurisdiction in Yorkshire. By the time, in the fifteenth century, that there were special judges with particular jurisdictions, the expectation would have been that they also had to be addressed with some particular ceremonial which is absent here (Lyon, p. 155).

There was the justiciar in the early Plantagenet period (the office seems to have been made prominent by Henry I, although it may have been established earlier; Barlow-Rufus, p. 202. Barlow-Rufus, p. 204, adds that "the post of chief justiciar.... hardly ever acquired a certain title," which is interesting). According to Jolliffe, p. 298, the barons felt the justiciar was "'to amend according to the law the wrongs done by all other justices and bailiffs and earls and barons,' in short, to be the guardian of common right." Obviously it would make sense to call a person in this office the "high justice," but only if the correct title had been forgotten. At least we do find instances of references to the "Justiciar of England" (e.g. Jocelin, p. 25), so it would be only a small leap to "Justice of England."

Not all justiciars were honest — Richard I, for instance, immediately after taking the throne deposed Henry II's justiciar Ranulf de Glanville for dishonesty (Gillingham, p. 129; Tyerman, p. 237, adds that he was fined an incredible £15,000). But Henry III left the office of justiciar vacant after 1234, revived it only under pressure decades later, then let it lapse, never to be revived (Prestwich1, p. 25). There was never a justiciar under a King Edward; even when Edward II appointed his favorite Piers Gaveston as regent, he called him "custos regni" rather than justiciar (Phillips, p. 133). Besides, in earlier years the purpose of the office was mostly to serve as a viceroy, so the justiciar is not likely to have been involved in a legal dispute.

(Edward I did appoint a justiciar of North Wales after he conquered the territory; Prestwich1, p. 206. But the post was specific to Wales; in England, the Welsh justiciar — initially Otto de Grandson — seems still to have been known by his English titles. Certainly the justiciars carried none of their Welsh authority in England.)

Pollard, p. 102, thinks the justice might be the chief justice of the forests north of the Trent. (A variation on a suggestion that John de Segrave, Justice of the Forests North of Trent and Constable of Nottingham Castle in the time of Edward II, was the original Sheriff of Nottingham; Dobson/Taylor, p. 15. They attribute this to P. Valentine Harris, though I failed to notice a mention of this in Harris's own book.) This produces a title which fits — but why would the Abbot need to buy *his* support? The Abbot is not trying to dispossess Robin Hood, who lives in the greenwood; he is going after the Knight.

In earlier times, there had been a single chief justice of the forest (Young, p. 74), but from 1239 onward, and at certain times before, the office was divided and there were two chief justices, one for north and one south of the Trent. So, from 1239, even if "justice" means "justice of the forest," he could not be the Justice of all England. (Unless

we emend "Englonde" to "the forest" or some such.) In addition, from 1311 until 1397, the forest officials were formally known as "gardiens," not "justices" (although it would be no surprise if people still called them justices). They were certainly not all honest; in the reign of Henry III, a chief forester ended up paying a thousand marks to the King as a punishment for misdeeds (Young, p. 77), and John de Neville, son of John's chief forester, was known to have abused his office (Young, p. 112).

It is fascinating to note that, toward the end of the reign of Edward II, Edward's much-favored councilor Hugh Despenser the Elder was Justice of the forests south of Trent (Young, p. 146). The Despensers were hated by almost everyone else, and many contemporaries regarded them as Edward's evil geniuses. As justices south of Trent, they probably wouldn't affect Robin, but the fact that Despenser had been a forest justice might influence how he is regarded.

In the period between the decline of the justiciar and the independence of the King's Bench, the Lord Chancellor (an officer which came into existence no later than 1069; Douglas, p. 293, although the Chancery did not really become separate from the King until the reign of Edward I; Lyon, p. 69) was generally in charge of justice.

And some Chancellors were pretty sleazy. Mortimer-Angevin, p. 65, notes that since the "beneficiary had to pay for charters and writs, the chancellor had ample opportunity to feather his nest." Powicke, pp. 335–339, generally praises Edward I's chancellors, but Prestwich1, p. 110, says that one of them, Robert Burnell, was sustained by Edward despite charges of corruption. (Edward, in fact, proposed Burnell for Archbishop of Canterbury in 1278 — and the Pope turned it down flat; Prestwich1, p. 249; Hicks, p. 10. Edward later tried to have Burnell made Bishop of Winchester; that too was shot down; Prestwich, p. 255.) Burnell died in 1292, according to Prestwich1, p. 293, so if he is the corrupt official involved, the Richard at Lee episode would have to have taken place by about 1290.

To give him his due, Powicke, p. 338, thinks Burnell played a major role in shaping Edward's legislation and softening the king's justice. Hicks, p. 10, declares that Burnell was not a reformer (which is why the Pope didn't want to make him archbishop), but "he probably was not guilty of the immorality, homicide, usury, or simony with which he was charged." And he seems to have been generally accessible; Prestwich, p. 234, sums him up as "affable, but slippery." In any case, Hicks, p. 9, says that he was rarely separated from the King.

Most counties had multiple Justices of the Peace, but there were a few instances mentioned on p. 354 of Crow/Olson where one JP had special powers not given others. So this JP might have been a *de facto* chief justice, perhaps so called — although he would only be chief justice of Yorkshire or wherever.

If our criterion is simply a corrupt senior judge, we do see an instance in the reign of Edward I when a justice of the King's Bench, William Bereford, was accused of corruption (Prestwich1, p. 167). Bereford nonetheless continued to serve in various posts until 1326 — almost the end of the reign of Edward II. That might imply he was honest — but more likely implies that he knew which side of his bread was buttered. If the Justice of the "Gest" is to be identified with an actual person (a position I would not wish to defend), Bereford is a good candidate. Not the only one, however…

Another possibility in the reign of Edward I was Walter Langton, Keeper of the Wardrobe after 1290. The Wardrobe was responsible for paying for Edward's wars, so it had both financial and judicial responsibilities, and Prestwich1, pp. 139–140, says that Langton was "a man of great ability and little principle" — a man who, in fact, was accused of killing his mistress's husband with his own hands. Phillips, p. 3, says that he fell "spectacularly" as soon as Edward I was dead, and was accused of "murder, adultery, simony, pluralism, and intercourse with the devil."

As a wild speculation, Langton, in addition to his office of Keeper of the Wardrobe, was Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. Obviously the Archbishop of York had jurisdiction over Barnsdale and the Yorkshire area, but Coventry isn't that far south of Nottingham. Could it have been Langton who forced Robin off his lands? There is absolutely no evidence for this, but it would explain why Robin so disliked high church officials, and why he would approve of Edward II who got rid of Langton.

Not even Edward I could stomach Thomas de Weyland, temporarily his chief justice of Common Pleas, who covered up for two murderers (Prestwich1, p. 339). Or what about Ralph Hengham of the King's Bench? Edward deposed him in 1289 and fined him heavily (Prestwich1, p. 293).

Perhaps Edward I's problem was that he didn't pay his officers much, according to Prestwich1, p. 154, so they had to gather money in other ways.

Prestwich1, p. 561, points out that the reign of Edward I saw "the virtual demise of the system of judicial eyres under an ever increasing weight of business, but there was no really effective replacement for them ever devised… [I]t is clear that the pressures of war from the mid–1290s aggravated an already difficult situation. Few criminals were brought to book, and of those who were, many received pardons for good service on the king's campaigns." (For more on these pardons, see the note on Stanza 439.) This situation continued in the reign of Edward II, and was the perfect situation for abusive justice such as we see in the Richard at Lee story.

Prestwich1 says (p. 294) that starting around 1290 "[t]here was a change coming over the character of the judicial benches." Until that time, most of the judges and judicial officials had been clerics. But "[t]here was an increased secularization of the judicial profession evident by the end if Edward [I]'s reign." In other words, professional clerics — who would generally have some other income, and no legal wife or legitimate children to support (although many of course had mistresses) — were giving way to professional lawyers, who had no other source of income and who did have families. The latter would naturally be more aggressive in trying to crank up their income, often by inflicting harsher punishments. Which increases the odds of a man losing his land.

There is a tale of Edward II's chancellor Robert Baldock that sounds very much like the "Gest." "One favorite technique of the Despensers and their allies the Earl of Arundel and Robert Baldock was to compel men to acknowledge large fictitious debts to them.... William de Boghan lost some lands when payment was demanded after he acknowledged a debt of [4000 pounds]" (Prestwich3, pp. 94–95). There are records of them actually imprisoning Edward II's niece to extort her to give up lands! (Phillips, pp. 446–447, who reports that "the appearance of legality hid the reality of fraud, threats of violence and abuse of legal process").

When Edward II fell, in fact, Baldock was taken and tried along with the Despensers. Only the fact that he was a clergyman saved his life — and even so, he ended up in prison and died soon after (Phillips, p. 516), perhaps of wounds inflicted by the mob (Packe, p. 30; Mortimer-Traitor, p. 162.)

A polemic of the time of Edward II was very upset about the conditions; "The church, from popes and cardinals to parish priest, is corrupt. Money rules in the ecclesiastical courts, the parson has a mistress, abbots and priors ride to hounds, friars fight for the corpses of the rich and leave the poor unburied. Chivalry is in decay; instead of going on crusade, earls, baron and knights war among themselves. Justices, sheriffs, and those who raise taxes for the king are all bribable" (from the "Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II," quoted on pp. 17–18 of Phillips).

J. R. Maddicott proposed (Holt, p. 59) that the Justice of the "Gest" is Geoffrey le Scrope, Chief Justice of the King's Bench at the end of Edward II's reign and the beginning of Edward III's, whom Prestwich3 (p. 232) called "a remarkable political survivor" and who has the advantage, from our standpoint, of being one of the Scropes of Bolton, a family based in Yorkshire (Ormrod, pp. 99–100. Bellamy, p. 113, prefers Geoffrey's brother Henry, Justice until 1323). Much Internet searching, however, seems to reveal that Geoffery was — by the standards of the time — relatively honest. There is also the problem that he was the grandfather of Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York, by whom the Abbot swears; Geoffrey died 65 years before his grandson was martyred, and so can hardly have been alive at the time the Abbot was swearing by his grandson!

Another interesting point, made by Prestwich3, p. 105, was that there was an extremely high rate of official turnover in the reign of Edward II — in twenty years, he had fifteen treasurers and ten keepers of the Privy Seal. This might explain why the official involved is so vaguely titled — no one remembered who played what role in Edward II's reign. Alternately, by the fifteenth century, the Signet was used as a third seal (Lyon, p. 151), so by the time the "Gest" was written, there might have been some confusion of terminology. It appears, too, that the use of the Privy Seal had been a major issue in Edward II's reign, and that there were attempts to restrict its use after his deposition (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 205).

In the end, none of this is decisive. Jolliffe, p. 236, suggests that in general the Angevin legal system broke down whenever the King wasn't actively keeping it in line. But this fits a great many reigns: Richard I, especially early in his reign (because he wasn't around), John (because he just had too many plates to juggle), Henry III (first because he was a minor and then because he was incompetent), Edward II (incompetent), Henry IV (weak on his throne and so unable to assert himself), and Henry VI (incompetent). I think we are forced to conclude that we don't have any idea what office the "Justice of England" actually held, let alone who he was. What we *can* be sure of is that he was not especially honest, either in the sense of doing his duty or in the sense of being an honest crook and staying bought.

❖ **Stanza 97/Lines 387–388** ❧ Somehow, the knight has acquired a group of followers (meyne/meinie) whom he instructs to dress in the clothes they wore over the sea. This is another hint of a company going on a crusade (Clawson, pp. 42–44, suggests that this has been imported from some sort of crusading ballad), but there are several

problems: First, how could an impoverished knight maintain a company; second, where were they when he met Robin; and third, when did he have time to go overseas? Plus the meinie is ignored in the next several verses. In this case, Clawson may well be right that this floated in from somewhere else (but see Stanza 125). Perhaps the text is defective; see the note on the text of Stanza 98. One possibility that occurs to me is that there was perhaps a mention of Little John here, lost when the text was corrupted. John would then constitute the meinie.

❖ **Stanza 98/Line 389** ❧ This line is missing in all the prints. Child and the other editions conjecture that "They put on their simple wedes"; I think it more likely that the line describes the Knight (and perhaps John) arriving at the gates. But we're all guessing.

❖ **Stanza 99/Line 396** ❧ "For the love of the." The irony of this line is obvious. The abbot evidently told his friends what he was up to, but didn't tell the porter (though the porter knew that the Knight was due on this day). The porter, like the prior, evidently wishes the knight well. Thus not all monastics are evil — it is the leaders who are under fire.

❖ **Stanza 100/Line 399** ❧ For the surprising quality of the horse Robin gave the knight, see the note on Stanzas 75–77. The word "coresed" is unattested; some glossaries suggest that it means something like "dressed" (perhaps "corseted"), but the more likely meaning is that it is well-built — i.e. thoroughly capable of running a course; so e.g. Dobson/Taylor, p. 86. Martha Galep, whom I consulted about keeping horses in the forest, suggests "a 'coresed' horse was a 'courser' or 'charger,' meaning a horse used for battle — it had to be swift and agile and therefore I am assuming it was a lighter, more finely bred horse than the heavier, more docile and placid work horses. This would explain the groom's admiration for the horse in question — given two horses 'of the day,' the lighter, swifter horse would be the more impressive one."

❖ **Stanza 100/Line 400** ❧ This reminds me, at a thematic level, of the Miracle of Cana in John chapter 2: Just as Jesus not only turned water into wine but turned it into excellent wine (John 2:10), so Robin supplied the knight not just with a horse but with an excellent horse.

❖ **Stanza 102/Line 405 (and many stanzas following)** ❧ "Lordes were o mete i-sette." The abbot, and his exalted company, is at meat. As we shall learn in stanza 122, it is "royal chere/fare" — something that pretty clearly violates the Benedictine Rule, which generally forbid more than two dishes at a meal apart from fruits and vegetables (see "On the Amount of Food" in the appendix). Note that, in Stanza 103, the abbot does not ask the knight to join them, or even greet him; he just asks for his money. This too violates the Benedictine Rule, which demands charity to guests (see "Of the Reception of Guests").

This line, with the subtle criticism of the abbot's excess, is not a direct Biblical allusion, but it is reminiscent of a scandal in Corinth that drew a rebuke from Paul (1 Corinthians 11:20–21): "When you gather, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper. For when the time comes to eat, each one goes ahead with his own supper, and one is hungry and another one is drunk." Of course communal meals had ceased to be part of

the church's practice long before Robin's time (the mass was something completely different), but the lack of hospitality is blatant.

BennettH, pp. 22-23, notes that this is not an isolated instance of a monk who is far from poor; both Chaucer and Langland railed against such: "[Chaucer's] Monk is also depicted as something of a worldling.... At home he loved best of all a fat swan, and as a result of his continuous feasting was very fat, with bulging eyes which gleamed like the furnace under a cauldron. In addition he was well dressed, with expensive fur at the wrists, and a gold pin to fasten his hood with a love-knot at one end of it. Who could recognize in such a man the monk sworn to the *tria substantialia* of Obedience, Poverty, Celibacy with the accompanying reinforcement of labour, claustration, and a quasi-vegetarian diet?" Langland, in addition, wrote of clerics who were "londe buggeres," i.e. land-buyers (*Piers Plowman,* B text, X.306; Langland/Schmidt, p. 156); four lines later he is asked "who taughte hym curteisie?"

❖ **Stanza 103/Lines 411–412** ❧ Note the abbot's complete lack of courtesy: He says no words of welcome; neither does he invite the knight into the feast. For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2; also the knight's request for courtesy in Stanza 108 and the note on Stanza 102 for the theological implications of this.

❖ **Stanza 104/Line 415** ❧ "Shrewed" here is the same root as the modern word "shrewd," but it is unlikely that it was used in the modern sense of cunning, clever, or prudent; this meaning is not attested until the sixteenth century. (Onions, p. 823) Although, curiously, the word seems to be used in Stanza 181 in the modern sense — at least, in that stanza, it's Little John who has a "shrewde" wile, which would imply clever rather than evil. But in the fourteenth century, "shrewd" meant "evil" or "wicked," and the verb "to shrewe" meant "to curse" (beshrew, afflict with shrews). It's just possible, if the "Gest" is late enough, that the word is evolving toward the sense "tricky," but probably not. It is not clear if the word here should be understood as an adjective, shrewd="evil," or as a verb, shrewed="cursed" — but it's certainly not good. See also the use in Stanza 164.

❖ **Stanzas 105/Line 420** ❧ "To pray of a lenger day," i.e. to ask more time to repay the loan. To this compare the Biblical account of Matthew 18:23-35, "The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant." A slave owes his master a large sum and cannot repay, so (in 18:26) "the slave fell on his knees before [his master], saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." The master not only gives him more time, he actually forgives the debt. Then the slave turns on other slaves who owe him money in turn — causing the master to revoke the mercy. The outcome of the parable is the opposite of what happens here, but the call for help is much the same.

❖ **Stanzas 106–109/Lines 423–436** ❧ This scene makes me think a little of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:26–36). In the parable, the man falls in among thieves; so too the knight is in the presence of a thief (the abbot). The man in the parable appeals, mutely, for the help of a priest and Levite, who are responsible for helping the people. Similarly, the knight appears first to the justice and then to the sheriff, who are supposed to uphold justice. A second appeal to the abbot also fails. It is Robin, the outlaw, who supplies justice, just as the Samaritan — a foreigner despised by Jews — who helped out the Jew betrayed by those who should have rescued him.

For the knight's actions, compare also Proverbs 6:1–3: "My son, if you have stood surety for your friend/neighbour.... go, hasten, and importune your neighbour."

The idea of a sheriff not upholding the law fits well with the fourteenth century, when we actually saw royal law enforcement officers turning brigands (Goodich, pp. 46–47).

❖ **Stanza 107/Lines 425–426** ❧ Child, p. 52, notes that the justice is bound to the abbot "with cloth and fee," i.e. by livery and payment, and that to hire someone to help deprive another of property was defined as conspiracy in the reign of Edward I. However, we have no indication that the justice was hired solely for this purpose, so this does not preclude a date after Edward passed his statute. Indeed, we find an instance late in Edward I's reign where one Margaret of Hardeshull appealing to the chancellor not to turn her case over to Ralph Hengham because Hengham was in the pay of her opponent in the case (Prestwich3, pp. 22–23).

The one firm date we have regarding this issue is that in the reign of Edward III judges were forced to take an oath not to accept livery (Pollard, p. 194). Thus a date before 1346 is strongly indicated — but it is also possible that the arrangement is illegal, or that the justice in fact was a lawyer or otherwise not bound by the laws preventing judicial corruption. In light of the uncertainty about who the justice really was (see Stanza 93), this probably cannot be used as a dating hint.

For the whole issue of corrupt judges, see again the note on Stanza 93.

❖ **Stanza 108/Line 430** ❧ For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanza 109/Lines 433–436** ❧ Here the knight promises to "trewely serve" the abbot until his debt is paid. This is a tall order. Recall from the note on Stanza 49 that a knight bachelor was paid thirty-five pounds per year in the reign of Edward III, meaning that it would take twelve years to pay off the debt as a servant being paid a knight's wages. Given the inflation in that era, we can probably assume it would have taken at least fifteen years to pay off the Abbot based on wages in the reign of Edward I or Edward II — and that's if the Abbot accepts the knight's service at the full military rate, which is, obviously, unlikely. Odds are that the knight (who, after all, has an adult son) would be dead by the time he could pay off the debt. Our tentative conclusion must be that the knight is not offering his personal service but his feudal loyalty — he is offering to be the abbot's vassal.

❖ **Stanza 112/Lines 445-446** ❧ Child considers the quote of Stanza 111 to continue into Stanza 112 — that is, the knight tells the abbot that it is good to test a friend before there is need. But 112 strikes me as more of an editorial comment, and in my text I have concluded the quote with Stanza 111. The line "Leve us well to spede" has a near-parallel in Stanza 153.2, "God lende us well to spede." In 280.3-4 we read "God, that syt in heven hye, Grante us well to fare." Also, the final stanza of the "Monk," 90.304, reads, "God, that is ever a crownéd king, Bring us all to his bliss." This seems to be a sort of space-filling formula that also adds a trace of piety to the text.

❖ **Stanza 112/Lines 447–448** ❧ "For it is good to assay a frende Or that a man have nede." Compare Wisdom of Sirach 6:4: "Gold is tested in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation." Sirach 9:10 adds a warning not to trade old and trusted

friends for new. Sirach is, of course, one of the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books, but this would not matter to a Catholic.

The saying seems to have been proverbial, or possibly was known from a song of the period; Greene's #78 (p. 140) begins, "Man, be ware and wyse indede, And asay thi frend or thou hast need." This is from Bodleian MS. Eng. poet e.1, of the fifteenth century (i.e. about the time the "Gest" achieved its final form), with a similar text in the Richard Hill manuscript, Oxford, Balliol college MS. 354, of the early sixteenth century.

❖ **Stanza 113/Line 449** ❧"lothely." Probably to be read "loathly, "with loathing," but perhaps "loth-ly," loth to do, reluctantly.

❖ **Stanza 113/Line 452** ❧ "Spede the out of my hall!" We might remind ourselves that the hall belongs to the *abbey,* not the *abbot.* He doesn't really have any justification for calling it "my hall."

❖ **Stanza 114/Line 455** ❧ To the statement here that the knight was never a "false knyght," compare the statement in Stanza 320 that he is "a trewe knyght."

❖ **Stanza 115/Line 460** ❧ For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2. But there is also a class element here: The abbot could have demanded that a villein (say) stay on his knees for such a long time without it being a failure of courtesy, but not someone of the knight's rank.

❖ **Stanza 116/Line 461** ❧ "In ioustes and in tournement."This is not the only time jousts and tournaments are mentioned together in romances. Jn the romance Maldwyn Mills calls "Sir Percyvell of Gales" (French/Hale call it "Sir Perceival of Galles"), for instance, lines 173-174 declare that Percival

> Schall he nowþer take tent [pay heed]
> To justeȝ ne to tournament.

Tournaments, in the sense of mock battles, were quite old, and are not a dating hint (See the note on Stanzas 52–53, about the knight's son killing a knight and a squire, perhaps in a tournament).

The joust — the formalized passage of arms — is altogether another matter. Of course it was well-known by the time the "Gest" was published (imagine Malory without jousts!), and in its more French form "juste" it occurs in Chaucer (Chaucer/Benson, p. 1260) and Langland (Langland/Schmidt, p. 528). But the idea was rare before the reign of Edward III, and the highly organized tournament we think of as a joust flatly did not exist in the early Plantagenet era. If not an anachronism, this is another hint of an Edwardian date, and the later the better.

❖ **Stanzas 117–119/Lines 465–476** ❧ Although, theoretically, the abbot should own the land if the knight cannot repay, the justice apparently advises him to give the knight some consideration to induce the knight to sign away the land — or, perhaps, to have him openly sell it to the abbot, since this would make the issue of ownership more certain. (This, at least, is the obvious interpretation of the lines; Mersey, p. 181, thinks that the justice is trying to extort a higher fee from the abbot. But this would not address the danger of the knight being willing to attack his dispossessor.)

The abbot, nettled, offers a hundred pounds; the justice suggests two hundred — a sum which would actually leave the knight fairly well off. Presumably the purpose is to keep the knight from turning outlaw and preying upon the new legal owners of the

land (so, implicitly, the last line of stanza 117). But the knight refuses any such offer outright (stanza 119). This is, in one sense, standard knightly defiance. But what would he have done had he not had four hundred pounds available to pay off the loan?

The justice's warning about giving some compensation is probably wise. In Stanza 360, the King gives away the Knight's land, which causes a counselor to warn in Stanza 363 that no one will be able to enjoy the land while Robin is alive. The abbot doesn't know about Robin is friends with the knight, but the knight could haunt the land.

❖ **Stanza 120/Lines 479–480** ❧ Here the knight repays the abbot by shaking four hundred pounds out of a bag. Difficult, if the money is in the form of silver; we are told that one hundred pounds sterling of silver pennies filled a barrel (Barlow-Rufus, p. 365, and see note on Stanza 49). It would probably be a small barrel — one hundred pounds sterling is roughly thirty-five kilograms, and the density of silver is 10.5 kilograms per litre, so one hundred pounds sterling takes up a bit more than three litres, and four hundred pounds sterling is just about thirteen litres. If melted down, that's a cube about twenty-three centimeters on a side. But if supplied in the form of coin, it will be much bulkier — coins cannot be stacked perfectly. My rough calculation is that, in the form of coin, four hundred pounds sterling would take up about seventeen litres (possibly more, if the pile contains coins of different sizes and thicknesses, such as farthings and groats as well as silver pennies).

In all, you're looking at a weight of three hundred pounds/135 kilograms, and a cube twenty-six centimeters (just over one foot) on a side. The man who shakes that out of a bag isn't a middle-aged knight with an adult son, he's the Incredible Hulk. And even if the man could carry such a sack, what sort of cloth made in the Middle Ages could bear the strain?

And isn't it odd that no one counts the coin?

But give the Justice and Sheriff credit: Once the loan is repaid, they follow the law and allow the knight to keep his land.

❖ **Stanza 121/Line 481** ❧ "Have here thy golde, syr abbot." Here the poet resolves the problem of the incredible quantity of silver by telling us the knight gave gold. It solves the problem of weight; it leaves the problem of either coming up with enough gold coin (if we are in the late reign of Edward III) or of testing the weight and purity of the gold (if the knight gives raw metal).

The most likely explanation is anachronism: The poet simply did not realize that there were no gold coins prior to the reign of Edward III (see the note on Stanza 49), and that it was not until roughly the Lancastrian Era that there were enough of them in circulation for a scene like this to be possible. This is strong evidence for dating the composition of the poem relatively late (though it doesn't tell us much about when the events were supposed to have taken place).

None of which addresses the problem of how the knight would *prove* that he had paid back the loan when all witnesses were hostile, but presumably the poet had never actually had to deal with a large-scale loan and didn't realize that there was a proper procedure to follow.

❖ **Stanza 121/Lines 483–484** ❧ The knight declares that, had the abbot been courteous, he would have been rewarded. For the concept of courtesy, see the note on

Stanza 2 The rest of the verse reflects the church's attitude toward lending, interest, and usury. Exodus 22:25 explicitly forbids the people of Israel to lend at interest to each other. Leviticus 25:36–37 forbids interest and taking advantage of another's poverty. Deuteronomy 23:20 grants that "on loans to a foreigner you may charge interest," but 23:19 forbids charging interest to Israelites.

The church therefore forbid lending at interest. Since lending is sometimes necessary, Thomas Aquinas developed a doctrine of mutual risk, in which both the borrower and the lender were considered to be involved in whatever activity required the loan. For how this worked in practice, see also Stanza 55. It wasn't until the Protestant Reformation that this attitude began to shift (Bainton, pp. 237–249).

For one who truly needed a loan, this left only two choices. One was to borrow from the Jews, who were allowed to lend to Christians at interest. But Edward I had passed a strict anti-usury law in 1275, and — having wrung every cent out of the Jews that he could — expelled them from England in 1290 (Cannon, p. 532; Powicke, p. 322; Prestwich, pp. 343–346; Stenton, p. 197). This might be an indication of date: the knight probably could not have borrowed from Jews after 1275, and certainly not after 1290.

After 1290, that left only the possibility of borrowing from Christians. All such borrowing followed informal rules. Officially, the lender simply gave the borrower the money, expecting to be paid back, without interest, at the end of the loan period. Unofficially, it was understood that the lender would receive the money — and also a gift from the borrower. In law, it was two separate transactions. In practice, the gift was the interest on the loan. In this case, the knight says that he will not pay the gift because of the abbot's vile behavior — and, under the letter of the law, he had every right to do so. Hence his statement in Stanza 124 that "shall I have my londe agayne."

It is not clear how much interest would have been expected. Child, p. 52, points out that in Stanza 270 the knight repays Robin with a gift of twenty marks on a four hundred pound loan. Since four hundred pounds is six hundred marks, this is one part in thirty, which works out to three and a third percent interest (with no compounding, of course). But the knight also gave the gift of bows and arrows (see notes on Stanza 131 and Stanza 132). In a period of no inflation, three and a third percent is not too unreasonable — but one suspects the abbot would have held out for more. One would guess the terms were for at least twenty pounds interest, or 5%. Maybe more.

❖ **Stanza 122/Lines 485–486** ❧ For the abbot and his fine meal see the note on Stanza 102.

❖ **Stanza 123/Lines 489–492** ❧ The abbot, having failed to gain the knight's land, demands that the justice repay the fee mentioned in Stanza 107. However, the fee is not a contract as we would understand it — the justice is the abbot's man, but owes only certain duties. He has done these (presumably by showing up and witnessing the transaction), and sees no need to repay the fee. Perhaps a more honest man might return the fee — but a more honest man would never have taken it in the first place. It is ironic that the abbot, who tried to hold to the letter of the law, himself requested more than the letter of the law when the tables turned.

❖ **Stanza 124/Line 495** ❧ On the knight's right to reclaim his land see the note on Stanza 121.

❖ **Stanza 125/Lines 499–500** ❧ The knight puts on his good clothing and left his other clothes behind, referring back presumably to the "symple wedes" of Stanza 97, although that stanza and this seem to be the only references to what amounts to a disguise. (Could this be a reference to one of the sources? The tales of Fulk and Eustace and such are much taken with disguise, an element largely downplayed in the "Gest.") The fact that he left his poor clothing behind when he changes into his richer attire is a strong argument that the "symple wedes" are not crusading garments.

❖ **Stanza 126/Line 504** ❧ The knight's home is listed as "Verysdale" (or "Uerysdale"), an unattested place (Bellamy, pp. 75-78) Ritson declared that there was a Lancashire forest named "Wierysdale" (Gummere, p. 336), and Mersey, p. 181, offers "Uterysdale" (a reading supported by online sources but with no attestation in the prints and not found on any map I've located). I'm somewhat tempted by "Weardale," the region along the Wear in Durham — after all, a knight coming from Weardale would have to pass along the Great North Road to reach London or York (the problem being that a man going from Weardale to York would never get as far south as Doncaster).

Weardale was also the center for a failed campaign by Roger Mortimer against the Scots (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 175) — and we would expect to see some reference to this if Robin's king was Edward II. Except that this was also the time of the Dunheved Gang activity (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 126), so they, rather than Robin, may have been the outlaws in that area. There really isn't much evidence for or against this conjecture.

These problems have led most scholars to believe that the name "Verysdale" refers to Lee in Wyresdale; (Holt, photo 15 facing p. 97; Ohlgren, p. 316 n. 9). The Wyre river is in Lancashire, somewhat north of the Ribble; Lee is not far from the town of Lancaster, being somewhat to the south and east at the crossing of the Wyre.

This fits with the statement in Stanza 53 that the knight's son slew a Lancashire/ Lancaster knight; presumably the boy killed someone close to home. Holt, p. 103, says that the lands around Wyresdale were divided among the Earls of Lancaster and the de Lacys of Lincoln in the thirteenth century — but that all of them came into the Earl of Lancaster's hands when the last de Lacy earl died in 1311. Thus, if Wyresdale is meant and the period is the reign of Edward II, there is an intimate connection between Wyresdale and the Earl of Lancaster, who might be the noble who displaced Robin.

It should be noted, however, we also find the knight, in Stanza 310, having a castle somewhere between Nottingham and Robin's home. This may be the result of the "Gest" blending together two different accounts, but it doesn't fit well with any of the ideas suggested for the location of "Verysdale." Bellamy, p, 79, suggests that part of the name might have been lost, and so adds random letters and offers Iverishagh, an old fort which can't be shown to have been inhabited in this period, or Annesley, Castle along the river Erewash between Nottingham and Derbyshire.

Phillips/Keatman, p. 109, mention a suggestion that Verysdale might be Kidwelly, which is a partial calque of Verysdale (dale=kid, and "Very" and "welly" would be pronounced similarly in some dialects).

I must admit that I am tempted, instead of reading "Verysdale," to read "Ayredale" — an error of copying rather than of hearing. The river Aire, which naturally passes through Airedale, flows east into the Ouse between York and Doncaster. Indeed,

Ferrybridge over the Aire is on the Great North Road. In other words, it is right on the knight's path. This would fit well with the situation in Stanza 310.

Another faint possibility is the valley of the river Ure, which however is not nearly as well known; I've never found a reference to "Uredale."

As a further interesting footnote, we observe that, in the time of Edward IV, there was the outlaw called "Robin of Redesdale," also known as "Robin Mend-All." As we saw in the Introduction, he seems to have tried to invoke the spirit of Robin Hood — and "Redesdale" is rather similar to "Wyresdale." Although the significance of the name "Mend-All" is rather uncertain — one of the names Jack Cade had used in his 1450 rebellion was "Jack Amendalle" ("Jack Amend-all"; Wagner, p. 133) — or perhaps "John Amend-All" (Hicks, p. 279; the latter name seems also to have been used by a Norfolk rebel a few years later; Castor, p. 88).

❖ **Stanza 128/Line 512** ❧ "Beggers had we ben," in other words, beggars we would have become. Interesting that there is no mention of going over the sea, despite Stanzas 56–57.

❖ **Stanza 130/Lines 517-520** ❧ This stanza represents an entire year (less a few days). We are told that this is the time when the Knight makes back his money. Clawson points out that this must also be the time in which the events in Fit III (Little John's service with the Sheriff) takes place. Chronologically, the poem is out of order, though it makes sense dramatically. See also the note on Stanza 144.

❖ **Stanza 131/Line 521** ❧ A hundred bows. The best bows were made of yew, with the best yew coming from the Iberian peninsula. The knight, who is a legal citizen, could acquire imported yew bowstaves; Robin, as an outlaw, very possibly could not.

This may also be a dating hint. The Hundred Years' War led to a much-increased demand for munitions — every archer sent to France needed a bow and several sheafs of arrows. During periods of heavy campaigning, this led to significant supply bottlenecks; in 1356, for instance, it was reported that no arrows at all were available in England (Hewitt, p. 66). This does not preclude a date in the reign of Edward III, since there were truce years and years of light campaigning during the War, but it is an argument against the years of the major battles.

❖ **Stanza 132/Lines 525–526** ❧ The knight gives Robin arrows which are "an elle long." The ell, or "cloth yard" (hence the famous "clothyard arrow") was 45 inches long, or about 1.15 meters.

Holt and others think that Robin's weapon could have been a short bow, and it is true that few of the ballads mention the longbow specifically by name. Holt, p. 79, even denies that there is a distinction between short and long bows. Similarly, Bradbury, p. 35, argues that longbows were used at the Battle of the Standard in 1138 — but by "longbows" he means "non-crossbows." It should be remembered that a short bow could be fired facing forward, while a longbow was fired from the side, with the head over the shoulder and, for a long range shot, the left hand above the head. Some short bows, it's true, were longer than some longbows; the difference is one of technique.

Robin's exploits imply a weapon of superior range and accuracy (see also Stanzas 397–398). This clearly requires the longbow. What's more, a short bow would not require a clothyard arrow — and most short bows were too short to be very effective

with such a long arrow. The reference to these arrows strongly implies a longbow. And the Lettersnijder edition of the "Gest" is illustrated with a picture of a longbowman (see Figure 8 above), although this is canned clip art based on one used earlier to illustrate an edition of Chaucer.

The mention of the long arrows is one of several indications that Robin must date after the time of Richard I and John. Chandler/Beckett, pp. 20–21, says that Richard and John's archers were crossbowmen. Indeed, according to Gillingham, p. 276, Richard suffered his fatal wound because he himself decided to take a turn shooting at the defenders of Chalus-Chabrol — with a crossbow. This surely comes close to proof positive that Richard and Robin did not know each other — Richard was too good a soldier to be fiddling around with crossbows if longbows had been available.

❖ **Stanza 132/Lines 526-527** ❧ The arrows had peacock feathers, plus silver on them — somewhere. The editions disagree as to where (see textual note on Stanza 132), but all the prints refer, in one form or another, to the nock. The nock was a groove in the back of an arrow into which the bowstring was placed. This was a weak point of an arrow, and a truly well-made arrow might have a metal cap there. The text implies that this cap was made of silver, which, as Knight/Ohlgren confess on p. 156, was "unusually lavish." So lavish as to be silly, since silver was not as structurally strong as iron. And a silver nock would not be very visible under the feathers! So the reading "worked with silver," while incorrect, actually makes more sense: it might mean that the shaft or the point was inlaid with silver tracings.

It hardly matters where the silver was, in practice; the point is, they were fancy and expensive. Peacock feathers were also an extravagance; most arrows had goose feathers or (according to one source) swan feathers. Interestingly, most manuscripts of the General Prologue of the *Canterbury Tales* say that the yeoman who accompanied the Knight also had "a sheef of pecok arwes" (section I(A), line 104, Chaucer/AndrewEtAl, p. 137; a few copies, including Caxton's first edition, omit "pecok"). Chaucer/Benson, p. 803, says that peacock feathers were "prized," but how much of that is because they were actually better than goosefeathers and how much is conceit I do not know. There has been dispute in the Chaucer literature about whether peacock feathers were any good. The answer appears to be, it depends on which peacock feathers one used. Someone named Markert, whose writings I cannot trace, says that the peacock feathers used were not those of the peacock tail, which were not very good aerodynamically, but those of the wing. So peacock arrows may not be as fancy-looking as you expect, but still, there were peacocks involved....

Silver arrows occur in grimmer contexts. In the incest ballad "Sheath and Knife" [Child 16], once the brother and sister agree that she and their child must die, they go to a deer park, and when she signals, he kills her with a silver arrow, presumably as a tribute.

❖ **Stanza 133 /Line 529** ❧ An escort of "an hundreth men." This sounds similar to the indenturing of soldiers, used particularly during the Hundred Years' War. This again implies a date during or after the reign of Edward I, with Edward III using indentures most heavily of all. (It's also just about the only evidence for Ohlgren's contention that the Knight was preparing to fight in the Hundred Years' War., for which

see the note on Stanzas 56–57) A force of a hundred men is, we should note, a large company by the standards of the time; it is hard to determine the actual size of armies in this period, but this is quite a few followers for a mere knight (at the great battle of Crécy, for instance, the ratio of knights to ordinary soldiers seems to have been less than 20:1). This is another hint that our knight had more resources than most of his class.

❖ **Stanza 133/Line 432** ❧ The knight returns to Robin wearing colors of red and white — not green (and the red might not be the scarlet of Stanzas 70–72; we cannot tell). Thus he does not seem to be wearing Robin's colors. In a period long after the latest possible date for Robin, the Duke of Exeter distributed white and red badges as the Duke of Lancaster's livery, so this is perhaps a Lancastrian emblem (Storey, p. 144) although this goes against the argument that Robin was an enemy of the Duke of Lancaster (see the note on Stanza 412).

❖ **Stanza 135–142/Lines 537–570** ❧ The story of the "wrestling." Holt, p. 23, considers the incident of the wresting an incidental insertion, arguing that it is not necessary to the plot. Certainly it seems to interrupt the action — and, what is more, the text seems badly damaged; see the textual note on Stanza 135. But Holt offers no reason for the insertion; it seems more likely that such an oddity would be original than that it would be added later on.

Wrestling was considered a rather low-class sport at this time (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 157, note that Chaucer's Miller was a successful wrestler, and that his prize was a ram). The amazingly large prize in stanzas 136–137 (a white bull, a saddled courser with gold trimming, gloves, a gold ring, and a pipe of wine) suggests a special contest — and yet, there seems to be no one to enforce the rules, forcing the knight to step in. This causes a delay, which is useful in terms of the plot because it allows time for Robin Hood's men to rob the monk of St. Mary's; this strikes me as the most likely explanation for its inclusion Perhaps this strange wrestling was included in the Miracle of the Virgin tale that underlies this plot segment.

Alternately, we see Robin himself engaged in wresting in some of the later ballads, including the very first ballad of the Forresters manuscript, where Robin fights the crowd that drives him to turn outlaw (Knight, p. 1). He also wrestles in the play of *c.* 1475 which parallels "Guy of Gisborne" (Holt, p. 33).

Another possibility is that this is some sort of side effect of the Tale of Gamelyn, which shares some elements with the "Gest." Gamelyn's story includes a tale of Gamelyn wrestling with a local champion — a tale which occupies about a hundred lines (Clawson, p. 48).

I am also vaguely reminded of the romance of "The Tournament of Tottenham," one copy of which happens to be included in the same manuscript (Cambridge Ff. 5.48) as the sole substantial witness to "Robin Hood and the Monk" (Dobson/Taylor, p. 9). This is the farcical tale of a potter named Perkin who wishes to win a bailiff's daughter, and is told to take part in a tournament to earn her hand. He proceeds to win the tournament but nearly loses the girl when another entrant proceeds to make off with her (Sands, pp. 313–314). It does not appear parallel to this story, but several motifs are the same: A competition featuring low-born men rather than gentry, a richer-than-usual prize for such an event, and an attempt to cheat the winner.

If we accept the conjectural reading "Ayredale" for the location of the knight's castle (see note to Stanza 126). then it is reasonable to assume that the wrestling took place a Ferrybridge on the Aire, a convenient meeting point.

❖ **Stanza 135A.4/Line 540** ❧ "west countree" — an odd location for an event in Yorkshire. One suggestion is that it is a reference to the west riding of Yorkshire (Harris, p. 17); another, that it is an artifact of the insertion of the wrestling tale discussed above. Another is that it is an error (for "north country" or "west riding" or something). But with the text of this stanza in such terrible shape, I didn't venture to emend it. Alternately, this might be another hint of a Lancashire location, though even in that case "north" would be at least as reasonable a reading as "west."

❖ **Stanza 138/Line 551** ❧ A yeoman, apparently not a local, wins the wrestling match, and this causes a disturbance. The reason is not clear (see textual note on Stanza 138). The likely meaning is something like "And he was far from home and friendless," and the locals didn't like people from far away, but the line may be corrupt.

❖ **Stanza 140/Line 558** ❧ What was the status of the knight's company to the knight? Did they follow him "in fere," i.e. "in company"? Did they simply follow him, with no explanation? Is it possible that "fere" should be read as "fear," i.e., he'd intimidated them into following him? The first is possible but doesn't make much sense in the social context, the second produces an impossible line, the third doesn't make the knight come off very well. So I have made a very simple conjecture: The men were *in fee* to him, i.e. the knight had hired them. Even if it's not the original reading, it's almost certainly the correct sese: the men with the knight were his retainers.

❖ **Stanza 142/Line 565** ❧ Five marks: As we shall see in Stanza 150, twenty marks per year is an extremely generous allowance for a yeoman. Five marks thus represent at least a 25% bonus above a man's ordinary yearly pay, and probably more.

❖ **Stanza 143/Lines 571–572** ❧ For Robin waiting to dine until a guest arrives, see the note on Stanzas 6–7.

❖ **Stanza 144/Lines 573–574: Fit II** ❧ Observe the parallel to the first stanza, which also begins "Lyth and listen, gentyllmen," and to Stanza 282 and Stanza 317–318. For notes on this introductory formula, see the notes to Stanza 1.

It is widely agreed that this fit is not from the same "Robin and the Knight" source as Fits I+II+IV, although there is disagreement about what it does come from (I've called it "Robin and the Sheriff," but that's somewhat question-begging).

This whole fit is about Little John as servant of the Sheriff. Pollard, p. 172, suggests that it is, in a way, a parody of *The Book of Nurture*, which trains a masterless young man in how to be a proper servant. Little John completely overturns the conventions. The curiosity in that case is that the Sheriff hires John after John competes well at archery. Why would he hire an archer as a domestic servant? Or was he hired to be part of the Sheriff's guard? This would make sense were the Sheriff of high enough rank, but since we don't know his rank, we can't say.

Clawson, p. 58, points out that this fit is chronologically out of order; the proper place for it is somewhere in the second fit (he suggests Stanza 130, and indeed the events must have happened in the year covered by that stanza), during the year in

which the Knight is earning the money to repay Robin. But he admits that it is more effective when placed here.

On p. 61, Clawson adds that the basic theme of this section — of the hero, or his servant, taking a position in the household of his enemy — is found also in the stories of Hereward the Wake and Eustace the Monk. But the details of both those accounts differ substantially from the "Gest." Neither tale can be considered a direct source, although they may have inspired some intermediate stage.

Also, the later Robin Hood legend was rife with "Robin Hood Meets His Match" tales, in which Robin meets someone, fights with the newcomer, and recruits him. Here, it is "Little John Meets His Match," but it's still a recruitment tale. At the time this was written, there may have been only one other "Meets His Match" tale, "Robin Hood and the Potter." Could the original version of the legend have had John be the one who met his match — an outcome that would perhaps make Robin seem more competent? Is this the prototype of other ballads of this type? We haven't enough data.

Another point to consider: In Fit 1, Robin serves the Knight a fine meal, yet there is no evidence that Robin has a cook. Might the story in Fit III have been a sort of "Robin Hood Hires a Cook" tale that was displaced when the various pieces of the "Gest" were assembled? There is no evidence for any of this, but a version of the tale where the cook is recruited *first* would make a lot of sense. In this scenario, perhaps, Little John didn't know Robin any more than the Cook did; John was simply a servant of the Sheriff's who ended up making an arrangement with the Cook, and both of them ran off to Robin.

❖ **Stanzas 145–146/Lines 577–584** ❧ This archery contest, seen by the Sheriff of Nottingham, is the first of several in the "Gest" (see Stanzas 282–283, 397). An archery contest is also a key element of the "Potter," where it gains Robin access to the sheriff (Holt, p. 34). These contests could have taken place at any time in the Plantagenet era, but it is noteworthy that Edward III, to improve the quality of the archers who would be fighting in France, commanded regular competitions with the bow (Keen, p. 139).

❖ **Stanza 146/Line 582** ❧ "Alway he sleste the wande." The "bullseye" type target for archery practice is a modern invention. Later in the "Gest" (Stanzas 397–398) we read of a rose garland on a pole (wand). Here we find Little John slicing or splitting the wand on which the target rests. This is of course an exceptional — indeed, a well-nigh impossible — feat. John surely must have used his own bow and arrows, and they must have been exceptionally well made, although we are given no information about the source of his equipment. But it is a hint that Robin had his own expert bowyer and fletcher.

❖ **Stanza 149/Line 593** ❧ Little John claims to have been born in "Holdernesse" =Holderness. A small town in eastern Yorkshire, almost on the seacoast, not far north of the Humber. It is so small that it doesn't appear even on my 1 cm.=4 km. map of northern England, but it was well enough remembered that Conan Doyle had a fictitious "Duke of Holderness" in "The Adventure of the Priory School." The nearest significant town, Patrington, lies just to the west. (At least, so the maps I've checked online. Cawthorne, p. 164, says that it adjoins Beverly, north of Kingston-upon-Hull. This still puts it in eastern Yorkshire north of the Humber, and both locations are far

from any of the places associated with Robin Hood — although closer to Barnsdale than Sherwood or Nottingham, even if you ignore the need to cross the Humber).

Holderness was probably better known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries than now; in the fourteenth century, one of the most beautiful major churches in the country was built there: Patrington Church, called "The Queen of Holderness" (Kerr, pp. 180–181). Might the pious John have claimed to be from there because of its church?

John's mention of Holderness has at least two points of interest to Robin Hood scholars. The first is because it was the alleged home of "Robin of Holderness," who led one of many small rebellions against King Edward IV. We aren't really sure about the history of the Robin Rebellions of 1469-1470 (see the discussion above about Robin of Redesdale), but Kendall-Warwick, p. 241, suggests that Robin of Holderness's rebellion was "a riotous protest against a purely local grievance, a tax on corn which for generations had been exacted by St. Leonard's Hospital, York." This explanation comes from Polydore Vergil (Wagner, p. 234), who wrote almost two generations later. Kendall-Warwick adds that Holderness's rebels went on to demand other things — but what is noteworthy is that they were rebelling against the church and government rules, which is rather like Robin Hood.

In another interesting twist, Robin of Holderness's rebels were trying to bring about the reinstatement of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland (Wagner, p. 234). Two decades later, after Percy had betrayed Richard III at Bosworth, the people of York murdered Percy — who at that time was sheriff of Northumberland. The reason? A complaint about taxes (Chrimes, p. 80). It is surely too late for the "Gest," but the parallel is interesting.

The second point of interest is that Henry de Fauconberg, the Sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in 1318–1319 and 1323–1325, and sheriff of Yorkshire after that, who has been suggested as a possible Sheriff of Nottingham, came from a family which had an estate in Holderness (Cawthorne, p. 199; Bellamy, p. 52 says it was his original estate). Would John have listed his home as Holderness had he known the Sheriff came from there? Surely not; this is (faint) evidence that the sheriff here is not Fauconberg.

Oddly enough, Henry de Fauconberg was a younger son who nonetheless inherited the family land instead of his older brother John. This probably means that there was something wrong with John — but Phillips/Keatman, p. 87, mention a speculation that John de Fauconberg was actually Little John. Needless to say, this would render impossible the idea that Little John could serve the sheriff in disguise! And what are the odds that John would claim to be from Holderness if the sheriff actually came from there and might be expected to know him?

Of course, all of this is moot if the Sheriff is not based on a real person — and he almost certainly is not; see the note on Stanza 15.

And yet, there is still another interesting point: In the early stages of the Hundred Years' War, the English feared French raids, and set up local defense systems. The local sheriffs were responsible for this (Hewitt, p. 5). Most of the sites places under defense were on the English south coast (Hewitt, p. 6) or East Anglia (Hewitt, p. 3). But there

was also a warning issued in Holderness (Hewitt, p. 6). Could some side effect of this have been what caused Robin or John to turn against the sheriff?

Or is it just that Holderness, being across the Humber from York, would be a fairly remote place, making it hard for the Sheriff to check John's story?

I do have to mention one minor conceit of my own. It is well-documented that one of the seminal visions which led J.R.R. Tolkien to produce *The Lord of the Rings* and his other works came when he saw his wife dancing in Roos; it gave him the vision of the tale of Beren and Lúthien (Shippey, p. 244; Pearce, p. 205, quotes Tolkien's own description of the event), the most beloved of all the tales of Middle-Earth to its author.

Roos happens to be very close to Holderness. Is it possible that this spot inspired two of the three greatest myth-cycles of English history? (Those of Robin Hood and Tolkien's Middle-Earth; obviously the origin of Arthur was elsewhere.)

As an additional conceit, Tolkien's papers are in the Bodleian Library, and the Bodleian also has four copies of the "Gest" — the only library to have more than one.

❖ **Stanza 149/Line 595** ❧ "Reynold Greenleaf." Later on, in Stanza 293, we meet a Reynold who is a member of Robin's band. Why, then, does Little John borrow his name? This is never explained. My personal conjecture is that some lost list said that Reynold was part of Robin's band (Child prints an item from Ravenscroft which might somehow be related), but no tale existed of him, so the creators of two of the component poems of the "Gest" included him in the band in difference guises, and the compiler of the "Gest" never straightened it out. But this is only conjecture.

Knight/Ohlgren suggest on p. 182 that there was a ballad of Reynold serving the sheriff, which the compiler of the "Gest" took over and, presumably, transferred to Little John, leaving a few inconsistencies such as this one. Clawson, p. 64, attributes this suggestion to Fricke and thinks this may not have been a Robin Hood ballad but just a ballad of someone infiltrating the household of an enemy.

Cawthorne, p. 163, offers a third suggestion, which is quite interesting: That "Reynold Greenleaf" was rhyming cant for "thief." But has rhyming cant been shown to exist in the North at this time?

Pollard, p. 175, tells us that a man named "Greneleff" was accused of acting like Robin Hood in 1503. Hole, p. 74, suggests that the reference in *Fabyan's Chronicle* is to an actor playing Little John and known as Greenleaf, and that somehow the two were conflated and entered tradition together. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 188, mentions the same fellow, although dating it to 1502 (and reprinting the relevant chronicle entry). But this is surely too late to have influenced the "Gest" — perhaps Greenleaf took his name based on the same forgotten legend as the one which the Gest's author was using? Dobson and Taylor, in fact, suggest on p. 4 that the thief took the name from the "Gest," and Ohlgren is open to the possibility.

❖ **Stanza 149/Line 596** ❧ "Whan I am at hame." This is one of the few instances of a line where we might see northern dialect influence: "dame" in the second line rhymes with "hame" but would not rhyme with "home."

The verse reminds me a little of "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry" [Child 113], which involves, in a sense, another example of a man incognito, but that song is probably much more recent than the "Gest."

❖ **Stanza 150/Line 600** ❧ The Sheriff of Nottingham offers Little John "Twenty marke (twenty marks) to thy fee" — in other words, 3200 pence. Or put it another way: A mark is two-thirds of a pound, so this is thirteen and a third pounds per year. Recall that, in the reign of Edward III, a knight's fee was forty pounds, or sixty marks, a year! (See note on Stanza 45.) So twenty marks is a third of a knight's annual earnings.

Another way to look at it: In Edward III's 1360 campaign in France, the English contracted with mounted archers at 6 pence a day. Richard II, in 1397, employed Cheshire archers as a sort of praetorian guard for six pence a day (BennettM, p. 113). 360 days at six pence a day is 2160 pence per year.

Esquires, in the reign of Edward III, were paid seven and a half pence a day (Crow/Olson, p. 121), which works out to 2700 pence per year.

Ormrod, p. 141, states a man-at-arms in Edward III's armies (who would be a higher pay class than an archer) earned a shilling a day. (Though Hewitt, p. 34, says that a man-at-arms earned six pence a day. One suspects they were referring to different classes of men-at-arms.) A shilling a day is 4320 pence a year.

Holt, p. 122, cites an instance of a household yeoman (valet) earning two pounds a year. Hunter said that valets at the court of Edward II received three pence a day (Child, p. 55; cf. Holt, pp. 122–123); this was also the wage of a foot archer in Edward III's wars (Hewitt, p. 36). This is 1095 pence per year, or not quite seven pounds.

Seward, p. 269, says that "minor gentry, merchants, yeomen, and important artisans" could expect to earn from fifteen to twenty pounds in 1436; a plowman made only four pounds per year. But this is after substantial inflation, plus a major increase in wages for the lower classes following the Black Death (a plowman before the plague earned between ten shillings and a pound per year).

Hence to offer a servant twenty marks, in the period before 1350, was to offer a fee far above the prevailing rate (and, of course, is even more absurd if we go back to the period of Richard I and John). Wages rose dramatically, and rents fell, after the Black Death (Pollard, p. 20; Kelly.J, pp. 205–206), but the amount seems excessive even by post-plague standards. (Unless, by some wild chance, the source of this is Scottish, and the reference is to Scottish marks, which were only a fraction of English. But then the amount seems too small.) The likeliest explanation is an anachronism; at some time in the history of the poem, the pay was adjusted to a fifteenth century rate.

Bottom line: the Sheriff is offering John almost exactly fifty percent more than the going rate for archers *in France, earning hazard pay,* and a sixth more than even an esquire earned in ordinary service. It's about three-fourths of combat pay for an esquire. Maybe the author of the "Gest" was thinking in terms of prices of his own time, rather than Edward II's or Edward III's reign, but it's *still* very high pay for someone of yeoman rank or lower.

No wonder John was interested.

Could the Sheriff of Nottingham be recruiting soldiers? If so, nothing comes of it, since John's brief service is all served in England. Bottom line: such a large fee would imply a date after the reign of Edward I — ideally, one after the Black Death, when wages rose.

We might add that, in stanza 43 of the "Monk," Little John claims that Robin Hood robbed him of twenty marks.

❖ **Stanzas 151–152/Lines 601–606** ❧ "The sheryfe gate Lytell Johan Twelve monethes of the knyght." Could it really be that simple? Would the Sheriff, who presumably was the sheriff who was present when the knight and Little John repaid the abbot, not have seen what was going on? Would he hire John under those circumstances — and would the knight be in position to consent so freely? On the face of it, we might suspect that a stanza or two is missing here. Or maybe the Sheriff *did* recognize John, and was trying to hire him away from the Knight.

For that matter, in the previous fit, the knight was coming to pay off Robin at the end of his year. This means that John has been in the knight's service for a year, and should be done — if not at that particular hour, then within a day or two at most (Harris, p. 18). And John in any case would probably consider himself *Robin's* man — certainly in the fourth fit he is back in Robin's service. The poet, in combining the two stories here, seems to have lost track of his chronology (see the note on Stanza 144 about relocating the third fit). This is one of the evidences that the source I call "Robin and the Sheriff," which includes this section, was rewritten to make the sources fit together.

Of course, there is another possibility, if we assume that Little John was in fact the knight's watchdog (see the note to Stanzas 80-81). The knight might have desired to be rid of his shadow — or John might have been satisfied that the knight was honest, and they could have agreed that he could go on to other activities.

For "courtesy" see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanza 152/Line 608** ❧ The Sheriff gives John a "gode hors." Edward III began to use mounted archers in 1330 (Chandler/Beckett, p. 19), and used them regularly on his campaigns in France. This was one of the secrets of his success in the Hundred Years' War: He mounted not only the knights but the archers and other soldiers who would fight as infantry. This let his army move much faster than one which combined horsemen and infantry. If in fact the Sheriff is recruiting John for an expedition in the reign of Edward III (see note on Stanza 150), he would indeed need a horse. On the other hand, if Robin Hood had so many horses that he was trying to get rid of them (see the note on Stanzas 75–77), wouldn't John already have a good horse? Of course, the outlaws could potentially take another and sell it somewhere.

❖ **Stanza 153/Line 610** ❧ For a parallel to the line "God lende/grant us well to spede" see the note on Stanza 112.

❖ **Stanza 155/Line 618** ❧ The Sheriff goes hunting — seemingly in the forest, and seemingly for a hart (see note on Stanza 185). This is curious, since on its face this appears to be a violation of the forest laws against taking venison. It is true that the King sometimes granted exceptions — but these were very limited. Young, p. 133, reports that in the final ten years of Henry III's reign (i.e. 1262–1272), that king granted rights in Sherwood Forest to take ten harts and three hinds of red deer and 61 bucks and twelve does of fallow deer. The restrictions under Edward I were even stiffer; from 1272–1287 he granted only one hart, 61 bucks, and 43 does. Does this mean that the sheriff was violating the law with his hunt?

This is, in a small way, an argument that Robin is based in Barnsdale, not Sherwood. Sherwood was forest, and subject to forest law. Barnsdale was not.

❖ **Stanza 156/Line 624** ❧ There is uncertainty about the text here (see textual note on Stanza 156), but no question that a cranky Little John demands to be fed. This demand begins the quarrel which eventually causes Little John to fight, and then recruit, the cook. It's another example of Little John talking about food, something we see on several occasions in the "Gest"; see the note on Stanza 5, and also Stanza 206.

❖ **Stanza 158/Line 631** ❧ The phrase "I make mine avowe to God" is used some thirteen times in the "Gest," in stanzas 158, 164, 169, 180, 187, 190, 240, 249, 343, 346, 408, 415 (165 omits "to God"), making it one of the most common phrases in the entire story. The clustering is interesting; note that it does not occur in the first two fits of the poem, but is then found six times in 33 stanzas of Fit III! The frequency then goes back down, although not to zero. Pretty clearly it is characteristic of the "Robin and the Sheriff" source.

❖ **Stanza 159/Line 633** ❧ For courtesy, which the butler does not show, see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanza 163/Line 650** ❧ Clawson, pp. 69–70, speculates on why the cook (as opposed to the butler or other household servant) becomes the hero in this part of the saga. He mentions a parallel to the story of Hereward, and also that there were other tales of heroic cooks, although he cites no examples that strike me as likely to be well-known to English audiences. Cooks are commonly mentioned in folk song and lore (because sailors and cowboys and such were so dependent on the skills of those who fed them), but these mentions are generally much more recent than the "Gest."

❖ **Stanza 164/Line 654** ❧ For "shrewde" see the note to Stanza 104. It is not certain whether the last word of this line should be "hyne" or "hynde"; see the textual note on Stanza 164. Knight/Ohlgren gloss "shrewede hynde" as "cursed servant" and do not even note the variant.

There is the faint possibility that "hynde/hinde" should be read as "hind," the female red deer, but this is extremely unlikely. The word intended is probably hyne/hine, a Middle English word not found in Chaucer but fairly common in other thirteenth and fourteenth century texts. It goes back probably to Old English *hine*, from *hiwan*, household, or *higa*, member of the household. The exact sense varies slightly; Sisam interprets it as servant/laborer; Emerson, p. 384, offers servant/domestic; Turville-Petre, p. 236, servant/farm-worker; Sands, p. 385, servant; Langland/KnottFowler, p. 274, peasant/servant; Langland/Schmidt, servant/thing of low worth. Thus the sense might be of a peasant who wasn't up to his job.

Every one of these sources spells it "hyne" or "hine," without a d, but Emerson says that "hynde" was a dialect version of the word. The usage might tell us a little about the point of origin of the various texts, but this is far from sure.

If a "hyne" is a poor or incompetent servant, then a "shrewde hyne" is probably a servant who doesn't know his place.

❖ **Stanza 168/ Lines 669–672** ❧ Little John and the cook fight for as long as it takes to walk two miles (probably about forty minutes, although it might be anything between half an hour and an hour depending on the burdens the walkers carried), then

"maintained" the fight for the rest of an hour. This is a quite exceptional period to be actually engaged in swordplay — most medieval battles lasted only a couple of hours, usually with pauses, and few men at arms would have fought the whole time. Supposedly the Battle of Evesham in 1265, which Baldwin would have us believe involved Robin, lasted two hours (Burne, p. 170). The Battle of Crécy in 1347, the greatest of Edward III's battles, technically lasted about six hours (Seward, p. 66), but it involved almost no hand-to-hand contact. Ross-War, pp. 123–125, says that the battle of Barnet in 1471, which began at sunrise, was over before the morning mist burned off, and many of the soldiers were not engaged for large parts of the battle.

Thus for two men to fight hand-to-hand for an hour is an astounding feat. It is surprising that we do not hear more of the cook in the rest of the "Gest," given his prowess. It seems evident that this scene floated in from another tale, which presumably ended with the cook joining the band; there was nothing more to say about him. Perhaps the band didn't really need his cooking skills; after all, the knight had praised his dinner highly in Stanza 34, so *somebody* in Robin's band could cook.

Clawson, p. 66, points out that many of the "Robin Hood meets his match" type ballads involve extended fights of this type — another indication that this tale was derived from an earlier source.

❖ **Stanzas 170–171/Lines 679–682** ❧ "Two tymes in the yere thy clothynge I-chaunged sholde be; And eyery yere.... Twenty marke to thy fe." In other words, Little John offers the cook, whom he has been battling, twenty marks a year and two changes of livery. For the high fee of twenty marks, see the note on Stanza 150; for the idea of livery, the note on Stanzas 70–72. In Stanza 420, we see Robin expecting to have two changes of clothing per year from the King.

Also of interest is the fact that Little John seems to be empowered to enroll new members into Robin's band. Furthermore, he not only offers a place, he offers a fixed degree of pay. It's almost as if Robin really is a merchant hiring a band (recall that John compared Robin to a merchant in Stanza 71); ordinarily one would expect something like an outlaw band to operate on the basis of shares of the loot rather than a salary — indeed, Robin seems to share out the take when the King is captured in Stanza 382.

❖ **Stanza 171/Line 684** ❧ Here again we see a case of someone being a "fellow" of Robin Hood. For the importance of fellowship to Robin, see the note on Stanza 14.

❖ **Stanza 174/ Line 695** ❧ The comment that the locks were of "good steel" is likely to be misunderstood by moderns. Carbon steels were known at this time, and sometimes someone would turn up an iron deposit with enough nickel or cobalt in it to make a fairly good steel — but generally medieval steels were not as strong (or as corrosion-resistant) as modern steels. Plus, locks were generally rather primitive. Yes, they had keys, but the keys were not very fancy. Much of the security of medieval locks came from all the leaves and decoration which made it hard to even operate the things. These often produced weak points. It was a lot easier to smash even the best medieval lock than the modern equivalents.

Note that one of Robin's followers, Scathelock/Scarlock, is a lockbreaker. Maybe Little John took lessons.

In Child's "B" version of "Robin Hood's Death," Little John breaks "locks two or three" to get to his dying master.

❖ **Stanza 176/Lines 704, 706** ❧ There is an interesting textual variant here (see textual note on Stanza 176), but the correct reading is almost certainly that Little John and the cook took "Thre hondred pounde and more" to Robin Hood "Under the grene wode hore," that is, "under the green wood hoar."

"Hore," modern "hoar," is the root word of "hoarfrost," and refers to a grey or white color. Hence, by implication, it means "old." Gummere, p. 317, claims it was a common word for a forest. Did Robin meet the cook under an old tree or under a grey tree? If the latter, it implies that the tree is without leaves, which in turn implies that the season is winter, or at least that it is early enough in spring that the leaves have not budded.

This despite the fact that Pollard, p. 57, says that the "Gest" takes place in "perpetual early summer"; Baldwin, p. 33, agrees, and speculates that the band must have scattered in winter. Supporting this is a comment on p. 42 of Goodich that "crime and violence tended to follow the agricultural calendar, reaching a high point from March to August." I would not consider this decisive (see the notes to Stanza 29 and Stanzas 32–33; also the faint hint in Stanza 91 that it might be April) — but it is hard to believe that the sheriff (who will soon be captured) would go so far afield in winter. So the word probably means "old" in this context. There are living trees associated with Robin Hood (e.g. Holt prints a photo of the "Major Oak" in Sherwood), but any tree ancient enough to be considered old at the time of the composition of the "Gest" is almost certainly dead by now.

Although Robin's tree is probably gone, there does seem to have been a "trystel tree," mentioned in stanzas 274, 286, 298, 387, 412, in the "Monk" (Stanza 37.1) and "Guy of Gisborne" and also, apparently, in Henry VIII's 1515 pageant (Pollard, pp. 52–53). The "Potter," stanza 56.4, refers to Robin's "tortyll-tree," presumably a corruption of this. Pollard on p. 53 claims that this requires that Robin be understood as an outlawed forester, but this strikes me as going beyond the data — surely any band of outlaws will have a series of recognized meeting places!

There is the interesting question of just what "trystel" means. **fg** changed "trystel-tre" to "trusty tree," which is banal but perhaps possible. The word trystel itself is rare, and (given the lack of Middle English spelling conventions) could be from several roots. Is it from "traist," "confidence" (Emerson, p. 450, compare Turville-Petre, p. 257, "traistis," "trust"); "trist," "appointed place, rendezvous" (Emerson, p. 451), whence our "tryst" (a word which we often think of as having sexual connotations, but which simply means a meeting place where secret things happen); or "tryste," "trust" (Emerson, p. 452)="truste," "trust" or "loyalty" (Dickins/Wilson, p. 315)? The essential meaning, however, is clear: A safe place to meet.

❖ **Stanza 180/Lines 717-718** ❧ "I make myne avowe to God... And to the Trenyte." This is one of only two references in the "Gest" to the Trinity (the other is in Stanza 359) , though all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned (the Father and the Holy Ghost in Stanza 9 and Christ repeatedly). It is a bit odd to read of God and the Trinity being separately invoked, as if they were separate divinities. (There actually were some obscure religious groups that treated the Trinity as a separate deity, which is what made

me think of this.) But surely this is just an odd statement by Robin, who as a devout Catholic would not have odd beliefs such as that.

❖ **Stanza 181/Line 721** ❧ Although the third fit is all about Little John and the sheriff, Clawson, p. 70, points out that it has two parts (which we might call "Little John in the Sheriff's Household" and "Little John Traps the Sheriff" or some such), and that these two are not directly linked in any way. Clawson considers these two originally to have been independent stories, and this the dividing point (the latter being almost incontestable if the former assertion is true). But even if the two are separate stories, it might simply be that one comes from the tale of Robin and the Knight, while the other comes from a separate tradition. Or it might be that this is one of the areas where the poet rewrote most heavily, creating a slightly different feeling.

I find it noteworthy that the theme of this part of the tale, of the sheriff being tricked into the forest, being made to share the life of the outlaws, and then being released, occurs also in "Robin Hood and the Potter." The details are very different — for one thing, it is Robin, not Little John, who tricks the Sheriff in the "Potter" — but this still hints that there was a well-known belief that Robin tricked and captured the Sheriff, and both tales set out to exploit the motif. This might, indeed, be why the poet decided to include this tale, which is someone inconsistent with his two main sources ("Robin and the Knight" and "Robin and the King"), in his tale: He felt that he needed a tale of Robin capturing the Sheriff -- and maybe, later on, of Robin killing the sheriff.

❖ **Stanza 181/Line 722** ❧ Here again we meet the word "shrewde"/"shrewed," which in Stanza 104 (which see) and Stanza 164 seemed to refer to wickedness, something accursed, something evil. Here, it seems to have switched over to the modern sense of "wise, insightful." Perhaps here read something like "sneaky" or "tricky."

❖ **Stanza 182/Line 727** ❧ Little John, we are told, "coude of curtesye." In "Havelok the Dane," line 194, we read that Goldeboru is to be educated until she was twelve and "she couthe of curteysye" (Sands, p. 63; Bennett/Gray, p. 156). For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanza 185/Lines 737–738** ❧ "a ryght fayre harte, His coloure is of grene." A green hart? (Thompson B731.7, "fancifully colored deer.") And the sheriff bought this tale? (And from a deserter?) The problem was sufficient that Allingham, without manuscript evidence, proposed emending "of grene" to "full shene" (cf. Gummere, p. 317). My suggestion that it was grazing in a green is perhaps a little more sensible — but it ignores Little John's "shrewde whyle." The likeliest explanation is that John is referring obliquely to Robin Hood, while trying to lure the Sheriff with the sight of a wonder; the "sixty.... tyndes" — that is, sixty tines, or forks in the antlers — of the next verse are also intended to make the beast seem wondrous. The alliterative poem *The Parlement of the Thre Ages,* which probably comes from about a century before the "Gest,"considers a hart with "sett of six and of fyve," i.e. with eleven tines, to be an impressive animal (Turville-Petre, p. 71).

In Stanzas 357–358 the King is angry that "He coud unneth fynde one dere, That bare ony good horne" — that is, he couldn't find any deer with decent antlers. The antlers were the measure of the animal.

Might the green hart be a hint of another link to "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight?" Again, probably not; Tolkien/Gordon, p. xx, believe the green knight came from the legend of the green man, and I've seen others who accept that belief. Whereas here, based on Stanzas 187–188, Robin is the green hart. Still, it's interesting to see this use of the color green.

Child, p. 53, notes that a disguised Fulk FitzWarren lured King John into a trap using a tale of a long-horned stag. Clawson, p. 74, points out other similarities between the two tales, e.g. Fulk brings in his men to trap the king. Evidently Little John wanted to go that tale one better. There is a difference in the tales, however, as we see from Cawthorne, p. 113. In the Fulk version, Fulk disguises himself as a peasant — a charcoal-burner (itself an illegal occupation within the bounds of a forest unless one had a warrant from the king; Young, p. 110). In the "Gest," John is incognito but does not use a new disguise.

The great hart — that is, a buck with very large antlers — was always the most desired trophy for a hunter; Pollard, p. 63, notes that they were becoming hard to find in the Middle Ages.

Clawson, p. 72, observes that we find, in "Robin Hood and the Butcher" [Child 122], that Robin himself, in disguise, offers to take the Sheriff to see his horned animals, which turn out to be deer. But the parallels are not close; in the "Gest," it is John, not Robin, who undertakes the deception, and John promises deer, not cattle. And the "Butcher" is widely felt to be a variation on the "Potter" anyway, and is more recent than the "Gest."

See also the note on Stanza 155 about the sheriff's right to hunt in the forest.

❖ **Stanza 186/Lines 743** ❧ "I durst not shote" There may be an incredibly subtle wordplay here. "Durst" is usually regarded as the past tense of "to dare," i.e. "dared." However, according to Davis Et Al, p. 151, it actually derives from the the passive of þar, "to be necessary." So Little John, using the word as a form of "þar," *might* have been saying "I was unable to shoot" (because there were no deer to be shot at), while the sheriff (taking "durst" as a form of "dare"), interpreted it as "I dared not shoot." Maybe. It's certainly clever of John to come up with such a subtle deception (at least, I think *I'm* clever for thinking of this) — but I honestly doubt the poet would have thought of that, or even known the archaic verb þar.

❖ **Stanzas 187–188/Lines 741–746** ❧ Little John professes to be afraid of the deer in the wood, and the Sheriff insists on seeing them. Note that the sheriff, whatever the reasons for his dispute with Robin (reasons which we are never told), does not lack courage.

❖ **Stanzas 188–189/Lines 751–756** ❧ The capture of the Sheriff. Recall that Robin also captures the Sheriff in the "Potter" (Holt, p. 34); perhaps it was an expected part of the tradition, and tales of Robin were expected to include some story of how it came about.

❖ **Stanza 189/Line 755** ❧ Stanzas 189 and 296 have variations on the same idiom, "Wo the worthe" and "Wo worth the," both meaning "you are worthy of woe" or "you deserve woe."

❖ **Stanza 191/Lines 762–764** ❧ Knight, p. 23, points out that the trick of having the Sheriff eat from his own silver also occurs in the Forresters version of "Robin Hood and the Sheriffe," i.e. "Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow" [Child 152].

❖ **Stanza 192/Line 767** ❧ Robin grants the Sheriff his life "for the love of Little John." This is an interesting change from Stanza 15, where Robin gives specific orders against the Sheriff and John seemingly makes no objection. Could this be a different sheriff? It has, after all, been about a year since Robin gave his instructions, so annual offices would have turned over to new holders had the King chosen new appointees. This would likely be an indication of a late date, after it became the norm to change sheriffs regularly.

Later, after the sheriff betrays Robin, Robin will not be so charitable.; see Fit V.

We see a similar situation in the "Potter," where again the sheriff is captured but spared. There, however, Robin spares the sheriff for the sake of his wife (Holt, p. 34) rather than for the sake of Little John.

❖ **Stanza 198/Lines 789-790** ❧ A "harder order... than ony anker or frere." It probably does qualify as a harder life than any friar's of this period. But harder than an anchorite? They withdrew from the world: "Extreme ascetic practices characterized the anchorites, and they gave little evidence of a sense of mission to mankind" (HarrisonEtAl, p. 41). An anchorite "differs from a hermit in that the latter is free to move about but chooses to live in isolation, whereas the anchorite is confined to his cell or dwelling. In the Middle Ages he was formally enclosed at a service performed by a bishop" (Metford, p. 24). An anchorite in this period might be walled into a chamber with a single small opening, through which necessities were passed and waste disposed of; when the anchorite died, the window might be bricked up. The anchorite was supposed to spend almost all time in prayer and self-deprivation. A night spent in the cold can hardly compare!

❖ **Stanza 200/Line 799** ❧ "Smyte of my hede." This is one of two places in the "Gest" where someone asks to be killed; the other instance is Little John in Stanzas 303–305. In Little John's case, the reason is clear: Catholic doctrine forbid suicide, but he wanted to die rather than fall into the hands of torturers. It's much harder to know what to make of this instance — the sheriff is not subject to anything close to what John would experience if captured! But maybe he too wants to die rather than face what he fears Robin will do to him.

❖ **Stanza 201/Line 802** ❧ for "saynte charity," i.e. probably "holy charity," see the note on Stanza 378.

❖ **Stanza 202/Lines 805–806** ❧ Robin makes the Sheriff swear by his "bright brand," i.e. sword. The "bright brand" is also mentioned in the "Monk," 14.4. In stanza 26.1 of the "Monk," Robin actually carries a two-handed sword — a long, heavy, difficult weapon, and not one which one learned casually.

Swearing by the sword is a well-attested phenomenon; known e.g. from Malory (e.g. when Lancelot defeats three knights who are attacking Sir Kay, he makes them swear on their swords to submit to the judgment of the court; Book VI, chapter xi; Malory/Rhys, p. 169).

Some have suggested that the oath on the sword goes back all the way to the time when great men had swords with names and histories. Pickering, p. 281, claims that "an oath made on a sword was once considered as binding as one made on a Bible." Normally, of course, we would expect a devout Christian like Robin to prefer an oath on the Bible — but remember that Robin lived in a Catholic England in the era before printing. Even if Robin was literate (unlikely if he lived in the reign of Edward II or before), Bibles were rare, and a complete New Testament (which required hundred of sheets of expensive parchment and months of scribal labor) would generally cost more than a sword. And Bibles were rarely seen outside religious foundations; even if they had been cheap, the Catholic Church didn't like lay people to read the Bible, or to see it translated into the vernacular. So the only Bibles around, prior to John Wycliffe in the late fourteenth century, were Latin bibles. What are the odds of Robin being able to read a Bible in Latin to be able to verify that it was what it said it was? Maybe Little John could read it, since he shows signs of clerical training, but he would have been one of very few in the band. And the sheriff, although very possibly literate in English, probably couldn't read it either. So a sword was surely his best bet for an oath.

Gummere, p. 317, observes that an oath upon the sword was still common lore in Shakespeare's day; see *Hamlet*, Act I, scene v (lines 147–150 in RiversideShakespeare). Wimberly, p. 94, mentions three instances of swearing by or on swords in versions of other ballads: "Queen Eleanor's Confession" [Child 156], "The Bonnie House o Airlie" [Child 199], and "The Gypsy Laddie" [Child 200], although the motif is not present in all versions of any of those ballads. Possibly it is also related to the idea of one person answering to another "on the point of my sword," which occurs in some versions of the ballad "The False Bride (The Week Before Easter; I Once Loved a Lass))" — although that may be just a case of a threat of harm.

Note that when Robin kills the sheriff, it is with this same bright brand (Stanzas 347–348). Robin then calls the sheriff untrue (Stanza 349). In Stanza 305, however, Little John calls it a "browne swerde," which doesn't sound so bright....

In the final line of the stanza. Robin declares that the Sheriff shall swear not to harm him "by water ne by lande." Is this a hint that Robin is also a pirate? If so, the hint is not picked up — although there was a Scottish ship *Robin Hood*, plus there is the ballad of "The Noble Fisherman, The, or, Robin Hood's Preferment" [Child 148]. It's conceivable that this wandered in from the legend of Eustace the Monk, who was a pirate, or some other such story. Odds are, however, that this is simply an oath that rhymes well.

❖ **Stanza 204/Line 813** ❧ The sheriff swears an oath of friendship — considered a very strong vow, at least unless one was a a king engaging in international diplomacy. (Some things never change....) For a possible consequence of this oath, see the note on Stanza 287.

❖ **Stanza 204/Lines 815–186** ❧ The text says that the sheriff was "as full of grene wode As ever was hepe of stone" — he was as full of (fed up with) the greenwood as was a "hepe" of stone. Knight/Ohlgren interpret "hepe" as "hip," a fruit (as in rose hips, e.g.), so the sheriff was as full as a fruit is with its seed (a suggestion going back to Ritson; cf. Dobson/Taylor, p. 93). But the ordinary meaning of "hepe" is "heap," just as you would expect, with a secondary meaning of "crowd, group, host." The more likely

reading is that the sheriff was as full of the greenwood as a heap is full of stones. We must confess uncertainty, however.

❖ **Stanza 205/Line 819** ❧ Although we tend to think of Robin leading "merry men," there aren't many references to the merry men in the "Gest"; they are usually young men, yeomen, or Robin's meinie. We do see "mery men" again in Stanzas 281, 316, 382, and the **a** text of 340; also his "mery meyne" in Stanza 262, and "mery yonge men" in 287. This may be another result of combining sources: in the first part, Robin has only the four followers (John, Much, and Scathelock; see the note on Stanza 4); but in this fit, we're in one of the sections where Robin has a large following.

❖ **Stanza 206/Lines 821** ❧ Here is another instance of John asking about his dinner; see the note on Stanza 5; also Stanza 156.

❖ **Stanza 206/Lines 823–824** ❧ Robin fears that the Virgin is "wroth with me, For she sent me not my pay" (or so most editors; see the textual note on Stanza 206).

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 159, say that "commercial interests" are invading Robin and his band, but this does not follow. Robin accepted the Virgin as surety on his loan to the knight; her failure to pay is thus a theological, not a monetary, issue. Robin uses the identical words in Stanza 235. Of course, all will turn out well….

Given the emphasis on the Virgin Mary in this section, I am tempted to suggest that Robin's meeting with the knight, and the repayment, might both have happened on one of the Mariological feast days. DaviesLiturgy, p. 349, lists these as:

2 February — the Purification of the Blessed Virgin (Candlemass)

25 March — the Annunciation

July 2 (later moved to 31 May) — the Visitation

15 August — the Assumption of Mary

8 September — the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin ("a very old feast," although the reason for the date is not known)

Of these, 8 September seems the most logical, since the weather in the day would still be fine, but it would be getting chilly at night, explaining the sheriff's uncomfortable night in stanza 200.

I emphasize that this is purest speculation. There are no indications in the text that the events took place on a feast day.

❖ **Stanza 207/Lines 825–828** ❧ We shall see, shortly, a running narrative of Mary sending Robin his payment via the monk of St. Mary's Abbey; see the note on Stanza 214 as well as the section on Miracles of the Virgin. It is interesting to see that John, who presumably knows the knight best, thinks it safe to reassure Robin about his honesty.

❖ **Stanza 208 (and following)/Lines 832 (and following)** ❧ Clawson, pp. 9–13, prints parallel texts of (most of) stanzas 17–44 with stanzas 208–251. The similarities between the two are too frequent and substantial to be regarded as coincidence; clearly the poet designed them to be parallel. The more noteworthy similarities will be pointed up in the notes below. In this verse, for instance, Robin sends out John, Much, and Scathelock, just as he did in Stanza 17.

Clawson, p. 15, follows Fricke in suggesting that one of these tales was originally an independent ballad, which was taken over by the author of the "Gest" and then duplicated. But on p. 16, he allows the possibility of two source ballads. As supporting

evidence, Clawson points out on p. 16 that the story of Eustace the Monk has two versions of the tale of Eustace taking a traveler, one in which the victim tells the truth and is spared, while in the other, the man Eustace captures lies and is robbed. But, as Clawson points out, these incidents are told in very different ways; they cannot be seen as the direct inspiration of the "Gest's" account.

Clawson's considered opinion, on p. 17, is that the tale of Robin and the Knight originally existed in a short (ballad?) version in which Robin captured the knight and then, being generous, paid off the Knight's debt. The difficulty with this suggestion is that we have little evidence, in any extant source prior to Ritson, of this theme of Robin giving to the poor. Martin Parker's "True Tale of Robin Hood" [Child 154] sort of hints at it (Phillips/Keatman, p. 32), but it doesn't use those words, and that is the only hint.

Personally, I would guess that the duplication was already present in the source Robin and the Knight, where the parallels would be much more significant: in that tale, the parallels would be the beginning and and of the tale, not just the beginning and middle, so the replay would seem more significant to the listener. Also, since the source would omit Fit III, the parallels would be closer together and more obvious.

❖ **Stanza 209/Lines 832–833** ❧ "Sayles"and "Watlynge Strete." This is the same place Robin sent his men at the beginning of the "Gest"; see note on Stanza 18.

❖ **Stanzas 210-211/Lines 837-844** ❧ Although stanza 209 is closely parallel Stanza 18, and Stanza 212 to Stanza 20, stanzas 210-211 are not parallel to Stanza 19. In stanza 19, Robin tells his men to rob the upper classes. But in Stanza 210, Robin is giving instructions to be kind to ordinary men (a faint hint of the "give to the poor" motif of the later legend), and in Stanza 211, we see John somewhat upset with the matter (from hunger? from being ignored?), though he obeys his orders. Stanza 210 thus is a sort of inversion of Stanza 19, and Stanza 211 has no parallel at all.

❖ **Stanza 212/Lines 845–848** ❧ Note the precise parallel in Stanza 20 to the language about seeking a victim: they go to the Sayles and look around. The parallel extends to the first line of Stanza 213 (but see the next note)

❖ **Stanza 213/Line 850** ❧ In the parallel in the first fit, instead of observing the "highway," John and his men observe a "derne [secret] strete." See the note on Stanza 21. As far I know, no one has offered an explanation for why the men change from haunting a back road to haunting a highway, unless it is simply that Robin's operations have expanded and he is able to go after more significant prey. This passage, more than the one in the first fit, fits the motif of "Schimpf und Ernst," about the robbing of a monk to pay another man's debt; this is summarized in the notes to Stanza 65.

❖ **Stanza 213/Line 851** ❧ Child, p. 53, says that the "black monks" are Benedictines — possibly significant, because the Benedictines were "the richest and most worldly" order of monks (Pollard, p. 131); Cook/Tinker, p. 278, declare that "from the fourteenth century on, they were famous more for their learning than for their piety." Lest we condemn, "They were the only scholars of the Middle Ages" (Cook/Tinker, p. 279). And, yes, St. Mary's was a Benedictine house (Pollard, p. 124).

Edward I, his wife Eleanor of Castile, and Edward II had Dominican rather than Benedictine confessors; Phillips, p. 65. On p. 73 Phillips tells of a Dominican priory founded by Edward. Phillips, p. 507, notes that the London Dominicans were so close to

Edward II that, when London turned against the King, the monks felt it necessary to flee. After Edward's deposition, many Dominicans seem to have been involved in trying to bring him back (Phillips, p. 545). So it's possible that the Dominicans were the pro-Edward friars, which might make the Benedictines the allies of the anti-Edward party. But to make this a motivation in the "Gest" is an extremely long stretch. The Benedictines were well established in Yorkshire — the first Benedictine monasteries in England may well have been those founded at Ripon and Hexham, by Wilfred of York in the late seventh century (Cannon, p. 94).

It is odd to note that Eustace the Monk, whose tale is considered to be a source of the "Gest," was a Benedictine (Cawthorne, p. 121), meaning that Robin was attacking a member of the order to which the hero of one of the source legends belonged.

It probably isn't very significant to the way Robin treats these monks, but I will note that Duns Scotus, the pioneer of extreme Mariolatreia (see the note on Stanza 10) was associated with the Franciscans (WalkerEtAl, p. 349).

Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 166, notes as an apparent inconsistency the fact that we see two monks here, but after this stanza, only one monk is mentioned. Of course, the junior monk might have fled with the guards, but there is no explicit statement to this effect. Clawson, p. 19, cites several instances of the number shifting, and thinks (pp. 19–24) the references to two monks represents a survival of an older ballad: In this ballad, Robin had robbed two monks; the compiler of the "Gest" took this ballad and mixed it up with elements taken from the tale of Robin and the Knight, producing a confused amalgam. It is a noteworthy point, particularly given other signs that the "Gest" is composite, but beyond proof. But Clawson always explains inconsistencies by creating new sources; I'd be inclined to consider the change a mere goof.

❖ **Stanza 213/Line 852** ❧ Here again we see men riding palfreys, as in Stanzas 75–77. Of course, monks were not fighters, so it is less surprising to see them riding a type of horse often associated with a woman.

❖ **Stanza 214/Lines 853–856** ❧ This stanza is the first clear part of a running gag which occupies most of the fourth fit: That this monk of St. Mary's Abbey (Stanza 233) has brought the payment of the loan for which the knight offered the Virgin Mary as guarantor. The monk of course would not see it this way, but in Stanza 207, John had told Robin he was sure the knight would pay; in this stanza, John suggests that the monk is bringing it; in Stanza 236, John firmly states that "this monke it hath brought"; in Stanza 242 Robin agrees that the monk has brought it; and in Stanza 248 John counts the monk's money and finds that it is twice what the knight owes; "Our Lady hath doubled your cast." This causes Robin to affirm, in 249–250, that Mary is the truest woman and best security he has found. In Stanza 271, the knight shows up to pay the debt, and Robin refuses the gift, because Our Lady brought the payment.

❖ **Stanza 215/Line 858** ❧ In Child's text, Little John tells his subordinates to "frese your bowes of ewe (yew)." I think it should be "our bowes," but this doesn't resolve the question of what it means to "frese" (freeze?) a bow. There is no certain answer to this question; see the discussion in the textual note on Stanza 215.

❖ **Stanza 216/Lines 861–862** ❧ The monk's company has seven "somers" — i.e. sumpters, pack horses. Sumpters generally were not fast but could carry large burdens

for a long time; see the note on Stanzas 75–77. At least two and probably three would be required to carry the eight hundred pounds of silver (Stanza 247). That leaves four to carry the baggage of the company — baggage which would be substantial for a company of fifty-two guards, two monks, and two servants. This presumably would be mostly food, plus perhaps some spare arrows or such; the soldiers would carry their own clothing and weapons. Unless the company has carts (which are not mentioned, and which could sometimes be a handicap on the poor, muddy roads of northern England), this means that they carried food for only about three days — evidence that they would need money to buy food along the way. For other types of horses used in the "Gest," again see the note to Stanzas 75–77.

❖ **Stanza 219/Line 873** ❧ John orders, "Abyde, chorle monke." This is less an insult than it sounds today — "churl" derives from Old English "ceorl," who was simply a peasant farmer. In Chaucer, e.g., it means both "common man"and "boor," but the former meaning is more common, in the opinion of Chaucer/Benson, p. 1228 (under "cherl"). Similarly, Davis Et Al, p. 22, list "common man" as the main meaning, with "churl/boor" secondary. But one thing is certain: it means a person at the bottom of the social scale. Many monks, especially senior monks, were in fact younger sons of aristocrats whose families had purchased them a comfortable position. By calling the lead monk a churl, John (who is said in Stanza 3 to be a yeoman) appears at minimum to be asserting superior social status. A modern equivalent might be something like, "Hold it right there, low-life."

John will use "chorle" again, with stronger force, in Stanza 227.

❖ **Stanza 221/Line 884** ❧ For the monk's comment on Robin "Of hym herd I never good," compare 26.1, where the Knight says of Robin, "Of him I have heard much good." We can instantly see that the Knight is willing to be a "fellow," the monk is not. (We also see that the monk is not particularly bright, to go about insulting people who are aiming bows at him.)

❖ **Stanza 222/Line 887** ❧ Little John here calls Robin a "Yeoman of the Forest." This might, of course, mean simply "a yeoman who lives in the forest." But it was also an office in the Edwardian period; see the note on Stanza 1.

❖ **Stanza 223/Line 889** ❧ The best texts say that Much had a"bolte" ready. There is a variant here (see the textual note on Stanza 223); probably because the usage is imprecise; Ritson noted that a "bolt" from a bow was usually used to shoot birds (Gummere, p. 318); also, of course, crossbows fired bolts and longbows arrows. The text is probably correct, however, since an arrow could casually be called a bolt — indeed, we quite clearly see arrows called "bolts" in the "Potter," stanzas 45.4, 51.2.

❖ **Stanza 224/Line 895** ❧ The word "grome" appears twice in the "Gest," here and in Stanza 4. The meaning in stanza 4 is uncertain; here, it clearly means "groom." "Groom" was the lowest of three levels of servants in noble households in the late fifteenth century, the two above it being squire and yeomen (Dobson/Taylor, pp. 34–35. "Groom" was the only one which was never an independent social rank; Pollard, p. 37).

❖ **Stanza 225/Line 897** ❧ This is the second time Robin meets someone at the lodge door (the other instance being in Stanza 29). Otherwise, they Robin meets outsiders at the trystel-tree. It is not obvious if the difference is significant.

❖ **Stanza 226/Lines 901–904** ❧ For Robin Hood and his hood, see the note to Stanza 29. Here, as there, the hood is simply used as a demonstration of courtesy (for which see Stanza 2): Robin is mannered enough to take off his hood. But in contrast to the well-mannered knight, the monk has not the courtesy to remove his hood in response to Robin's gesture. He will call Robin uncourteous in Stanza 256. It's an interesting point; Robin and Little John observe the *forms* of courtesy, but the spirit is more complicated.

❖ **Stanza 227/Line 905** ❧ For John's use of the word "chorle," see the note on Stanza 219.

❖ **Stanza 227/Line 907** ❧ Robin disclaims force here, in much the same language as in Stanza 13, although the circumstances are different. Here, as there, it does not mean *use no force* but *that has no significance* or *no matter;* see the note on Stanza 13.

❖ **Stanza 229/Line 915** ❧ "Seven score of wyght yemen." Could Robin really have fed and supplied seven score men in Barnsdale? This is an astonishing number of outlaws — but the poet will give this number several times (stanzas 288, 342, 389, 416, 448, and by implication in 342, where the reference is to seven score of bows, implying a similar number of bowmen. Often they are "wyght yonge men" rather than "yemen," hinting that Robin might take in men of other social statuses). Possibly the number derives from the tale of Gamelyn (line 628), where Gamelyn meets seven score men in the forest when he and his brother's steward Adam flee there (Cawthorne, p. 171).

Ohlgren, on p. 154 of Ohlgren/Matheson, suggests instead that 140 is the approximate number of members of a guild at the time. This fits his suggestion that the poem is aimed at the guilds.

Pollard, pp. 93–94, discusses outlaw bands in the fifteenth century and concludes that large bands did not hold together — men would join and leave in short order. Probably it is just a matter of the poet exaggerating again. But if we take it seriously, the time is obvious: The Scots wars of Edward II, when raiders and robbers were everywhere. At minimum, it must be before the Black Death; if it were after, there would be enough land available that there would be no need for hundreds of men to go off and be outlaws.

It is interesting that none of the references to this large band are in the section of the "Gest" devoted to Robin, the knight, and St. Mary's Abbey; all appear to derive from the other tales used by the author of the "Gest." In the tale of Robin and the Knight, there is no evidence that Robin had followers other than Little John, Scathelock, and Much (see the notes on Stanza 4 and Stanza 17).

❖ **Stanza 230/Line 918** ❧ There is disagreement as to the meaning of "raye." Ritson suggested undyed cloth; Gummere, p. 318, prefers Halliwell's explanation "striped cloth," which is also accepted by Knight/Ohlgren. We might also consider the possibility of emending to something like "scarlet and ryche arraye." For the uncertainty about the meaning of "scarlet," see the note on Stanzas 70–72.

❖ **Stanza 231/Line 921** ❧ For Robin's custom of washing before dinner, and its importance in polite society, see the note on Stanza 32. Could the fact that they have to *make* the monk wash be an indication of his lack of courtesy?

❖ **Stanza 233/Line 932** ❧ The "Hye Selerer," or High Cellarer, was present when the knight went to St. Mary's (see the note to Stanza 93). This makes Stanza 239 particularly

interesting. (It also reminds us of the question of whether Little John was there when the Knight repaid the abbot. Would he have recognized the Cellarer? Probably not, not after a year, particularly since all the monks are tonsured. But it might explain why John has such a low opinion of him.)

❖ **Stanza 235/Lines 939–940** ❧ These lines about Robin not being paid are the same as those at the end of Stanza 206; see the note there.

❖ **Stanza 236/Lines 943–944** ❧ For the running account of the Virgin Mary sending Robin his payment via the monk of St. Mary's Abbey, see the note on Stanza 214.

❖ **Stanza 237/Line 947** ❧ "A lytell money" — clearly a joke; four hundred pounds was a *lot* of money. See the note on Stanza 49.

❖ **Stanza 239/Lines 955–956** ❧ The Cellarer denies having heard of Robin's loan guaranteed by the Virgin Mary. Formally and legally, he is absolutely correct; he was not a witness to the meeting between Robin and the knight. But we know from Stanza 93 that the Cellarer of St. Mary's was present when the knight paid the abbot. Unless a new cellarer has been appointed in the last year (possible, but unlikely, particularly in a story as well-worked-out as this), he should know about the abbey's loan to the knight. To give him his due, he might have no particular reason to recall that that little fiasco happened exactly a year before. But recall that Little John was serving as the knight's yeoman in Fit 2. Just as we asked in John might have recognized the Cellarer in stanza 233, might not the Cellarer have recognized John? (At least in fiction.)

❖ **Stanza 240/Lines 959–960** ❧ "For God is holde a rightwys man" — the mention of God being a *man* is perhaps an echo of the Nicene Creed ("one Lord Jesus Christ, who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man") or even John 1:14 ("and the word became flesh and dwelt among us"). The righteousness of God is a very common theme in Paul (see, e.g. Romans 3:25–26). The righteousness of Mary ("his dame") is not explicitly stated in the New Testament, but is vaguely hinted at in the creeds. For more on Robin's theology of the Trinity, see the notes on Stanza 9 and Stanza 180.

The text of these lines is rather messed up; see the textual note on Stanza 240.

❖ **Stanza 242/Lines 965–966** ❧ For the running account of the Virgin Mary sending Robin his payment via the monk of St. Mary's Abbey, see the note on Stanza 214.

❖ **Stanza 243/Line 969** ❧ As in the first fit, Robin asks his guest to tell how much money he is carrying (the "Truth or Consequences" game); see the note on Stanza 37.

❖ **Stanza 243/Line 971** ❧ The monk claims, falsely, to have only "twenty marke" — twenty marks, or thirteen and a third pounds sterling, or 3200 pence. This is, by interesting coincidence, the amount the Sheriff offered Little John in Stanza 150, and which Little John offered the cook in Stanzas 170–171. It is a significant sum, which would surely have been enough to take the Monk to London had he travelled with a small company.

But the monk had fifty-two men in his company (Stanza 216), and he did not have enough horses to supply their needs for more than a few days (Stanza 216 again). If we assume he is paying each one three pence a day (a suitable rate, and one which would allow them to buy their own food), that's 156 pence per day for the whole company. Even if we assume no expenses other than paying the company, that means that the

entire twenty marks would be used up in twenty-one days. In practice, he would presumably have other expenses — if nothing else, his own food and lodging, which we can assume would cost more than the guards'. Even if we assume that the monk was very cheap about such things (which would explain why most of the men abandoned him so easily), in practice twenty marks probably would not maintain the company for more than about ten days. And the distance from York to London is about 200 miles/ 325 kilometers. That's probably at least a ten day journey for such a company. To bring so many from Yorkshire to London (Stanza 253) really calls for a budget of more than twenty marks; the Cellarer just doesn't have enough reserve. So he stands convicted by implication from the start.

❖ **Stanza 247/lines 985–986** ❧ Little John spreads his mantle "As he had done before" — in Stanza 42, when he counted the knight's money.

❖ **Stanza 247/Line 988** ❧ The monk allegedly carried "eyght [hondred] pounde" — eight hundred pounds. For this extremely high total, see the note on Stanza 49. See also the textual note on Stanza 247. For the outlaws searching their victims, see the note on Stanza 38. This is actually more than can be counted on a checkered cloth, but our poet might not know that.

❖ **Stanza 248/Line 989** ❧ The statement "Little John let it lie full still" occurs also in Stanza 43.1, also while counting money.

❖ **Stanza 248/Lines 991–992** ❧ For the running account of the Virgin Mary sending Robin his payment via the monk of St. Mary's Abbey, see the note on Stanza 214. Here John jokes that the monk is true — true not in his statement (Stanza 243) that he had twenty marks, but true in his delivery of Robin's pay.

Compare this to the factually accurate statement in Stanza 43 that the knight is "trewe inowe" because he had only the handful of change that he said he had.

Although I doubt that the poet was thinking of this, there is an interesting analogy to the account of Joseph in Egypt in Genesis 40. In that tale, Pharaoh's baker and butler are imprisoned for having displeased Pharaoh, and Joseph interprets their dreams, telling both that Pharaoh will "lift up your head." As John says the knight is true because he is true and the monk is true in a completely different sense, so Joseph tells the butler that Pharaoh will lift up his head and restore him (Genesis 40:13), but he will lift up the baker's head and hang him (Genesis 40:19). Both dreams truly tell of Pharaoh lifting his servant's head, but true in very different ways.

In the final line of the stanza, **b** says the Virgin Mary has doubled Robin's "cast" (**p**'s "caste" presumably is the same thing), while **fg** read "cost." This probably doesn't really mean "cost," since such usage is primarily modern, but even if it did, the reading of **b** is preferable — Robin gambled on the knight's honesty (or on the Virgin's, if you will), as he might gamble on dice — and he has been repaid double, as he might in gambling on dice.

A very subtle theologian might even tie this in with the theology of miracles. Aquinas had a whole classification system of miracles (Goodich, p. 148). One class is of things which could happen naturally but not by the means by which the miracle happens (an example would be the Miraculous Harvest miracle, in which an husbandman sees his crop instantly mature: It would mature eventually, but not

instantly). Here, the Virgin has doubled Robin's cast, but not by the natural means of slow profit. And this, Robin might argue, also conforms to the standard for a truly divine miracle: it "redound[s] to the benefit of the faith and confound[s] its foes" (Goodich, p. 149). Thus the idea of this event as Miracle of the Virgin is reinforced.

❖ **Stanza 251/Lines 1003–1004** ❧ Robin here promises to be "a friend" to the Virgin "yf she have nede." Arguably she calls in this promise in Stanza 336, where the knight's wife asks Robin for help "For Our dere lady love," though the poet does not ever explicitly point out Robin as the means by which the Virgin works. This would then be another Miracle of the Virgin, but a very subtle one; see the comment on Aquinas in the previous note. See also the section The Knight's Story as a Miracle of the Virgin.

❖ **Stanza 252/Line 1005** ❧ Note that here Robin says that he will provide silver, but not gold, if the Virgin needs it. See the note on Stanza 49; it is somewhat curious to see silver promised here but gold paid out there.

❖ **Stanza 253/Lines 1009–1012** ❧ Apparently the monk is being sent to London to try to get the King to deal with the knight and give his lands to the abbot. (Something that formally should be done by Parliament with a bill of Pains and Penalties, or even an Act of Attainder resulting in execution, but that's too complicated to put in a ballad.) This is obviously similar to a portion of the plot of the "Monk," which also involves St. Mary's. Here, as there, the monk is intercepted on the way to the King— in each case, by John and Much. But here there is no rescue, just a preemptive strike.

That the monk's goal is legal action is strongly suggested by the word "mote" in the second line of the stanza. "Mote," or "moot" as we would usually spell it (think of "Entmoot," Tolkien fans), is a term "constantly associated with law," according to Gummere, p. 318.

Clawson, pp. 21–22, thinks that stanzas 253–254 contradict each other somewhat, and are out of place after stanza 252. He would move 253–257 to a location around stanza 232 (where Robin is asking the monk about the abbey he comes from). Clawson's arrangement makes sense — in effect, Robin would then be asking "Where are you from?" and "Why did you take a trip?" — and could possibly have arisen if the common ancestor of our prints had an arrangement of five stanza per page and became disarranged, but I do not think the disorder enough to justify such a drastic change.

❖ **Stanza 254/Line 1015** ❧ The reading of **b** is "Too reken with our reves," i.e. to check the accounts of our local managers, and maybe gather what they owe (another sense of "reckoning"), which is a perfectly reasonable thing to do and is an innocuous activity for the monk (although it's very likely a lie). **f** has a fascinating reading in the place of "reves": "revers," i.e. "reavers" — thieves, robbers. In other words, in **f**, the monk says he is going to deal with people like Robin Hood! A threat? A warning? An inadvertent truth? It would be a fascinating reading, but presumably it's just an error. (Although it's just possible that "revers" could have been heard as "reves" or vice versa if a person took down the "Gest" from recitation.)

❖ **Stanza 255/Lines 1019-1020** ❧ John is the best yeman "To seke a monkes male" — to search a monk's baggage. It is of note that "searcher" was an actual customs office post — when Geoffrey Chaucer was a customs officer in London, "two searchers were acting in the port, one in London itself and the other down-river at Gravesend,"

searching for "uncustomed" goods as well as controlling the flow of precious metals in and out of England. "Boatmen and armed servants were necessary to assist the searchers in their work" (Crow/Olson, p. 175). It's almost as if John is playing the Searcher to Robin's Customs Officer, as if Barnsdale were the Republic of Robin. Could John have learned is money-counting and baggage-searching skills in government work? There is no way to tell. The other instance of John searching a visitor's baggage is Stanza 41, but that search is much less explicit.

❖ **Stanza 256/Line 1021** ❧ The text of this line is troublesome and probably damaged (see textual note on Stanza 256); the sense is probably that Robin asks what, or how much money, the monk is carrying on another horse.

As the textual note mentions, there may be an irony here, in Robin referring to a baggage horse as a "courser" — a high-quality animal (see the note on Stanzas 75–77). Could it be that it was a particularly *poor*-looking animal? And, if so, might it have been used as a disguise? That is, could the monk have put his treasure on a poor-looking animal, to try to conceal it? This would explain why John didn't search it at once. And, perhaps, why the Cellarer thought he could get away with lying.

❖ **Stanza 256/Line 1024** ❧ "That were no curteysye." For the importance of courtesy, see the note on Stanza 2; for Robin's courtesy to the monk, see Stanza 226.

❖ **Stanza 257/Line 1025** ❧ The Cellarer says that Robin's men beat and bound him. This fulfills Robin's instructions on how to deal with church officials in Stanza 15, though there seems to have been more binding than beating.

❖ **Stanza 257/Lines 1026–1027** ❧ **"**It is our olde maner... To leve but lytell behynde." Could Shakespeare have known this little bit of casuistry? As a motto or slogan, perhaps? Compare Falstaff's justification of his less-than-honourable ways: "Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal, 'tis no sin for a man to labor in his vocation" (1 Henry IV, I.ii, lines 104–105 in RiversideShakespeare).

❖ **Stanzas 259–260/Lines 1035–1040** ❧ The monk has enough self-possession enough to try a little irony, saying in effect, "The food is cheaper in Blythe and Doncaster." Robin, not to be outdone, in effect praises the abbot for sending such a profitable victim.

To the monk's words compare, e.g., the words of the Bishop of Hereford in "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford" (Child 144, Text A, stanza 15): "For if I had known it had been you, I'd have gone some other way."

❖ **Stanza 259/Line 1036** ❧ "Blith or.... Dankestre," i.e. Blythe or Doncaster, for which see the note to Stanza 27. In this case, we are absolutely certain the monk is going to London (stanza 253), and is coming from St. Mary's. So he must be going south, and to have met Robin north of those towns. This is strong evidence that the scene is Barnsdale, not Sherwood. This reinforces the sense that the knight was heading south in Stanza 28.

❖ **Stanza 263/Line 1049** ❧ Is this the palfrey Robin gave the knight in Stanzas 75–77? We cannot say, but it would be appropriate.

❖ **Stanza 263/Line 1051** ❧ For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2. The knight again shows courtesy in Stanza 270.

❖ **Stanza 265/Lines 1059–1060** ❧ Robin, having pretended that the monk was bringing the knight's money, perhaps continues the pretense here (presumably as a joke

with his men, since no one else could know what had happened) — since Robin has been paid, the knight has no necessary reason to show up.

❖ **Stanza 266/Line 1063** ❧ For the difficult problem of the "hye iustice" see the note on Stanza 93. Here, however, there is no textual variant. Perhaps, in this case, it just means something like "the senior justice" or the like, rather than a specific office.

❖ **Stanza 268/Line 1069** ❧ Kittredge suggests that "a grefe" should be read as "a-grefe," in other words, don't take a grievance, don't hold a grudge.

There are very many problems with the text of this verse; several lines are probably missing. At least, this is how I resolved the problem of a stanza that is, in all the extant texts, many syllables too long. See the textual note on Stanza 268 and note that I added enough lines to pad one too-long stanza into two.

❖ **Stanza 268A/Line 1070** ❧ Wentebrydge. Conjectural reading. We know, thanks to Hunter (Harris, p. 64) that the place near Barnsdale where Watling Street crosses the river Went is called, unsurprisingly, "Wentbridge." And Wentbridge ("Went-breg") is mentioned in stanza 6 of the "Potter." Thus it seems reasonable to mention it here. Child's text does the same in Stanza 135. Nonetheless this is only a guess, although one based on the geography or the area around Barnsdale.

❖ **Stanza 270/Line 1079** ❧ Twenty marks of interest. See the note on Stanza 121 for the value of twenty marks, as well as the author's seeming obsession with that amount.

❖ **Stanza 271/Line 1082** ❧ The line "Thou broke it well for ay" could be interpreted as, "yes, you really broke the commitment to arrive on your day," but given the approval Robin expresses, it should probably be understood, "You, brook it well, for aye," that is, "Accept that I am giving you the money." See also the readings in Stanza 274 and Stanza 279.

❖ **Stanza 271/Lines 1081–1084** ❧ For the story of Mary's repayment of the knight's loan, see the note on Stanza 214. This particular passage, with its theme of Robin being repaid but from another source, in addition to its parallels to some of the Miracles of the Virgin, is reminiscent of the story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 42–44. Joseph's brothers, jealous of the fact that he was his father's favorite, sold him into Egypt. There Joseph became the vizier. When famine hit Canaan, the brothers had to go down to Egypt for food. They brought money, but Joseph (who knew them although they did not recognize him) played a trick on them, causing the money they paid him to be placed in their sacks of grain. The famine was long, and eventually they were forced to come to Egypt again. When they came, they tried to explain, and Joseph declared (Genesis 43:23) "your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your sacks for you; I received your money." (After some additional testing of his brothers, Joseph finally concluded that they had reformed, and all lived happily every after, but that has no parallel in this tale).

❖ **Stanza 272/Lines 1085–1086** ❧ Robin, in these lines, refuses to commit usury by accepting more than what he is owed. Admittedly he took the payment from the wrong source — but he does not collect more than his due. It is a peculiar form of honesty, but considering the behavior of modern bankers (with their careful scheduling of payments to generate overdraft fees, and their concealment of loan terms), perhaps we ought not question.

❖ **Stanza 274/Line 1093** ❧ In Stanza 271, Robin urged the knight to "broke," i.e. "brook, accept" his gift — to take the money. Here, he uses "broke" again. Perhaps the sense is the same — but perhaps it means "broker," "trade with." The latter meaning is even more likely in Stanza 279.

❖ **Stanza 274/Line 1096** ❧ For Robin's "trystel tre(e)" see the note on Stanza 176.

❖ **Stanza 276/Line1102** ❧ There is a variant here, probably caused by the fact that "tresure" does not appear to rhyme with "me." " But "treasure" is doubtless to be pronounced "treasury." Note that once again it is Little John who counts the money.

❖ **Stanza 279/Line 1096** ❧ This is the third time Robin urges the knight to "broke" the four hundred pounds, following Stanza 271 and Stanza 274. Since he is to brook it *well,* the odds are here very high that he is to use it for commerce.

❖ **Stanzas 280–281/Lines 1117–1124** ❧ For two partial parallels to the lines "God... grant us well to fare," see the notes on Stanza 153 and especially Stanza 112.

Note, however, that this is a very appropriate end to the tale of Robin and the Knight. *This could be the end of a complete tale.* It is very reasonable to assume that this is where the source tale of "Robin and the Knight" ended. The remaining four fits are from other sources.

This explains a curiosity: Although the copies all place the end of the fourth fit after stanza 280, internal evidence clearly indicates that the fits should be divided after stanza 281 (observe the use of the "lythe and listen" formula at the beginning of 282). But if the tale of Robin and the Knight ended with Stanza 280, then Stanza 281 is probably a "glue" stanza added by the compiler to transition us from the tale of the Knight to this section of the tale of Robin and the Sheriff. This would explain why the compiler put the division where he did: he puts the division at the point where his first and main source ends.

Of course, it is a genuine question whether the fits are authorial or editorial. Some old writings make the division explicit in the text; in *Wynnere and Wastoure,* a fit ends with the line "Full freschely and faste, for here a fitt endes" (Speirs, p. 276). On the other hand, there are hints in Chaucer that he knew romances which had been ineptly divided into fits by editors (Bennett/Gray, p. 127). If the divisions in the "Gest" are editorial, the fits have no authority anyway. Perhaps the fits were marked by the editor who produced the first printed edition, and all the later printers followed that first edition — and the editor marked "Fyfth Fytte" in the margin of the source manuscript alongside stanza 281, meaning it to follow 281, but the compositor set it before.

The main point, however, remains: The end of Stanza 280 is likely the end of the first source used to create the "Gest." All remaining material is from other sources.

❖ **Stanza 282/Lines 1125–1126** ❧ Observe the parallel to the first stanza, which also begins "Lithe and lysten, gentylmen" (although with different spelling), and to Stanza 144 and Stanza 317–318. For notes on this introductory formula, see the notes to Stanza 1.

❖ **Stanza 282/Lines 1125–1128** ❧ In Fit V, as in Fit III, the Sheriff of Nottingham is Robin's chief opponent, and there is no indication that a new sheriff has been appointed. But the Sheriff of Fit III is a relatively incompetent figure of fun. The Sheriff of Fit V comes close to destroying Robin (Holt, p. 25). Some editors suspect that these

two fits come from different sources; I am not sure, but I certainly do not consider it impossible. In Stanza 15, Robin had warned against the Sheriff; one suspects the warning was against the Sheriff of Fit V, not the one of Fit III. For more about the status of sheriffs, and why the new sheriff might have been closer to the king than the old, see the notes on Stanza 15.

This fit features the second archery contest of the "Gest"; for the first, see the note to Stanzas 145–146. Robin and his men will stage their own in Stanzas 397–398. But this one is different; it is supposed to bring in all the best archers of the North. Given that Robin's men in Stanza 301 almost fall victim to an ambush, this raises the possibility that the contest was intended to lure Robin into a trap. (One wonders if the monks of St. Mary's might have put the sheriff up to it.) We see this made explicit in the Forresters version of "Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow" [Child 152] (Knight, p. 23).

❖ **Stanza 285/Lines 1137–1140** ❧ The golden arrow as a prize for an archery contest. This strikes me as a rather strange prize; in a time when life was relatively short and people were poor, mementos like this were not popular; in the absence of another prize, the winner would probably have to melt it down. Nor would it be an effective arrow, since the gold would blunt and the silver break. The balance and mass would be off, too, and it would be heavier than a regular arrow. It was a trophy and nothing more. Nonetheless the idea seems to have inspired "Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow" [Child 152].

Estimating the value of the arrow is difficult, because we don't have its dimensions. It probably wasn't a full "cloth yard." A reasonable assumption is that it would be the length of a war arrow — about twenty-eight inches (Featherstone, p. 65), or seventy centimeters. The shaft, in such cases, had a diameter of about .3 inches, or .75 cm. The point would be a pyramid two inches (Featherstone, p. 66), or five cm., long and with sides about .75 cm. So the golden arrowhead would have a volume of about one cubic centimeter. Add perhaps fifty percent for the golden feathers and we get 1.5 cc. The density of gold is 19 grams per cubic centimeter. So the weight of gold is 28.5 grams — a hair over one ounce; the difference between the two figures is well within our margin of error, which is on the order of 50% even assuming we've guessed the right kind of point for the arrow.

The volume of silver is a little more than thirty cubic centimeters. The density of silver is 10.5 grams per cubic centimeter. So the total mass of silver is about 325 grams, or 11.5 ounces. So the total value, in silver equivalent, is about 30 oz. of silver. That's about 2.5 pounds sterling. It's a substantial sum to a yeoman, but one a royal official could probably afford. This makes rather more financial sense than many of the figures in the "Gest."

❖ **Stanzas 287–288/Lines1145, 1151** ❧ "Yonge men" may be an archaism, the root form of "yeomen." (Or not; the point is disputed.) Alternately, it may be a transcription error for "yeomen." Or not.... This is one of the places in the "Gest" where Robin has a large band; it makes sense, in a band of 140+, that many would not be yeomen. For yeomen note on Stanza 1.

❖ **Stanza 287/Lines 1147–1148** ❧ Robin decides to participate in the Nottingham archery contest, declaring he "wyll wete [test, know] the shryves fayth, Trewe and yf he

be." Ohlgren, p. 282, interprets this to mean that Robin will test whether the sheriff is true to the oath he swore in Stanza 204 to be Robin's friend. That would imply, contrary to some of the speculations outlined in the note on Stanza 292, that Fits III and V are from the same source. Assuming they are from the same source raises other questions — for starters, after that embarrassment, would the Sheriff still be sheriff?

But there is another point. The spelling in this line is not ""sheryf," as in (for instance) stanzas 204 and 205, nor "sheryfe," as in stanza 282. Terminal *e* in middle English was often an optional syllable, for rhyme or meter, and *i* and *y* were really the same letter, so "sherif" and "sheryfe" were genuine variants. And the glossary shows that no one at this time really knew how to spell "sheriff." But "shryues (shryves)"? That's about as close to "shreward," "rogue" (Dickins/Wilson, p. 306) as to "sherif"; also consider "shryn," "shrine" — perhaps Robin made a pilgrimage and made some sort of conditional vow and wanted to see the effects? Just a thought....

Even if "shryves" means "sheriff," there is the possibility that Robin is not testing the Sheriff's oath of friendship but his promise to give the prize to the best archer no matter who it be — that is, will he give the award to one of Robin's men? As it turns out, he will not — a hint, it seems to me, that in fact it is a new sheriff.

Note however that in Stanzas 296–298, Robin complains that the sheriff is untrue.

These lines give us another, very vague, parallel to the story of David and Saul, this time to 1 Samuel 20. By this time Saul is so jealous of David that he wants David dead. He had tried to have David killed by demanding that he kill a hundred Philistines as a bride-price for Saul's daughter Michal — but David, instead of dying, produced the hundred Philistine foreskins (the Hebrew text of 1 Samuel 18:27 in fact says that David killed two hundred Philistines, although the Greek says only one hundred). In 1 Samuel 19, Saul tries to capture David in his bed, but David escapes.

In 1 Samuel 20, David and his friend Jonathan, Saul's son, agree to test Saul. David will be absent from Saul's monthly banquet (1 Samuel 20:5). Saul will ask where he is (20:6). Jonathan will explain that he has gone to a family sacrifice, and has asked Jonathan for permission to do so. If Saul accepts the explanation, then David and Jonathan will know that David is safe; if Saul does not accept the explanation, then David must flee (20:7).

As it turns out, in 1 Samuel 20:30, Saul refuses Jonathan's explanation and even reviles Jonathan's mother, Saul's own wife.

Thus David tested Saul just as Robin tests the Sheriff, and just as Saul failed the test, so too does the Sheriff. And, in the end, Saul's lack of faith probably cost him his life (although it was not David who killed him), and certainly the Sheriff's lack of faith results in Robin killing him.

❖ **Stanza 288/Line 1151** ❧ For Robin's seven score men, see the note on Stanza 229.

❖ **Stanza 292/Line 1166** ❧ There is a variant here, over which outlaws hit the target, and whether they sliced or clave it; see the textual note on Stanza 292. Knight/Ohlgren suggest, p. 161, that stanza 292 refers to a sort of "tiebreak" between Robin and Gilbert, the winners of the preliminary round, but the description of the contest is too brief for us to really assess what happened.

❖ **Stanza 292/Lines 1167–1168** ❧ "Gylberte Wyth the whyte hande." Until this point, the only outlaws given any real mention are Little John, Much the Miller's Son, and Scathelock, and John is the only one who has done much of anything. We have no background on Gilbert of the White Hand. (We do note that **fg** call him Gilbert of the "lylly white" hand.) As mentioned above, there was a 1501 mention of Gilbert by Gavin Douglas, but it tells us nothing except that he was associated with Robin by that year — for all we know, the reference might derive from the "Gest."

Is there any possibility that the name "Gilbert" was traditionally used for foresters? Young, p. 49, mentions a case in the time of Henry II when four knights were tried for killing a group of men including Gilbert the forester. But I know of no other foresters named Gilbert.

It is probably coincidence, but we find an instance in the reign Edward II of the bishop-elect of Durham and two cardinals being robbed by outlaws in the north of England (Hutchison, p. 88) — a situation quite similar to "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford" [Child 144] as well as to portions of the "Gest." Prestwich3, p. 103, and McNamee, p. 84, say that the crime was committed by Gilbert de Middleton in 1317 — exactly halfway into the reign of Edward II (and, astonishingly, exactly the time we would have expected Robin to have robbed the monk if the knight had been talking of going on crusade in 1316). Phillips, p. 299, says that Middleton was one of Edward's household knights, as was one of his fellow robbers, Sir John de Lilburn.

Apparently all of this involved a local resident, John d'Eure, who acknowledged a debt of 100 marks to John de Sapy, the keeper of the temporalities of Durham. The agreement was overseen by the Prior of Durham. This debt was only supposed to be paid if Louis de Beaumont was consecrated as Bishop of Durham (Philipps, p. 300). It's not the story of Robin, the Knight, and the Abbot, but it's surprisingly close.

According to Phillips, p. 299, the two cardinals were quickly released, but Bishop Louis of Durham, along with his brother Henry de Beaumont, were held for more than a month. The result was a political crisis, with Edward and the Earl of Lancaster — who were always at loggerheads anyway — each suspecting the other.

All this causes us to ask, Could "Gilbert de Middleton" have become "Gilbert of the White Hand"?

To be sure, Gilbert de Middleton's story does not end happily. He was captured in 1318, taken to London, tried, and executed (Phillips, p. 302).

As a really, *really* wild additional stretch, I'm going to mention the existence of a royal yeoman listed as "Robert le Ewer." The description on p. 437 of Phillips is astonishing: "One chronicler even described him as 'the prince of thieves....'…He appears to have served in the Scottish campaign but in September 1322 left the king secretly without permission and headed for his home county of Hampshire, where he allegedly acted like a Robin Hood, distributing the good of executed contrairants to the poor as alms for their souls."

As an alternate explanation for the name "white hand," Baldwin, p. 66, says that Robert Earl of Leicester (1168–1190) was known as "Blanchemains," French for "White Hand." There is no reason to think Gilbert related to the Beaumonts of Leicester, however. Baldwin suggests that the name may have arisen because Earl Robert had

vitiligo, which causes a sort of localized albinoism. Some have suggested that the character Gilbert's name also derived from vitiligo. But if we are getting speculative, we can wonder if there might not be a reason why Gilbert did not have a tan on his hands — perhaps he had been a clerk or some such.

Some versions of the Tristam legend refer to "Isuelt of the White Hand" (CHEL1, p. 310), but I strongly doubt this is related. Some versions of the tale of *Ywain and Gawain* call Ywain "Blanchemains," "white hands," or equivalent; that seems a bit more likely to be a source. There are other romances which call a character some variation on this name — compare, e.g. Malory, in which Sir Gareth is called "Beaumains," "fair/pretty-hands." (Sir Kay declares, "And sythen he hath no name, I shall gyff hym a name whyche shall be called Beawmaynes — that is to say 'Fayre Handys' — And into the kychyn I shall brynge hym"; Malory/Shepherd, p. 179. Left unexplained is how a fifth century Briton could award a name in medieval French....) This is often because the young man involved had not been in the field much and so had relatively fine-looking hands.

Harris, p. 81, suggests that "of the white honde," instead of meaning "of the white hand," might be an error for a rare but attested name that was something like "Withondes" or "Withehoundes." Now it's worth noting that the "Gest" uses the spelling "hande," not "honde," for Gilbert (although it usually uses "honde" elsewhere). And Gilbert is mentioned outside the "Gest." But that doesn't absolutely prove that Harris is wrong.

❖ **Stanza 293/Line 1170** ❧ Reynold. For Little John's use of the name Reynold Greenleaf, see the notes to Stanza 149. This is the only time in the "Gest" that Reynold is mentioned as an archer distinct from Little John. (Although we do find Reynold listed among Robin's men in the Winchester parliamentary list of 1432; see the note on Stanza 4). Scholars often treat this as a sign of inconsistency, and it surely is, but I wonder if, in the source, Little John competed under the name Reynold, and the compiler of the "Gest" failed to notice this. Or maybe the author of the "Gest" just needed another name (since he had specified six archers), and that's what he came up with.

It is interesting to note that Ravenscroft's *Deutermelia* of 1609 contains a piece which Child-ESB titles "By Lands-Dale Hey Ho." He quotes it from Ritson. This piece begins:

By Lands-dale hey ho,
By mery Lands-dale hey ho,
There dwelt a jolly miller,
And a very good old man was he, hey ho.
He had, he had and a sonna a,
Men called him Renold.

The piece goes on to tell of Reynold's shooting, concluding

And there of him they made [a]
Good yeoman Robin Hood,
Scarlet, and Little John,
And Little John, hey ho.

The whole makes little sense, and it was printed long after the "Gest," but it perhaps indicates a "Reynold" traditionally associated with Robin who was later forgotten.

❖ **Stanza 295/Line 1179** ❧ For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanzas 296–298/Lines 1181–1192** ❧ For Robin's decision to test the value of the Sheriff's oath, see the note on Stanza 287. For the oath itself, see Stanza 204.

The first line of stanza 296, "They cryed out on Robyn Hode," is interesting. Who is doing the crying? The sheriff's men? Or was it the townsfolk of Nottingham? The latter is the suggestion of Knight/Ohlgren, p. 162, which obviously implies that Robin was not as popular with the townsfolk as some would have us think. It would also explain their fear of Robin and his men in Stanza 428. If it does mean the townsfolk, of course, it relieves the Sheriff of some of his guilt. But see the note on Stanza 301.

In stanza 63 of the "Monk," a guard at Nottingham's gates explains that Robin's men "slew our men upon our walls," but no details of this assault are given, nor any explanation of the reason.

The fact that the Sheriff's men attacked, and forced Robin to retreat, is surprising if Robin really had seven score of followers. Just how many men did the Sheriff have that he would dare attack such a large force? Other than London, the largest towns in England in the fourteenth century had fewer than ten thousand people — and Nottingham was not one of the largest towns. A population of three thousand is probably about right. Half were women. Probably a third were children. A few were old or disabled. That leaves a population of probably not more than 900 able-bodied men. Were they all fighters? Probably not. Were they all present? Probably not. Were they all organized as soldiers? Certainly not. I think it most unlikely that the population of one town, without careful preparation, could take on a band of 140 skilled archers — especially archers as good as Robin, John, and (seemingly) Gilbert.

❖ **Stanzas 296/Lines 1183** ❧ For the idiom "Wo worth the" see the note on Stanza 189.

❖ **Stanza 298/Line 1190** ❧ For Robin's "trystel tre(e)" see the note on Stanza 176.

❖ **Stanza 301/Line 1201** ❧ The fact that an ambush has been laid in (and that the Sheriff had enough men available even to try it) would seem to imply that the whole shooting contest was a trap — not a legitimate contest but a way of luring Robin from the greenwood (see also the note on Stanza 282). This would go against understanding the passage in Stanza 296 to mean that the townsfolk, not the sheriff, initiated the attack on Robin.

❖ **Stanza 302/Lines 1205–1206** ❧ Little John's injury in the knee is similar to an event in the tale of Fulk FitzWarren, where Fulk is wounded in the leg (Baldwin, p. 37); also similar is the fact that both find shelter with a friendly knight.... Note however that in the tale of Fulk it is the hero himself, not his chief lieutenant, who is wounded. There is also a somewhat similar instance where Fulk's brother is wounded (Cawthorne, p. 115). Clawson, pp. 81–83, finds parallels in the various stories of William Wallace — in one tale, Wallace executes his own follower rather than let him be captured, but there is also a case where Wallace rescues a man by carrying him on his back.

❖ **Stanzas 303–305/Lines 1209–1220** ❧ The instances of an injured man pleading not to fall into the hands of an enemy are of course very old. Child, p. 54, has an eastern analogy involving one Giphtakis, but completely ignores the three-thousand-year-old appeal of Saul of Israel, wounded by the Philistines on Gilboa, that his armor-bearer kill

him rather than letting the Philistines capture him. This tale is told in 1 Samuel 31 — the immediate follow-up to the raid on Ziklag, for which see Stanzas 338–339. There is, of course, the difference that there was no one to rescue Saul, who (when his armor-bearer could not bring himself to do the deed) fell on his own sword.

Goodich, pp. 56–57, etc., notes that the fourteenth century was an era in which torture was a standard method for obtaining confessions, due to the general incompetence of the investigative forces. And executions were also done with torture.

Little John, if taken by the Sheriff, would be tried and surely convicted — and sentenced to death by torture. Very likely drawing and quartering — being dragged to the place of execution, followed by castration, half-hanging, and evisceration, with his dead body cut into parts which would be displayed outside the gates of local towns. Given the sheriff's reasons to dislike John, we can hardly doubt that the punishment would be even more severe than usual. Little wonder that he begged for a quick, clean death!

Of course, John could have attempted suicide — but the Catholic Church strongly condemned suicide. Hardon, whose book is basically Catholicism in its most extreme and dismaying form, declares on p. 422 that suicide "a grace sin against the natural and revealed law. The suicide offends against the divine precept 'You shall not kill.' One causes grave injury to the welfare of society and violates the virtue of charity to oneself. God is the supreme and exclusive owner of all things.... He alone can take human life when he wills. The one who directly takes his or her own life violates the rights of God." One can only wish that someone would hire a medieval torturer to teach Hardon what it was like to be drawn and quartered, so he could learn a little charity rather than saying Seigheil to his non-Biblical God — but the point is, suicide was strongly condemned by the Church and was close to an automatic damnation. It was viewed as morally equivalent to murder, and it barred the victim from consecrated ground (Goodich, p. 80). Thus John would surely prefer what would be considered a battle death to taking his own life. Hence these stanzas.

For another instance of someone begging to be killed, see Stanza 200. Ironically, the person doing the begging there was the Sheriff, whose vengeance John here fears. That was hardly as serious a circumstance as this, though. The Sheriff was just feeling a little chilly; there was no threat of serious torture.

❖ **Stanza 305/Lines1217–1220** ❧ It is interesting to see John call Robin's blade a "browne swerde"; elsewhere (Stanza 202, Stanzas 347–348) it is a "bright bronde." Dobson/Taylor gloss "browne" as "bright, shining," but I haven't seen any other instance of this usage. Typically "browne" means "brown"; sometimes this generalizes to "dark" or a dull hue, the opposite of "bright." J. R. R. Tolkien's glossary in Sisam defines "broune" as "brown," "dull-hued," and "dark." According to Onions, p. 121, the word only came into use in the thirteenth century, and seems to have been rare then; based on the glossaries, neither Chaucer nor Langland used it. Perhaps the meaning was still a little unfixed — I could imagine the sense "brown" meaning "having been blooded."

❖ **Stanza 309/Lines 1233–1236** ❧ Robin and his men come to a castle, which we learn in the next stanza belongs to Sir Richard at the Lee. This stanza describes it as a "fair castle, a little within the wood," walled, and with a double ditch.

This isn't much of a description — after the Norman Conquest, the Normans studded England with what were called motte-and-bailey castles (Douglas, p. 216, and Head, p. 22, both note that this was one of the chief methods by which the Normans beat the English; there is a drawing of one on p. 121 of Head). A motte-and-bailey consisted of a ditch enclosing a palisade (wall), usually of wood, with the dirt used in digging the ditch carried inside to build a hill. Later, many of these had the palisade walls rebuilt in stone, but still, it would be hard to find a castle that didn't have a wall and ditch, and the addition of a second ditch was a cheap additional precaution.

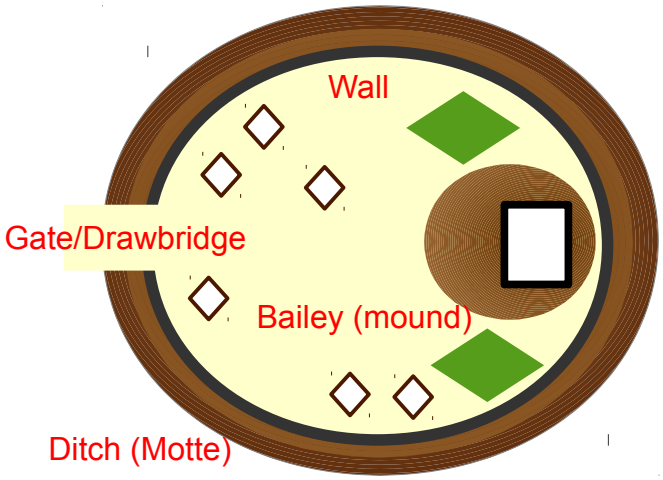


Figure 18: Sketch plan of a Motte and Bailey castle:
A hill (the bailey) with a citadel, a palisade wall, and a ditch (the motte) with a single gate and drawbridge. There might be smaller buildings or gardens within the palisade, but the ditch, wall, and mound were key.

Nonetheless Baldwin, p. 170, makes this description one of the keys to his identification of Sir Richard in the ballad with the historical Richard Foliot and his castle of Fenwick.

On the other hand, Bellamy, p. 79, suggested Annesley, a motte-and-bailey castle eight miles north of Nottingham; see the note on Stanza 126. P. Valentine Harris thought a Richard at Lee based in Rastrick near Kirklees a better candidate (Harris, p. 80). What all these suggestions probably prove in reality is that we simply cannot identify the site.

Clawson, p. 84, says that the Sheriff probably could not expect to have enough men to overwhelm Robin and his seven score men, which agrees with my thoughts on Stanzas 296–298. On this basis, Clawson (who regards this fit as an expansion of a ballad of Robin escaping the Sheriff) thinks the business with the castle an addition. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that the original of this story assumed that Robin had so many followers.

❖ **Stanza 310/Line 1238** ❧ "Syr Rychard at the Lee," usually modernized as "Sir Richard at (the) Lee." Note that, although Sir Richard is linked with the knight of the first four fits, this is the first time he is named — an indication, presumably, of the

composite nature of the "Gest." The poet has combined two tales, and claimed the knight of one is the knight of the other. Nonetheless the tale hints that they are distinct — Sir Richard is close at hand when Robin and his men flee the Sheriff of Nottingham, which implies that he lived near Barnsdale or Sherwood. But the knight of Stanza 126 lives in Verysdale, which is very probably in Lancashire, and was making a long trip from his home to St. Mary's abbey.

This is not as strong an objection as it sounds. We know from Stanza 49 that the knight has land worth four hundred pounds. The value of an ordinary manor would be measured in the tens of pounds in the fourteenth century. The knight, based on the value of his property, almost certainly has at least three manors, and six to ten is a better bet. So there is no reason why he should not have manors in both Lancashire and south Yorkshire — or, if we accept my conjecture "Ayredale" for "Verysdale" in Stanza 126, then he could have manors in north and south Yorkshire. More interesting is the fact that it's an actual *castle,* not a manor house. That is a hint that we're in Yorkshire rather than Nottinghamshire; in general, the further north you get, the greater the need for fortification, for protection both from the Scots and from one's neighbors.

Clawson's hypothesis (p. 101) regarding the origin of the "Gest" involves a very large number of sources, and he suggests that the compiler inserted the name here from a portion of one of the sources he used later on. But why, then, not introduce it in the first fit as well? My feeling is that Clawson is right in part — the Knight of the "Robin and the Knight" source is unnamed; the Knight of the "Robin and the King" source is Sir Richard, and the poet was glueing them together in this stanza.

It is interesting to note that, in "The Noble Fisherman, or, Robin Hood's Preferment" [Child 148], Robin takes service with a fisherman under the name "Simon over the Lee" (stanza 7 in Child's text) — the name "Simon" likely being suggested by the fact that Simon Peter was a fisherman, and became a fisher of men (Matthew 4:18–19 and parallels). It is even more interesting to observe that, in the Forresters Manuscript version of this ballad, which in this case seems to preserve an early form of the tale, Robin becomes "Simon of the Lee" (Knight, p. xvi), exactly paralleling the form in the **g** print of the "Gest." This late ballad would seem to imply that Robin was taking the knight's title.

Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 167, has a rather far-out suggestion for the use of the name at this point, based on the existence of the "other" Anthony Munday Robin Hood play, "Metropolis Coronata, The Triumphes of Ancient Drapery." Ohlgren dates it to 1615. Then Ohlgren makes one of his flying leaps into quicksand. On p. 168, Ohlgren makes the observation that the fact that the "Metropolis Coronata" was written for a Lord Mayor means that the Robin Hood story was thus freely adapted to the situations of specific persons.

Because there once was an instance of a play written for such a purpose, Ohlgren, p. 169, speculates that the "Gest" might have been written for the London Mayor Sir Richard Lee (cf. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 134), made Lord Mayor in 1460 and 1469 — although not knighted until 1471. This would make a lot more sense if Sir Richard's name had been used throughout, rather than only in the latter half of the "Gest," and if

the name in the "Gest" had been "Richard Lee," not "Richard at the Lee," and if he had been a knight at the time Ohlgren would have us believe the "Gest" was performed.

Ohlgren, p. 169, explains the concealment of the Knight's name by analogy to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, where Sir Bertilak is not named until the end. This hypothesis of course suffers from the substantial problem that Gawain could not be allowed to know that Bertilak is the Green Knight, whereas there is no reason to hide the Knight's name in the "Gest."

Ohlgren's is not the only wild suggestion. Phillips/Keatman, p. 108, suggest that Sir Richard is actually Henry of Lancaster, the brother of the executed rebel Thomas of Lancaster, with his name being disguised. But, flatly, the circumstances don't fit.

Phillips/Keatman, p. 108, further suggest Sir John de Annesley, lord of Annesley castle (for see note on Stanza 309). On p. 109, they give a convoluted line of logic to claim that Richard at the Lee is Richard the Lion-Hearted, although how he could be alive in the reign of King Edward is beyond me.

The whole incident of the knight's arrest has a very faint parallel in a story of the capture and rescue of Hereward the Wake (Head, p. 121). I doubt any actual dependence in this case.

Harris, p. 80, says that "At the Lee," if treated as a surname, would evolve to the surname "Atlee"/"Attlee."

As with most people in the "Gest," there have been sundry attempts to identify Sir Richard. The most recent case is by Bellamy, pp. 97-109, for a Richard de la Lee who may have been the parson of Arksey and who had a lot of legal troubles in the reign of Edward III. I find this thoroughly unconvincing — a parson shouldn't have a wife, wouldn't have an income measured in the hundreds of pounds, probably wouldn't own a manor, let alone a castle, is unlikely to have been active in the reign of Edward III if he had an adult son no later than 1322, and *isn't a knight.* Bellamy nonetheless goes further and suggests that the "Gest" was composed for the de la Lee family, as "an exercise in family propaganda constructed... to 'improve the image' of the patron of the compiler (Bellamy, p. 130). Were this true, wouldn't the story have done more to clear the knight's son of the murder charge? And would the piece really have been so long and so full of side episodes? And wouldn't it have been about the Knight primarily, rather than about Robin? And wouldn't it have used the Knight's name from the start? Finally, and (to my mind at least) completely fatally, Bellamy's idea requires that the "Gest" be from the mid-to-late fourteenth century, and it's pretty clearly from the fifteenth century; Bellamy took the earliest date ever seriously proposed and went even a little earlier.

❖ **Stanza 312/Line 1246** ❧ For courtesy see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanza 313/Line 1251** ❧ For Child's reading "proud[e]" see the note on Stanza 282.

❖ **Stanza 315/Lines 1258–1259** ❧ Saint Quentin was an early martyr, slain in Gaul. His dates are unknown, but it was early enough that he was in conflict with Roman authorities (DictSaints, p. 206). He was not well-known in England; his cult was centered in France. He was not the patron saint of anything in particular. It is curious to find Sir Richard invoking him, unless he was a family saint dating back to the time before the Conquest. This is a strong argument against the idea that Robin Hood was a pro-Saxon rebel; he would not then be friends with a guy swearing by Norman saints.

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 162, suggest that Sir Richard swears by Saint Quentin because he is promising to spare Robin from Quentin's fate. Alternately, we might suggest that the day is October 31, Quentin's feast day.

The "forty days" of the next line in Child's text (see the textual note on Stanza 315) was the traditional annual period of feudal military service. It might also be an allusion to something such as the forty days and forty nights of rain during Noah's Flood in Genesis 7:4, etc., or the forty days Moses was on the mountain in Exodus 24:18, or the forty days Jesus fasted in the wilderness in Matthew 4:2, etc. The most likely explanation, however, is to the traditional right of sanctuary in a church: a wrongdoer was allowed protection there for forty days before being expelled into exile or civil custody (Lyon, p. 160). Hence the knight would seem to be offering Robin the same sanctuary that he would get from a church.

But the reading "forty" is not found in all the prints. If the correct reading is, as I believe, "twelve days," there is no obvious inspiration for the reading. Perhaps the twelve days of Christmas/Epiphany? But there is no hint of a holiday setting in the text, and the Sheriff probably would not hold an archery contest in the middle of winter — too much likelihood that the contestants would not arrive! We probably should not look too hard for an explanation here. The fact that we *can't* guess why the Knight offers sanctuary for twelve days is the strongest argument that "twelve" is the original reading.

Also, a knight might perhaps be able to feed 140 men for twelve days, though even that is a stretch. But no ordinary castle would have enough supplies on hand to feed 140 men for forty days.

❖ **Stanza 316/Line 1261** ❧ Gummere, p. 318, interprets "Bordes were layde" to mean that tables were set up by laying boards on trestles, although it's at least as reasonable to assume that it refers to sideboards that were filled (laden).

❖ **Stanza 317–318/Lines 1265–1272** ❧ Here again we have the "Lyth and listin, gentilmen" formula of stanzas 1, 144, and 282. For notes on this introductory formula, see the notes to Stanza 1.

These stanzas, however, contain several additional curious readings (see the textual note on Stanzas 317–318). As they currently stand, Stanza 317 ends in mid-sentence, with the sentence continuing into Stanza 318. This is unusual although not entirely unknown in the "Gest." My strong suspicion is that this is one of the "glue" stanzas created by the poet who assembled the "Gest"; a source ended at the end of Fit V, and the poet had to transition us over from the scene where Robin and his men were seemingly safe (a reasonable ending to a story) to one where they are still in danger from the Sherif.

Observe also that, as it is written, we learn that the "proude shyref.... full cam to the hye shyref." This on its face implies *two* sheriffs. Possibly the poet is simply using "hye" to refer to any senior official, as some texts refer to the "hye justice" in Stanza 93. But this still seems to leave us with two sheriffs. And there is no such office as the "hye shyref." Possibly the poet uses this title to contrast with the under-sheriff (since the sheriff was for long the chief royal official of a county, he necessarily had many

subordinates — Mortimer-Angevin, p. 66, lists deputy sheriffs, summoners, clerks, sergeants, "ministers," and bailiffs).

But the reference to a separate high sheriff would, on its face, make Robin's enemy the under-sheriff. It was unlikely enough that a sheriff was a lord with a castle and many servants (as we saw in fit three). It is frankly unbelievable that an under-sheriff would have such. Presumably the intent of these lines is simply to say that the Sheriff raised some sort of hue and cry.

❖ **Stanza 319/Line 1274** ❧ "Traytour knyght." To charge the knight with treason is formally false; even after Edward III broadened and clarified the statute of treason in 1352, it included only plotting the death of the monarch, levying war against the monarch, raping the King's eldest daughter, killing royal justices in performance of their duties, and importing forged coins (Prestwich3, pp. 230–231). Clearly the knight had done none of these. However, the laws of treason were easily stretched — Edward I had executed William Wallace on a charge of treason, even though Wallace never acknowledged Edward as his king (Prestwich, p. 503). Edward II, similarly, had a great many men executed on treason charges in 1322 (Phillips, p. 410). Some, like the Earl of Lancaster, were guilty to a degree, but some, like Bartholomew Badlesmere, had merely disagreed with the King until Edward forced him into open rebellion. Edward then arranged that he suffer an unusually harsh execution (Phillips, p. 411).

One suspects that the Sheriff was using the threat of a treason charge to frighten the knight into giving up Robin. The penalty for treason, as suffered by William Wallace, was drawing and quartering, one of the most painful and horrid deaths possible. This was similar to what was suffered by Badlesmere. (And probably why Little John begged for a quick death in Stanza 305, because he could expect something similar; see the note there.) If the Sir Richard gave up Robin, the likely penalty for harboring a fugitive would have been merely a fine. So the Sheriff offered a strong incentive.

If the King is in fact Edward II, and if this in fact takes place about a year before Edward's visit north in 1323, then the charge becomes particularly telling: "Give up Robin Hood, or the King will do to you as he just did to Badlesmere and all the rebels who fought along with Lancaster in the last couple of years." Indeed, the Sheriff might even be accusing the Knight of being part of Lancaster's rebellion.

Here again we have a Biblical parallel from the story of David, this one told in 2 Samuel chapter 20. After the rebellion of Absalom failed, Sheba son of Bichri rebelled against David. The rebellion quickly failed, and Sheba fled to Abel-Bethmaacah. David's army, under Joab, demanded the surrender of Sheba, implying that the city would be sacked if Sheba was not surrendered, but spared if Sheba were turned over. The outcome, however, was different: The residents of Abel gave up Sheba, throwing his head over the wall to Joab.

❖ **Stanza 320/Line 1280** ❧ Sir Richard declares himself "a trewe knyght." Compare Stanza 47, where the knight declares that he is a proper knight; Stanza 109, where he promises to be a true servant if treated properly; Stanza 114, where he says he is not a false knight. As a knight, his word was considered to have more value than a lesser man's (absurd as that is).

❖ **Stanza 321/Line 1283** ❧ The knight appeals to the King's will. Robin will do the same in Stanza 353. This touchingly naive faith in the King's justice is somewhat reminiscent of the actions of Paul in Acts 25:11–12, where Paul, having been arrested and kept in prison for a long time without charge, appeals to Caesar (rendered "the Emperor" in some versions) to escape local justice. It is highly unlikely that this was a direct source for the "Gest," but might underlie it at some removes.

There is another faint possibility, if we assume that there is a genuine historical framework here. As noted at Stanza 43, it makes chronological sense to assume that the knight was dubbed in 1306, the same time as Edward II himself. So the knight might be appealing to his own comrade at arms.

❖ **Stanza 322/Line 1286 also 353/line 1409** ❧ The sheriff gets an answer without "leasynge." Dobson/Taylor gloss "leasynge" as "falsehood," and Knight/Ohlgren as "lying." "Lees/Lese/Leas(e)" does indeed mean falsehood," as does "Lesing," and "to les(e)/lees(e)/leas(e)" can and often does mean "to tell a falsehood," but "To lese" can also mean "to lose," and some have interpreted this line in that light (i.e. perhaps read "without any loss" or "without suffering harm.").

❖ **Stanza 324/Lines 1295-1296** ❧ The Sheriff accuses Sir Richard of setting the King's will at nought. No king would tolerate actual rebellion — but if I am right and the King is Edward II and the year is 1322, this particular king would be hypersensitive to anything that crosses his will, even if (as in this case) it falls well short of direct revolt. After all, Edward had just suppressed the rebellion of Thomas of Lancaster, a northern lord who had tried to set Edward's will at nought....

❖ **Stanza 325/Line 1297** ❧ "I woll be at Notyngham." This, plus Stanzas 357–358 and Stanza 365, are the key to Hunter's claim that the king in the "Gest" was Edward II. Edward II visited Nottingham in 1323, and though he was not there continuously for six months, as in the "Gest," he remained in the North the whole time rather than returning to London. None of the other Edwards settled in that part of the country for any length of time; Edward I had been in the far north to fight the Scots, but otherwise he stayed closer to London. Given that the rest of the tale also fits Edward II, it makes some sense to assume that this part of the "Gest" is set in that time.

❖ **Stanzas 331–332/Lines 1321–1328** ❧ If we need proof that the knight was in good financial shape by this time, these stanzas prove it: Hawking was an expensive and aristocratic sport. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 163, point out that the knight would not be properly armed while hawking (since hawking requires special gloves and such rather than armor), making the sheriff's behavior in arresting him at this time somewhat improper. This is a dubious objection, but the sheriff's decision to bind him hand and foot (stanza 333) is certainly improper behavior toward a member of the gentry who, as far as we can tell, has not been outlawed. Although the King had said in Stanza 325 that he would take Robin Hood, that is not by itself a jury finding — and Magna Carta had guaranteed the right to trial by jury more than half a century before Edward I took the throne.

The intent of the last line of 331 is not entirely clear (partly due to a variant; see the textual note on Stanza 331), but if we are to understand that the sheriff let the hawk(s) fly loose, it means he has done the knight monetary damage as well as arresting him.

Clawson, p. 89, points out an inconsistency here: That the knight should have known better than to go hawking in public when he knew the Sheriff would be after him. He thinks this indicates that the compiler has shifted sources. However, this does not really fit his source-critical analysis, which in any case is far more complicated than that accepted by other commentators. Probably the knight just didn't think the Sheriff would watch him that closely, since they seemed to have reached an agreement to wait until the King acted.

❖ **Stanza 336/Line 1343** ❧ Note that knight's wife invokes the Virgin Mary in asking Robin for help. This might be an appeal to Robin's known love for the Virgin — but it also recalls his promise in Stanza 251 that if Mary has "nede to Robyn Hode," he will be her friend. It hints at the ongoing Miracle of the Virgin of Robin helping the Knight. Fit VI probably has more "glue" and rewriting than any other in the "Gest"; I suspect the poet may have been invoking that idea, and we're just not very sensitive to it today.

❖ **Stanzas 338–339/Lines 1352–1353** ❧ These lines are missing in all the early prints, making this one of the most important and substantial defects in the "Gest"; see the textual notes on Stanzas 338–339.

It strikes me as just barely possible that these lines were deliberately suppressed: The Knight's wife said something perhaps treasonous about the royal justice, and someone — perhaps a typesetter who lived in the Tudor police state and didn't want trouble — left it out. But this is only a wild speculation with no evidence.

The Knight's wife must have moved quickly indeed if she reached Robin when the Sheriff's men had taken the knight just three miles. It's interesting that they didn't try to occupy his castle, or even put a watch on it. Maybe the new sheriff isn't so smart after all.

There another slight hint at the career of David here. David, after Saul tried to murder him, entered the service of the Philistines. The Philistines were preparing the the climactic campaign against Saul which ended in the Battle of Mount Gilboa (for which see the note to Stanzas 303–305). David and his company (supposedly six hundred men) were preparing to serve on the Philistine side against Israel. But a majority of the Philistine leaders did not want an Israelite serving in their army at the great battle; they feared he would turn on them (1 Samuel 29:3-5). They sent David to his home (1 Samuel 29:6-11).

When David reached his home in Ziklag, he found that Amelekites had raided Ziklag, and taken the wives, children, and relatives of David's soldiers prisoner (1 Samuel 30:1–2). David, frightened of his own men (who were brigands, after all), asked an oracle whether he should pursue them, and was told "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue" (1 Samuel 30:9). And, indeed, even as Saul was being killed at Gilboa (very conveniently for David), David overtook the raiders and rescued his wives and his followers' families. Similarly, Robin overtakes the Sheriff's men and rescues the knight. It is interesting that Robin's forces are strong enough to do that when they were not strong enough to hold off the Sheriff's men at the earlier shooting contest in Stanza V. Maybe, this time, the Sheriff hadn't gathered his followers — and Robin had.

❖ **Stanza 342/Line 1366** ❧ For Robin's seven score followers, see the note on Stanza 229.

❖ **Stanza 345/Lines 1379–1380** ❧ Robin here asks the Sheriff for tidings of the King. This is perhaps an indication that Robin, despite being an outlaw, still is devoted to the King (though we note that he gets no answer). We will see many more such indications in the seventh fit, where Robin honors the monk who (he thinks) comes from the king.

❖ **Stanza 346/Lines1381–1382** ❧ Robin says that he has not moved this fast on foot in seven years. Probably this is just a conventional statement — but it is interesting that it was seven years from 1316, which for various reasons seems to be roughly the time the knight went into debt, to 1323 when Edward II made his trip to the north.

❖ **Stanzas 347–348/Lines 1385–1392** ❧ Why did not Robin's arrow kill the Sheriff itself? Although improvements in plate armor meant that a longbow could no longer piece armor at long range by the mid–1400s (Reid, p. 353), the two were within speaking range, and an arrow fired at that range could still pierce armor. Probably the sheriff was dead and Robin simply made sure. But there is also a symbolic element: in Stanza 202, the sheriff swore on Robin's "bright brand"; since he broke the oath, the bright brand is used to execute him.

Pollard, pp. 107–108, sees a symbolic element to the whole episode of the Sheriff: Killing the corrupt official is one half of restoring true justice (the other half being the receipt of the King's pardon). He adds that there was an "inextricable link between violence and the law in fifteenth century society." This is unquestionably true — one of the major causes and side effects of the Wars of the Roses was that nobles settled their differences in battle rather than in the courts — but it was hardly held up as ideal. And the fifteenth century, which opened with the overthrow of Richard II and also saw the overthrows of Henry VI (twice), Edward IV (temporarily), and Richard III, was a period when the king's power to grant pardon and justice was hardly taken seriously — a man pardoned by one king could expect to be subject to severe persecution by the next. Plus Richard II was infamous for revoking pardons; this was one of the main events of the crisis of 1397 that began Richard's absolute rule. In any case, Pollard's case is based on a fifteenth century date, and the "Gest" gives every indication of being set in the fourteenth century. On the other hand, it was composed in the fifteenth century.

The cutting off of the head really sounds more like the Robin Hood of "Guy of Gisborne" than the Robin of the rest of the "Gest," however — and surely he would not have been so crude to a man who supposedly was the husband of the Sheriff's wife of the "Potter." Note that Robin accuses the Sheriff's body of falsehood in the next stanza.

Possibly this may derive from the story of Hereward the Wake. Hereward also takes revenge by decapitating a man after he is dead (Head, p. 69)

This isn't the only time in the early ballads that Robin kills the Sheriff. He does so also in "Guy of Gisborne" (cf. Holt, pp. 32–33). Does this mean that there were several traditions of how Robin killed the sheriff, or that there was a tradition that he had done so but no tradition as to how, or that there were no such traditions and everyone just assumed it must have happened? We cannot really say.

❖ **Stanza 351/Line 1402** ❧ In this stanza Robin cuts.... something.... in two to free the knight. It may have been his "hoode" (the earliest reading, but a strange one) or his

bonds; see the textual note on Stanza 351. Perhaps the guards could have tied the knight's hood over his eyes to prevent him from seeing. Also, "hode" sometimes seems to be used to refer to the head, or the contents of the hood, but this hardly helps. In practical terms, of course, it does not matter; what counts is that Robin cut the knight free.

If the original reading was "hoode," it is interesting to see that **b** spelled it with a double o, while Robin's name is spelled "Hode," with only one o.

❖ **Stanza 352/Lines 1405–1406** ❧ Robin bids the knight to abandon his horse (the horse Robin gave him?) and run with the outlaws. For residents of an actual forest, this is always good advice — but it makes less sense if Robin inhabits open land that is only nominally forest (which was the case for much of Barnsdale).

This may be a dating hint, since it was not until the reign of Edward III that archers were mounted. So it makes sense, if we are in the reign of Edward II or earlier, for archers to be unmounted. On the other hand, this seems to contradict the situation in Stanza 152, where the Sheriff offers John a horse.

❖ **Stanza 353/Line 1411** ❧ "Till that I have gete us grace...." Note that Robin is seeking "grace," i.e. presumably a pardon, for himself as well as others — and seems to think he will be able to get it. For this "appeal to Caesar," see the note on Stanza 321.

Clawson, p. 113, makes an interesting point here: unlike almost all stories of penitents being helped by the King, Robin does not make a direct appeal, even though Robin in this verse strongly implies that he is seeking pardon. Robin will not leave the greenwood, which he loves, to go to the King. So the King must come to Robin. Clawson implies that a large part of this section is rewriting designed to turn a story of a normal appeal to the King into a case of the King coming to the suppliant. I agree that there is likely a lot of rewriting here, but I don't think that's the reason. I suspect this aspect of the tale was always there.

❖ **Stanza 353/Line 1412** ❧ "Edwarde, our comly kynge." Although there have been references to the King before this (stanzas 319, 321, 322, 325, 326, 345), this is the first one which gives him a name — and it isn't William, Henry, Richard, or John, it's *Edward.*

There were six Kings Edward in English history before the first certain reference to Robin Hood as a figure of folklore: Edward the Elder (reigned c. 899–925), Edward the Martyr (c. 973–978), Edward the Confessor (1042–1066), Edward I (1272–1307), Edward II (1307–1327), and Edward III (1327–1377). There was another Edward, Edward IV (reigned 1461–1470 and 1471–1483) who lived before the "Gest" was published, and in some ways he fits the ballad — but the piece would almost certainly have had to have been rewritten to refer to him, and this would likely have taken place in Tudor times. Not likely when Henry VII was trying to make a claim that he was the legitimate King (which he simply wasn't).

We can instantly reject the first three Edwards (the Elder, the Martyr, and the Confessor), because they lived before the Norman Conquest. The very fact that Our Hero is named "Robin" — diminutive of "Robert" — proves that he must be post-Conquest. The name "Robert" is Franco-Norman; William the Conqueror's father was named Robert, as was William's eldest son. Checking multiple histories, I can find *no* pre-Conquest Englishmen named Robert; the index in Swanton lists sixteen men named

Robert — and only one lived in England pre-conquest: Robert of Jumièges, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was an import from France (he was appointed during the period when Edward the Confessor was favoring Normans over Englishmen). Barlow-Rufus, p. 164, says that Robert was, after William, the most common name among post-Conquest Norman office-holders.

The introduction discusses the matter of which Edward is meant. The only help we have in this verse is the fact that this Edward is called "comely."

Keen, p. 143, reminds us that Edward IV (reigned 1461–1470 and 1471–1483) was, in his prime, considered the handsomest man in Europe (cf. Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 150, which attributes the observation to Knight, not Keen).

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 163, and Pollard, p. 200, point out that Edward III was called "our cumly King" in Laurence Minot's Poem IV; Ohlgren is convinced (and Pollard, p. 201, seems to accept the argument) that this means the "Gest" is about Edward III. This even though Ohlgren admits (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 147) that there is "no direct evidence" that the author of the "Gest" knew Minot. Nor was Minot popular; only one copy of his works survived (British Library, MS. Cotton Galba IX, according to CHEL1, p. 356). Admittedly the author of the "Gest" would have had access to Minot if anyone did; Minot's verse shows signs of northern dialect (many more such than the "Gest") and he seems to have known a lot about Yorkshire (CHEL1, p. 357). But looking at the samples of Minot's works in Sisam (pp. 152-156), I cannot help but be struck by how different they are from the "Gest": Formal language, stiff metres, and names dropped all over the place. No "yeoman minstrelsy" this! In addition, Minot seems to have been more likely to call Edward III "Sir Edward" than "Our comely King" (see Sisam, p. 152, line 9; p. 153, line 16; p. 154, line 4; p. 155, lines 44, 60, 62).

We might also note that stanza 84.1 of the "Monk" reads, "Then bespake oure cumly kyng." A sign of dependence? Perhaps, but it probably argues more strongly that it is a conventional description and not to be used as evidence for an identification.

Ohlgren, having claimed that Edward III is the "Gest's" king on this thin basis, goes on (Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 148) to suggest that the allusions, originally to Edward III, were then adapted to Edward IV.

The argument about appearances is however neutral; Edward I, Edward II, and Edward III were all tall and majestic, if not quite so handsome as Edward IV. The chronicles call Edward II "Fair of body and great of strength" and "Of a well proportioned and handsome person" (Doherty, p. 35). The anonymous author of the *Life of Edward II*, in speaking of the new King Edward III, hoped that he would have the traits of his ancestors: The energy of Henry II, the bravery of Richard I, the long life and reign of Henry III, the wisdom of Edward I — and the good looks of Edward II (Ormrod, p. 47). In any case the phrase "comely king" is probably just a customary description.

There is another problem with making Edward IV the King of the "Gest," and that is that there is no hint in the "Gest" of the context of the Wars of the Roses. This even though the greatest of the battles in the Wars (indeed, believed to be the biggest battle ever fought in Britain) was the 1461 Battle of Towton (Reid, pp. 410–412). The preliminaries included two fights at Ferrybridge (Wagner, p. 272), which is right in the

middle of Robin Hood country and might even be where the Knight saw the wrestling (see note on Stanza 126). One of these preliminary battles was very important, and Edward IV himself was credited with the win (Goodman, p. 51). The bridge itself had been damaged (Goodman, p. 50), which would surely have affected Robin's activities. The Towton battlefield itself is just a little north of there, between Ferrybridge and Tadcaster on the river Cock (see map on p. 428 of Reid, or below). There was also a battle at Wakefield in 1460 (see the map on p. 317 of Wagner), at which Edward IV's father Richard Duke of York and his brother Edmund were killed (Goodman, p. 43). The other King, Henry VI, was based at Nottingham for part of this time. And, in 1469, Edward IV planned to gather his armies at Doncaster, although he never made it there (Castor, p. 203). He *did* operate out of Doncaster in a campaign against rebels 1470.

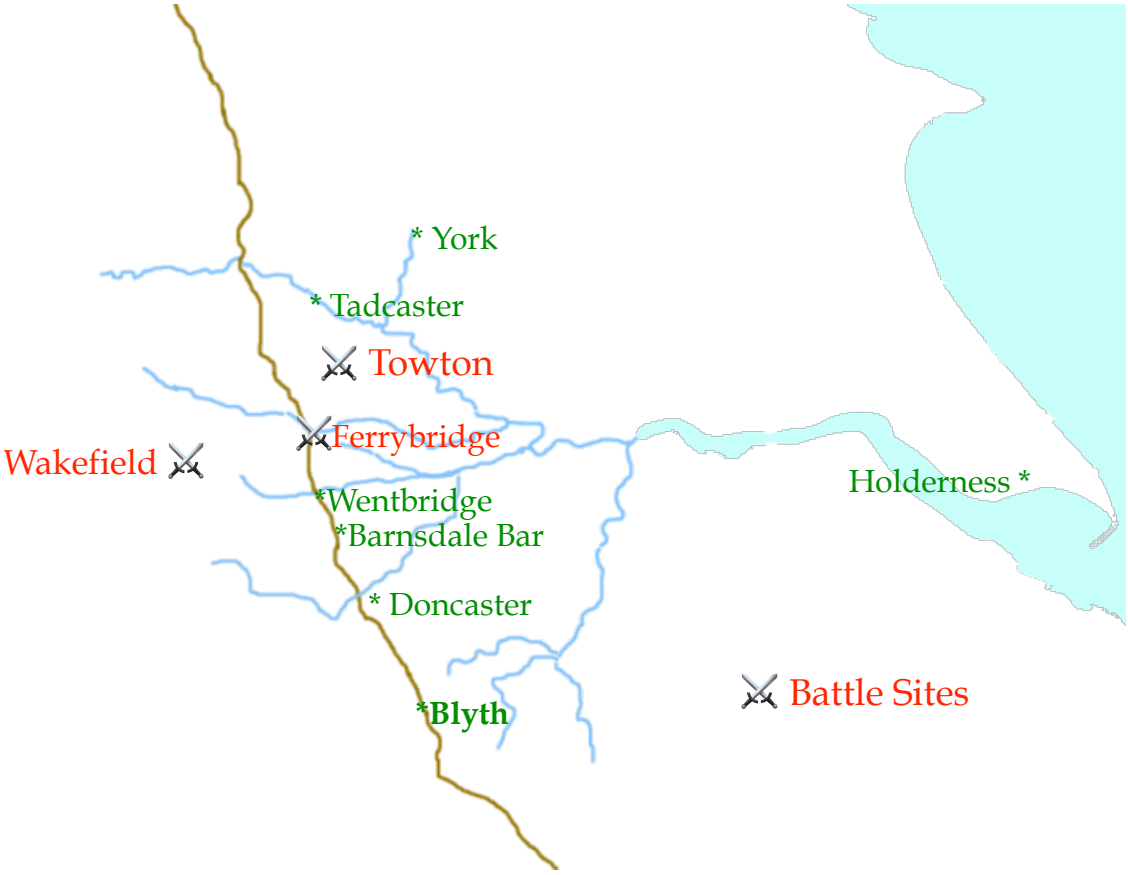


Figure 19: The Wars of the Roses in Yorkshire
December 30, 1460: Battle of Wakefield. Richard Duke of York killed
February 27, 1461: First Battle of Ferrybridge: Yorkists unable to cross the Aire
February 28, 1461: Second Battle of Ferrybridge. Yorkists force a passage of the Aire
March 29, 1461: Battle of Towton. Probably the largest battle ever fought in England. Yorkists under Edward IV defeat Henry VI's Lancastrians. Edward secures his throne. Many Lancastrians said to have been drowned at Tadcaster
1469: Robin of Holderness's Rebellion

The conclusion is inevitable: If Robin Hood lived in Barnsdale in the reign of Edward IV, there would surely be some mention of these events — the armies passed

right through his haunts! (To be sure, it's different if Robin lived in Sherwood. But, even in Sherwood, the Doncaster incidents would likely have come up. And Edward IV was also based in Nottingham for part of this time.)

Plus, before we can say that the "Gest" refers to Edward IV, we have to prove that its current form comes from the reign of Edward IV or later, rather than in the reign of one of the Lancastrian kings. A date in the reign of Edward IV has been asserted but not demonstrated.

To sum up: If we are to figure out which Edward is Robin Hood's king, we shall have to use other arguments than just the fact that he is here called "comely."

The fact that the name "Edward" is used, as opposed to simply the title "King," might be a hint that we're getting to the part of the "Gest" that comes from the source "Robin and the King" rather than being glue supplied by the compiler, but of course we can't be sure.

❖ **Stanza 354/Lines 1413–1414** ❧ It is extremely unlikely that the King would come all the way to Nottingham simply to deal with an outlaw band and a disobedient knight. Edward I, it is true, spent some time chasing after William Wallace, but that is almost the only instance. Presumably the King in this case had other business. Unfortunately, Nottingham was a place English kings visited fairly often — it was roughly the northern limit of their usual circuit. So this by itself is not a dating hint — although there are several hints in the following stanzas.

❖ **Stanza 356/Line 1425** ❧ Most editors' glosses on this verse understand "seased" as "seized" (**f** suggests "ceased"), but I wonder if it is a reference to "seisin," a legal right of ownership. (The verb is "to seise." Although Smith, p. 109, stresses that seisin is neither "possession" nor "right"; it is so strange a concept, to modern thinking, that Smith simply passes it off as a "tangled problem" and refers readers to a paper called, ahem, "The Mystery of Seisin.")

If the reference is to seisin, the King is not *occupying* the land; he is transferring possession away from the knight — a fairly significant step in a society where hereditary land ownership was very important.

This would explain why the King did not take the knight's lands until his trip north: "The ceremony [of transferring seisin] was normally held on or within sight of the land that was being formally put into an individual's possession. It was also held in the presence of witnesses who would remember the transaction" (Smith, p. 55). Thus the King properly could not do a ceremony of taking seisin while in London; it had to be done when up north. Yes, there were ways around this in practice, but why bother if the King was going north anyway?

Of course, because of the spelling inconsistency of the period, this is only speculation.

❖ **Stanzas 357–358/Lines 1425–1427** ❧ "Lancasshyre.... Plomton Parke.... He faylyd many of his dere." In other words, the King went to a hunting reserve in Lancashire, called Plumpton Park, but was upset to find it almost devoid of deer. (A common problem, apparently; by the fifteenth century, red deer were almost gone throughout the south and midlands, according to Pollard, p. 60, and presumably even the fallow deer were badly threatened in some places. But it also means that there had been a clear

violation of the Forest Law, which was intended to prevent such depredations and maintain both trees and animals.)

For more on the King's trip to Nottingham and the north, and how this connects to Edward II, see the notes on Stanza 325 and Stanza 365, as well as the section Dating the Legend.

It is interesting that Plumpton Park is also mentioned in "King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth," stanza 38 — Child's version of the family of ballads referred to above as "King Edward and the Hermit." Plumpton/Plompton is also mentioned in "The Noble Fisherman, or, Robin Hood's Preferment" [Child 148] (stanza 13; cf. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 164) — Simon in that song wishes he were hunting deer in the park. It is not clear whether there is literary dependence.

Several locations have been proposed for "Plumpton Park"; Holt lists them on p. 101. His own preference is for Plumpton Wood in Lancashire, near the forest of Myerscough. Child, pp. 54–55, mentions a couple of possibilities, listing first Camden's suggestion of a location on the bank of the Petterel in Cumbria east of Inglewood; this was also Ritson's preferred site (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 164). Dobson/Taylor, p. 105, prefer Hunter's suggestion of Plumpton Park near Knaresborough in Yorkshire (about halfway between York and Harrowgate), a choice also mentioned, rather disapprovingly, by Child, and with strong approval by Baldwin, p. 23. The Plumpton family was based in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the reign of Edward IV (Ross-Edward, p. 200). Knight/Ohlgren, p. 164 are convinced the Park is in Inglewood Forest, where there was a Plumpton Hay. But it hardly matters which one is meant. It is a northern forest which has been hunted out, and Robin Hood is thought to be to blame.

Holt, p. 156 quotes a document describing "great destruction of the game" in the lands which had formerly belonged to Thomas of Lancaster, which is extremely interesting in connection to Edward II's northern trip of 1322–1323 following Lancaster's overthrow, although the text does not tell us if this Plumpton was involved.

It is certain that there was a Plumpton Park in existence from a very early date; we know that Geoffrey de Neville in 1279–1281 was repairing a paling and hiring men to guard a park and lawn within in (Young, p. 115). This Plumpton was in Inglewood (Young, p. 116).

The hunting episode in these stanzas is by far the strongest dating hint in the "Gest." Almost all kings of England hunted deer (Kendall-Richard, p. 395, says that Richard III had "no marked interest" in hunting, but this was exceptional — and even Richard found himself involved in hunting at the end of his reign, and it was in Sherwood, no less; Kendall-Richard, p. 408). But the kings rarely went as far as Lancashire to do it; it was too long a trip, and the north of England too unsettled and uncomfortable.

As it turns out, all three Edwards spent time in the north of England — but Edward I and Edward III were fighting the Scots, not hunting.

Of the kings of England sometimes linked to Robin, we know that Richard I particularly liked hunting — indeed, we know that his one approach to Sherwood Forest was to hunt there (Gillingham, p. 242). John's son Henry III was "indifferent to hunting" (Baldwin, p. 114).

In 1852, Joseph Hunter (the Robin Hood scholar who, according to Holt, p. 179, restored the "Gest" to its rightful place in the legend) showed that the only King Edward who made a progress to northern England which resembled that of the "Gest" was Edward II, who visited Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Nottingham in 1323 (Holt, p. 45). This was in the aftermath of one of the myriad baronial conflicts of Edward II's reign. He had finally managed to defeat and execute his long-time enemy Thomas of Lancaster (Hutchison, p. 114), and spent a period of months in the north of England trying to deal with the aftermath of the fighting and with Scotland. While this was going on, he naturally spent time hunting and otherwise amusing himself. Harris, p. 66, summarizes Hunter's results: "the king [Edward II], in the latter half of 1323, lived for some time at York, in Holderness, and in the country around Hadlesey, Cowick and Thorne. In August he was at Pickering and in September at Wherlton Castle, in the country around Richmond and Jervaulx Abbey. On 22nd of September he was at Haywra Park, in the forest of Knaresborough, and afterwards moved in the direction of Lancashire. On 4th October he was at Ightenhill Park, near Clitheroe; thence visiting Blackbourne, Holand, Kirkby and Liverpool. On 3rd November he removed to the monastery of Vale Royal, and afterward visited Sandbach, Newcastle-under-Line, Croxden, Langford, and Dale Abbey; and so to Nottingham, arriving there on 9th November." It's not the core Robin Hood sites — no Barnsdale, no Blythe, no Doncaster, no Wentbridge — but it's close, and it was a long visit.

Phillips, p. 73, says that Edward II had only an "occasional" interest in hunting, but most of his other biographers (e.g. Packe, p. 4) seem to think he was very keen for the hunt; his huntsman wrote the first English hunting manual (Hutchison, p. 10), and Edward himself spent great sums upon related activities, importing horses from Lombardy and buying a dead earl's entire stud and delighting in hounds (Doherty, p. 28). We also know that, in a conflict over forest laws, he gave in on the boundaries of the forest but reserved the right to hunt in the lands which he allowed to be disafforested (Young, p. 144). Even his wife Isabella is said to have engaged in hunting (Doherty, p. 176). Whereas Prestwich1, p. 115, thinks that Edward I was more interested in falconry (compare Powicke, p. 228).

In any case, even if Edward II himself did not hunt, he would need a steady supply of meat for his table — and for the pet lion he kept (Phillips, p. 93). So he would be concerned if a forest had been hunted out even if he did not intend to hunt it himself. Plus parks reportedly brought in income as well as game (Young, p. 96; Barber, p. 39 says that in the reign of Edward III, bad park management resulted in a shortfall of no less than a thousand pounds), so a hunted-out park might cost the treasury much-needed income.

To be sure, Child, p. 55, tartly comments, "Hunter, who could have identified Pigromitus and Quinapallus, if he had given his mind to it, sees in this passage, and in what precedes it of King Edward's trip to Nottingham, a plausible semblance of historical reality. Edward II, as may be shown from Rymer's Foedera, made a progress in the counties of York, Lancaster, and Nottingham, in the latter part of the year 1323. He was in Yorkshire in August and September, in Lancashire in October, at Nottingham November 9–23." (He also visited Nottingham in March/April, Baldwin, p. 57.

Baldwin, like Child, does not think Edward's visit the source of the legend, but thinks the visit might have led to tales of outlawry which contributed to the legend; Baldwin, pp. 58–59.)

Child is surely correct in thinking that Hunter wrung much more out of the historical data than is justified — as Holt, p. 47, points out, Hunter's argument was circular in that he started with the "Gest," found some people who might just possibly have been those mentioned in the "Gest," and then used the "Gest" to try to prove what he had assumed. But Holt, p. 56, concedes that Child did "less than justice to Hunter's case" — and I agree. *If* the "Gest" is to be linked to any actual historical events, this is the key date. The King Edward of these stanzas is Edward II. Our only hesitation about this conclusion is that the "Gest" is composite, and may not be intended to be based on history. This could be an isolated fragment associated with Edward II, with other parts of the piece deriving from other contexts. But I think it much more likely that this is part of the source I call "Robin and the King," and it (although perhaps not the rest of the "Gest") is an historical fiction based on events in the reign of Edward II.

There is an interesting historical parallel to this story, but it happened *after* the "Gest" was printed: "In Meggatdale King James V [reigned 1513-1542] killed 'aughteine score of deir' on his periodic circuit to round up robbers and outlaws. Indeed, the king's hunt was a ruse for assembling his best soldiers for the capture of Johnny Armstrong…" (Wells, p. 56).

❖ **Stanza 359/Lines 1433–1434** ❧ "The kynge was wonder wroth withall." Wild rages were characteristic of all the Plantagenets (except the feeble-minded Henry VI and the forgiving Edward IV and Richard III, all of whom lived at the very end of the Plantagenet period), and are no key to dating. On p. 94 of McLynn, for instance, we find reports of both Henry II and John biting their fingers when in a rage. Edward I was supposed to have once torn out his son's hair in anger (Phillips, p. 120, who doubts that it actually happened. More significant is the fact that people were willing to believe that it happened.)

There are hints, too, that Edward II's rages grew worse after his triumph over the earl of Lancaster in 1322. In 1323, he ordered the execution of Andrew de Harclay, who had won the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322 which gave Edward the win over Lancaster. After Boroughbridge, Edward made Harclay Earl of Carlisle. When word came that Harclay was negotiating with the Scots — something fairly necessary in his position, although Harclay did go a little far in proposing a draft treaty — Edward not only had him executed but also degraded from both earldom and knighthood (Phillips, pp. 432–433). A few weeks later, he sent a councilor to prison for disagreeing with him (Phillips, p. 435). The picture we get, in the 1323 period, is of a man who had lost all patience with opposition, even friendly opposition.

But we note that, although Edward vows a particular punishment (confiscation of lands) for the knight, he does not promise anything in particular for Robin. No doubt the implication was clear: Robin would suffer a traitor's death. This of course did not happen. But consider the blow the king inflicts upon Robin in Stanza 408. If called out to fulfill a vow to punish Robin, the King could say he had done so — with his own hand!

❖ **Stanza 359/Line 1434** ❧ "And swore by the Trynyte." Robin also swears by the Trinity in Stanza 180, although in a way that is (quite literally) somewhat unorthodox.

❖ **Stanza 360/Lines 1439–1440** ❧ The king offers the Knight's lands to whoever can bring in the knight. This is a clear argument against the King being Edward I; that king occupied much land but rarely shared it out with his subordinates (Tuck, pp. 23, 48). See also the note on Stanza 356 about why the King perhaps had to be in the north to take over the land.

❖ **Stanza 361/Lines 1442-1443** ❧ The king offers a charter and seals it. This presumably means that he has the Privy Seal, and its keeper, with him (not that that is surprising). We note that he does not mention signing it. That's not much of a dating hint, but we know that the fully literate kings from Edward III on were more likely to sign things than were those who came before them — signatures by Edward III survive.

For another mention of the seal, see the note on Stanza 384.

❖ **Stanza 363/Lines 1449–1452** ❧ The king is warned that no one will be able to safely occupy the knight's land because of Robin Hood. This is similar to the situation in Stanzas 117–119 in which the Justice warns the Abbot of the danger of simply confiscating the knight's lands.

❖ **Stanza 364/Lines 1453–1454** ❧ The warning to the king continues: The person who occupies the knight's land will lose "the best ball in his hode." The meaning of this is unknown. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 165, suggest that this is a reference to ancient games which use a human head as a ball. I strongly doubt this. It is true that there are many accounts of warriors collecting heads as trophies, and the Grimm Brothers story "The Boy Who Set Out to Learn What Fear Was" has a tale of spirits playing ninepins using skulls for balls, and there are various accounts of men being executed after losing some sort of game — but I do not know of any real uses in British history of a head or skull for a ball. Neither would suit the purpose at all well; the human head is neither round enough to roll well nor consistent enough in its components to bounce well.

I note that Wimberly, who has much discussion of heads and bones in ballad folklore, never mentions this idea.

Gummere, p. 319, explains the phrase as "a jocose expression of old standing" — but offers no evidence or parallel citation.

I'm reminded a bit of the drawing of lots by pulling colored balls from a hood. But I can see no reason why that would apply here.

Another possibility is that "ball" might be a mis-spelling or dialect version of "bell." Or perhaps of "baill," "bundle." Then we might emend to something like "the best baill in his honde" or the like. But while all such emendations are possible, none are convincing.

The line is in any case over-long. Perhaps we should emend to something like "At honde of Robyn Hode" or similar.

The bottom line, I think, is simply that anyone who takes the knight's lands will regret it, though we don't know what he will suffer.

❖ **Stanza 365/Lines 1457–1458** ❧ These lines report that the King's stay specifically in Nottingham lasted half a year. If taken literally, this doesn't fit any of the Edwards — but Edward II was in Nottingham in early 1323 (March or April), and again from

November 9–23 (Baldwin, pp. 55, 57), which makes about half a year from the time he first arrived to the time he finally left the area. He never stayed in one place for any length of time, however. In any case, the King couldn't visit Plumpton Park if he never left Nottingham. Nonetheless this and Stanza 325 are the key to Hunter's claim that Robin's king is Edward II. Despite the fact that he moved around the north, Edward II is the best fit; none of the other Edwards spent such a long time simply hanging around the north. See further the note on Stanzas 357–358 for more details on his itinerary.

The king's base in Nottingham may be genuine history (Edward II did spend time there), or the author may have placed him there because the story is associated with Sherwood — but, to repeat what was said above, Nottingham, until the time of Edward I's northern wars, was generally as far north as a Plantagenet king would go on his regular travels (Mortimer-Angevin, p. 17).

If we absolutely have to find a fit for spending a long spell continuously in Nottingham, it was probably Richard III in the period shortly before his death. With his wife and his son dead, and Henry Tudor about to invade, Richard chose Nottingham as the "castle of his care" (Kendall-Richard, pp. 408-409), and stayed there for much of 1485 until Henry Tudor finally landed. But the "Gest" had surely been written, and was very possibly already in print, by the time Richard was killed in 1485.

For more on the King's trip to Nottingham and the north, and how this connects to Edward II, see the notes on Stanza 325 and Stanzas 357–358, as well as the section Dating the Legend, which discusses the possibility that Richard II was the king involved.

❖ **Stanza 367/Line 1465** ❧ A "fostere" suggests the king's next act. "Foster" is used as a term for "forester" in the sixteenth century poem ""I have been a foster, long and many a day," found in London, British Library, MS. Additional 31922, folio 65. "Forester" is probably the meaning here as well; "foster" is an easy slurring of "forester." If this man had been a forester in Barnsdale or Sherwood, he might well know Robin (recall that in Stanza 14, Robin told John, Much, and Scarlock not to harm a yeoman who walked "the grene wode shawe," which probably means a forester). Could the whole situation be a set-up? That is, could Robin have told the forester of the plan, or the forester warned Robin that the King would come? We know that Robin wishes to obtain pardon from the King; see the notes on Stanza 321 and Stanza 353. That probably requires meeting the king.

❖ **Stanza 368/Line 1470** ❧ "Gete you monkes wede [weeds=clothes]," i.e. "disguise yourself as a monk." The motif of a king in disguise is rather common in folklore; it is Thompson motif P14.19. Apart from the famous case of Odysseus concealing his name at the end of the *Odyssey*, we find it in "King Estmere" [Child 60] and in "King William and the Keeper," and in the Robin Hood cycle it occurs also in "The King's Disguise, and Friendship with Robin Hood" [Child 151]. In "Queen Eleanor's Confession" [Child 156], we even find the King and a companion disguised as clergymen, although for a rather different purpose. There were also numerous tales of James V of Scotland doing this sort of thing. Indeed, Pollard, p. 201, reminds us that Shakespeare used the gimmick in "Measure for Measure." Clawson, p. 107, points out evidence gathered by

Kittredge that people in the late fourteenth century believed that Edward III had visited people in disguise.

It didn't happen often in reality — certainly there is no hint that the haughty Edward III went incognito. Interestingly, we do find Richard I trying to disguise himself to cross central Europe on his way home from the Crusade (Gillingham, p. 223). But this did not happen in England, or any land the Plantagenets ruled — and the disguise was a failure anyway; Richard was taken prisoner and was not released until he had paid a huge ransom (which he knew was likely to happen; it's why he used the disguise. As to why he didn't go another way... let's just say Richard was a little to proud for his own good. Like most of Richard's ideas that didn't involve fighting, it was a really dumb thing to do). Bonnie Prince Charlie also disguised himself, on his voyage to Skye, but that was long after the "Gest."

One account of the life of Henry VI says that he often dressed as a "townsman" or a "farmer" (Wolffe, p. 10), and it is certain that he was often in disguise in the early 1460s when he had been overthrown and was trying to avoid capture. But the 1460s are a late date for the composition of the "Geste," and in any case Henry at this time had no power, and would not dare reveal himself so openly — and was not forceful enough to play the role of the king in the "Gest."

There is an account of Edward II in disguise reported from about the 1360s, which cannot have been true but which might have fostered the idea of the concealed King: In about 1305, when Edward II and his father Edward I were quarreling, Edward I was supposedly riding along a muddy, dangerous road in winter — and Edward II, in disguise, came out and led his father's horse through the mud, so that his father did not fall (Phillips, p. 603).

Plus Edward II reportedly liked hanging around with monks and friars (Philipps, p. 602). The idea of dressing as a monk would probably appeal to him.

The idea of adopting a cleric's disguise would be particularly good in 1323, because Edward II had ordered the clergy to gather, separately from parliament, early in that year. He summoned them to Lincoln to discuss a war subsidy (Phillips, p. 432). Thus Robin and his men, in that year, might have been keeping a particularly close watch for high church officials.

Also, there were several tales of Edward II having escaped his execution in 1327 and wandering around Europe. The probability of this is exceptionally low, but the stories usually describe him in the guise of a hermit of some sort (Phillips, pp. 582–592, 612, who doesn't believe it; Doherty, pp. 185–215, who takes one version seriously without being absolutely convinced). The story is in fact extremely implausible — but the mere rumor might have influenced the idea of Edward II disguising himself as a monk.

There is also an interesting tale from 1234, in the reign of Henry III: The King was going to visit Windsor Forest, and an outlaw named Richard Siward was attacking travelers in the area. If I understand the tale told on p. 105 of Young, it seems that only the King's presence kept Siward from attacking his party. Siward was not pardoned, however; attempts were made to take him as he moved toward Wales.

❖ **Stanzas 368–369/Lines 1471–1476** ❧ The King is told to go from an abbey to Nottingham. This is pretty typical of what happened when Kings stayed in the north.

They often stayed in abbeys, which were usually much wealthier than anything else in the vicinity and used to taking in guests. Also, the King could not stay in one place for very long; no place in the north had food and other supplies enough to provide for the king and all his entourage for more than a few days.

The idea that the King wandered about in the north fits far better with the history of Edward II (see Stanza 365) than the idea of him staying in one place for all that time.

❖ **Stanza 369/Line 1473** ❧ The forester offers to be the king's ledes-man, i.e. guide, leader, but emendations to this line have been proposed; see the textual note on Stanza 369. Again, though, one wonders if this might be a set-up, cooked up by Robin or the forester; see the note on Stanza 367.

❖ **Stanza 373/Line 1490** ❧ "Forsooth as I you say." This phrase occurs here, in Stanzas 339, 375, and Stanza 424 (with minor variants), but nowhere before this (although there are a few other uses of "forsooth"). This is a curious pattern of occurrences which hints that it is characteristic of the source "Robin and the King." We also find the phrase "Forsooth as I thee/you say" in the "Monk," stanzas 27.2, 66.2, 78.2, and "The sooth as I you say" in the "Monk," stanza 60.2.

❖ **Stanza 373/Line 1491** ❧ The king is said to have sung as he rode. Sadly, this is not much help with identification. There was a famous early story about Richard I making himself known to his minstrel Blondel by a song he sang (Gillingham, p. 224, although he notes that it can hardly be true). As late as the reign of Richard III, probably the last king to die before the "Gest" was printed, we find bishops complaining that the King was too interested in music and dance (Ross-Richard, pp. 141–142).

We know that Edward II was interested enough in music to send a courtier to the Welsh marches to learn the crwth (Phillips, p. 37), and Hutchison, p. 10, reports that "he was to be a keen patron of musicians and minstrels." Given that he was also fond of "theatricals" (Harvey, p. 125, declares that he was "the first of our Kings to take a personal interest in the theatre"; Packe, p. 5, declares that he "dabbled before his time in interludes, or plays," and even concludes that "his flare for the theatre was perhaps the key to his personality"), it would be no surprise to find him a singer as well as a hearer of music.

One wonders, though, if the songs he sang would have been suitable for an abbot.

❖ **Stanza 373/Line 1492** ❧ "The covent was clothed in graye." Since the "monks" wear grey, not black, they are not portraying themselves as Benedictines — incidentally meaning that they are not from St. Mary's, the abbey with presumably the greatest interest in capturing Robin Hood. (Not surprising, since the king is in Nottingham, not Yorkshire.) Nor are they Cisterians, the white monks. For the possibility that the "monks" were Dominicans, see also the note on Stanza 390. If the trip to see Robin is a set-up (see the note on Stanza 367), could the color of their habits be a clue to Robin of who they are?

❖ **Stanza 375/Line 1500** ❧ For the phrase "Forsooth as I you say" see the note on Stanza 373.

❖ **Stanza 377/Lines 1505–1507** ❧ "We lyve by our kynges dere." Here Robin in effect admits to living by poaching, despite claiming to lines earlier to be a yeoman of the forest. But see the note on Stanzas 32–33.

There is one interesting side note here, based on the fact that Robin is such a staunch Catholic (see the notes on Stanza 8 and following): If he is Catholic in this period, he should have fasted in Lent. No meat. How could someone who lives on the King's Deer fast in Lent? But that's from a different source, where they have other food as well.

❖ **Stanza 378/Line 1512** ❧ There is a textual variant in the spelling of the word "saynt" (see the textual note on Stanza 378); it is possible that this is a difference between the meaning "saint" and "saintly," but we really cannot tell. There is no well-known saint named "Charity"; the idea here seems to be "for holy charity." We also find a reference to *Seinte Charité* in the "Tale of Gamelyn,"lines 451, 513.

❖ **Stanza 379/Lines 1501–1504, etc.** ❧ The King and Robin speak to each other, seemingly in English, certainly without a translator. This implies a King who speaks English. William the Conqueror could not, nor could most of the kings between William I and Henry III. Richard I certainly could not; Cannon, p. 802. (As Gillingham points out on p. 24, Richard had almost no English blood — only one of his great-grandparents, Edith the wife of Henry I, could be considered English. The rest were all Normans or French or other "foreigners." Gillingham, p. 33, says Richard could compose songs in Norman French and Provencal, and crack jokes in Latin — but never mentions English. Markale declares on p. 57 that "never has an English king been so French.")

The situation changed in the century after that. It is universally agreed that English was the first language of all kings from Henry VI (ascended 1422) on. Henry IV (1399–1413) is often said to be the earliest English King whose first language was English (Burrow/Turville-Petre, p. 17). Richard II (1377–1399) was clearly also fluent, having been able to casually converse with Wat Tyler's rebels while still in his early teens (SaulII, p. 68ffff.). Edward III certainly knew English, and Edward I spoke it as a second language (Prestwich1, p. 6); so it is not unreasonable to assume Edward II did also; Hutchison, p. 9, thinks he did. So does Phillips, p. 60, although he finds no English documents at all among Edward II's letters; over 90% were in French, the rest in Latin. But that might just be the result of what was kept by the archivists; Geoffrey Chaucer, for instance, was a thoroughly English poet, yet almost every record of his life found in Crow/Olson is either in French or in Latin.

❖ **Stanza 380/Lines 1517–1518** ❧ **"**I have layne at Notyngham This fourtynyght with our kynge**."** A subtle and artful statement, this: It gives the strong impression of being a statement by a clergyman, and yet it is basically the truth: The King has been in Nottingham in the company of the king. He is the head of the King's company, but he has been with it.... And a good King should not lie.

❖ **Stanza 381/Line 1524** ❧ The text here is uncertain (see textual note on Stanza 381). Child's text "I wolde vouch it safe on the" means that, if the king/abbot had a hundred pounds, he would trust it to Robin Hood. The reading of **b** is, however, "I vouch it half on the," that is, he would turn half over to Robin if his budget were in better shape. Given that Robin actually takes half, this seems much the better reading. It also seems to imply that the King knows what to expect from Robin.

❖ **Stanza 382/Lines 1525–1528** ❧ This should be Robin's cue to search the King's party (see the note on Stanza 38), yet he fails to do so. He just takes the cash and splits it. Is this another hint that this is a set-up?

Another point: In the earlier part of the "Gest," it was always Little John who searched the visitors. But note that Little John was last mentioned in Stanza 328, which is a bridging stanza, and is not mentioned again until Stanza 392, and that in a minor role. The association of Robin and John is ancient (see the note on Stanza 3), but might the source of this section of the "Gest," what I've called "Robin and the King." ignore John? It certainly looks as if the author here didn't know of John's role as searcher and money-counter — note that in the next lines, Robin seems to divide the money himself. (I don't want to lay too much weight on the idea that Little John wasn't mentioned in the source — I am far from certain — but his absence is peculiar.)

A change of source between Fit VI and Fit VII, or somewhere in the midst of Fit VI, would explain why the King wanted to destroy Robin in the former fit, but was perfectly willing to talk to him in the latter. It may not really be the same King.

❖ **Stanza 382/Lines 1525–1528** ❧ Of the "monk's" money, Robin gives "halfandell" to his merry men (possibly **b** is to be read "half endell; there is a very small space betweeh the f and the e). This is a very rare word; it is usually taken to mean "half" or "half of it all," but the word "halfe" can also mean "side"; perhaps Robin gave the money from one side of the pile to the men? In practice it probably doesn't make much difference.

If the reference is indeed to half of forty pounds, twenty pounds among 144 men is 33⅓ pence each — the equivalent of about eight days' service for a bowman at four pence a day. So it's not a trivial amount of money, though it won't make anyone rich.

One thing is clear: In this verse, Robin is sharing the loot with his men, even though, in Stanzas 170–171, it seems as if the men are paid on a fee/salary basis.

❖ **Stanza 383/Lines 1531** ❧ "We shall mete another day." How could Robin be sure of this? Does he know something we don't know? Is this another hint of a set-up? Or is he just saying, "I'll see you again when you head in the other direction"?

❖ **Stanza 384/Lines 1533–1536** ❧ "The greteth Edwarde." For King Edward see note to Stanza 353. Actual instances of a King inviting an outlaw to meet him are not unknown — it happened a lot in Scotland — but many monarchs could not be trusted to keep their safe conduct.

The royal seal (for which see also Stanza 361) was of course the means of validating official documents — many of the early Norman and Plantagenet kings could not read or sign their names (although Packe, p. 4, says that Edward II was able at least to read), and even if the kings could write, the commoners could not read it. Thus developed the custom of sealing official documents. The King might have as many as three seals, and always had two, the Great Seal and the Privy Seal.

The Great Seal was generally kept by the Chancellor, who from the time of Edward I was housed at Chancery, often away from the King's household (Lyon, p. 69). Hence the need for the Privy Seal, kept by the keeper of the Privy Seal, which tended to move with the King (unless, as was common but not universal, the King used a third seal, the signet, to move the privy seal). A complication in the case of Edward II was that he had lost the privy seal at Bannockburn (Phillips, pp. 233–234) — and, astonishingly, managed to misplace it again a decade later, during his time in the north (although, that

time, it was found after a few days; Phillips, p. 320. But it's fascinating to think what might have happened had Robin captured the seal for a few days).

In a minor irony, when he lost the privy seal at Bannockburn, it was none other than Roger Mortimer, Edward's later nemesis, who brought it back (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 64).

The "Gest" does not make it clear whether the seal was the great or the privy seal. Given the situation, the privy seal seems more likely (since it was available for use in Nottingham; the King could have sealed an invitation to Robin before setting out) — and stanza 64.3 of the "Monk" refers to the "prive seell." But we cannot be sure; the usage of the seals varied (Jolliffe, p. 278); indeed, if we knew which seal was involved, it would be a dating hint.

It is noteworthy that it was possible to "summon [a] defendant by a writ under the Privy Seal requiring him to appear before the king and his council.... If a second privy seal failed to procure the attendance of the defendant, a writ of attachment addressed to the sheriff would follow" (Chrimes, p. 148). Thus we may be seeing a formal legal summons to Robin here.

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 166, claims that the seal itself was treated with reverence. This is at best a retrojection, if we are in the time of Edward II. It seems to have been Richard II who introduced the terms "highness" and "majesty" (Saul3, p. 116). In the 1320s, the English monarchy had not yet developed the Tudor insistence calling the monarch "Your Majesty." The King was not a near-divine being — as witness the fact that Edward II, and later his great-grandson Richard II, His Original Majesty himself, would be deposed.... Still, we see reverence for the royal seal also in the "Monk"; when the sheriff sees the King's seal, he takes off his hood (stanza 65.1-2).

❖ **Stanza 385/Lines 1537–1540** ❧ This is a crux (see the textual note on Stanza 385). The last word of 385.1 may be "tarpe" or "targe" or possibly "seale" — the latter the easiest word, but were it original, there would be no reason for the other readings to arise. The actual text of **b** says that the king showed his broad "tarpe." There seems to be no such word in Middle English. Child's suggestion is "targe." The normal meaning of "targe" is "shield." A shield would not bear a seal. A shield might well show the King's colors, to help identify him in battle, but in that case he would not give it to a monk.

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 166, note that the OED lists "targe" as a word for the privy seal in the Edwardian period, based perhaps on the use of a shield in the seal at the time; and Dobson/Taylor, p. 107, also gloss "targe" as "seal."

This raises two difficulties. First, the seals of the Edwards did *not* contain shields — all the seals were quite similar, with the King mounted and wearing armor on one side, and enthroned on the other (see the illustration below). The Exchequer seal did have a shield — but the exchequer seal isn't going to cause anyone to get all excited. Plus the use of "targe" for "seal" was obscure even at that time, and probably effectively vanished by the time the "Gest" was written. The only justification for assuming the targe is a seal, rather than a shield, is that Robin refers to the seal in the next stanza.

Personally, I suspect that the original word, which has been lost completely, was a reference to some sort of commission or charter which would carry the king's seal.

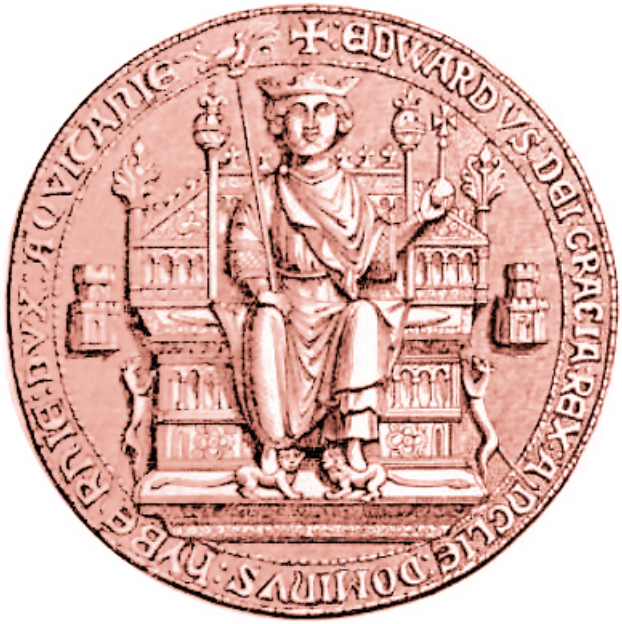


Figure 20: Edward II's Great Seal

Robin for "curtesy" then gets down on one knee at the sight of whatever-it-is. This, if nothing else, demonstrates his respect for the king.

Note however that this "monk" never actually reads a letter from the King, or anything like that. The seal-or-whatever is treated more like a holy relic than the sign of an actual message. Very odd. Perhaps another hint that Robin is actually aware of what is going on, and is play-acting?

❖ **Stanza 386/Lines 1541-1542** ❧ "I love no man in all the world So well as I do my kynge." More than Little John? Admittedly this is probably hyperbole, or another hint that Robin is aware of what is going on: he's either buttering up the king or the king's representative. But see the note on Stanza 382; this might be another hint that this part of the "Gest" comes from a source that doesn't include Little John.

❖ **Stanza 387/Line 1548** ❧ For Robin's "trystel tre(e)" see the note on Stanza 176.

❖ **Stanza 389/Line 1555** ❧ For Robin's seven score followers, see the note on Stanza 229.

❖ **Stanza 390/Line 1560** ❧ "Saynt Austyn." This is usually stated to be Augustine of Canterbury, who converted Britain to Catholicism, not the more famous Augustine of Hippo. I am not absolutely convinced, however. The Dominicans (who first came to England in 1221; Powicke, p. 24) followed the rule of Augustine of Hippo (Cannon, p. 299). And the king's party was dressed in grey, like the Dominicans (see the note on Stanza 373). And Edward II seems to have been fond of the Dominicans (see the note to Stanza 213). Might he have picked up this oath from his Dominican confessor? In any case, this cannot he be regarded as an indication of date. Augustine was sent to Kent by Pope Gregory the Great in 597 (Benet, p. 967), so he preceded all Plantagenet kings....

There is a passage in one of Gower's French works *(Mirour de l'omme)* mentioning Saint Augustine and an unknown "Robyn" in consecutive lines (20886–20887, as given in Mustanoja, p. 64). I doubt that this is significant, however.

❖ **Stanza 391/Lines 1563–1564** ❧ The king observes that Robin's men are "more at his byddynge" than are the King's own. This again hints at a date in the reign of Edward II. Nobody crossed Edward I — at least not for long! Edward III had more trouble with his subordinates, especially about taxes, but his soldiers were quite obedient. Whereas orders from Edward II were quite regularly ignored.

Discipline was not a widely-stressed virtue at this time. Reid, p. 32, says that we have absolutely no records of soldiers training as a body. They learned their weapons, of course, but they do not seem to have practiced unit maneuvers — certainly not at a scale larger than the company. So if Robin had his men firmly in hand, he really did have unusual control over his forces.

❖ **Stanza 392/Line 1568** ❧ Here, for the first time in this particular incident, — possibly for the first time in the whole account of "Robin and the King." — we finally see Little John. But John doesn't actually *do* anything; it might be that his name is an editorial insertion. It is, after all, a little odd to see a man serve *dinner* with all his might. How might might does it take to carry a plate? This sounds more like serving the monarch in war.

❖ **Stanza 396/Lines 1583** ❧ Some have read the text of **b** (our only authority) as "a gast" (two words) rather than one ("agast"). I don't think this is correct; **b**'s text does not appear to me to have any space between the a and the g. Still, it raises a question of interpretation: should we read "a gast," i.e. perhaps "a guest," or as "agast," i.e. probably "aghast." The word "agast" does not appear elsewhere in the "Gest," although it appears in some parallels. "agast" seems to make better sense than "a gast," but that doesn't prove much; **f** and **g** treat it as one word, but that proves even less. I've translated as "aghast" but offer you this note so you can think about it....

❖ **Stanzas 397–398/Lines 1585–1589** ❧ About an archery contest in which Robin's men shoot at garlands at great distance. This is another indication that Robin's weapon must be the longbow, not a short bow. Fifty extra paces, no matter how you slice it, requires a longbow! For another indication, and supporting evidence, see Stanza 132.

One does wish that at least one of the archery contest accounts would list an actual distance!

❖ **Stanzas 401-402/Lines 1601-1605** ❧ Robin, Gilbert (for whom see Stanza 292B), Little John, and Scathelock take part in the archery contest, but where is Much? Did he die or desert? More likely this is another hint that the "Robin and the King" source doesn't know much about Robin's band; on its face, it hardly knows Little John and knows Much not at all. For this point, see also the note on Stanza 435.

❖ **Stanza 402/Lines 1606, 1608** ❧ The rhyme here, in all the prints, is spare.... sore. It seems likely that the poet intended the rhymes to be pronounces "spare.... sair." This is perhaps a hint of northern origin — and of editing by a non-northern typesetter.

❖ **Stanza 405/Lines 1619–1620** ❧ Robin has had each man who loses pay off to his master — presumably meaning another archer who wins a head-to-head contest. The "tackle" the loser forfeits is probably his arrow. But here Robin treats the king/abbot as

his master, for no obvious reason. It wasn't unknown for clergymen to hunt, but in Stanza 426, the King makes it clear that he isn't as good an archer as Robin. Is this another hint that Robin actually already knew it was the King?

❖ **Stanza 406/Lines 1621–1622** ❧ The King says that, as monk, he isn't supposed to strike a yeoman. Many religious orders rejected shedding blood, with the interesting effect that we see fighting churchmen inventing weapons such as the mace and the war hammer so they could kill without actual bloodshed. (We see what may be an odd reflection of this in the "Tale of Gamelyn," lines 521-523, where Gamelyn is advised not to attack the clerics who have abused them: "They are men of holy church; draw of them no blood; Save well the crown[s] and do them no harm, but break both their legs and also their arms."). Probably most churchmen did not absolutely reject the striking of blows. It's a good bit of disguise, though.

❖ **Stanza 408/Lines 1629–1630** ❧ The strength of the disguised king fells Robin. All three Edwards were tall and strong (as was Edward IV later on), but Edward II in particular seems to have had a reputation for exceptional physical strength. Barbour, the author of the *Bruce* — obviously no fan of Edward — wrote that he was "the strongest man of any that you could find in any country" (Phillips, p. 83), although this was written half a century after Edward's reign. When he was overtaken by the enemy at Bannockburn, every blow Edward struck was said to have felled its victim (Phillips, p. 233); his strength was regarded as being responsible for his escape. We also read in "Adam Davy's Dreams about Edward II" (written probably early in that king's reign) that Edward was a "kniȝt of mychel miȝht" (Emerson, p. 227, line 4. Although CHEL1, p. 356, says that we do not know why Davy wrote; there might be an element of flattery).

This little scene might have a practical meaning. The king in Stanza 359 had been very angry with Robin Hood, without, it seems promising him any particular punishment (he said he would take the knight's lands, but merely wished to see Robin). If he vowed punishment for Robin, he could at least technically use this blow as a basis for saying he had fulfilled the vow. Fulfilled it with his own hand, in fact.

❖ **Stanza 411/Lines 1643–1644** ❧ "Now I know you well" — somehow, Robin and Sir Richard recognize the King. Possibly Sir Richard had met him (see the note on Stanza 45 about them possibly being knighted at the same time) — but Robin? Was it just by the strength of the King's arm (this is the explanation of Baldwin, p. 24)? This is surely inadequate.

Bellamy, p. 40, suggests that Robin had *already* known the king, and so knew his features; possibly, in this hypothesis, Robin was a former royal servant who had deserted his service once already. Bellamy is trying to make Robin an historical figure, so perhaps this might have "really" happened, but there is certainly no preparation for it in the "Gest."

Was it, then, by his face on his seal? (The seal they may have seen in Stanza 385, recall.) Robin saw the seal, but seals are not very detailed. Indeed, the image on Edward II's Great Seal may not have resembled the actual man, for the portrait on the seal shows a broad-faced man with a short beard or no beard at all, whereas Edward's tomb effigy shows a man with a narrow face and a much longer beard. And if we compare the

image on the seal with the image on the tomb, the latter clearly shows a greater resemblance to the king's son Edward III. Thus it is reasonable to assume that the tomb image is more like the real man and the image on the seal imperfect.

In any case, what was recognizable on the seal was generally not the portrait but the other artwork (e.g. Richard I's was designed to show a shield with the three lions of his coat of arms; Saul3, p. 234). The only likely way for ordinary people to know the king (unless he wore a crown or the like) was coin portraits. If Robin really did recognize the king from his coinage, it argues for one of the Edwards rather than an earlier King (see note on Stanza 49), and the later the better; it argues very strongly indeed against Richard I and John, who made so little change to the old molds that their coins still used the name of Henry II (Cannon, p. 223).

❖ **Stanza 412/Lines 1645–1648** ❧ Note that Child had two versions of the first two lines of this stanza (see the textual note on Stanza 412). In his original edition, he printed

'Mercy then, Robyn,' sayd our kynge,
'Vnder your trystyll-tre,

In a correction (volume V., p. 297 in the Dover edition) he amended this to follow:

'Mercy,' then said Robyn to our kynge,
'Vnder this trystyll-tre.'

The former reading, however, is very much to be preferred.

Does the reading really mean what it says? Did the King expect that Robin would attack him if he became known? It sounds like it. Hunter hypothesized that Robin was one of Lancaster's rebels against Edward II (Harris, p. 70) But here we again see evidence that Robin was not a rebel against a king, at least in his own mind, but an outlaw of some other sort. Under what context might we find a man who does not consider himself a rebel, but who is regarded as a rebel by the King? It is reasonable to assume that Robin was opposed to one of the King's retainers. In the case of Edward II, we might even suspect that Robin rebelled against one of that king's traitorous vassals. I find myself wondering if Robin might have been one of the followers of Adam Banaster, one of the Thomas, Earl of Lancaster's vassals who rebelled against his lord (Prestwich3, p. 92; Prestwich3, p. 96 refers to a period of "virtual civil war" in Lancashire. We know on other grounds that Lancaster often had trouble holding his followers' loyalty; Tuck, p. 80).

Hicks, p. 48, declares "Lancaster's misuse of his power reflects 'the repulsive nature of the man. A generous almsgiver and pious benefactor, perhaps more than conventionally devout,' he was also sexually immoral, quarrelsome, selfish and vindictive. He was rapacious to his tenants, maintained his retainers beyond the legitimate bounds of lordship, and seized what he wanted in defiance of right and the law. He readily resorted to brutality, violence, in his Thorpe Waterville dispute with Pembroke, his suppression of Adam Banaster's rebellion, his feud with Warenne, Sir Gilbert Middleton's kidnapping of two cardinals, and when wasting Damory's lands."

Every history I've read broadly agrees with this opinion of Lancaster: he was power-hungry, untrustworthy, corrupt, and grasping — as well as rather stupid and inefficient. What would *you* do if he had been your overlord?

We don't know much about Banaster's rebellion, which took place in 1315; the fullest analysis I've seen is less than a page long, on p. 98 of Haines. Haines thinks Banaster might have come in conflict with another of Lancaster's retainers, Sir Robert Ho(l)land. (Interesting name, that.) "A group of disaffected knights sympathetic to Banaster met on 8 October [1315] and entered into a sworn confederacy. After some initial successes, and the murder of Sir Henry Bury, the confederates robbed the rectory at Wigan and proceeded to Halton Castle, which they captured, together with a substantial number of weapons. On 31 October they advanced to Manchester flying royal banners to disarm opposition. They then proceeded by way of Wigan to Preston. By that time Holland had mustered his forces, as had the sheriff, Edmund de Neville. After one or possibly two engagements, the Banaster supporters were routed and on 11 November the ringleaders[,] Adam Banaster and Henry de Lea, were captured and executed at Leyland, allegedly at the behest of the earl and Robert Holland. Much of the revolt involved wanton pillage. Holland and his adherents now proceeded to ravage the area in their turn and to wreak vengeance on the Banasters and their associates. Whatever might be said about the rival factions, this incident does not reflect well on Lancaster's ability to maintain law and order...."

Such of Banaster's followers as survived must surely have fled to escape Lancaster's wrath; they might well have turned outlaw.

Like all our speculations about the history behind the "Gest," this is an extraordinary amount of inference based on the thinnest reed of information, and I offer it only as a faint possibility. But it is a reasonable context in which a man in the reign of Edward II might have become an outlaw. Tenants of the Earl of Lancaster were probably more subject to this sort of problem than anyone else in this reign, simply because Lancaster was the richest man in England other than the King, and he and Edward hated each other.

There is in fact a printed item (I hesitate to call it a song, or even a poem; it makes most doggerel look good) called "Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster: A Ballad," set to the tune of "The Abbot of Canterbury," which purports to treat of a quarrel between Robin and the Duke of Lancaster. It is printed in Dobson/Taylor (pp. 191–194), and there are several copies in the Bodleian collection (Douce Prints a.49(1), G. Pamph. 1665(8), Johnson c.74; reprinted on p. 398 of GutchII).

It apparently was printed in 1727 (GutchII, p. 397). But it is almost beyond belief that it represents an actual tradition; it claims to have taken place in the year 1202, when John was King — but there was no Duke of Lancaster in 1202; there were no Dukes in England at all (Edward III created the first English dukes, beginning by making his son Edward the Duke of Cornwall in 1337; Barber, p. 20). So you don't have to look up that piece. And, believe me, you don't want to. Gutch suggests that it is a satire about a courtier who wanted a job as a royal forester, presumably in the reign of George I or George II; Dobson/Taylor, p. 192, are even more specific, declaring it to refer to Lord Lechmere, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the reign of George I.

❖ **Stanza 412/Line 1646** ❧ For Robin's "trystel tre(e)" see the note on Stanza 176.

❖ **Stanza 413/Lines 1651–1652** ❧ Here Robin formally asks the King's pardon, for himself and his men — yet we still do not learn what his crime was!

Although Edward II seems rarely to have given out pardons as King, when his estranged wife Isabella and her rebels looked like they might be able to take over the country, Edward is reported to have given pardon to more than a hundred outlaws if they would join his forces (Phillips, p. 505 n. 307). This did not take place during Edward's northern excursion, but it might have figured into the legend somehow.

Interestingly, Edward II himself, before he became king, was once charged with poaching (Packe, p. 5). Might this have made him more willing to forgive poachers? On the other hand, Edward's mercy wasn't much — and he wasn't very good at keeping he word about it, either. For example, he had taken Roger Mortimer into custody at a time when Mortimer thought he had been given safe conduct (Mortiner-Traitor, p. 115). But Mortimer was, arguably, Edward's personal enemy, which Robin was not.

Mortimer-Traitor, p. 120, says that Edward II took vengeance on the wives of his enemies as well as his enemies themselves — e.g. arresting Roger Mortimer's wife. Would Robin, had he known of this, still have approved of such a king?

❖ **Stanza 414/Lines 1654–1655** ❧ "And thereto sent I me, With that thou leve the grene wood." The King here tells a truth, although an ironic one: He intended to have Robin and his men leave the woods by taking them prisoner; instead he chooses to induce them to leave the woods by pardoning them.

For the effects of the offer of pardon and a place at the court, see the note to Stanza 435. For conditional pardons, see the note on Stanza 439.

❖ **Stanza 416/Lines 1661–1664** ❧ Robin promises to come to court to be the King's servant (parallel, in a small way, to John and Much becoming yeomen of the crown in the "Monk"; cf. Holt, p. 29). But he also promises to bring at least some of his men. To me, this seems to imply either that Robin wants pardon for all his men, or that he is promising to bring them all to be the King's soldiers (or bodyguards? If the year is 1323, Edward II might well have wanted a loyal bodyguard).

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 166, say however that "The idea of Robin holding an alternative lordship, with his own retinue, is clear." What is not clear to me is what is meant by an "alternative lordship." Certainly Robin, were he gentrified, would want to keep a retinue, but there is no hint whatsoever that he is being offered any sort of holding, let alone a title — merely a position at court. For all we know, his job might be privy-scrubber.

For Robin's seven score followers, see the note on Stanza 229. In this verse we see Robin with "seven score and three" followers. Probably this is just poetry, but it might be that the three are Little John, Scathelock, and Gilbert (or Much, but as we've seen, this source doesn't seem to know Much), and the seven score are all the other unnamed archers who exist mostly to supply "alarums and excursions" (or random people who took the nickname "Reynald"?).

❖ **Stanza 417/Lines 1665–1666** ❧ Robin, in these lines, declares that he will only stay on if he "likes well" the King's service. The first printings of the "Gest" almost certainly took place in the time of King Henry VII (Henry Tudor) or slightly earlier. The poem had probably reached its final form in the reign of Henry VI. The manuscript which was the source of all extant copies very likely comes from the reign of Edward IV or perhaps Richard III. These are the kings of the era of the Wars of the Roses. It was quite normal

for the nobility to commit to one side or another, then switch based on their personal advantage. That makes Robin's warning that he might leave the King's service potentially quite politically interesting. A reminder of what happened in the past? A threat to the present king? Or just part of the legend?

❖ **Stanza 417/Lines 1665–1668** ❧ Baldwin, p. 41, follows Pollard in pointing out that no outlaw could dictate the conditions of his own pardon. This is true in the sense that it was up to the King to grant the pardon and set the conditions. On the other hand, outlaws could decide whether to take the pardon — and so could negotiate what it would take for them to give up their rebellion. I would again consider this to be a warning by Robin to the King — and, as it turns out, it was a warning Edward would have been wise to heed, because (as we'll see in the next fit) Robin did *not* like the King's Service.

❖ **Stanzas 417–418/Lines 1668–1669** ❧ This is marked as the beginning of the eighth and final fit. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 166, point out that there is no reason for a break here — there is no scene change, and no break in the action. They suggest that the insertion of the heading is editorial. This seems likely — unless, perhaps, there was damage in the ancestral print either in the column below 417 or text above 418 (more likely, I suspect, the latter) and the material has been lost which would justify the break between fits. But the eighth fit seems very like the seventh: It's about Robin and the King, the site is near Nottingham, Little John is hardly to be seen, and in general the two feel the same in terms of language (at least to me). Maybe the poet just needed a drink about here.

❖ **Stanza 418/Lines 1669–1672** ❧ Robin had earlier acted as a cloth merchant in Stanzas 70–72, and Ohlgren thinks this ties him to one of the cloth guilds; see the note on Stanza 10. In fact, Ohlgren/Matheson, p. 180 accuses him of violating the law against "forestalling," but this law is not mentioned in either of my constitutional histories of England; I doubt it was really an issue.

It is interesting that Robin *gave* livery to the knight (Stanzas 70–72) but is asked to *sell* it to the King. This is noteworthy because, in the reign of Edward II, soldiers were required to wear uniform but had to pay for them themselves (Tuck, p. 141). Thus the King arguably has to ask for the clothing based on his own rules.

Incidentally, this is a strong argument against the King of the "Gest" being Richard II; that King loved the pageantry and symbolism of fine clothing (Saul3, pp. 109–110). Saul3, p. 114, calls him "a showman to his fingertips"; he would hardly have "dressed down" this way. Saul3, p. 126, even argues that one of Richard's portraits — the first one of an English king shown face-on — is an attempt to emphasize the divine aspect of his kingship, since only the Almighty was normally painted this way. This argument also applies, with slightly less force, to Richard I, who was ostentatious and insisted on being buried in his coronation robes (Saul3, p. 113).

❖ **Stanza 420/Lines 1677–1680** ❧ Robin agrees to clothe the King in green, and expects the King to give him clothing in return at Yule (Christmastide and year's-end). In other words, Robin is accepting the King's livery. Since Robin does not expect a change of clothing until Yule, the date is presumably after midsummer's day (June 25).

The king's acceptance of green, and his calling forth of Robin's men while wearing green, is a strong argument against the king being Richard I; see the note on Stanzas 70–72.

❖ **Stanza 421/Lines 1681–1684** ❧ Knight/Ohlgren, p. 167, says that the King's wearing green livery "acknowledges forest values." It also gets the king out of dirty (sweaty? flea-infested? poorly-woven and itchy?) garments, so he might simply have wanted to change clothes. Nonetheless it does seem symbolic — a symbol much more likely from Edward II than either his father or son; see the note on Stanza 424.

❖ **Stanza 422/Line 1685** ❧ "Lyncolne grene," or Lincoln Green, and Kendall Green, were famous colors in the Middle Ages — probably because greens were hard to make (Finlay, p. 275). There were few good dyes at the time — and none at all that allowed cloth to be dyed green in one step. Paintings typically used copper compounds for greens — but these were not good dyes. Green cloth was made by mixing the blue of woad (indigo, or modern FD&C blue dye #2) with any of several organic yellows — broom plant, or dyer's greenweed, was a common choice (Binney, p. 89). Supposedly Lincoln Green used a plant-based yellow dye called "weld" (Finlay, p. 276) — usually applying the dyes serially.

Incidentally, weld fades faster than indigo, so if by chance you come across a piece of cloth from that era which was originally green, it will now appear blue (Finlay, p. 276).

Why Lincoln Green? Gummere, p. 319, quotes someone (Ritson?) as explaining that it was good at letting the outlaws hide from the deer. Neither Ritson nor Gummere could know it, but this is rather unlikely. Deer do not see as we do. Human vision is trichromatic — red, green, and blue. But trichromatic vision, among non-marsupial mammals, is exclusive to primates (Dawkins, pp. 146–150). Deer, and all the other mammals of English forests, have dichromatic vision — green and blue sensors only. We know that dichromats can see through various forms of camouflage which fool trichromats (Dawkins, p. 151) — although there are also concealment schemes which will fool a dichromat and not a trichromat. Without knowing the exact shade of green, we can't say just how a deer or rabbit would perceive a man in Lincoln Green, but based on the way it was made, I don't think it would be ideal camouflage. Brown or dark grey would be better.

Others argue that Lincoln Green was camouflage against human intruders. This makes some sense. Lincoln Green is a little too olive to be ideal forest coloration — but there was no good leaf green available.

Finlay, p. 276, suggests instead that Robin dressed his men in Lincoln Green "to show off," because green cloth was expensive due to the need for multiple dying steps. However, the evidence is that Lincoln Green was not that expensive — certainly not when compared with, say, scarlet red based on kermes. The Welsh soldiers in Edward III's wars, for instance, were clothed in white and green (Hewitt, p. 39) — and it is certain that no one would have spent much on clothing the Welsh!

In any case, Kendall Green is a good symbolic color for outlaws, because Kent was famously considered a rebellious county (Cawthorne, p. 78) — e.g. most of Wat Tyler's rebels came from there. Kent's rebelliousness is probably somewhat exaggerated; Kentish rebels tended to be noticed more often in London because rebels in Kent could

reach the city far more easily than those in, say, Lincolnshire. But Kent did have fewer villeins and more free men (Cannon, p. 956), so the people probably were somewhat more rowdy.

It is certain that green was a color associated with outlaws. Note the green disguises used by Henry VIII when he played an outlaw (see above, p. 314). We also have a report of something similar in Edwardian times: During the reign of Edward III, the English had captured the French king Jean II. As he was conveyed back to England, he was treated to the sight of (supposedly) five hundred "outlaws," foresters, dressed in green and menacing the royal party (Barber, p. 152).

In 1321, during one of the protests against the misrule of Edward II, the rebels were said to have worn green tunics with the right arm and shoulder dyed yellow — but also bearing the royal arms (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 108). So was green the color of rebellion or loyalty? Hard to say....

Wimberly, p. 178, says that green "is a fairy color and of ill omen," but points out that it is one of the most common colors of clothing in the ballads. Despite all those attempts to link Robin with the Green Man or the like, I doubt that the color has any mystical significance.

For more on cloth offered by Robin, see the notes on Stanzas 70–72.

❖ **Stanza 424/Line 1694** ❧ For this line see the note on Stanza 373.

❖ **Stanza 424/Line 1695** ❧ The plucke-buffet, believed to be a contest in which the players exchange blows as forfeits, is attested in many forms (including in variant form in Stanzas 400-408). The extreme form is the beheading game of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The game occurs in the tale of *The Turk and Gawain*, found in the Percy folio, although we cannot tell the exact details because the folio is so damaged at this point (Tolkien/Gordon, p. xix). It also features in two other Gawain romances, the related tales of *Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carlyle* and *The Carle off Carlile* (Lacy, p 154), although the latter of these is almost certainly later than the "Gest" and the former may be.

As a sport, it is sometimes known as an "Irish Stand-Down," though that doesn't necessarily involve two parts; they just hit each other, whereas here there is the archery contest followed by the blow. Child, in his notes on this stanza (page 55) mentions a romance in which Richard the Lion-Hearted himself engaged in this game, but this is one of those stories (like Richard killing a lion with his bare hands by tearing out its heart and then eating it raw; Gillingham, pp. 7–8; text of the passage on pp. 108-109 of Garnett/Gosse) which is demonstrably false.

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 167, seem to think that the contest between Robin and the King was also more serious than some casual shooting with the bow, followed by a blow to the loser, but they offer no reason for this hypothesis.

More interesting is the question of whether any English king would engage in such a contest with his subjects.

Holt, p. 61, argues that the legend of the King being reconciled with Robin is derived from Fulk, or Hereward, or maybe (who knows?) Alfred and the Cakes (an idea going back at least to Clawson, p. 104, who on p. 105 mentions a similar story told of Henry II), all involving an incognito king. This is a common theme of folklore (see the note on

Stanza 368) but the fact that the motif is legendary does not preclude a reconciliation between King and outlaws — several rebellions ended that way, because it was easier for the King to befriend the rebel than run him down!

This motif does however argue against a date in the reigns of Richard I or Edward I — they were strong grudge-holders. Prestwich1, p. 202, says explicitly, "Clemency towards his enemy was not in Edward [I]'s character." What's more, Edward I had a strong streak of violence when crossed (Prestwich1, p. 3); he just wasn't the sort to go off and negotiate with rebels.

There is an actual recorded instance of Edward I accidentally ending up in single combat with an enemy because a ditch cut Edward off from his supporters, and Edward did formally forgive the other man — "but there is no evidence that he was ever regarded with any special favor" (Prestwich1, p. 56, although Baldwin, p. 146, says that "There is nothing to substantiate Nicholas Trivet's story" of this encounter, and Pollard, p. 196, flatly declares it fiction. Clawson, pp. 107–108, points to the tale of John the Reeve, in the Percy Folio, in which Edward I is separated from his followers, but this is not the same tale).

Baldwin, p. 95, has a good summary when he says that "Edward [I] was respected by his barons, but he was a man of violent temper far removed from the jovial and understanding 'King Edward' of the ballads."

Richard I was, if anything, worse; he was aloof and generally lacked the common touch; according to Kelly.A, p. 173, "Richard was less affable in crowds than Henry [II], more selective in his friendships, and less accessible to general company. He lacked the charm that attracted a large personal following.... He often ruffled his peers with an overweening brusqueness."

He was such a snob that, when he heard a hawk shriek in a commoner's house, he went in and attacked the owners (even though they were not his subjects) — and was forced to take to his heels when they fought back (McLynn, p. 144). During the conquest of Cyprus, he insulted the island's inhabitants by shaving off the men's beards just because they were ruled by his enemy (McLynn, p. 157). At Acre, he demeaned the Duke of Austria so badly that the Duke left the crusade — and Leopold of Austria was a *duke*, almost as high on the social scale as Richard himself. Saul3, p. 120, declares that Richard never let "intimacy degenerate into familiarity." Richard didn't have subjects; he had two kinds of slaves, the chained and the unchained. The notion of him even talking to a commoner, other than one of his soldiers, is absurd.

Henry II had a way with common people, and was relatively accessible to them — Dahmus, pp. 148–150 — but even if we can accept such an early date for Robin, Henry was another grudge-holder.

Henry III, according to Baldwin, p. 118, "was often temperamental but he did not bear grudges."

By contrast, Edward II had a strange interest in common tasks and men, according to Hutchison, pp. 148–149 — he liked woodworking and metalwork, kept company with craftsmen, and worked at thatching. A story tells of him engaged in hedging and ditching when he might have been at mass (Prestwich3, p. 80), and there are records of him ordering plaster so that he might build walls (Prestwich3, p. 81).

Phillips, p. 13, quotes his best contemporary biographer as saying, "If he had practiced the use of arms, he would have exceeded the prowess of King Richard. Physically this would have been inevitable, for he was tall and strong, a handsome man with a fine figure.... If only he had given to arms the attention that he expended on rustic pursuits… " After Bannockburn, a member of his household declared that the king could not win battles if he "appl[ied] himself to making ditches and digging and other improper occupations' (Phillips, p. 15).

As Packe says on p. 4, Edward II had "altogether too much of the common touch." Harvey, p. 124, declares he "was in almost all respects a country squire of the best type; a good friend and master, fond of his family, pathetically naïve, devoted to sport and open-air exercise, and built for a life of healthy amusement and the gentle routine of estate management." This relatively humble demeanor compares to, say, Richard II, who introduced the title "majesty" (see note on Stanza 384) and demanded that his people bow to him whenever he looked at them — so Saul3, p. 60, who describes Richard as deliberately putting distance between himself and his subjects.

Even Hutchison, almost the only defender of Edward II, admits on p. 2 his "rather odd personality." Although most instances of him engaging in a form of common labor are attested by only one source, Phillips, p. 72, mentions four sources describing his love for ordinary men's work, and the reports of him spending time rowing are well-supported. Phillips goes on to note that Edward II "enjoyed the near-presence of the low-born," and mentions an instance in 1325 of sailors and carpenters eating in the royal chamber.

What's more, Edward II liked games, including gambling games, and did not insist upon winning (Phillips, p. 75). This fits the stanza's indication that Robin out-shot the king and so was entitled to beat up his monarch. (Possibly the King felt this to be safer than to have his half dozen men fight all of Robin's band.) The wonder is that the King decided to participate, having seen Robin's prowess. He was probably a good archer with a hunting bow, but a longbow was a different matter.

And where Edward I, for instance, tended to look down his nose even at the higher nobility, Edward II displayed very little snobbishness. In Edward I's last years, there was a quarrel between the King and his son over the size and expense of the Prince's household. According to Phillips, p. 99 and note 131, there were four men the Prince really wanted to keep around him. Two were of gentle blood — Piers Gaveston and Gilbert de Clare — but the other two were yeomen.

There is even a report of Edward II staging mock fights with his fools (Mortimer-Traitor, p. 15). I know of no other English king who did this, and it sounds very like what probably happened here.

Jolliffe, pp. 369–370, declares that "like several of our more incompetent kings, Edward II was inclined to advance popular principles" — meaning, in this case, the principles of ordinary people rather than the high nobility; Edward increased the role of the commons in parliament (presumably to reduce the power of the barons).

It is true that Edward II was a man who never changed his mind, and he certainly held grudges. His best early biographer wrote in the *Life of Edward II* that, in 1322 when Edward finally seemed to have defeated his enemies, "the earl of Lancaster once cut off

Piers Gaveston's head, and now by the king's command the earl of Lancaster had lost his head" (quoted by Phillips, p. 409). But Edward's grudges were very specific and pointed. A man who had not directly offended him or joined his enemies was forgivable. (To be sure, Hunter thought that the original Robin Hood served the Earl of Lancaster, and that this was why he needed the King's pardon. But the subtle hints in the "Gest" all point to an outlaw who was loyal to the King all along, as several mentions in the "Gest" demonstrate.; see the note on Stanza 412 Mark Ormrod also apparently pointed this out in an unpublished paper; Pollard, p. 253 n. 58.)

If ever there had been a king likely to meet with outlaws, it was Edward II. Doherty, pp. 23–24, explains this oddity based on the way his father neglected him: "Left to his own devices, bereft of a father and a mother-figure, the young Edward naturally looked for friendship from others, whether they were ditchers, rowers, sailors or boatmen." Doherty, p. 26, also thinks that Edward II had "a desperate yearning to be liked."

Edward's willingness to hang around with common people became so proverbial that, according to pp. 60–61 of Doherty, a pretender actually showed up during this reign claiming to be the real King Edward; he had been swapped with a peasant boy after a nurse had allowed him to be injured and was afraid to reveal the truth. The "proof" of this was that Edward showed tastes such as only a peasant would have, and thus must be an impostor. Naturally this pretender was executed (as was his cat, which obviously was innocent), but the whole story shows what Edward's reputation was like.

The only other Plantagenet I can imagine hanging around with common folks was John. However, we have already read, in Stanza 408ff., of the King giving Robin a blow which floors him. The Plantagenets were mostly very tall — Edward I was called "Longshanks," and when his skeleton was measured, he was found to have been 6'2" (Prestwich, p. 567). Edward III is said to have been 6'3". Richard I is said to have been tall, well-built, and with unusually long arms and legs (McLynn, p. 24). The only exceptions prior to 1460 were Henry II, who was of average height, and John, who at 5'5" was perhaps the shortest Plantagenet known to us (Warren-John, p. 31). Henry II was strong despite his height. But John does not seem to have been a mighty man.

To be sure, the last King Edward to live before the publication of the "Gest," Edward IV, was so open to commoners that he became the hero of "King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth" [Child 273]. Edward IV's brother Richard III seems to have tried — apparently for the first time — to actually build a government out of men who were not members of the nobility; Cheetham, pp. 161–162. So both of these two kings were relatively accessible. But both of these are almost certainly too late.

In connection with the King's fist-fight with Robin, see the note on Stanzas 429–430 regarding Edward II's fondness for horseplay and practical jokes.

❖ **Stanza 428/Lines 1709–1712** ❧ Upon seeing what appears to be a mass invasion by Robin Hood's men, the people of Nottingham are very afraid (though without reason, as it turns out). This may very well connect with their hostility to him in Stanzas 296–298. On the other hand, it might just be that such descents by brigands were well-attested in Yorkshire — we have records from both York and Wakefield, e.g., of regulations made to control incursions at the time of the mystery play presentations

(Rose-Wakefield, p. 27) — so the people of Nottingham were afraid of it coming for them.

❖ **Stanzas 429–430/Lines 1713–1717** ❧ The king laughs at the rout of the townsfolk, as the people try by any means possible to flee the coming of Robin Hood. This too fits well with what we know of Edward II, who seems to have been fond of practical jokes and rough humor (Doherty, pp. 50–51). One can imagine him staging this little scene to see how the folk of Nottingham would respond; indeed, Mersey, p. 188, calls this "a jest on the king's part." For another instance of his fondness for low games and roughhousing, see the note on Stanza 424.

Knight/Ohlgren, p. 167, compare this to the story of "Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham" [Child 139], in which the people of Nottingham also fear and attack the outlaw. They see this as a contrast between "forest and urban values," but "Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham" is a later writing and not a source for the "Gest." And while there doubtless is a contrast between town and outlaw morals, the fear of the people of Nottingham more likely derives from the fact that Robin has already had two conflicts with them, one at the time of the archery contest when they attacked him and once when Robin attacked and killed the Sheriff.

Another interesting contrast is with the story of Hereward the Wake, who at one point set out to force the Normans from his native town. In that tale, the townfolk gave alarm and the newly-settled Normans fled (Head, p. 73).

❖ **Stanza 431/Line 1722** ❧ "Notes hye." The obvious sense of this is "high-pitched notes," but there is no obvious reason why to sing in such a way. Maybe it's just the best rhyme the poet could come up with, but "hye" could also mean "exalted," in the sense of a member of the higher orders of society. So maybe this should be understood as meaning they put on a concert fit for a king, or in praise of the king, or the sort of music often listened to by a king.

❖ **Stanza 433/Line 1731** ❧ "Spent an hondred pounde." Holt, p. 118, makes the interesting observation that, by the time the "Gest" was probably written, "local society fell, in descending order, into knights, squires, gentlemen, yeomen and husbandmen.... Only the first two, knight and squire, had distinguishing qualifications. The gentleman, particularly, was sometimes simply he who claimed to be a gentleman, or lives like a gentleman, perhaps especially one who got into debt like a gentleman." That certainly sounds like Robin's behavior. (It also fits, e.g., the Paston Family, where the sons in London kept asking money from their parents to gain attention in the city.)

So Robin's behavior makes sense for a courtier, but observe that Robin, who in Stanza 68 had been able to lend four hundred pounds, apparently has only one hundred pounds at his disposal here. (For more on the value of this money, see the notes to Stanza 49 and Stanza 120). In Stanza 150 we see the Sheriff offer Little John twenty marks per year; in Stanzas 170–171, Little John offers the cook twenty marks per year to join Robin's band. Since one hundred pounds is one hundred and fifty marks, Robin's hundred pounds would pay only seven men for a full year at their old wage. If he truly had seven score men (Stanza 416), he could have paid them only one mark each — or enough for three weeks at their old rate. The effects of this play out in Stanza 435.

The implication, obviously, is that either Robin left much of his money behind, or that he had lost it in the interval between his intervention on the knight's behalf and the time he met the king. It seems more likely that Robin's fortune would have declined; traffic would have learned to avoid Barnsdale if Robin became a truly successful robber (note the fear of him shown by the people of Nottingham in Stanza 428), plus his band probably grew in that time, meaning that he had to pay more in wages. One wonders if Robin might not have accepted the King's offer because he was going broke.

Except… there is every reason to think that this section is from a different source than the story of Robin and the Knight in the early fits. A hundred pounds, while far short of four hundred pounds, is still a *lot* of money. Probably the author behind the tale of "Robin and the King" knew nothing of the story told in "Robin and the Knight," and talked about what seemed like a big expenditure to him, and the poet who assembled the tales into the "Gest," having less concern with continuity than we have, didn't adjust the numbers.

This section also reminds me of the fourteenth century alliterative poem *Wynnere and Wastoure*, in a sort of updated version of Aesop's fable of the "Ant and the Grasshopper," in which "Wynnere," the one who by hard work wins and stores up wealth, has a flyting (insult contest, raucous debate) with "Wastoure," who spends his money freely and is likely to find himself in want. They present their case before an army representing each side, with a king (presumably Edward III, since the poem appears to have been written some time between 1352 and 1370) judging the results. It is not a one-sided argument; if Wastoure is guilty of profligacy and of using his wealth to support his pride (a very serious sin), Wynnere is guilty of avarice (Speirs, pp. 277-279). The king concludes that both contribute to society; if there is a winner, that part of the poem has been lost (Turville-Petre, p. 39). But anyone who knows the "Ant and the Grasshopper" will probably think Wynnere the winner.

It's not likely that the poet(s) of the "Gest" knew *Wynnere and Wastoure*; it survives in only a single manuscript, and that defective (Wells, p. 243-244). But the idea would have been floating around. The analogy to Robin is clear: In the Greenwood, he was a Wynnere, gathering money and even enforcing a sort of virtue on those who pass. At the court, he is a Wastoure, throwing away his money for that which does not profit. But Robin, unlike Wastoure, realizes his fault and goes back to the Greenwood.

❖ **Stanza 434/Lines 1733–1736** ❧ Gummere, commenting on Robin's prodigality, says on p. 319, "This liberal expenditure was the proper thing for knights and men of rank...." But his chief expense was likely just paying his men. In Stanza 52, we perhaps saw a hint of the Tale of the Prodigal Son. This tale of Robin at court may also have been influenced by that tale (in chapter 15 of Luke); the Prodigal takes his inheritance, spends it on loose living, and then has to go home in disgrace.

It is interesting, although perhaps not very relevant, that Grafton declared that Robin went to the greenwood because of excess generosity (Knight, p. 1; Knight/Ohlgren, p. 28).

❖ **Stanza 435/Line1737** ❧ After a year at the King's court (literally fifteen months, but the author is always adding threes to things), Robin has used up his resources. This is not really unusual. The King's senior officers often did not enjoy actual payment for

their work; rather, the King granted them some sort of compensation or opportunity. A cleric would get a certain number of "livings"; a secular lord would be given an office or the rent from sundry manors. Or a payment might be in "tallies," wooden sticks which amounted to the right to take a certain income from a certain source — which might not, however, have the funds available (Storey, p. 52n.) We note that the King's offer to Robin of a place at his court (Stanza 414f.) contained no promise of any income beyond a livery, even of income as uncertain as a tally. Perhaps Robin assumed a pension would be forthcoming (see Stanza 420, where he seems to accept the King's livery); perhaps he did not realize the need for such a grant; perhaps (as could be true of a peasant) he didn't know how to manage money; perhaps the King simply did not live up to his promise.

The failure to keep financial promises would fit well with either Edward I, who was notably stingy with pay for his officials, or with Edward II after his victories of 1322–1323 — Phillips, p. 421, reports that in this period "Like the archetypal miser Edward [II] not only gathered every penny he could but was remarkably loath to spend any more than he had to."

Similarly, Tuck, p. 94, reports, "This is perhaps the fundamental reason for Edward [II]'s political failure. Generosity was expected of a king.... But Edward proved incapable of using his powers of patronage in this way. The concentration of favor and rewards first upon Gaveston and then the younger Despenser was bound to alienate those who did not share the benefits of intimacy with the king."

One almost wonders Edward mightn't have brought Robin to court to try to get a hand on Robin's treasure.

As mentioned in the notes on Stanza 433, Robin's hundred pounds would pay only seven men for a full year at their old wage — little wonder they deserted. Even if he paid only the three pence a day expected by valets (see the note on Stanza 150), that would allow him to maintain only about twenty men for a year.

❖ **Stanza 435/Line 1739** ❧ John and Scathelocke are still here from the "old gang," but not Much? He was as much part of Robin's core group as the other two. Another hint that this is from another source than the early fits, one which doesn't know Much; see also the note on Stanzas 401-402.

❖ **Stanza 436/Line 1742** ❧ "Full ferre/fayre upon a day." There is a variant here which perhaps affects Robin's feelings about watching the archers: Were they shooting great distances, or shooting attractively? See the textual note on Stanza 436.

❖ **Stanza 437/Lines 1745–1748** ❧ Robin, in the King's service, recalls being a successful archer. Clearly he is not spending much time practicing with his bow at this time. This, it seems to me, is exceptionally strong evidence that this is not happening during the reign of Edward III. That king won his victories with the bow, and would not put the best bowman in England out to pasture!

One wonders if Robin might not have been disappointed with the court in other ways. If the year is indeed 1323/1324, this was the period when Edward's favorites the Elder and Younger Hugh Despensers were dominating — and corrupting — the government. (For more on them, see the notes on Stanza 93.) It was a period when no one's money or land was safe if the Despensers wanted it. Phillips, p. 448, says that

Edward II was deeply if indirectly involved in their extortion — it couldn't have happened without his consent. But the attitude at this time seems always to have been "It's not the King, it's his evil counselors." Robin could have been — would have been! — disgusted by the Despensers, and might not have blamed the King. But he would doubtless wish to get away.

❖ **Stanza 439/Lines 1753–1756** ❧ Robin determines to leave the King's service. This is an interesting decision if he had taken the King's pardon, because most pardons in the Edwardian period, especially those to soldiers, were conditional: "Though a few pardons were granted in advance, for the great majority of men indicted of murder or other serious felonies, charters of pardon were withheld till the [military] services had been performed and attested by the leaders in whose companies the men had served. Even then the pardons were frequently subject to further conditions" (Hewitt, p. 29).

For a man hired as a solder, Hewitt (p. 30) lists four typical conditions of a pardon, of which Robin arguably violates three: He must put up surety for his behavior (which Robin, once he is broke, can no longer do); he must be available for service to the King for up to a year at a time (Robin initially fulfills this, then violates it — and since most of his men deserted him before he himself quit the court [Stanza 433-435], they would have violated it immediately upon desertion), and that he stay in the King's service while still in the vicinity of the conflict, that is, he not desert or quit when battle is in prospect (which, if the King is Edward II and the conflict is that resulting in Edward's overthrow, he failed to do). Thus Robin, in all likelihood, violates the conditions of his pardon.

Pollard, p. 206, sees this as a sort of allegory: He believes that the King is Edward III, considered responsible for restoring justice — but even this ideal king could not restore justice enough to satisfy Robin.

The difficulties with this hypothesis are myriad: First is the internal inconsistency — if Pollard is going to claim that the "Gest" is set in the reign of Edward III because Edward III is a paragon of justice, then he can't really have it both ways; Robin wouldn't have quit because of Edward's injustice. Nor is there any hint of this sort of allegory anywhere else in the "Gest." Plus Robin doesn't complain of injustice; he complains of being broke and of not being used as an archer.

In any case, the plot requires that Robin leave the King's service. Since the "Gest" and the "Death" tell the same general story, the story of Robin's death almost certainly existed before the "Gest" was composed. So Robin had to be in the greenwood in order to die. That means he had to leave the court.

❖ **Stanza 440/Lines 1757-1759** ❧ Robin (claims to have) founded a chapel to Mary Magdalene. Hunter very tentatively identified this as the Free Chapel of Norton (Harris, p. 68). Even if you believe the "Gest" to be historic, the evidence is thin. And the "Gest" never describes Robin as founding, or even attending, a chapel; I don't think that we can be certain that Robin was telling the truth. He just wanted out of the King's service.

On the other hand, given his piety, his ill management of his money, and his magnanimity, it seems not unlikely that Robin would have endowed a chapel — it was a common thing to do in this period, when the prayers of the faithful were thought to shorten one's time in purgatory. The dedication to St. Mary Magdalene is interesting —

the first genuinely appropriate mention of a saint in the "Gest." Robin would naturally have wanted a female saint, and Mary Magdalene was the saint of penitents (Benet, p. 975). (Despite which, I find it surprising that Robin didn't dedicate it to the Virgin instead. But, yet again, this is not the Robin of the tale of "Robin and the Knight" in the early fits, with his intense devotion to Mary.)

Protestants who think of Mary Magdalene only as the woman to whom Jesus first appeared after the resurrection (Mark 16:1, John 20:1, etc.), or as the woman from whom Jesus cast seven demons (Luke 8:2; also Mark 16:9 in the Vulgate and early English translations, although this verse is probably not an original part of Mark's gospel), should perhaps realize that Catholics often identified her with the Mary of Bethany of John 12, who washed Jesus's feet and wiped them with her hair. (A story paralleled in the other gospels but with the woman not named.) Bible scholars regard this as extremely unlikely, since John's gospel mentions both Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene, and does not equate them. But what matters is not the truth but what people thought true. The *Golden Legend,* a famous collection of saints' lives and other materials, makes the equation: "With her brother Lazarus and her sister Martha she owned Magdalum... along with Bethany, and a considerable part of Jerusalem itself.... Magdalene, then, was very rich, and sensuous pleasure keeps company with great wealth. Renowned as she was for her beauty and her riches, she was no less known for the way she gave her body to pleasure — so much so that her proper name was forgotten and she was simply called 'the sinner.' Meanwhile Christ was preaching here and there.... Being a sinner she did not dare mingle with the righteous, but stayed back and washed the Lord's feet with her tears" (Ryan, p. 375). The *Golden Legend* was extremely popular, and this is probably how people of Robin's era would have known Mary Magdalene: As a repentant sinner who met the resurrected Jesus and was given miraculous powers as a result.

We have another faint parallel to the story of David and his departure from Saul's court here, although in the case of David and Saul, David was already in trouble with the King, whereas Robin is merely dissatisfied. David (through Jonathan) tells Saul that he must go home for a family religious celebration. Having left the court, he flees and becomes an outlaw.... The core of this story is in 1 Samuel, chapter 20.

❖ **Stanza 442/Line 1767** ❧ "Barefote and wolwarde" — i.e. barefoot and with wool next to the skin. Walking barefoot was the standard token of a pilgrimage or penitant — e.g. when Raymond of Toulouse set out to lead the Christian army on the last stage of the journey to Jerusalem in the First Crusade, he walked barefoot (Runciman1, p. 261). When Jane Shore was forced to do penance for her adultery with Edward IV, "on a Sunday, wearing nothing but her kirtle, she was led barefoot through the streets, a taper in her hand" (Jenkins, p. 166). Wearing wool next to the skin — i.e. presumably a hair shirt — is an even stronger sign of penitence; a hair shirt irritated the skin, and also held lice, so it was painful — and it could be worn under other garments so that one could suffer a penance without parading one's piety before men. Archbishop Becket, for instance, was said to have been wearing a hair shirt when he died (Cannon, p. 89).

Gummere, p. 120, notes a similar reference in Piers Plowman (B.xviii.1 in Skeat's edition): "Wooleward and wete-shoed went I forth after," which Langland/Schmidt, p.

306 (which spells the third word "weetshoed") glosses as "With my skin toward the wool [i.e. with no shirt toward my cloak] and with wet feet [with feet shod with wet rather than with wet shoes]." Gummere also finds such a penance in v. 3512f. of "The Pricke of Conscience" by Hampole (that is, Richard Rolle, died 1349, known as the "Hermit of Hampole"; Benet, p. 941 — although, according to Sisam, pp. 36–37, his authorship of "The Pricke of Conscience" has been strongly questioned. NewCentury, p. 940, calls the "Pricke" the most popular poem of the fourteenth century but says that there is no evidence that Rolle wrote it. Wells, pp. 447-448, files it with Rolle's works but points to evidence of Latin and French sources; Hartung Et Al, p. 2269, says that it is "misattributed" to Rolle but also calls it "the most popular English poem of the Middle Ages." It also suggests it was written in Yorkshire, i.e. Robin Hood country).

As Knight/Ohlgren emphasize on p. 168, Robin's dress in this instance is a sign of penance, not poverty.

❖ **Stanza 443/Line 1771** ❧ "Seven nyght I gyve the leve": in other words, Robin must make his pilgrimage and return in seven days. Harris, p. 84, notes that a man on foot could not walk from London to Yorkshire in seven days. This is not *quite* proof that the King's requirement is impossible, since Robin could ride a horse and simply walk barefoot when he alighted off of it. But it certainly illustrates the King being unhelpful to a servant who does, after all, have the right to quit.

❖ **Stanza 444/Line 1775** ❧ This is the last of the many references to Robin's courtesy, for which see the note on Stanza 2.

❖ **Stanza 445/Lines 1777–1780** ❧ As Robin arrives in the greenwood "on a merry morning," he hears the birds singing. Pollard, p. 72, declares this as an invocation of the legend of the merry greenwood. It would seem to indicate that Robin returned to the forest in late spring or summer.

❖ **Stanza 447/Line 1785** ❧ "Robyn slewe a full grete harte." Speirs, p. 292, commenting on "The Parliament of the Three Ages," mentions an incident of a similar killing: "Most likely the slaying of the deer was the way to secure a vision or dream-guidance. Alfred Nutt, the folklorist, noted instances from Grail and Mabinogi legends of the hero hunting a stag, slaying it and falling under an 'illusion' in consequence; the stage was a regular messenger from the faery world." (Compare Thompson B142.3, "Prophetic hart.") So perhaps this killing marks a transition from one phase of Robin's life to another. But we this new phase is not described at all.

❖ **Stanza 447/Lines 1786, 1788** ❧ The use of a horn is characteristic of the Robin Hood legend in all of its phases (we see it in the "Gest" in stanzas 229, 389, and here in 447, and in Stanza 65 of the "Potter"; also, Robin uses a horn to summon help at the end of the "Death") but this use is particularly interesting because Robin seems almost to be imitating the right of the clergy to sound a horn and take a beast even within the bounds of the royal forest; for more on this, see the note to Stanza 19.

❖ **Stanza 448/Line 1791** ❧ For Robin's seven score followers, see the note on Stanza 229. It is interesting that there is no mention of John or Scathelocke or Much here, nor are any of the followers here given names. If John and Scathelocke were still with Robin at court, wouldn't they have returned to the greenwood with him? — more evidence

that this section is from a separate source from the Robin and the Knight source used in the early fits.

❖ **Stanza 449/Line 1799** ❧ "Welcome... our dere mayster." Presumably it is a testimony to Robin's leadership that, after he has been away for a year and more, his men still obey his command. And yet, this seems to be the end of his adventures, except for his death.

❖ **Stanza 450/Line 1798** ❧ Robin spent "Twenty yere and two" in the greenwood after leaving the King. This would seem as if it might be a dating hint — but it isn't much of one. Edward I reigned thirty-five years (1272–1307), Edward III reigned for fifty (give or take a few months; his official reign was 1327–1377), and Edward IV, from first to last, reigned just about exactly twenty-two (1461–1483, although with a hiatus in 1470–1471). Only Edward II fell short of this total — he reigned twenty years, 1307–1327.

Thus Edward I or Edward III might be meant, or the number might be a later adjustment to the reign of Edward IV. But there is another intriguing possibility, which gives us a perfect chronological dovetail.

The "Gest" says that Robin served the King for about fifteen months, then returned to the greenwood for twenty-two years before being killed by the prioress at Kirklees. In that time he presumably assembled a new band, who on his death would need a new leader or job. If the King at the time Robin meets him is Edward II, and the year he met Robin is 1322/1323, then one year plus twenty-two years later is in the period 1345–1346 — just in time for Robin's excellent archers to win the Battle of Crécy in 1346! The problem, of course, is that Robin stayed in the greenwood all that time "For all drede of Edwarde our Kinge." If this is read as meaning Edward was king for twenty-two years and more, Edward II cannot be meant. On the gripping hand, if the 1346 date be accepted, would it not make sense for Edward III to pardon the underlings if their leader was now dead?

Also, Edward III, after his ascension, was not particularly fond of those who had deserted or opposed his father. Robin, in this view, headed back to the greenwood in 1324 or, just possibly, 1325 — immediately before the final crisis of Edward II's reign. Might not Edward III have regarded Robin as a traitor in that case? The king Robin feared for twenty-two years, in this scenario, was not Edward II, whom he seemingly knew well, but Edward III, who had at most been only a boy when his father met Robin.

❖ **Stanzas 451–455/Lines 1801–1820** ❧ These five stanzas summarize, or rather hint at, the tale of betrayal which is the theme of "Robin Hood's Death" [Child 120]. Dependence on the same legend (although not on the same actual text) seems sure. Is this an indication of how the author of the "Gest" used his other materials? Probably not; it seems likely that he made fuller use of earlier sources for the cycle of Robin and the Knight e.g. A better bet is that he had heard the story of Robin's death, but had no actual source to borrow from, and so offered only a quick summary.

The tale of Robin's end as told in the fuller versions of the "Death" has one more parallel to the tale of Fulk FitzWarin, in that Fulk, in one of his innumerable conflicts with King John, finds himself in a fight. Sir Ber(n)ard de Blois attacks him from behind; Fulk spins around and kills him — nearly cuts him in half, in fact (Cawthorne, p. 145).

This is much like what happens with Red Roger in the "Death." But Fulk, unlike Robin, survives (although so severely wounded that he falls into a coma and has to be taken from the field; Cawthorne, p. 146).

Hereward the Wake was also betrayed, by the monks of Ely (Head, pp. 107–122), although legend has it that Hereward survived. But there is no firm history of what he did thereafter (Head, p. 117).

It appears that Anthony Munday, in rewriting the legend, knew some relative of the story in the "Gest" but not the full tale in the "Death." Robin is poisoned, not bled to death, by his uncle, the prior of York, and a "Sir Doncaster" (Cawthorne, p. 80; and see the Cast of Characters for Munday's play on p. 303 of Knight/Ohlgren).

Although the "Gest" does not tell the tale of the last arrow found in the later versions of the "Death," that account is another indication of a date in the reign of Henry III or later. Robin, in his weakness, needs help to fire the last shot. But if his bow were a crossbow, as it would have been in the time of Richard I, then one person could crank it for him and even a dying man could aim and fire it. The last arrow can only have come from a longbow.

Child in his notes on the "Death" suggests a parallel to "Sheath and Knife" [Child 16], where the girl asks her brother to shoot her and bury her at a spot she chooses. It seems to me, however, that this in fact reverses the motifs. In "Sheath and Knife," she chooses the spot, and the bow is relatively incidental (perhaps he uses the arrow so that he does not have to slay her with his own hand). In the "Death," the bow and arrow is essential and the spot trivial. If anything, the analogy is to something such as "John Henry" [Laws I1], who dies with his hammer in his hand; Robin's last act is to fire his bow, the weapon that made him great.

Phillips/Keatman, p. 5, offer another analogy, to the death of King Arthur, comparing Robin's last arrow with Arthur's return of Excalibur to the lake. The analogy strikes me as weak even if you ignore the fact that the last arrow isn't in the early stage of the "Death."

❖ **Stanzas 451, 454/Lines 1803, 1815** ❧ The name of the place where Robin Hood was killed is somewhat uncertain. Child prints "Kyrkesly" in stanza 451, "Kyrke[s]ly" in 454; I agree with the first but print **b**'s reading "Kyrkeley" in the second. For the evidence, see the textual note on Stanzas 451, 454. In the "A" (Percy folio) text of the "Death," it is "Churchles" or "Churchlees" ("church Lees" A.1.3, "Churchlees" A.11.3, "Churchlee" A.11.4, "church lees" A.12.1, Churchlee A.24.4), aligning "Church-Lee" with the more northern words for the same thing, "Kirk-Lee." The broadside versions of the "Death" (Child's "B") give "Kirkly" or "Kirkly-Hall" ("Kirkly-hall" broadside title, "Kirkly" B.3.1, "Kirkly-hall" B.4.1, "Kirkly" B.12.1, "Kirkly-hall" B.12.3, "Kirkly-hall" B.14.3, "Kirkleys" B.19.4; also "Kirkleys" and "Kirkley Monastery" in the end matter to B.b), which is also the reading of the Davis text from Virginia. The retelling of this tale in "Robin Hood and the Valiant Knight" [Child 153] has a tail note which reads "Birkslay," perhaps derived from the reading "Bircklies" of Grafton (for which see below).

The region of Kirklees on modern maps is south and somewhat west of Leeds, northeast of Manchester, and west of Wakefield. Knight/Ohlgren, p. 168, following Child, point specifically to the priory of Kirklees in west Yorkshire. According to Holt,

pp. 87–88, it is twenty miles west of Barnsdale (far enough west that some might even have thought it to be in Lancashire, which has also been suggested as its location). Or, perhaps, it really is a generic name, "the Lee of the [unnamed] Kirk."

There is also a Kirkby not far north of modern Liverpool (one of quite a few Kirkbys scattered about England), but it is rather far west of Robin Hood's usual haunts.

The "Gest" merely says that the prioress of Kirklees "nye was of hys kinne," i.e. a close relative, but stanza 10 of Child's "A" text of the "Death" calls him his aunt's daughter, i.e. first cousin, and in the "B" text of the "Death" he refers to her as his cousin in stanza 2, and she calls him cousin in stanza 5. Davis's text of the "Death" also has him murdered by his cousin, although it is not said that she is the prioress. The Sloane biography of Robin mentions that some said she was his aunt (Hole, p. 85).

It should perhaps be noted that a prioress would almost certainly not be from the lower classes of society. In general such a woman would be of the gentry at least. More evidence that Robin was genuinely a yeoman, if not higher in the hierarchy; he can hardly have been a villein.

In Grafton's Chronicle of 1569, which we met in the introduction, we find the first dated mention of the claim that Robin was bled to death (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 29). Grafton lists the place as "Bircklies," which I do not find on any map of England (there is a "Birtley" in the Newcastle area, but that's pretty far from Robin's haunts). Knight/Ohlgren suggest that "Bircklies" is a misreading of "Kircklies," which seems likely. Grafton's account does seem to confirm the antiquity of the details in the "Death," although he adds the curious statement that the prioress of the place set up a memorial stone for Robin, "wherein the names of Robert Hood, William of Goldesborough and others were graven" (Knight/Ohlgren, p. 29).

Grafton's explanation for why she set up the stone was so that travelers would no longer fear being robbed by Robin (Baldwin, pp. 74–75). Of course, were that the actual reason, she might well have set up the stone without possessing Robin's actual body.

Drayton also knew the story that Robin died at Kirkley (Gummere, p. 322).

Hole, p. 85, mentions that in the "last arrow" scenario, Robin's grave would have been in unconsecrated ground — something with the Catholic Robin probably would not have wished to happen to him.

Hunter suggested that the Prioress of Kirklees was one Elizabeth Staynton. But the few details we have about Staynton do not really support the legend of Robin — e.g. Baldwin, p. 74, says that she was indeed a nun at Kirklees in 1344 (which fits brilliantly with the reconstruction we gave above), but there is no evidence that she was the prioress. Hunter himself admits that her dates are uncertain, pointing to a possibility that she was prioress in the late thirteenth century rather than the fourteenth but arguing for the later date based on the style of writing on her tombstone (Phillips/Keatman, p. 94). Information on pp. 95–96 of Phillips/Keatman makes it extremely likely that Staynton was dead by 1348.

It is interesting that Elizabeth Staynton may have been a relative (at least by marriage and/or adoption) of Matilda Hood, the wife of Robert Hood of Wakefield, Hunter's candidate for Robin Hood (Phillips/Keatman, pp. 97–98). But the link is extremely tenuous.

Pollard, p. 120, suggests that the fact Robin is killed by a prioress is significant — that it is the last token of the conflict between Robin and the church; he compares (p. 121) Chaucer's monk who "loved venerye." And we certainly are told in Stanza 452 that the prioress loved Sir Roger, implying unchastity, and in Stanza 455 that he lay by her. This is not quite proof that she betrayed her vows (they might have been friends, and she might have allowed him to stay in hiding at the nunnery), but it is a strong indication.

The caution is that the parallel in the "Death" does not show the infidelity theme at all clearly. The prioress's unchastity might be in the missing sections of the Percy version, but Robin's anti-clericalism is not evident in the "Death." That the Catholic hierarchy was corrupt in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is obvious — Chaucer's Pardoner is even better proof than his Monk, and "Pierce the Ploughman's Crede" has much to say about the degraded nature of various friars (Barr, p. 6). But condemnation of the Church does not seem to be an essential part of the Robin Hood legend although it is a major theme of the "Gest." On yet another hand, most of the conflict with the church is from the Robin and the Knight source; there is little hint of it in the last two fits.

❖ **Stanza 452/Line 1806** ❧ "Donkesly" is the reading of the prints, but two stanzas later we read "Doncaster," which is a real place; Knight/Ohlgren, p. 168, suggest that Donkesly is a mistaken conflation of "Kirklees" and "Doncaster." This seems a reasonable explanation; we should probably interpret it to mean "Doncaster." If nothing else, it exists!

I observe that, of the nine characters in the "Gest" to be given a personal name (Robin Hood, Little John, King Edward, Scathelock/Scarlock, Much the Miller's Son, Gilbert of the White Hand, Reynold, Sir Richard, and Roger of Doncaster), only Roger of Doncaster is Robin's enemy. All his other enemies — the Sheriff, the Abbot of St. Mary's and his subordinates, the Prioress of Kirklees — are given titles only. Unfortunately, the name doesn't help, since we have too few details about Roger of Doncaster to offer an identification.

Those who think the "Gest" is an actual history have made attempts to find Sir Roger, with disappointing results.

Harris, pp. 78-79, found two items mentioning a Roger de Doncaster in records of 1327. He thinks that there could not be two Roger de Doncasters at this time, so it must be the same — and must be Robin's Roger of Doncaster. The first assumption is weak; the second is weaker. Also, someone he thinks is the same man was mentioned in 1301. But remember that Robin was killed more than two decades after he went to King Edward's court, which was after Edward's visit to the north in 1322. So if Harris is right, we're talking about someone who was old enough to be a chaplain in 1301 but was still active enough to be sleeping with a prioress *c.* 1345. Not impossible, but it doesn't sound likely.

Cawthorne, pp. 202–204, mentions several Rogers who are possibilities. There was a Roger of Doncaster at Wakefield in service to the earl Warenne, although this is rather early. There is a Roger son of William of Doncaster who was given eight acres of land at Crigglestone (now a parish in Wakefield) in 1327. Cawthorne on p. 203 sums up the case

for one Roger of Doncaster (identified by Hunter) who fits well in the reign of Edward II: "In 1306, he was sent by the Archbishop of York to be priest at the church in Ruddington near Nottingham. According to the records, he was still the parish priest there in 1328.... What's more, Roger the chaplain also seems to have been a knight — and a knight with a chequered sexual history. In June 1309, a 'Sir Roger de Doncastria' was charged with adultery with Agnes, the wife of Philip de Pavely" (cf. Phillips/Keatman, pp. 98–99).

Throw in the fact that, as a chaplain, Roger would have easier access than most to a nunnery, and the fact that there were "scandalous" rumours about the nuns of Kirklees in Yorkshire in 1315 (Cawthorne, p. 203; Phillips/Keatman, p. 98; and see the note on Stanza 455), and we have a surprisingly good fit.

But it is by no means clear that all these mentions in the chronicles describe one man; Holt, p. 61, declares that they in fact refer to at least two distinct Rogers. Phillips/Keatman, pp. 98–99, are not convinced Holt is right, but certainly caution is indicated.

Bellamy, p. 120, offers the suggestion that "the compiler did not want to acknowledge Robin was killed by a cleric and so made his assailant a knight." The same argument might suggest that the compiler might not want to admit that a cleric was sleeping with the prioress. This is an interesting point. The author of the Robin and the Knight source would probably have no hesitation to smear a higher cleric in any way possible, but this material is not from that source, and we have no reason to think Robin disliked ordinary priests. So such a cover-up is possible — but it doesn't really bring us any closer to an actual historical person.

As with almost every pseudo-historical character in the "Gest" except the King, I think we have to say that Roger is either unidentifiable or a creation of the poet — probably the latter.

❖ **Stanza 453/Lines 1809–1812** ❧ This verse raises the question, Why was it the concern of the Prioress and Sir Roger of Doncaster to kill Robin? Why not the authorities? One possibility is that there was a reward, another is that Sir Roger was a local under-sheriff or the like. Or maybe he had been robbed by Robin. But I suspect it is a theme we also see in the Jesse James story: "He said there was no man with the law in his hand Who could take Jesse James when alive." Or catch Robin Hood while alive — note that we saw it reported in Stanza 365, etc., that no outsider could catch Robin Hood; it takes a conspiracy and a trick.

❖ **Stanza 454/Line 1816** ❧ "Craftely to be leten blood." The word "craftely" in this verse serves a double meaning: the surface meaning is "with skill in the craft," i.e. "skillfully," but the deeper meaning is "with craftiness," i.e. "guilefully." There is a clear dramatic irony here: Robin is saying that he needs someone skillful to let his blood — but as it turns out, someone will let his blood with guile.

❖ **Stanza 455/Line 1818** ❧ "Syr Roger... By the pryoresse he lay." This is the most explicit indication of the Prioress's unchastity; see the note on Stanza 452. It is, however, just possible that the statement that Sir Roger lay by the Prioress means that he lay in wait, or merely that he was spending his time at Kirklees; "lay" could mean "resided."

But the reputation of Kirklees in the Edwardian period was of unchastity: "Kirklees, known to romance as the house where a wicked prioress bled Robin Hood to death, was

in a deplorable state about the same time." Nuns named Alice Raggid and Elizabeth de Hopton fled it in 1306 and 1313, respectively. In 1315, Archbishop Greenfield complained that "some of the nuns of the house, and especially Elizabeth de Hopton, Alice 'le Raggede' and Joan de Heton, were wont to admit both religious and secular men into the private parts of the house and to hold many suspicious conversations with them. He forbid these or any other nuns to admit or talk with any cleric or layman save in a public place and in the presence of the Prioress, subprioress, or two other nuns; and he especially warns a certain Joan de Wakefeld to give up the private room, which she persists in inhabiting by herself. On the same day he imposed a special penance on Joan de Heton for incontinence with Richard de Lathe and Sir Michael, 'called Scot,' a priest, and on the unhappy Alice Raggid for the same sin with William de Heton of Mirfield" (Power, p. [704]). Some of these incidents clearly sound like they could have been related to the legend of the Prioress and Sir Roger.

❖ **Stanza 455/Line 1819** ❧ Oddly, we are never actually told that Robin *died;* in the "Gest," the word *died* is applied only to Jesus (see note on Stanza 62). We are merely told that he is betrayed, and then, in the next verse, there is a prayer for his soul. Without the "Death," we would not have any real clue what happened here.

❖ **Stanza 456/Lines 1823–1824** ❧ "For he was a good outlawe, And dyde pore men moch god." Pollard, pp. 192–193, compares this with the final stanzas of "The Outlaw's Song of Trailbaston," for which see the note on Stanza 15. The last line of the next-to-last stanza of the "Outlaw's Song" is rendered "Nor a thief out of malice to do people harm" on p. 10 of Ohlgren, and "Nor was I wicked robber to do people harm" on p. 192 of Pollard; this is the line Pollard thinks parallels the "Gest." It seems clear, however, that there is no literary dependence between the two.

And note that neither of those mention doing *good;* they just don't do harm. The "Gest" says that Robin did much good. Furthermore, it's good *for poor men*, not just general good. Which sort of resembles the later story of giving to the poor — but, other than lending to the knight, we see no actual charity to the poor in the "Gest." Unless, perhaps, his charity is taking them into his band.

Even if the story of Robin's betrayal comes from a written source (and, as I mentioned in the note on Stanzas 451–455, it seems more likely that in these last six stanzas the poet is summarizing a story he heard), this concluding stanza seems likely to be the composition of the author who assembled the "Gest," not something that came from a source. Ending a romance with a pious wish is fairly standard (e.g. "Havelok the Dane" ends "That Jesu Crist his soule bringe Beforn his Fader at his endinge" (Shepherd, p. 74); "Ywain and Gawain" has a wish that the major characters have a happy afterlife: "Bot Jhesu Criste, for his grete grace, In hevyn blis grante us a plae, To bide in, if his wills be. Amen, amen, par charité" (Shepherd, p. 173). Even the much less ornate "Sir Orfeo" ends "Thus com Sir Orfeo out of his care; God graunt ous alle wele to fare. (Amen.)"

Thus the ending of the "Gest" is pretty conventional — except for the mention of the poor. You don't see that often in conventional romance. This is something different. Just as the "Gest" is a romance, but a rather different romance.

Appendix I: Divergences from Child's text of the "Gest"

To this day, Child's text of the "Gest" remains the standard — as witness the fact that Dobson/Taylor and Knight/Ohlgren follow it so closely. This is the first attempt to really rethink that text. I considered listing every difference between this edition and Child's.

This is not really workable in practice. There are no fewer than 545 orthographic differences between my text and the reading of ***M*** in the second apparatus; 85 more where my text differs from ***F***; 122 in the second apparatus between my text and ***FJC***; and hundreds more orthographic differences that appear in the first apparatus as part of a more significant variant. To list a couple of hundred meaningful variants amid about a thousand orthographic variants is exhausting, not useful.

Depending on how you count, there are between about 140 and 255 meaningful differences between my text and Child's — most people would probably tend toward the lower number. Truly important variants probably don't exceed a few dozen (my casual count was 35). The list below includes only difference in the first apparatus, and even of those, I try to omit the orthographic ones, or the ones Child puts in [brackets]. But, when in doubt, I included. That gave me 233 differences. These are listed below. I've listed the stanza and line number, then my text, then Child's text.

2.4: y-founde / ***FJC:*** founde
3.1: Bernysdale / ***FJC:*** Bernesdale
4.1: Scathelock / ***FJC:*** Scarlok
5.1: bespake hym / ***FJC:*** bespake
5.2: an ye / ***FJC:*** and ye
6.1: bespake / ***FJC:*** bespake hym
6.4: unketh / ***FJC:*** unkouth
7.3: some squyere / ***FJC:*** squyer
9.2: the other / ***FJC:*** and another
9.3: was of / ***FJC:*** of
11.3: shall gone / ***FJC:*** shall go
11.4: lyfe we / ***FJC:*** life that we
13.2: ynough / ***FJC***: I nowe
14.4 wolde / ***FJC***: wol
15.3: Notyinghame / ***FJC:*** Notyingham
16.2: shall we / ***FJC:*** we shall
16.3: ferre / ***FJC***: fer
17.2: Moche / ***FJC:*** Much
17.3 Scathelocke / ***FJC***: Scarlok
18.1: Sayles / ***FJC***: Saylis
18.3: unketh / ***FJC:*** unkuth
19.2: brynge / ***FJC:*** bringhe
20.1: Sayles / ***FJC***: Saylis
20.2: yemen / ***FJC:*** yeman

21.1: in / ***FJC:*** in to
21.1: Barnysdale / ***FJC:*** Bernysdale
21.3: rydinge / ***FJC:*** rydinghe
22.1: semblaunte / ***FJC***: semblaunce
23.1: hangynge / ***FJC:*** hanged
23.4: somer's day / ***FJC:*** somer day
24.4: welcome are you / ***FJC:*** welcom ar ye
25.3/4: syr *on line 3* / ***FJC:*** syr *on line 4*
26.1: your / ***FJC:*** thy
30.3: abyde you / ***FJC:*** abyden you
32.2: set / ***FJC:*** sette
36.2: I have / ***FJC:*** I it have
39.1: trouth than / ***FJC:*** truth than
40.1: have / ***FJC:*** hast
40.2; wyll / ***FJC:*** wol
41.2: trouthe / ***FJC:*** truth
41.4: Not one / ***FJC:*** No
43.3: tydynge / ***FJC:*** tydingës
44.3: Moch / ***FJC:*** Moche
47.4: my / ***FJC:*** myn
50.2: shapen / ***FJC:*** shaped
51.2: ryches / ***FJC:*** rychesse
52.1: had / ***FJC:*** hade
52.4: iuste / ***FJC:*** iust
53.1: Lancastshyre / ***FJC:*** Lancaster
56.2: shall / ***FJC:*** woll
56.3: wyll/ ***FJC:*** wol
57.4: not / ***FJC:*** no
59.2: wyll / ***FJC:*** wol
61.2: Scathelock / ***FJC:*** Scarlok
62.1: frendes / ***FJC:*** frende
62.2: The borowes / ***FJC:*** Thy borowe
62.2: wyll / ***FJC:*** wolde
62.4: on a / ***FJC:*** on
63.1: waye / ***FJC:*** away
63.1: sayd / ***FJC:*** than sayde
63.2: wyll / ***FJC:*** wol
63.3: wyll / ***FJC:*** wolde
68.2: Scathelocke / ***FJC:*** Scarlok
68.4: eyghtene-and-two / ***FJC:*** eight and twenty
69.3; almes / ***FJC:*** almus
70.4: helpe / ***FJC:*** lappe

73.1: of / ***FJC:*** at
73.3: devylkyns / ***FJC:*** devylles
74.1: Scathelocke / ***FJC:*** Scarlok
74.3: the bette / ***FJC:*** gode
74.4: Bygod it cost hym / ***FJC:*** For it costeth hym
75.3: that / ***FJC:*** the
75.3: an / ***FJC:*** a
75.4: al this / ***FJC:*** this
76.4: leve / ***FJC:*** graunt
77.3: Scathelocke / ***FJC:*** Scarlok
78.2: clere / ***FJC:*** clene
81.1: lene / ***FJC:*** lende
82.3: Bernysdale / ***FJC:*** Bernesdale
83.2: Scathelock / ***FJC:*** Scarlok
87.1: *(blank line)* / ***FJC:*** He borowed foure hondred pounde
89.2: he is / ***FJC:*** is his
93.3: justyce / ***FJC:*** hye justyce
94.2: they / ***FJC:*** their
98.2: *(blank line)* / ***FJC:*** They put on their symple wedes
121.3: hadst / ***FJC:*** had
122.2: chere / ***FJC:*** fare
126.4: And home / ***FJC:*** At home
128.3: had not be / ***FJC:*** had be
135.1-2: But... wrastelying: *two lines* / ***FJC:*** *print as one line*
135+135A: *print as two incomplete stanzas* / ***FJC:*** *print as one overburdened stanza*
137.2: good fay / ***FJC:*** fay
138.4: i-slayne / ***FJC:*** slayne
139.2: where that / ***FJC:*** where
146.1: a bout / ***FJC:*** aboute
146.2: sleste / ***FJC:*** slet
146.4: gan / ***FJC:*** can
147.4: sawe I me / ***FJC:*** sawe I
148.4: wan / ***FJC:*** wane
149.1: Holdernesse / ***FJC:*** Holdernes
150.2: wolte / ***FJC:*** wolde
150.3 wyll / ***FJC:*** woll
151.3: gete leve / ***FJC:*** leve gete
154.2: be / ***FJC:*** by
155.1: befell / ***FJC:*** fell
156.4: me to dyne / ***FJC:*** me my dynere
157.4: gyve thou / ***FJC:*** gif
160.2: yede nygh / ***FJC:*** went here

160.4: wors he sholde / ***FJC:*** wors shuld he
161.2: ope / ***FJC:*** open
162.1: wyll / ***FJC:*** wol
163.1: dronke / ***FJC:*** drank
165.3: avowe / ***FJC:*** avowe to God
165.4: lyketh / ***FJC:*** lyked
166.1: an hardy / ***FJC:*** hardy
170.4: I-chaunged / ***FJC:*** Chaunged
171.4: wyll / ***FJC:*** woll
173.2: Ther / ***FJC:*** Theyre
175.4: they none / ***FJC:*** thei not
178.1: And also / ***FJC:*** Also
179.2: And sende the / ***FJC:*** And sendeth the
181.1: hym there / ***FJC:*** there hym
181.2: whyle / ***FJC:*** wyle
182.2: hounde/ ***FJC:*** houndes
184.3: syght / ***FJC:*** syghtes
185.1: se / ***FJC:*** sawe
185.3: an herde/ ***FJC:*** a herde
186.4: sloo / ***FJC:*** slo
188.3: afore / ***FJC:*** before
191.3: se / ***FJC:*** sawe
192.4: is graunted / ***FJC:*** I graunt
193.2: al a-gone / ***FJC:*** al gone
193.3: commaunde / ***FJC:*** commaunded
194.1: pye / ***FJC:*** pie
194.2: fyne / ***FJC:*** and fine
194.3: to / ***FJC:*** toke
195.3: shall lay / ***FJC:*** should lye
196.1: that / ***FJC:*** the
200.3: my / ***FJC:*** mijn
200.3: to-morne / ***FJC:*** to-morowe
201.3: wyll/ ***FJC:*** woll
201.3: thy / ***FJC:*** the
201.3: best / ***FJC:*** bestë
203.2: by day / ***FJC:*** day
204.1: have / ***FJC:*** hathe
205.1: Notynghame / ***FJC:*** Notingham
205.2: gone / ***FJC:*** agone
208.2: Moch / ***FJC:*** Much
208.3: Scathelock / ***FJC:*** Scarlok
209.3: such / ***FJC:*** some

213.1: he / ***FJC:*** they
214.4: That / ***FJC:*** That these
215.2: frese / ***FJC:*** leese
215.2 our/ ***FJC:*** your
216.1 fifty/ ***FJC:*** fifty men
224.1: wyght yemen / ***FJC:*** wyght yonge yemen
228.1: Than sayd / ***FJC:*** sayd
228.2: Had nowe / ***FJC:*** Had
231.4: them / ***FJC:*** him
244.4: shall I / ***FJC:*** I shall
244.4: the / ***FJC:*** to the
249.2: that / ***FJC:*** what
262.4: the / ***FJC:*** his
268.1: not a grefe / ***FJC:*** no grefe
268.3-268A.**1**: *print as two stanzas and add* **3** lines of conjecture / ***FJC:*** *omit and print as one stanza*
271.3: selerere / ***FJC:*** hyë selerer
280.2: this / ***FJC:*** his
283.3: that / ***FJC:*** he that
284.1: all theyre / ***FJC:*** allther
290.2: hede / ***FJC:*** hevede
291.4: he / ***FJC:*** as he
292.1: a bout / ***FJC:*** about
292.2: they / ***FJC:*** he
303.2: lovest / ***FJC:*** lovedst
312.1: moche / ***FJC:*** moche I
314.4: walle / ***FJC:*** walles
315.3: twelve / ***FJC:*** forty
315.4: suppe / ***FJC:*** soupe
316.4: gan / ***FJC:*** can
317.4: armes / ***FJC:*** armys
319.3: enemye / ***FJC:*** enemys
319.4: lawes / ***FJC:*** lawe
320.2: thou / ***FJC:*** that
321.4: woll / ***FJC:*** wyll
323.1: hem / ***FJC:*** him
323.1: tolde / ***FJC:*** telde
323.4: That noble were / ***FJC:*** That were soo noble
324.1: wolde / ***FJC:*** wyll
324.1: had / ***FJC:*** hath
324.3: wolde / ***FJC:*** wyll
325.1: the / ***FJC:*** our

326.1: Go home, thou proud sheryf / ***FJC:*** Go nowe home, shyref, sayde our kynge
331.1: awayted / ***FJC:*** wayted
331.1: this / ***FJC:*** the
331.4: let / ***FJC:*** lete
332.2: armes / ***FJC:*** armys
332.3: lad hym home / ***FJC:*** led hym
334.2: fre / ***FJC:*** a free
336.3: Lady love / ***FJC:*** Ladyes sake
337.1: Late thou / ***FJC:*** Late
337.2: i-slayne / ***FJC:*** slayne
337.3: i-bounde / ***FJC:*** bowne
338.2: fre / ***FJC:*** so fre
338.3: i-take / ***FJC:*** take
339.4: your / ***FJC:*** his
340.3: mery yonge men / ***FJC:*** mery men
341.3: wode be / ***FJC:*** wode
341.4: nor / ***FJC:*** no
342.1: i-bent / ***FJC:*** bent
342.3: spare they / ***FJC:*** spared they
346.2: so / ***FJC:*** this
347.2: drewe / ***FJC:*** drowe
351.2: hoode / ***FJC:*** bonde
356.2: understonde / ***FJC:*** understode
361.2: by / ***FJC:*** with
368.3: your / ***FJC:*** yon
371.4: blyth / ***FJC:*** blyve
377.4: (blank line) / ***FJC:*** Other shyft have not we
381.4: I vouch it halfe on the / ***FJC:*** I wolde vouch it safe on the
401.1: a boute / ***FJC:*** aboute
401.4: good whyte / ***FJC:*** whytë
409.2: shote / ***FJC:*** shete
409.4: than they met / ***FJC:*** gan they mete
412.1: sayd Robin / ***FJC:*** Robyn sayd (***FJC²:*** mercy then sayd Robin to our king)
412.2: your / ***FJC²:*** this
417.2: come / ***FJC:*** wyll come
421.3: had so / ***FJC:*** also
423.1: Theyr bowes bente / ***FJC:*** They bente theyr bowes
433.3: he hath / ***FJC:*** he had
436.2: ferre / ***FJC:*** fayre
437.3: commytted / ***FJC:*** compted
454.2: places / ***FJC:*** place
454.3: Kyrkeley / ***FJC:*** Kyrkesly

Appendix II: The Language of the "Gest"

Frequency List of Distinct Forms

This edition of the "Gest" is 10,583 words long. It uses 1523 different word forms (not words, but distinct spellings, e.g. "abbay" and "abbey" count as two forms although they are the same word). This, incidentally, shows the effect of copy text editing: in my former edition, which in effect shifted between **a** and **b** as copy text, the total was 1683! Allowing that some dozens of those are printers' errors, the use of a single copy text has still reduced the variety of forms by at least a hundred, even though there are still many variant spellings (e.g. "justice" and "justyse"). Some of the forms are editorial (e.g. there are a lot of compounds such as "i-bounde" and "i-bought"; **b** does not use a dash; also, **b** does not use apostrophes). Still, this should give a good picture of the "Gest's" vocabulary.

If we sort these forms in order of descending frequency, we find sixteen forms that occur at least one hundred times (one of them the proper name, "Robyn"); 44 forms occur at least fifty times (including "Johan" and "Hode"); 93 forms occur at least twenty times; 176 forms occur ten times or more, 287 forms that occur six or more times. If we count each *form* separately, in descending order of frequency, the list is as follows:

the (447), and (444), to (242), I (208), he (207), a (197), sayd (195), that (186), Robyn (182), of (170), his (135), in (127), me (123), for (119), thou (119), be (113), good (99), was (97), knyght (96), they (94), my (88), hym (85), Johan (83), all (79), lytell (78), have (76), is (75), by (73), with (71), on (69), god (67), it (67), shall (66), full (64), our (64), so (56), than (55), kynge (54), there (54), thy (54), this (53), no (52), ye (52), Hode (51), but (46), grene (44), syr (43), had (41), well (38), wode (38), wolde (35), your (35), as (34), man (34), wyll (34), or (33), then (33), abbot (32), men (32), more (32), them (31), were (31), at (30), monke (30), not (30), grete (28), here (28), we (28), day (27), dere (27), se (27), an (26), mayster (26), never (26), pounde (26), whan (26), what (26), under (25), yf (25), now (24), sheryf (24), you (24), make (23), may (23), best (22), came (22), gentyll (22), hondred (22), come (21), gan (21), myght (21), thre (21), ever (20), fayre (19), many (19), myn (19), none (19), say (19), toke (19), went (19), mery (18), Notyngham (18), one (18), sheryfe (18), up (18), yet (18), do (17), dyde (17), gone (17), gyve (17), londe (17), pay (17), tre (17), welcome (17), avowe (16), ryght (16), theyr (16), where (16), lady (15), leve (15), ony (15), take (15), two (15), anone (14), foure (14), hast (14), knyghtes (14), made (14), ne (14), proud (14), set (14), yeman (14), both (13), hath (13), longe (13), out (13), she (13), stode (13), these (13), tyll (13), upon (13), better (12), every (12), go (12), hede (12), holde (12), justyce (12), lorde (12), mete (12), rode (12), seven (12), bespake (11), bowes (11), dyed (11), kne (11), moch (11), shote (11), tell (11), trewe (11), wyne (11), company (10), downe (10), dyner (10), forth (10), fre (10), home (10), honde (10), i-wys (10), love (10), nowe (10), other (10), shalt (10), tolde (10), worthy (10), yere (10), yonge (10), abyde (9), agayne (9), arte (9), bolde (9), bowe (9), chere (9), drynke (9), dyne (9), Englonde (9), ferre (9), frende (9), hye (9), let (9), Much (9), nyght (9), proude (9), save (9), sholde (9), shot (9), some (9), thus (9), us (9), wyght (9), arowe (8), Bernysdale (8), brought (8),

brynge (8), dare (8), ete (8), fast (8), hors (8), lay (8), nay (8), othe (8), place (8), pray (8), redy (8), sawe (8), Saynt (8), score (8), stronge (8), styll (8), tree (8), wende (8), whyte (8), yemen (8), also (7), away (7), can (7), comly (7), daye (7), dwelled (7), forthe (7), gave (7), golde (7), her (7), knowe (7), kynges (7), lede (7), loked (7), lyfe (7), lytel (7), must (7), nede (7), see (7), sone (7), sylver (7), togyder (7), twenty (7), way (7), whyle (7), abbay (6), after (6), am (6), another (6), before (6), ben (6), countre (6), done (6), dwell (6), fastynge (6), forest (6), fote (6), founde (6), fynde (6), gete (6), grounde (6), helpe (6), herde (6), horne (6), how (6), lent (6), lete (6), loke (6), londes (6), marke (6), met (6), meyne (6), monkes (6), mote (6), nat (6), peny (6), put (6), Scathelocke (6), sent (6), sore (6), soth (6), swere (6), swore (6), waye (6), wonder (6), archere (5), are (5), art (5), bare (5), behynde (5), bent (5), borowe (5), broke (5), charyte (5), coke (5), dore (5), drede (5), elles (5), eyen (5), fayled (5), fro (5), gest (5), gramercy (5), Grenelefe (5), hande (5), hondreth (5), lyght (5), money (5), outlawe (5), outlawes (5), ryche (5), saye (5), served (5), smyte (5), sterte (5), stonde (5), syght (5), therfore (5), though (5), twelve (5), who (5), wronge (5), ylke (5), alway (4), arowes (4), bad (4), bere (4), blowe (4), bryght (4), buske (4), clothynge (4), curteyse (4), curteysly (4), curteysye (4), dyght (4), dynere (4), evyll (4), fayne (4), fee (4), fere (4), fyll (4), fyne (4), fyve (4), game (4), garlonde (4), glad (4), graunte (4), harme (4), if (4), into (4), kneled (4), lenger (4), lysten (4), lyve (4), maner (4), mantell (4), Mary (4), moche (4), myle (4), nere (4), nothynge (4), olde (4), payre (4), pore (4), praye (4), rede (4), rowe (4), Rycharde (4), ryde (4), Sayles (4), Scathelock (4), selerer (4), sette (4), shalte (4), sholdest (4), sorowe (4), sory (4), strete (4), such (4), swerde (4), syde (4), symple (4), tale (4), tene (4), thanke (4), ther (4), thereof (4), thought (4), thynketh (4), towne (4), trystell (4), walke (4), west (4), whether (4), worde (4), wroth (4), wynter (4), yede (4), al (3), Alas (3), ale (3), began (3), behelde (3), bete (3), blame (3), blyssed (3), body (3), brede (3), buffet (3), bynde (3), cam (3), cloth (3), clothed (3), com (3), coud (3), counsell (3), courte (3), Cryst (3), dame (3), dayes (3), dede (3), doute (3), drewe (3), Edwarde (3), eke (3), Englond (3), false (3), fell (3), forty (3), frendes (3), frere (3), gate (3), get (3), getest (3), gladly (3), goo (3), Gylberte (3), halfe (3), hastly (3), holpe (3), i-take (3), kyndenesse (3), Lee (3), lefte (3), lende (3), lere (3), lever (3), lewte (3), lodge (3), lordes (3), lost (3), lye (3), male (3), mercy (3), messengere (3), mo (3), monethes (3), Notynghame (3), nought (3), parte (3), playe (3), porter (3), Reynolde (3), same (3), selfe (3), shame (3), sir (3), slewe (3), smote (3), somers (3), spare (3), spede (3), speke (3), stande (3), stert (3), stuarde (3), syngynge (3), thereto (3), therin (3), therto (3), through (3), trouth (3), trouthe (3), trowe (3), tyme (3), unketh (3), untyll (3), vessell (3), walked (3), wedde (3), wente (3), when (3), whyles (3), within (3), without (3), wo (3), woman (3), worlde (3), yerdes (3), yes (3), yonder (3), abode (2), about (2), above (2), agone (2), alyve (2), amende (2), any (2), aray (2), archeres (2), archers (2), arme (2), armes (2), aske (2), awaye (2), awayted (2), ay (2), backe (2), baron (2), behote (2), bende (2), besyde (2), betrayed (2), blode (2), blythe (2), borde (2), borne (2), botes (2), bothe (2), bought (2), bout (2), brode (2), bronde (2), browne (2), brydge (2), buttes (2), byd (2), call (2), canst (2), care (2), cast (2), castell (2), chaunce (2), chorle (2), cofers (2), cole (2), coloure (2), commaunded (2), coude (2), countree (2), courser (2), covent (2), crave (2),

crowne (2), crye (2), curteys (2), curteysy (2), deth (2), donne (2), doost (2), dranke (2), drawe (2), dyd (2), dyned (2), dysheryte (2), est (2), even (2), everych (2), everychone (2), eyre (2), fall (2), fare (2), farewell (2), fay (2), fayle (2), felde (2), fifty (2), fle (2), folowed (2), foreste (2), forsoth (2), fourtynyght (2), fyfty (2), gates (2), gentylmen (2), grace (2), graye (2), greteth (2), grome (2), gylte (2), hall (2), hame (2), hart (2), hastely (2), hende (2), herken (2), heven (2), holy (2), houres (2), hous (2), hymselfe (2), i-bent (2), i-slayne (2), inowe (2), knele (2), kyrtell (2), lad (2), large (2), last (2), layde (2), laye (2), Le (2), leasynge (2), lese (2), London (2), loved (2), lowe (2), lyest (2), lyke (2), lyth (2), lyttell (2), lyveray (2), mayntayne (2), mesure (2), moneth (2), name (2), newe (2), neyther (2), nor (2), north (2), notes (2), nother (2), order (2), owne (2), page (2), palfray (2), passe (2), passed (2), paye (2), pryoresse (2), pryoure (2), purveyed (2), pyte (2), ran (2), Raynolde (2), renne (2), Robyns (2), Roger (2), rose (2), Rychard (2), scarlet (2), seale (2), seche (2), sell (2), semely (2), sende (2), servaunte (2), serve (2), servyse (2), sharpe (2), shawe (2), shelynges (2), sheryves (2), shet (2), shoteth (2), shotynge (2), shrewed (2), sloo (2), small (2), songe (2), sonne (2), soone (2), soule (2), spake (2), spende (2), spendynge (2), spent (2), spores (2), spred (2), squyer (2), stede (2), strokes (2), suche (2), syt (2), syth (2), takyll (2), taryed (2), ten (2), tho (2), thorowe (2), thyder (2), thyn (2), thynne (2), too (2), toune (2), trewely (2), true (2), tydynge (2), tydynges (2), tyl (2), tymes (2), unto (2), wan (2), wande (2), warde (2), Watlynge (2), wayte (2), wede (2), wete (2), whiche (2), woll (2), worthe (2), wyde (2), wyfe (2), wylde (2), Wyllyam (2), ynough (2), yoman (2), abbot-lyke (1), abbotes (1), aboute (1), abyden (1), acordyd (1), adoune (1), adowne (1), afore (1), agast (1), agaynst (1), ageyne (1), Allmyght (1), allther (1), allway (1), almes (1), alone (1), amonge (1), ancestres (1), ani (1), anker (1), answere (1), answered (1), araye (1), archebysshoppes (1), archours (1), aryse (1), asayed (1), ask (1), asked (1), askynge (1), assay (1), Austyn (1), awayte (1), ayenst (1), bagge (1), ball (1), banis (1), barefote (1), Barnysdale (1), bed (1), bedene (1), bee (1), befal (1), befell (1), beforne (1), beggers (1), begyled (1), begynne (1), bente (1), berde (1), bereth (1), beset (1), bested (1), bestes (1), bethought (1), betwene (1), betyme (1), beyonde (1), blacke (1), blow (1), blysse (1), blyth (1), blyve (1), bode (1), boldely (1), bolte (1), bonde (1), bone (1), bordes (1), born (1), borowed (1), borowehode (1), borowes (1), bost (1), bounde (1), boute (1), bowe-tre (1), brake (1), breche (1), bred (1), brere (1), brest (1), brethern (1), bretherne (1), brighte (1), broche (1), brydil (1), bryngest (1), bulle (1), burneyshed (1), burnyshed (1), busshement (1), buteler (1), butler (1), buttery (1), bydde (1), byddeth (1), byddynge (1), bydene (1), bye (1), Bygod (1), byrde (1), byrdes (1), bysshop (1), bysshoppes (1), Calvere (1), carefull (1), case (1), certayn (1), certayne (1), chapell (1), charter (1), chepe (1), cheve (1), chyldren (1), chyrches (1), clere (1), cleved (1), closed (1), clothe (1), clothes (1), cofer (1), colde (1), commaunde (1), commytted (1), comynge (1), confort (1), consyence (1), coresed (1), corser (1), cost (1), cote (1), courteysly (1), courteysy (1), covered (1), cowdest (1), cracke (1), craftely (1), cryed (1), Cryste (1), cumly (1), cut (1), Dancastere (1), Dankestere (1), dedely (1), dedys (1), delyver (1), delyvered (1), demed (1), denere (1), departed (1), depe (1), derne (1), desceyved (1), det (1), dettour (1), devylkins (1), Donkesly (1), Donkestere (1), doo (1), double-dyched (1), doubled (1), doune (1), dout

(1), draper (1), drery (1), dronke (1), dronken (1), dryve (1), dryved (1), dryveth (1), durst (1), dwel (1), dwele (1), dwelleth (1), dyche (1), dyghtande (1), dysgrate (1), eased (1), eche (1), eftsones (1), elle (1), ende (1), enemye (1), enfourme (1), ere (1), erely (1), erle (1), evyl (1), ewe (1), eyght (1), eyghtene-and-two (1), face (1), Fader (1), falleth (1), fat-heded (1), fatte (1), fayleth (1), faylyd (1), fayn (1), fayrest (1), fayth (1), fe (1), feders (1), fedred (1), felaushyp (1), felawe (1), felowes (1), fende (1), fenne (1), ferther (1), fesauntes (1), fet (1), fete (1), fette (1), feyre (1), fled (1), flee (1), flore (1), folde (1), fole (1), foly (1), fone (1), forbede (1), force (1), forgete (1), forgyve (1), formost (1), fors (1), forsaketh (1), forse (1), forther (1), foryete (1), fostere (1), fotes (1), fought (1), foules (1), fourth (1), frebore (1), free (1), frembde (1), frese (1), furred (1), furthest (1), fyngers (1), fynly (1), fyrst (1), gadred (1), gange (1), garment (1), gentil (1), gentill (1), gentyllman (1), gentyllmen (1), gladdynge (1), gloves (1), glyde (1), Goddes (1), gold (1), goodes (1), goodnesse (1), Goost (1), goynge (1), graunted (1), gray (1), gredy (1), gree (1), grefe (1), greve (1), greveth (1), gyrde (1), haddest (1), hadst (1), haest (1), hal (1), half (1), halfendell (1), halke (1), hand (1), handfull (1), hanged (1), hangynge (1), happed (1), harder (1), hardy (1), harken (1), harnes (1), harneysed (1), harte (1), haste (1), hasted (1), hat (1), hattes (1), haukes (1), haukynge (1), hedes (1), hedge (1), helpeth (1), hem (1), hens (1), hepe (1), herd (1), herdes (1), hertes (1), heygh (1), him (1), hodes (1), Holdernesse (1), hole (1), hondes (1), honger (1), hontynge (1), hoode (1), hore (1), hornes (1), hosen (1), hounde (1), houndred (1), houre (1), housbonde (1), hundred (1), huntynge (1), hurt (1), hurte (1), husband (1), hy (1), hyght (1), hyll (1), hynde (1), hypped (1), hys (1), hyt (1), i-bounde (1), i-brought (1), i-chaunged (1), i-dyght (1), i-fedred (1), i-nocked (1), i-pyght (1), I-quyt (1), i-sette (1), i-twyse (1), inough (1), iuste (1), japes (1), joustes (1), justyse (1), kechyn (1), kene (1), kepe (1), kepeste (1), kest (1), keste (1), knave (1), knaves (1), knee (1), knight (1), kynne (1), Kyrkeley (1), Kyrkesly (1), Ladye's (1), Lancasshyre (1), Lancastshyre (1), lappe (1), late (1), launsgay (1), lawe (1), lawes (1), layd (1), layed (1), layne (1), lechoure (1), led (1), ledde (1), ledes-man (1), leege (1), lefe (1), lend (1), lene (1), lened (1), lengre (1), lentest (1), leped (1), lerne (1), lesson (1), lest (1), leten (1), leugh (1), leved (1), leves (1), lithe (1), lived (1), lo (1), lockes (1), longeth (1), lordynge (1), lorne (1), lote (1), loth (1), lothely (1), loud (1), loude (1), lough (1), lovest (1), lughe (1), lust (1), lyketh (1), Lyncolne (1), lynde (1), lyne (1), lyste (1), lythe (1), Lytyll (1), Magdaleyne (1), maked (1), male-hors (1), maners (1), mantel (1), mantels (1), marchaunt (1), mare (1), markes (1), masars (1), maugre (1), mayden (1), mede (1), medes (1), mele (1), mennes (1), merkes (1), mervayle (1), messes (1), molde (1), mone (1), mony (1), mornynge (1), morow (1), mosse (1), moste (1), mounte (1), mountenaunce (1), muste (1), myles (1), myller's (1), mynde (1), myne (1), myre (1), myrthe (1), myrthes (1), mysserved (1), myster (1), nedeth (1), neyghbores (1), noble (1), non (1), noo (1), Notyingham (1), noumbles (1), numbles (1), nye (1), nygh (1), offyce (1), ofte (1), okerer (1), ope (1), ordayne (1), ordre (1), ought (1), oure (1), oures (1), oute (1), over (1), over-tolde (1), palferay (1), pallfraye (1), Parke (1), partye (1), pase (1), past (1), peces (1), pecocke (1), pees (1), pence (1), people (1), Peter (1), pith (1), places (1), play (1), plente (1), Plomton (1), plough (1), plucke-buffet (1), plyght (1), Poule (1), poverte

(1), prees (1), prese (1), presed (1), present (1), profer (1), pryce (1), pryckynge (1), pryde (1), pryour (1), purpose (1), pye (1), pyne (1), pype (1), quycke (1), Quyntyn (1), quyte (1), rather (1), rawe (1), raye (1), reddely (1), reden (1), redly (1), reken (1), releyse (1), renowne (1), rent (1), rentes (1), rest (1), reuthe (1), reve (1), revere (1), reves (1), rewarde (1), rewe (1), reweth (1), right (1), rightwys (1), robbe (1), rome (1), rounde (1), rout (1), ruthe (1), ryall (1), ryally (1), ryches (1), rydeth (1), rydynge (1), rynge (1), ryver (1), sad (1), sadell (1), sadle (1), saf (1), safly (1), salte (1), salued (1), sange (1), sare (1), sat (1), savfly (1), scathe (1), Scatheloke (1), seased (1), seke (1), seker (1), sele (1), semblaunte (1), semly (1), send (1), servaunt (1), servest (1), servyce (1), sete (1), sexty (1), shaft (1), shamefully (1), shapen (1), sharp (1), shefe (1), shende (1), shent (1), sheref (1), sherif (1), sherte (1), sheryfes (1), sheryffes (1), shete (1), shoke (1), sholder (1), sholderd (1), shone (1), shope (1), shoted (1), shrewde (1), shryves (1), shyt (1), slawe (1), slayne (1), sle (1), slepe (1), sleste (1), sleve (1), slist (1), slone (1), smarte (1), smartly (1), smerte (1), solde (1), somer's (1), somme (1), somtyme (1), soo (1), soryer (1), sote (1), sothe (1), spared (1), speciall (1), spekest (1), spendyng (1), spendynge-sylver (1), spones (1), spore (1), sporned (1), spredde (1), sprede (1), squyere (1), squyre (1), squyres (1), stable (1), stalworthe (1), stare (1), state (1), staves (1), steed (1), stele (1), sterope (1), stondynge (1), stone (1), stoode (1), stout (1), stoute (1), strayt (1), strayte (1), strenges (1), streyt (1), stroke (1), stryfe (1), strynges (1), styf (1), styffe (1), styfly (1), suffre (1), suffreth (1), super (1), suppe (1), supped (1), swannes (1), sware (1), swerde-men (1), swerdes (1), sworne (1), sych (1), sydes (1), synne (1), syrs (1), syteth (1), syx (1), table (1), takles (1), tap (1), targe (1), tarry (1), teche (1), teeres (1), tel (1), teres (1), tethe (1), thanked (1), thefe (1), their (1), therfro (1), theym (1), theyre (1), those (1), thousande (1), throwe (1), thryes (1), thryfte (1), thyderwarde (1), thyne (1), thynge (1), thynk (1), thynkest (1), thyrde (1), thyrty (1), to-fore (1), to-morne (1), to-morrowe (1), togeder (1), token (1), toldest (1), tonge (1), tournement (1), towarde (1), tray (1), traytour (1), treason (1), treasure (1), Trenyte (1), tresoure (1), tresure (1), treue (1), treuth (1), trewest (1), trouthes (1), trust (1), truste (1), trusty (1), Trynyte (1), trystyll (1), twayne (1), twelfe (1), twyse (1), tydenge (1), tydinges (1), tylleth (1), tyndes (1), tyne (1), uncurteys (1), understond (1), understonde (1), undertake (1), unneth (1), venyson (1), Verysdale (1), vouch (1), vylaynesly (1), walketh (1), walle (1), walled (1), walles (1), wand (1), ward (1), ware (1), wasshe (1), wasshed (1), water (1), wavyd (1), wedded (1), wedes (1), Wednesday (1), wekes (1), wel (1), welcom (1), welcomed (1), wele (1), welt (1), welthe (1), Wenest (1), Wentebrydge (1), wepte (1), werte (1), which (1), why (1), withall (1), wolte (1), wolwarde (1), wonest (1), wonnynge (1), wont (1), wonte (1), woo (1), word (1), wordes (1), wors (1), worshyp (1), worst (1), worste (1), worth (1), woundes (1), wrastelyng (1), wrastlelynge (1), wrought (1), wycked (1), wylte (1), wynke (1), wynne (1), wype (1), wyped (1), wyse (1), wystly (1), wyte (1), wyte (1), wyth (1), wytte (1), wyves (1), y-founde (1), ydyght (1), yeft (1), yelde (1), yeman's (1), yemanry (1), ynche (1), ynne (1), ynowe (1), Yole (1), yon (1), Yorke (1)

Frequency List Based on Distinct Words

The above list contains both instances of words with multiple spellings (e.g. "about" and "aboute" are different spellings of the word we now spell "about") and instances of different forms of the same root word (e.g. "abyde," "abyden," and "abode" are all conjugations of the root verb "to abide"). It is not always easy to determine if two forms used by the "Gest" are "the same" word, but combining them as best I can (based on the rules outlined in the Glossary below), I find that there are 1080 distinct words in this edition (give or take perhaps fifteen due to the complications of variant spellings and deciding just what is "the same" word. The total words in this count are 10587, rather than 10583 in the "forms" list, which shows just how tricky this is; I evidently double-counted a few).

There are eight words that occur more than two hundred times, sixteen that occur more than one hundred (including one proper name, "Robyn"; also "Knyght," which is almost always used for Sir Richard at the Lee), forty that occur at least fifty times (including the proper names "Hode" and "Johan"; also "Lytell," used mostly in the name "Lytell Johan"); an even one hundred that occur at least twenty times (though the only other proper noun is "Nottyngham." But "Sheryf" and "Wode," as in "Grene Wode," also occur more than twenty times). One hundred and eighty words occur at least ten times; 269 occur at least six times. The full list is below, in frequency order

The (447), And (444), He (430), Be (349), I (331), To (244), A (223), Say (219), That (186), Robyn (184), Of (170), Have (148), In (127), For (119), Thou (119), Knyght (111), Good (99), They (94), Lytell (88), My (88), Than (88), Johan (83), All (82), Shall (80), With (72), On (69), God (67), It (67), By (66), Our (65), Full (64), Kynge (61), You (59), So (57), There (54), Thy (54), Hode (53), This (53), No (52), Ye (52), Come (49), Sheryf (49), Syr (47), But (46), Do (44), Grene (44), Se (42), Well (40), Go (38), Make (38), Not (38), Wode (38), Wyll (38), Day (37), Take (37), We (37), Monke (36), Wolde (35), As (34), Man (34), Now (34), Abbot (33), Men (33), Or (33), More (32), Them (32), At (30), Hondred (29), Whan (29), Yf (29), Grete (28), Here (28), Dere (27), Lede (27), Mayster (26), Never (26), Pounde (26), What (26), Tre (25), Under (25), Yeman (25), Gentyll (24), Gyve (24), Londe (23), May (23), Proud (23), Shote (23), Stonde (23), Tell (23), Best (22), Notyngham (22), Gan (21), Myght (21), She (21), Thre (21), Bowe (20), Ever (20), Fayre (20), Myn (20), None (20), Many (19), Pay (19), Set (19), Welcome (19), Brynge (18), Mery (18), One (18), Ony (18), Theyr (18), Up (18), Yet (18), Forth (17), Gone (17), Honde (17), Ryght (17), Avowe (16), Dwell (16), Lady (16), Where (16), Both (15), Leve (15), Lorde (15), Moch (15), Two (15), Tyll (15), Anone (14), Dyner (14), Foure (14), Lay (14), Ne (14), Out (14), Swere (14), Trewe (14), Curteyse (13), Drynke (13), Hede (13), Justyce (13), Loke (13), Longe (13), Love (13), Sholde (13), These (13), Upon (13), Way (13), Abyde (12), Arowe (12), Better (12), Englonde (12), Every (12), Frende (12), Gete (12), Holde (12), Home (12), Kne (12), Lende (12), Let (12), Mete (12), Pray (12), Rode (12), Seven (12), Bespake (11), Downe (11), Dyed (11), Dyne (11), Fre (11), Hye (11), Scathelocke (11), Sle (11), Wyne (11), Agayne (10), Archere (10), Bare (10), Bent (10), Helpe (10), I-wys (10), Outlawe (10), Whyle (10), Worthy (10), Yere (10), Yonge (10), Away (9), Bad (9), Bernysdale (9), Bolde

(9), Can (9), Chere (9), Fayle (9), Ferre (9), Much (9), Nyght (9), Place (9), Save (9), Sende (9), Some (9), Sone (9), Thus (9), Wyght (9), Comly (8), Company (8), Countre (8), Dare (8), Ete (8), Fast (8), Forest (8), Fote (8), Golde (8), Hors (8), Must (8), Nay (8), Othe (8), Other (8), Redy (8), Saynt (8), Score (8), Serve (8), Smyte (8), Sterte (8), Stronge (8), Styll (8), Togyder (8), Walke (8), Wende (8), Whyte (8), Also (7), Before (7), Founde (7), Herde (7), Horne (7), Knowe (7), Lyfe (7), Nede (7), Put (7), Ryde (7), Soth (7), Such (7), Sylver (7), Though (7), Towne (7), Trouth (7), Twenty (7), Abbay (6), After (6), Another (6), Borowe (6), Coud (6), Dyght (6), Fall (6), Fastynge (6), Fynde (6), Grounde (6), How (6), Inowe (6), Knele (6), Lyve (6), Mantell (6), Marke (6), Met (6), Meyne (6), Money (6), Mote (6), Rycharde (6), Sore (6), Speke (6), Thereto (6), Thynk (6), Twelve (6), Tydynge (6), Wonder (6), Worde (6), Alway (5), Behynde (5), Blowe (5), Broke (5), Bryght (5), Charyte (5), Coke (5), Curteysly (5), Dore (5), Drawe (5), Drede (5), Elles (5), Evyll (5), Eyen (5), Fayne (5), Fee (5), Fro (5), Gate (5), Gest (5), Gramercy (5), Graunte (5), Hastly (5), Into (5), Lee (5), Lenger (5), Lyght (5), Moneth (5), Myle (5), Peny (5), Reynolde (5), Rowe (5), Squyer (5), Syde (5), Syght (5), Thanke (5), Therfore (5), Trystell (5), Tyme (5), Who (5), Wronge (5), Ylke (5), Arme (4), Aske (4), Begynne (4), Buske (4), Clothe (4), Clothynge (4), Cryst (4), Dede (4), Doute (4), Fere (4), Fle (4), Fyll (4), Fyve (4), Game (4), Garlonde (4), Gentyllman (4), Glad (4), Grenelefe (4), Halfe (4), Harme (4), Houre (4), Lye (4), Lysten (4), Lyth (4), Maner (4), Mary (4), Nere (4), Nothynge (4), Olde (4), Order (4), Palfray (4), Payre (4), Playe (4), Pore (4), Rede (4), Renne (4), Ryche (4), Sange (4), Sayles (4), Selerer (4), Selfe (4), Sharpe (4), Sorowe (4), Sory (4), Spare (4), Spende (4), Spred (4), Strete (4), Swerde (4), Symple (4), Syt (4), Tale (4), Tene (4), Ther (4), Thereof (4), Thought (4), Wete (4), Whether (4), Wroth (4), Wynter (4), Yede (4), About (3), Alas (3), Ale (3), Aray (3), Behelde (3), Behote (3), Bete (3), Blame (3), Blyssed (3), Body (3), Borde (3), Borne (3), Bounde (3), Bout (3), Brede (3), Buffet (3), Bynde (3), Cloth (3), Cofer (3), Commande (3), Counsell (3), Courte (3), Crye (3), Dame (3), Dancastere (3), Dryve (3), Edwarde (3), Eke (3), False (3), Fay (3), Force (3), Forty (3), Frere (3), Fyne (3), Gladly (3), Graye (3), Gylberte (3), Hart (3), Herken (3), Kyndenesse (3), Lefte (3), Lere (3), Lever (3), Lewte (3), Lodge (3), Lost (3), Lough (3), Lyke (3), Male (3), Mercy (3), Messengere (3), Mo (3), Nought (3), Parte (3), Porter (3), Pryoure (3), Same (3), Sell (3), Semely (3), Servaunte (3), Servyse (3), Shame (3), Shrewed (3), Somers (3), Spede (3), Spendynge (3), Spore (3), Stede (3), Strayt (3), Strynges (3), Stuarde (3), Takyll (3), Tarry (3), Therin (3), Through (3), Thyn (3), Trowe (3), Unketh (3), Unto (3), Untyll (3), Vessell (3), Wande (3), Warde (3), Wedde (3), Wede (3), West (3), Whiche (3), Within (3), Without (3), Wo (3), Woman (3), Worlde (3), Worthe (3), Wyfe (3), Yerdes (3), Yes (3), Yonder (3), Above (2), Adowne (2), Agaynst (2), Agone (2), Alyve (2), Amende (2), Answere (2), Assay (2), Awayte (2), Ay (2), Backe (2), Baron (2), Besyde (2), Betrayed (2), Blode (2), Blythe (2), Botes (2), Bought (2), Brethern (2), Brode (2), Bronde (2), Browne (2), Brydge (2), Burnyshed (2), Butler (2), Buttes (2), Bydene (2), Byrde (2), Bysshop (2), Call (2), Care (2), Cast (2), Castell (2), Certayn (2), Chaunce (2), Chorle (2), Cole (2), Coloure (2), Courser (2), Covent (2), Crave (2), Crowne (2), Delyver (2), Deth (2), Donne (2), Dysheryte (2), Est (2), Even (2), Everych (2), Everychone (2), Eyre (2), Fare (2), Farewell

(2), Fedred (2), Felawe (2), Felde (2), Fifty (2), Folowed (2), Forsoth (2), Fourtynyght (2), Fyfty (2), Grace (2), Greteth (2), Greve (2), Grome (2), Gylte (2), Hall (2), Hat (2), Hende (2), Heven (2), Holy (2), Huntynge (2), Hurt (2), Hymselfe (2), In-fere (2), Kepe (2), Kest (2), Knave (2), Kyrtell (2), Large (2), Last (2), Lawe (2), Leasynge (2), Lese (2), London (2), Loud (2), Lowe (2), Lust (2), Lyest (2), Lyveray (2), Markes (2), Mayntayne (2), Mede (2), Mesure (2), Myrth (2), Name (2), Newe (2), Neyther (2), Nor (2), North (2), Notes (2), Nother (2), Noumbles (2), Nye (2), Owne (2), Page (2), Passe (2), Passed (2), Prees (2), Pryoresse (2), Purveyed (2), Pyte (2), Quyte (2), Reddely (2), Rewe (2), Roger (2), Rose (2), Ruthe (2), Ryver (2), Sadle (2), Safly (2), Scarlet (2), Seale (2), Seche (2), Shapen (2), Shawe (2), Shelynges (2), Shende (2), Shet (2), Shotynge (2), Sleste (2), Small (2), Smarte (2), Songe (2), Sonne (2), Soule (2), Stout (2), Strokes (2), Styf (2), Suffre (2), Suppe (2), Syth (2), Teeris (2), Ten (2), Thorowe (2), Thyder (2), Thynne (2), Treasure (2), Trewely (2), Trusty (2), Trynyte (2), Twyse (2), Understond (2), Walle (2), Wan (2), Wasshe (2), Watlynge (2), Wayte (2), Wont (2), Worst (2), Wrastelyng (2), Wyde (2), Wylde (2), Wyllyam (2), Wype (2), Abbot-lyke (1), Accordyd (1), Afore (1), Agast (1), Allmyght (1), Allther (1), Almes (1), Alone (1), Amonge (1), Ancestres (1), Ankir (1), Archebysshoppes (1), Aryse (1), Askynge (1), Austyn (1), Bagge (1), Ball (1), Banis (1), Barefote (1), Bed (1), Befal (1), Beggars (1), Begyled (1), Berde (1), Beset (1), Bested (1), Bestes (1), Bethought (1), Betwene (1), Betyme (1), Beyonde (1), Blacke (1), Blysse (1), Blyth (1), Blyve (1), Boldely (1), Bolte (1), Bonde (1), Bone (1), Borowed (1), Borowehode (1), Bost (1), Bowe-tree (1), Breche (1), Bred (1), Brere (1), Brest (1), Broche (1), Brydil (1), Bulle (1), Busshement (1), Buttery (1), Byddynge (1), Bye (1), Bygod (1), Calvere (1), Carefull (1), Case (1), Chapell (1), Charter (1), Chaunged (1), Chepe (1), Cheve (1), Chyldren (1), Chyrches (1), Clere (1), Cleved (1), Closed (1), Clothes (1), Colde (1), Commytted (1), Comynge (1), Confort (1), Consyence (1), Coresed (1), Corser (1), Cost (1), Cote (1), Covered (1), Cracke (1), Craftely (1), Cut (1), Dedely (1), Demed (1), Denere (1), Departed (1), Depe (1), Derne (1), Desceyved (1), Det (1), Dettour (1), Devylkins (1), Donkesly (1), Doo (1), Double-Dyched (1), Doubled (1), Draper (1), Dreri (1), Durst (1), Dyche (1), Dyghtande (1), Dysgrate (1), Eased (1), Eche (1), Eftsones (1), Elle (1), Ende (1), Enemye (1), Enfourme (1), Ere (1), Erely (1), Erle (1), Ewe (1), Eyght (1), Eyghtene-and-two (1), Face (1), Fader (1), Fat-Heded (1), Fatte (1), Fayrest (1), Feders (1), Felaushyp (1), Fende (1), Fenne (1), Ferther (1), Fessauntes (1), Fet (1), Fette (1), Flore (1), Folde (1), Fole (1), Foly (1), Fone (1), Forbede (1), Forgete (1), Forgyve (1), Formost (1), Forsaketh (1), Forther (1), Foryete (1), Fostere (1), Fought (1), Foules (1), Fourth (1), Frebore (1), Frembde (1), Frese (1), Furred (1), Furthest (1), Fyngers (1), Fynly (1), Fyrst (1), Gadred (1), Gange (1), Garment (1), Gladdynge (1), Gloves (1), Glyde (1), Goddes (1), Goodes (1), Goodnesse (1), Goost (1), Gredy (1), Gree (1), Grefe (1), Gyrde (1), Hal (1), Halfendell (1), Halke (1), Handfull (1), Hanged (1), Hangynge (1), Happed (1), Harder (1), Hardy (1), Harnes (1), Harnyssed (1), Hasted (1), Haukes (1), Haukynge (1), Hedge (1), Hem (1), Hens (1), Hepe (1), Herdes (1), Hertes (1), Holdernesse (1), Hole (1), Honger (1), Hore (1), Hosen (1), Hounde (1), Hous (1), Housbonde (1), Husband (1), Hyll (1), Hynde (1), Hypped (1), Hyt (1), I-nocked (1), Iuste (1), Japes (1), Joustes (1),

Kechyn (1), Kene (1), Kynne (1), Kyrkely (1), Kyrkesly (1), Lancasshyre (1), Lancastshyre (1), Lappe (1), Launsgay (1), Lechoure (1), Ledes-Man (1), Leege (1), Lefe (1), Lened (1), Leped (1), Lerne (1), Lesson (1), Lest (1), Leten (1), Leves (1), Lo (1), Lockes (1), Longeth (1), Lordynge (1), Lorne (1), Lote (1), Loth (1), Lothely (1), Lyncolne (1), Lynde (1), Lyne (1), Magdaleyne (1), Male-Hors (1), Maners (1), Marchaunt (1), Mare (1), Masars (1), Maugre (1), Mayden (1), Mele (1), Mervayle (1), Messes (1), Molde (1), Mone (1), Mornynge (1), Morow (1), Mosse (1), Moste (1), Mounte (1), Mountnaunce (1), Myller's (1), Mynde (1), Myre (1), Mysserved (1), Myster (1), Nedeth (1), Neyghbores (1), Noble (1), Noo (1), Offyce (1), Oft (1), Okerer (1), Ope (1), Ordayne (1), Ought (1), Over (1), Over-tolde (1), Parke (1), Partye (1), Pase (1), Past (1), Peces (1), Pecok (1), Pees (1), Pence (1), People (1), Peter (1), Pith (1), Plente (1), Plomton (1), Ploughe (1), Plucke-Buffet (1), Plyght (1), Poule (1), Poverte (1), Presed (1), Present (1), Profer (1), Pryce (1), Pryckynge (1), Pryde (1), Purpose (1), Pye (1), Pyne (1), Pype (1), Quyke (1), Quyntyn (1), Rather (1), Raye (1), Reken (1), Releyse (1), Renowne (1), Rent (1), Rentes (1), Rest (1), Reve (1), Reves (1), Rewarde (1), Rightwys (1), Robbe (1), Rome (1), Rounde (1), Rout (1), Ryall (1), Ryally (1), Ryches (1), Rynge (1), Sad (1), Saf (1), Salte (1), Salued (1), Sare (1), Scathe (1), Seased (1), Seke (1), Seker (1), Sele (1), Semblaunte (1), Sete (1), Sexty (1), Shaft (1), Shamefully (1), Shefe (1), Sherte (1), Shete (1), Shoke (1), Sholder (1), Sholderd (1), Shone (1), Shyt (1), Slepe (1), Sleve (1), Smartly (1), Somer's (1), Somme (1), Somtyme (1), Soryer (1), Sote (1), Speciall (1), Spendynge-Sylver (1), Spones (1), Sporned (1), Stable (1), Stalworthe (1), Stare (1), State (1), Staves (1), Stele (1), Sterope (1), Stone (1), Stroke (1), Stryfe (1), Styfly (1), Super (1), Swannes (1), Sworde-Men (1), Synne (1), Syx (1), Table (1), Tap (1), Targe (1), Teche (1), Tethe (1), Thefe (1), Therfro (1), Those (1), Thousand (1), Throwe (1), Thryes (1), Thryfte (1), Thyderwarde (1), Thynge (1), Thyrde (1), Thyrty (1), To-Fore (1), To-Morne (1), To-Morrowe (1), Token (1), Tonge (1), Tournement (1), Towarde (1), Tray (1), Traytour (1), Treason (1), Tresure (1), Trewest (1), Trouthes (1), Trust (1), Twayne (1), Tylleth (1), Tyndes (1), Tyne (1), Uncurteys (1), Undertake (1), Unneth (1), Venyson (1), Verysdale (1), Vouch (1), Vylaynesly (1), Walled (1), Ware (1), Water (1), Wavyd (1), Wedded (1), Wednesday (1), Wekes (1), Welt (1), Welthe (1), Wenest (1), Wentebrydg (1), Wepte (1), Why (1), Withall (1), Wolwarde (1), Wonnest (1), Wonnynge (1), Woo (1), Wors (1), Worshyp (1), Woundes (1), Wrought (1), Wycked (1), Wynke (1), Wynne (1), Wyse (1), Wystly (1), Yeft (1), Yelde (1), Yemanry (1), Ynche (1), Ynne (1), Yole (1), Yon (1), Yorke (1).

An interesting footnote to this: As described in the notes on editong above, all choices between i and j are editorial; so are choices between u and v. Another curious point: there are *no instances of the letter z in the entire "Gest."* Not one. In other words, as typeset, the "Gest" uses only 23 letters of the Roman alphabet. (At least in **a b c d epq** and **f** as they now stand; there is a z in **g**).

Glossary of the Vocabulary of the "Gest"

The glossary below includes *every word and every form* found in the critical text of the "Gest," along with explanatory meanings. The list is organized by root forms, but all oblique forms are listed as cross-references. So, for example, the verb we now spell "to begin" has the entry:

Began (3: 122.4, 204.2, 429.1), ✸BEGYNNE (1: 44.2) — *to begin, began*

Begynne (begin) is the root form, so it is marked in ✸SMALL CAPS with a star, but the past tense **Began** is also listed, and there is a cross-reference ***Began: see Begynne.***

I have generally tried to combine all forms of a root word, but there are a few instances where a word can have two meanings, and one of the meanings can have two spellings. So, for example, the spelling "rode" is used both for the past tense of the verb "to ryde" (ride) and as the spelling of "rood" (the cross). In cases like this, I have not combined rode-the-verb with ride-the-verb, because it needs to be clear that "rode" can be either "rode" or "rood." So there are entries for both "rode" and "ryde," with cross-references.

For common words (those occurring six times or more), the frequency is usually simply listed, plus any meanings — e.g. the first item is

✸**A** (197), **An** (26), — *a, an*

That is, the word "A" occurs 197 times, and "An" occurs 26 times; they would be rendered "a/an" in modern English.

For rarer words (those with five or fewer instances, sometimes more), the entry lists all occurrences of the word, e.g.

✸ABBAY (6: 54.4 [**a** abbey], 84.4, 232.3, 233.1, 236.4, 368.3) — *abbey*

So there are six instances of the word "abbay," in 54.4, 84.4, 232.3, 233.1, 236.4, 368.3, and they all mean "abbey." But note the notation by 54.4: "54.4 [**a** abbey]." This means that, in 54.4, **a** has the spelling "abbey" rather than "abbay." Unless otherwise specified, it can be assumed that **b** agrees with my text, and that Child's text (***FJC***) agrees with **a**. This, incidentally, is one of the instances where shifting to a copy text has shortened the vocabulary list, since **b** consistently spells this word "abbay," but Child's text "abbey" in 54.4, "abbay" elsewhere.

Not every variant between **a, b**, ***FJC***, and my text is indicated, but I believe I have captured all the forms (if not all instances) used by **a** or **b** or printed by Child. I have included variants from **a**, **b**, **c**, **d**, and **epq**; for the most part, I've ignored **f** and **g**. The use of this feature means that you can also use this glossary for the editions of Child, etc., although you will have to do more cross-referencing.

Sometimes, to be sure, even following **b** alone, there are still multiple spellings. So, for instance, we have

✸**AGAYNE** (9), **Ageyne** (1: 35.1) — *again*
Ageyne: see Agayne

So we have two forms of the word which translate as "again": "agayne," which occurs nine times, and "ageyne," which occurs only once. The cross-reference ***"ageyne: see agayne"*** lets the user find the main form.

In general, I have alphabetized on the core form (nominative singular for nouns and pronouns, present indicative for verbs). Where there are multiple spellings of the core form, I go with the one which is more common (e.g., in the example above, "agayne" rather than "ageyne"). Where it's a tie, I try for the one more like the modern form, e.g.

✸**AGAYNST** (1: 319.4), **Ayenst** (1: 420.4)— *against*

I choose "agaynst" rather than "ayenst" as the core form because it's more like modern English. When all those rules fail, I make an arbitrary choice, often of the one that is first alphabetically.

Words which are similar to their modern English forms are typically minimally glossed. Others words may be extensively explained. Also, where a word has multiple meanings, there may be subheads:

✸**AVOWE** (16) — *avowal, vow, oath.*
1. *in variations on the phrase "I make mine avowe (to God)"* (158.3, 164.1, 165.3 [**b** omits "to God"; in **a**], 169.1, 180.1, 187.1, 190.1, 240.1, 249.1, 343.1, 346.3, 408.1, 415.3)
2. *institution to which the monk is pledged* (232.4)
3. *admit, swear to an action* (320.1, 324.1)

So there are sixteen instances of "avowe," all of which mean "avowal, vow, oath," but the sub-headings describe particular specialized uses. In this case, all the specialized uses are listed, but not always, and there may be only one subhead, for a particular use. So, for example:

✸**BOROWE** (5: 63.3, 64.3, 66.4, 237.1, 250.4), **Borowes** (1: 62.2) — *guarantor of a loan, one who offers surety. From Old English "borg." Sometimes used for "bail." In Chaucer it refers to the surety itself, but we also find Saint John offered as a guarantor in the* Squire's Tale, *V.596.*
1. *Of the Virgin Mary as guarantor (66.4, 237.1, 250.4)*

So there are six different uses of the word "borowe" (five singular, one plural), all of which refer to the guarantor of a loan. In four cases (the four cited under subheading 1),

the Virgin Mary is the guarantor; in the other two instances, not specifically cited, the word refers to some other guarantor.

A Note about Alphabetization.

The Middle English alphabet was not quite the same as the modern alphabet. Although the ancient letters þ ð ȝ are not used in any of the prints (except for a few instances of y for þ/th), the modern differentiation between i/j and u/v had not yet emerged. Child's edition, for instance, still uses the archaic letters (so "Johnn," as in Little John, is written "Iohnn," and "vouch" is written "uouch"). To make the text easier to read, my edition does use the letters j and v, in the places where we would use them today. (In one or two places where it's not clear whether the reading should have an I or a J, I have added a note.) The glossary is alphabetized accordingly.

A different problem involves I and Y. In Middle English, these represented the same sound, and were used absolutely promiscuously (so "sit" might be written as "sit" or "syt," "sir" as "sir" or "syr," etc.). **b** is more consistent than **a** in this regard — it has a strong tendency to use y rather than i — but only a little. Ordinarily, Middle English dictionaries alphabetize i and y as one letter (so, for instance, on page 57 of DavisEtAl, we find this alphabetical list of words: filth fin fyn final fynally finde(n) finder finding fyn(e) fyne(n) fyr firmament). This glossary, being intended for non-specialists, alphabetizes I as I and Y as Y, but this can sometimes be just as confusing as putting them together (e.g. when "Sir" is alphabetized under "Syr," because "Syr" is used much more often than "Sir"). I can only advise you to follow the cross-references in those cases.

The Glossary Itself

✸**A** (197), **An** (26), — *a, an*

✸**Abbay** (6: 54.4 [**a** abbey], 84.4, 232.3, 233.1, 236.4, 368.3) — *abbey*

1. Saynt Mary Abbay or similar (54.4, 84.4, 233.4; also implicitly 236.4)
2. Of the unnamed abbey where the king acquired monk's clothing (368.3)

Abbey: see Abbay

✸**Abbot** (32), **Abbotes** (1: 102.2) — *abbot, abbot's, i.e. chief priest of an abbey.*

1. *Abbots in general (19.2, 119.4)*
2. *The abbot of St. Mary's, a "mitred abbot" who had more than the usual power and privilege — and who used these powers ruthlessly. (54.3, 55.4, 85.1, 86.1, 91.1, 93.1, 93.4, 95.2, 103.1, 202.2, 103.3, 104.3, 105.1, 107.1, 108.1, 110.1, 113.1, 114.2, 115.2, 118.1, 121.1, 122.1, 123.1, 124.1, 129.1, 260.1, 266.3)*
3. *The king in his abbot's disguise (376.3, 387.1, 394.2, 405.3)*

✸**Abbot-lyke** (1: 372.3) — *appearing to be an abbot. Used of King Edward in disguise*

Abode: see Abyde

✸**About** (2), **Aboute** (1) — *about. See also "bout," as in "shot a bout."*

✸**Above** (2) — *above*

✸ABYDE (9; [a abide in 12.2]), **Abyden** (1: 25.3 [a abiden]), **Abode** (2: 143.3, 224.2) — *to abide*

Abyden: see Abyde

✸ACCORDYD (1: 129.1 [a Iaccorded, *i.e.* I accorded]) — *to bring into accord, i.e. to be accorded means the conditions of an agreement have been met. It need not mean they are actually satisfied with the outcome, only that the legal obligations have been met.*

Adoune: see Adowne

Adoune (1: 263.3), ✸ADOWNE (1: 226.1) — *down, off*

1. *of taking off clothing (Robin takes off his hood) (226.1)*
2. *of lighting off a horse (263.3)*

✸AFORE (1: 188.3) — *before*

✸AFTER (6) — *after*

✸AGAST (1: 396.3) — *aghast, alarmed*

✸AGAYNE (9), **Ageyne** (1: 35.1) — *again*

✸AGAYNST (1: 319.4), **Ayenst** (1: 420.4)— *against*

Ageyne: see Agayne

✸AGONE (2: 205.2, 435.1) —*gone. (Perhaps should be spelled a-gone.)*

Al: see All

✸ALAS (3: 436.3, 438.1, 438.2) — *alas. In the "Gest," all three uses pertain to Robin's regrets about leaving the Greenwood. For the usage in 438.2, "Alas and well a woo," see also the note on Woo.*

✸ALE (3: 161.4, 393.4, 399.4) — *ale*

✸ALL (79), **Al** (3) — *all*

✸ALLMYGHT (1: 74.2; a: almyght) — *Almighty. Used in the phrase "God allmyght." This is the traditional rendering of Hebrew "El Shaddai," which became "Deus omnipotens"in the Latin Bible (with some technical significance for the Church), but I doubt Scathelock, who used the phrase, would know that.*

✸ALLTHER (1: 9.4 [also *FJC* in 283.3, 284.1 *ex cj.*]) — *all other, i.e. above all others. "alþermāste," "most of all," "(above) all others most," based on the usage pattern noted on p. 323 of Emerson, appears to be a northernism*

Allway: see Alway

✸ALMES (1: 69.3 [a almus]) — *alms, charity*

✸ALONE (1: 80.2) — *alone*

✸ALSO (7 [a: alsoo in 4.1]) — *also*

Alsoo: see Also

Allway (1: 153.3 [a alwey]), ✸ALWAY (4: 146.2 [a alwey], 292.2 [d alwey], 366.1, 366.3) — *always*

Alwey: see Always

✸ALYVE (2: 304.4, 349.4 [b a lyve]) — *alive*

Am: see Be

✸AMENDE (2: 48.4 [b, but not ac, a mend], 50.4)— *to amend, make right. Used of God improving/correcting the Knight's condition.*

✸**Amonge** (1: 301.4) — *among*
An: see A
✸**Ancestres** (1: 47.4) — *ancestors*
✸**And** (444) — *and*
Ani**: see **Ony
✸**Ankir** (1: 198.2) — *anchorite, i.e. a person who has taken a strong religious vow and lives a very isolated, simple life. Elsewhere spelled "ancre"; Old English "ānċra"; compare the "Ancrene Riwle" and "Ancrene Wisse" (samples on pp. 206-210 in Emerson). When the Sheriff says that Robin's order is stricter than any anchorite or friar, he is probably right about the friars but clearly wrong about the anchorites, who often were so cut-off as to be walled into a cell, with almost no room to move and little interaction with people.*
✸**Anone** (14) — *anon, i.e. now, at once soon*
✸**Another** (6) — *another*
✸**Answere** (1: 322.1), **Answered** (1: 31.1) — *to answer, answered*
Answered: see Answere
Any**: see **Ony
✸**Aray** (2: 23.2, 71.2), **Araye** (1: 354.2) — *array, often meaning clothing, but also pattern, organization*
Araye: see Aray
✸**Archebysshoppes** (1: 15.1) — *Archbishops. For the Archbishops of York during the period of the "Gest," see the note on Stanza 15.*
✸**Archere** (5: 147.3 [**a** arschere], 289.3, 375.3, 437.1, 437.3), **Archeres** (2: 323.3 [**aq** archars], 326.3 [**aq** archers]), **Archers** (2: 283.1, 293.2 **df** [**b** archours]), **Archours** (1: 294.2 [**d** archers]) — *archer, archers. Should probably be understood as "longbowmen."*
Archeres: see Archere
Archers: see Archere
Archours: see Archers
Are: see Be
✸**Arme** (2: 314.3, 409.1), **Armys** (2: 317.4, 332.2) — *arm, arms*
1. *verb: to arm one's self (314.3)*
2. *weapons, arms (317.4, 332,2)*
3. *the king's strong arm (409.2)*

Armys: see Arme
✸**Arowe** (8), **Arowes** (4: 131.3 [**a** aros we *(sic.)*], 140.3, 275.2, 299.2) — *arrow, arrows*
Arowes: see Arowe
Arschere: see Archers
Art: see Be
Arte: see Be
✸**Aryse** (1: 348.1) — *to arise*
✸**As** (34) — *as*
Asayed: see Assay
Ask: see Aske

Ask (1: 164.4 [**a** aske]), ✸**Aske** (2: 258.3, 413.3), **Asked** (1: 355.1) — *to ask, asked*
Asked: see Aske
✸**Askynge** (1: 439.4) — *asking (as a noun), i.e. request*
✸**Assay** (1: 112.3), **Asayed** (1: 166.4 [**a** assayed]) — *to assay, i.e. test the quality of*
Asseyed: see assay
✸**At** (30) — *at*
✸**Austyn** (1: 390.4) — *(Saint) Augustine. The reference might be to either St. Augustine of Hippo, the fourth/fifth century theologian, or to Augustine of Canterbury, who brought Catholicism to England. Most scholars think the reference in this case is to Augustine of Canterbury.*
✸**Avowe** (16) — *avowal, vow, oath.*
1. *in variations on the phrase "I make mine avowe (to God)"* (158.3, 164.1, 165.3 [**b** omits "to God"; in **a**], 169.1, 180.1, 187.1, 190.1, 240.1, 249.1, 343.1, 346.3, 408.1, 415.3)
2. *institution to which the monk is pledged* (232.4)
3. *admit, swear to an action* (320.1, 324.1)

✸**Away** (7), **Awaye** (2: 125.2, 175.1 [**a** away]) — *away*
Awaye: see Away
✸**Awayte** (1: 202.3), **Awayted** (1: 330.3, 331.1 [**ad** wayted]) — *to await. In the "Gest" it usually bears the sense "trap, ensnare." See also "Wayte."*
Awayted: see Awayte
✸**Ay** (2: 85.4, 271.2) — *both times in the phrase "for ay": indeed, certainly*
Ayenst: see Agaynst
Ayre: see Eyre
✸**Backe** (2: 160.2, 308.1) — *back (noun, referring to the body part: the ribs and spine)*
✸**Bad** (4: 142.3, 351.4, 382.4, 432.2), **Bode** (1: 222.4), **Byd** (2: 260.3, 326.2), **Bydde** (1: 257.1), **Byddeth** (1: 384.3) — *to bid, call upon, instruct, give direction; past tense bade*
✸**Bagge** (1: 120.3) — *bag, sack*
✸**Ball** (1: 364.2) — *presumably the same as modern "ball," although "bell" strikes me as a possible meaning*
✸**Banis** (1: 453.4) —*bane, i.e. cause of death/disaster*
✸**Bare** (5: 134.1, 279.3, 308.2, 358.4, 400.2), **Bere** (4: 137.4, 283.4, 363.4, 400.1), **Bereth** (1: 137.3)
1. *adjective: bare, ill-clothed (279.3)*
2. *verb: to bear up under, endure (400.2)*
3. *verb: to bear, bore, carry (all other uses)*

✸**Barefote** (1: 442.3) — *barefoot*
Barnysdale: see Bernysdale
✸**Baron** (2: 6.3, 19.1) — *the lowest level of titled nobility, junior to earls, marquises, and dukes, typically with an annual income in the (low) hundreds of pounds, but above knights and esquires and, of course, yeomen.*

Am (6), **Are** (5 [**a** 24.4 ar]), **Art** (5), **Arte** (9), ✸**Be** (113), **Bee** (1: 151.4 [**a** be]), **Ben** (i.e. "Been" 6: 46.1, 52.2 [**c** bene], 121.3, 128.4 [**a** bene], 129.1, 340.2 [**b** be]), **Is** (75), **Was** (97), **Were** (31), **Werte** (="Were." 1: 45.3 [**a** warte; **bc** were]) — *forms of the verb "to be." Note that the "Gest" is relatively more likely to use participial forms (be, been) than indicatives than is modern speech, although it does not seem to use "being."*

✸**Bed** (1: 155.3) — *bed*

Bedene: see Bydene

Bee: see Be

✸**Befal** (1: 48.1), Befell (1: 155.1) — *to befall, befell, to happen to, come upon*

Befell: see Befal

✸**Before** (6), **Beforne** (1: 182.4) — *before*

Beforne: see Before

Began: see Begynne

✸**Beggars** (1: 128.4) — *beggars*

✸**Begyled** (1: 451.1) — *beguiled, tricked, deceived, bemused*

Began (3: 122.4, 204.2, 429.1), ✸**Begynne** (1: 44.2) — *to begin, began*

✸**Behelde** (3: 291.3, 410.1, 427.2) — *beheld, past tense of to behold.*

✸**Behote** (2: 297.3, 315.1), **Hyght** (1: 442.3) — *to ask, ask of, request; the form hyght, hote typically means "promised," "vowed," "planned." A very irregular verb; forms attested in the fourteenth century, according to Sisam's glossary (under "hote") include among others "hete," "hyȝt(e)," "heiste," "heihte," hight(e)," "yhote," and more. Emerson, p. 334, links it to Old English behātan, promise, with a similar range of irregular forms.*

✸**Behynde** (5: 12.2, 257.4, 352.1, 374.2, 268A.4) — *behind*

Ben: see Be

Bende: see Bent

Bene: see Be

✸**Bent** (5: 140.3, 290.3 [**d**: ibent], 299.1, 347.1, 396.2), **Bende** (2: 218.1, 291.1), **Bente** (1: 423.1), **I-bent** (2: 288.1, 342.1) — *to bend, bent*

Bent: see Bende

Bente: see Bende

✸**Berde** (1: 91.1) — *beard*

Bere: see Bare

Bereth: see Bare

Bernesdale: see Bernysdale

Bernydsale: see Bernysdale

Barnysdale (1: 21.1 [**a** Bernysdale]) ✸**Bernysdale** (8: 3.1 [**a** Bernesdale], 82.3 [**a** Bernedt ale (*sic.*)] , 83.1, 134.4, 213.1, 262.1, 440,1, 442.1) — *Barnsdale, forest, probably in Yorkshire, where Robin is based. See the map in the Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest" and the Sketch of the Royal Forests in the "Robin Hood Period."*

✸**Beset** (1: 318.3 [**a** besette]) — *to beset, to be beseiged, under attacked, surrouned*

Beside: see Besyde

✸**Bespake** (11) — *spoke, spoke to, spoke out. See "Spake."*

✷**Best** (22) — *best, either as adjective or as verb, to best, overcome, defeat, succeed against*
✷**Bested** (1: 138.3) — *usually "beaten, defeated"; here perhaps "overpowered, outnumbered." This line may well be corrupt.*
✷**Bestes** (1: 60.2 [**a** bestis]) — *beasts*
Beside**: see **Besyde
Bestis: see Bestes
✷**Besyde** (2: 22.4 [**a** beside], 54.3) — *beside*
✷**Bete** (3: 12.4, 15.2, 257.2) — *to beat, abuse*
✷**Bethought** (1: 181.1) — *thought of*
✷**Betrayed** (2: 189.4, 455.3) — *betrayed, past tense of to betray*
✷**Better** (12) — *better*
✷**Betwene** (1: 237.2) — *between*
✷**Betyme** (1: 5.3) — *betime, at an appropriate time, i.e. soon*
✷**Beyonde** (1: 89.1) — *beyond*
Bi: see By
Bird: see Byrde
Bishopes: see Bysshop
✷**Blacke** (1: 213.3) — *black*
✷**Blame** (3: 38.4, 190.2, 240.2) — *blame*
1. *blame, attribution of fault (noun) (38.4)*
2. *to blame (verb): "thou art to blame" (190.2, 240.2)*

Blessyd: see Blyssed
Blith: see Blythe
✷**Blode** (2: 1.2, 454.4) — *blood*
Blow: see Blowe
Blow (1: 447.2), ✷**Blowe** (4: 59.4, 229.1, 296.2, 389.2) — *to blow*
1. *of blowing a boast, i.e. being a blowhard (59.4)*
2. *to blow a horn (229.1, 296.2, 389.2, 447.2)*

✷**Blysse** (1: 128.1) — *bliss*
✷**Blyssed** (3: 82.4 [**a** blessyd], 83.3 [**a** blyssyd], 394.4) — *to bless, blessed, to be blessed*
Blyssyd: see Blyssed
✷**Blyth** (1: 371.4) — *blythe, happily*
✷**Blythe** (2: 27.4 [**a** Blith], 259.4) — *town on the Great North Road, where travelers would stop on their way between Nottingham and York. It is about 15 kilometers/10 miles south of Doncaster and just inside the county of Nottingham. See the map in the Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest"*
✷**Blyve** (1: 300.4) — *quickly, hastily*
Bode: see Bad
Bodi: see Body

✷**Body** (3: 4.3 [**a** bodi], 70.4, 194.4) — *body (always of a living body, and of a human)*
1. *of Much's body, that was worth many "gromes" (4.3)*
2. *to "helpe" the Knight's body (70.4)*
3. *to "lappe" the Sheriff's body (194.4)*

✷**Bolde** (9) — *bold*

✷**Boldely** (1: 407.1) — *boldly*

✷**Bolte** (1: 223.1) — *properly "bolt," as of a crossbow, but probably to be understood "arrow" — a usage found both at this point in the "Geste" and in stanzas 45.4, 51.2 of the "Potter."*

✷**Bonde** (1: 220.2) — *band (to a hood or hat)*

✷**Bone** (1: 336.4) — *boon, i.e. gift, grant, privilege*

✷**Borde** (2: 11.2, 120.1), **Bordes** (1: 316.1) — *board, sideboard, i.e. table (perhaps to hold food)*

Bordes: see Borde

Born: see Borne

Born (1: 148.3 [**a** borne]), ✷**Borne** (2: 112.1, 149.1 [**b** bore]) — *to bear, born*
1. *of the birth of Little John in his guise as "Reynold Greenleaf" (148.3, 149.1)*
2. *of Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary (112.1)*

✷**Borowe** (5: 63.3, 64.3, 66.4, 237.1, 250.4), **Borowes** (1: 62.2) — *guarantor of a loan, one who offers surety. From Old English "borg." Sometimes used for "bail." In Chaucer it refers to the surety itself, but we also find Saint John offered as a guarantor in the* "Squire's Tale," *V.596.*
1. *Of the Virgin Mary as guarantor (66.4, 237.1, 250.4)*

✷**Borowed** (1: 86.4) — *to borrow, borrowed*

✷**Borowehode** (1: 239.3) — *borrowing, i.e. loan. See "borowe."*

Borowes: see Borowe

✷**Bost** (1: 59.4 [**ac** boste]) — *boast, bragging (noun)*

Boste: see Bost

Boteler: see Buteler

Botery: see Buttery

✷**Botes** (2: 77.3, 373.1) — *boots*

✷**Both** (13), **Bothe** (2: 32.1, 330.4) — *both*

Bothe: see Both

✷**Bought** (2: 92.2, 111.4) — *to buy, bought. In 92.2 it has seems to be used in the technical religious sense "redeemed."*

✷**Bounde** (2: 332.4 [so **ap**; **b** i-bounde]), **I-bounde** (1: 337.3 [**a** bowne, **d**^{vid} bounde) — *bound, held in bonds*

✷**Bout** (2: 146.1 [**a** aboute for "a bout"], 292.1 [**d** boute]), **Boute** (1: 401.1) — *turn or round in a contest. All three uses involve someone "shooting a bout": taking his turn in a longbow contest. In all three cases there is disagreement between editors about whether to print* about, aboute, a bout, *or* a boute*; however, there is no question but that someone took his turn in the shooting contest.*

✷**Bowe** (9), **Bowes** (11) — *bow, longbow*

Bowes: see Bowe

✷**Bowe-tree** (1: 72.4) — *bow-tree, bow-stave (used by Little John to measure cloth — perhaps a joke on the cloth yard?)*
Bowne: see Bounde
Brake: see broke
✷**Breche** (1: 196.2) — *breeches*
✷**Bred** (1: 33.4) — *to breed, bred (although in this case, referring to birds, it may mean something more like "found on")*
✷**Brede** (3: 32.3, 172.3, 393.3) — *bread*
✷**Brere** (1: 33.1 [**a** bryre]) — *briar*
✷**Brest** (1: 223.3) — *breast*
✷**Brethern** (1: 217.1), **Bretherne** (1: 27.2) — *brethren, brothers*
Bretherne: see Brethern
Bright: see Bryght
Brighte: see Bryght
Bringe: see Brynge
Bringhe: see Brynge
✷**Broche** (1: 142.3) — *to open, that is, to "set a broach" is to broach a wine cask*
✷**Brode** (2: 372.2, 385.1) — *broad*
Brake (1: 174.4), ✷**Broke** (4: 106.1, 271.2, 274.1, 279.1, 301.1 [**d**^{vid} brok; ***FJC*** "to-broke" for "to broke") — *to break or variants*
1. *broken, abandoned; the conditions of a contract not met (106.1)*
2. *broke, destroyed (174.4)*
3. *possibly the same meaning as #2, but possibly "brook," i.e. "accept, tolerate, enjoy," or even possibly "broker, use, take advantage of" (271.2, 274.1, 279.1)*
4. *"to broke": to break out of an ambush (301.1)*

✷**Bronde** (2: 202.2, 348.4) — *brand, i.e. sword. Onions, p. 114, suggests that the word comes from "brand" in the sense of a shining ember: a gleaming sword shone like a brand.*
Brought: see Brynge
✷**Browne** (2: 305.1, 393.4) — *brown*
✷**Brydge** (2: 135.1, 314.1) — *bridge*
✷**Bridle** (1: 136.3) — *bridle*
Brighte (1: 348.4 [**a** bright]), ✷**Bryght** (4: 131.4, 136.4, 202.2 [**a** bright], 350.1) — *bright (in the sense of shining, giving light, gleaming)*
Brought (8), ✷**Brynge** (8: 19.3 [**a** bringhe], 67.3 [**a** bringe], 78.4 [**a** bringe], 217.3, 253.4, 276.3, 360.2, 416.3), **Bryngest** (1: 178.2), **I-brought** (1: 238.1 [***FJC*** ibrought]) — *to bring, brought*
Bryngest: see Brynge
Bryre*: see* ***Brere***
✷**Buffet** (3: 400.1, 408.1, 425.1) — *buffet, i.e. blow, hit, punch*
✷**Bulle** (1: 136.2) — *bull*
Burneshed: see Burnyshed
Burneyshed: see Burnyshed

✷**Burnyshed** (1: 131.4 [**a** burneshed]), **Burneyshed** (1: 136.4 [**a** burnyssht]) — *to burnish, burnished*

Burnyshed: see Burnyssht

✷**Buske** (4: 56.3, 187.3, 287.1, 340.3) — to *prepare to travel, set out; in effect, pack up to leave. Usually implies moving rapidly; one might say "Get up and get moving!"*

✷**Busshement** (1: 301.1) —*ambush*

✷**But** (46) — *but*

Buteler: see Butler

Buteler (1: 160.1 [**a** boteler]), ✷**Butler** (1: 159.1 [**a** boteler]) — *butler*

✷**Buttery** (1: 159.3 [**a** botery]) — *buttery, food storehouse. Most often used of a wine cellar.*

✷**Buttes** (2: 284.3, 289.2) — *butts, i.e. archery targets*

✷**By** (66 [**a** *frequently* bi]) — *by*

Byd: see Bad

Bydde: see Bad

Byddeth: see Bad

✷**Byddynge** (1: 391.3) — *bidding, i.e. orders*

Bedene (1: 185.4 [**a** bydene]), ✷**Bydene** (1: 350.4 [**b** by dene]) — *together, at once, in a group. Can sometimes just be a meaningless interjection, but the phrase "al bedene," as in 184.4, is used, e.g. by Laurence Minot in "The Taking of Calais" 11, for "all together."*

✷**Bye** (1: 277.3) — *buy*

✷**Bygod** (1:74.4 [**a** for] — *By God*

✷**Bynde** (3: 12.4, 15.2, 257.2) — *to bind, tie up*

✷**Byrde** (1: 33.3), **Byrdes** (1: 445.4) — *bird*

✷**Bysshop** (1: 216.3) **Bysshoppes** (1: 15.1),— *bishop, bishops*

Bysshoppes: see Bysshop

Cal: see Call

✷**Call** (2: 113.2, 149.3 [**a** cal]) — *to call*

1. *to call out, label, declare someone to be (113.1)*
2. *to be called by name or given a name (149.3)*

✷**Calvere** (1: 57.2) — *Calvary, the name used in the Latin of Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33, John 19:17 to translate Golgotha, "the place of the skull," where Jesus was crucified. (The word does not occur in the Greek Bible, but the Catholic Church used the Latin Bible.) Although we have no knowledge of where it actually was, the presumed site was the subject of intense veneration by Christians. See note on Stanzas 56–57.*

Cam: see Come

Came: see Come

✷**Can** (7), **Canst** (2), [**b** cun *in* 242.3] — *can; also "began;" also "is capable of." Auxiliary verb, frequently to be translated by some word such as "do," "did." See also "Gan," with which it is often interchanged*

Canst: see Can

✷**Care** (2: 125.2, 280.2) — *care, worry, concern, burden*

✷**Carefull** (1: 28.2) — *careful*

✷**Case** (1: 356.1) — *situation*
✷**Cast** (2: 122.3, 248.4) — *to cast*
1. *verb: turned (to look): the monk turns his head to rest on his shoulder (122.3)*
2. *noun: a cast, throw, turn, specifically of casting of lots or dice, i.e. a gamble (248.4): The Virgin Mary doubles Robin's gamble on the Knight*

✷**Castell** (2: 309.1, 318.3) — *castle. For a typical castle of the period see the Sketch plan of a Motte and Bailey castle:.*
✷**Certayn** (1: 327.4 [**ap** certen]), **Certayne** (1: 54.2 [**a** certayn]),— *certain*
Certayne: see Certayn
Certen: see Certayn
✷**Chapell** (1: 440.1) — *chapel. Note that, in a medieval Catholic context, a chapel might well include a staff to maintain it.*
Charite: see Charyte
✷**Charter** (1: 361.1) — *a legal instrument by which the king awards a right or privilege. A typical use of a charter is to grant lands.*
✷**Charyte** (5: 192.2, 197.2, 201.2, 378.4, 394.2) [**a** charite *in all three instances where it exists*] — *charity*
1. *Saynte (holy) charity or similar (201.2, 378.2); see also "Tale of Gamelyn," lines 451, 513*

Charyte: see Charite
✷**Chaunce** (2: 18.4, 209.4) — *chance, something not expected*
1. Up chaunce (18.4, 209.4)*: by chance*

I-chaunged (i.e. ✷**Chaunged**) (1: 170.4) — *changed (in this case, of clothing: the cook will be given a new livery)*
✷**Chepe** (1: 259.3) — *deal, price, low price, a bargain. "Better chepe": a lower price. In the "Potter," 34.1, Robin selles "Pottys, gret chepe," and in 33.4 he "chepyd ffast of his ware."*
✷**Chere** (9) — *cheer (which often means something like "mood, feeling")*
✷**Cheve** (1: 349.2) — *achieve. To cheve is to bring about an end, i.e. "evyll mote thou cheve"= "may you meet an evil end."*
✷**Chorle** (2: 219.1, 227.1) — *churl, i.e. villein, the lowest class of society. These were expected to be uncultured, and were socially well below yeomen such as Robin and John, but the word probably does not carry quite so strong a sense as today.*
✷**Chyldren** (1: 50.3) — *children*
✷**Chyrches** (1: 378.1) — *churches*
✷**Clere** (1: 78.2 [***FJC*** clene]) — *probably "clear," but the text and meaning of this line is uncertain*
✷**Cleved** (1: 401.2) — *to cleave; cleaved/clove. To cut or split in two.*
✷**Closed** (1: 218.4) — *to close. Here, held within (understand as "closed up within" or similar)*
✷**Cloth** (3: 107.2, 418.1, 419.3) — *cloth*
✷**Clothe** (1: 420.3), **Clothed** (3: 133.4, 373.4, 422.1) — *to clothe*
Clothed: see clothe
✷**Clothes** (1: 316.1) — *(table)cloths*
Clothinge: see Clothynge

✷**Clothynge** (4: 44.4 [**a** clotynge], 70.2 [**a** clothinge], 125.3, 170.3) — *clothing*
Clotynge: see Clothynge
✷**Cofer** (1: 42.3), **Cofers** (2: 38.1 [**a** coffers], 243.1) — *coffer; perhaps also "strongbox"*
Cofers: see Cofer
Coffers: see Cofer
✷**Coke** (5: 163.3, 164.1, 167.2, 171.3, 179.3) — *cook. Cooks were surprisingly often the heroes in folktales.*
✷**Colde** (1: 89.3) — *cold*
✷**Cole** (2: 372.1, 421.1) — *cowl: a hooded, sleeved garment. It was standard apparel for monks, so it makes sense that the king wore one while disguised as a monk in 372.1, and cast it off when he gave up his disguise.*
Colour: see Coloure
✷**Coloure** (2: 72.1 [**a** colour], 185.2) — *color*
Com: see Come
Cam (3: 91.3, 259.2, 289.1), **Came** (22 [**a** cam in 129.4, 318.1, 335.1 [**e** cam in 445.1]), **Com** (3: 278.2, 314.2 [**ad** come], 384.3), ✷**Come** (21) — to *come, came*
Comitted: see Commytted
✷**Comly** (7), **Cumly** (1: 379.1) — *comely, attractive, handsome. Every use refers to the "comely King" (353.4, 365.1, 379.1, 388.1, 410.1, 430.3, 431,3, 432.3), a description also found in the "Monk," 84.1. For another usage of this phrase, see Laurence Minot's poem "Edward Oure Cumly King" in the appendix.*
✷**Commande** (1: 193.3), **Commaunded** (2: 195.1 [**a** commaundyd], 430.2) — *to command, commanded, ordered, required*
Commaunded: see Commande
Commaundyd: see Commande
✷**Commytted** (1: 437.3 [**e** committed, ***FJC*** compted]) — *to commit. Probably to be understood "counted," "reckoned," although this meaning is rare elsewhere; the usual sense of this verb (from Latin "committere") is "appointed," "commissoned": "I was committid and made a mayster-mon here" ("St. Erkenwald," line 201; Burrow/Turville-Petrie, p. 209). But the word is rare enough that it could easily have local meanings — indeed, the prints all spell it differently.*
Compani: see Company
✷**Company** (8 [**a** compani *in* 10:3, companye *in* 140.4) — *company, troop, group*
Companye: see company
Compted: see Commytted
✷**Comynge** (1: 121.3) — *coming, arrival*
✷**Confort** (1: 312.1) — *comfort*
✷**Consyence** (1: 90.3) — *conscience*
Contre: see countre
✷**Coresed** (1: 100.3) — *probably to build muscle or be of a good breed (of horses: the most physically strong and attractive), but the meaning is uncertain; it might refer to the horse's equipment, i.e. "be the best fitted-out"*

✷**Corser** (1: 256.1) — *probably courser, i.e. horse (almost certainly a high-quality horse), but other meanings such as "coffer" have been suggested. See the entry on "Courser."*

✷**Cost** (1: 74.4 [**a** costeth]) — *cost(s)*

Costeth: see Cost

✷**Cote** (1: 194.1) — *coat*

1. Cote of pye: pie-coloured coat, parti-coloured coat

✷**Coud** (3: 358.3, 385.3, 447.4), **Coude** (2: 182.3, 365.3), **Cowdest** (1: 170.1)— *could, often with the sense "was capable of, knew." The use in 182.3, "Lytell Johnn coude of curteyse," is perhaps slightly different. In "Havelok the Dane," line 194, we learn that Goldeboru was brought up until "she couthe of curtesye," i.e. was familiar with curtesy; given the frequency of confusion between d/ð(th), this is perhaps a reference to the same usage.*

Coude: see Coud

Counsel: see Counsell

✷**Counsell** (3: 45.2 [**a** counsel], 279.4, 453.1) — *wise, well-tested, i.e. a "counsel word" is a word guided by advice*

Contre: see Countre

✷**Countre** (6: 35.2 [**a** contre], 148.3, 318.2 [**a** contre], 355.1, 363.1, 365.4)**, Countree** (2: 135A.4, 326.4 [**ad** contre]) — *country, region, area, land*

Countree: see countre

Coursar: see courser

✷**Courser** (2: 76.1 [**a** coursar], 136.3) — *courser, fine horse. See also "corser." Horses in the Middle Ages were classified by purpose, such as "destrier," "courser," "palfrey," "sumpter." The "Gest" does not mention destriers (a heavy warhorse, with more weight than speed), but it mentions coursers, palfreys, and sumpters. A courser was a warhorse, but faster than a destrier. A palfrey ("palfray") was a riding horse, often ridden by a woman, or by a knight or squire when not expecting to fight. Sumpters ("somers") were baggage horses: slow but with (if possible) with good endurance.*

Although it wasn't a universal rule, working horses, especially destriers and coursers, were usually male. This was not because female horses could otherwise do the work; there is little gender difference in horses' capabilities. It was simply more cost-effective to risk the male horses and leave the females to create more horses. So, for instance, in The Canterbury Tales, *the only one of the pilgrims who was said to ride a mare was the ploughman, the poorest of them all, presumably because he had no other animal.*

✷**Courte** (3: 415.1, 416.1, 433.1) — *court, i.e. the King's court*

Courteysly: see Curteysly

Courteysy: see Curteyse

Courteysye: see Curteyse

✷**Covent** (2: 86.1, 373.4) — *gathering (of monks); compare convent, coven*

✷**Covered** (1: 427.4) — *to cover, covered*

Cowdest: see coud

✷**Cracke** (1: 158.4 [**a** crake]) — *to crack, so "crack thy crown" is to injure the head: lay a crack (blow) upon the head and perhaps fracture it*

✷**Craftely** (1: 454.4) — *with skill in the craft, i.e. skillfully, but also with covert intent, guilefully. There is probably some dramatic irony in its sole use in the "Gest": the final blood-letting that kills Robin. Robin wants to be skillfully treated; instead he is treated with guile.*

Crake: see Cracke

✷**Crave** (2: 36.4, 413.4) — to *crave, desire*

Criste: see Cryst(e)

✷**Crowne** (2: 158.4, 372.2) — *crown (in the "Gest," both uses refer to the crown of the head, not to royal regalia)*

✷**Crye** (2: 282.4, 319.1), **Cryed** (1: 296.1) — *to cry, cried*

1. *announce, as a town cryer would announce (284.2)*
2. *to draw attention to something — in this, case, Robin's presence at the Sheriff's archery contest (296.1)*
3. *to cry out, so as to be heard at a distance and with forceful effect (319.1)*

Cryed: see Crye

✷**Cryst** (3: 172.2 [**a** Criste], 183.2 [**a** Criste], 456.1), **Cryste** (1: 57.1 [so **c**; **a** Criste, **b** Cryst]) — *Christ. Observe the interesting fact that the name "Jesus" is never used in the "Gest"! (But also that Robin's piety is directed mostly to the Virgin Mary.)*

1. *In the phrase "Criste thee save" (177.2, 183.2)*

Cumly: see Comly

Cun: see Can

Curteys: see Curteyse

Curtesly: see Curteysly

Curteyes: see Curtes

Curteys: see Curtes

Courteysy (1: 385.3), ✷**Curteyse** (4: 2.3, 24.1 [**a** curteyes], 108.2, 226.3), **Curteys** (2: 121.3 [**a** curtes], 151.2. *N.B. this is the only one of these spellings that always means "courteous"*), **Curteysy** (2: 227.4 [**p** curtyse], 270.4), **Curteysye** (4: 115.4, 182.3 [**a** curteyse], 312.2 [**d** curteyse], 256.4) —*courteous* or *courtesy. This is a technical term for a certain sort of behavior; see the note on Stanza 2. Note that, in this farrago of different spellings, the word sometimes means "courteous" and sometimes "courtesy."*

1. Courteous: 2.3, 24.1, 121.3, 151.2 226.3
2. Courtesy: 108.2, 115.4, 182.3, 227.4, 256.4, 270.4, 312.2, 385.3

Courteysly (1: 444.3 [**e** curtely]), ✷**Curteysly** (4: 29.3 [**a** curtesly], 263.3, 295.3, 383.1) — *courteously*

Curteysy: see Curteyse

Curteysye: see Curteyse

✷**Cut** (1: 351.2) — to *cut, slice*

✷**Dame** (3: 127.3, 149.2, 240.4 [conjectural reading; **b** has "name"]) — *dame, lady. Sometimes also used of queens. Frequently used to describe mothers. Euridice is called "Dame Heurodis" in "Sir Orfeo," lines 63, 323 (Sisam, pp. 15, 23)=lines 36, 298 (Sands, pp. 188, 194). The wife of Piers Plowman is "Dame 'Worche-whan-tyme-is'" (Langland/*

Schmidt, p. 98, line 98; Sisam, p. 81, line 72). In line 298 of the Wakefield play of Noah, Noah calls his wife "my dame"; in line 324 (spelled "dam") it refers to a mother (Sisam, p. 195). Chaucer uses it both for ladies of rank and for mothers (Chaucer/Benson, p. 1234).
1. *of the Knight's wife (127.3)*
2. *of the mother of Little John in his role as Reynold Greenleaf (149.2)*
3. *of the Virgin Mary (240.4)*

✷**Dancastere** (1: 27.4 [so **ac**; **b** Dankastere]), **Dankestere** (1: 259.4), **Donkestere** (1: 455.1); also probably **Donkesly** (1: 452.2) — *Doncaster, town on the Great North Road just south of Barnsdale; the next town to the south is Blythe. The reading Donkesly in 452.2 should probably also refer to Doncaster. Sir Roger, who helped slay Robin, was of Doncaster. From Doncaster to York, by the roads of the time, is about 55 kilometers, or 35 miles. It was about 75 kilometers, or 45 miles, north of Nottingham by direct routes, although the route along Ermine Street made the path a third longer. See the Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest"*

Dankestere: see Dancastere

✷**Dare** (8) — *to dare, take a risk, decide upon. Cf. "Durst."*

✷**Day** (27), **Daye** (7), **Dayes** (3: 16.3, 315.3, 441.3) — *day, days*

Daye: see day

Dayes: see day

✷**Dede** (3: 57.1, 92.1, 453.3), **Dedys** (1: 320.2) — *deed, deeds, but also "dead" (for this cf. "Dethe")*
1. *"where Cryste was quycke and dede," i.e. "where Christ was dead and alive" (57.1)*
2. *dead (92.1)*
3. *deeds, acts (of the Knight's sheltering Robin) (320.2)*
4. *the deed of murdering Robin* (453.3)

✷**Dedely** (1 [**a** dydly]: 10.2) — *deadly, so deadly sin, i.e. presumably mortal sin, for which see 1 John 5:17-18, which say not to pray about mortal sin, because it is beyond help, but to pray for sins which are not mortal*

Dedys: see dede

✷**Delyver** (1: 405.3), **Delyvered** (1: 295.1) — *to deliver, delivered, in the sense of "to hand over. Both uses in the "Gest" refer to delivering an arrow to one who has won it in a contest*

Delyvered: see Delyver

✷**Demed** (1: 95.1) — *to deem, deemed, i.e. judged, condemned, reckoned against*

✷**Denere** (1: 231.2) — *dinner*

✷**Departed** (1: 382.2) — *to depart, departed, leave behind*

✷**Depe** (1: 305.3) — *deep*

✷**Dere** (27)
1. of deer, the animal: 32.4, 185.3, 357.4, 358.4, 366.3, 377.3, 388.3, 417.3, 446,4
2. dear so-and-so...
2A. The phrase "Our dear Lady," with variants, occurs in 9.3, 10.3, 65.3, 336.3
2B. The phrase "dear worthy God," with spelling variants, occurs in 36.3, 37.3, 66.1, 111.1, 219.3, 227.1, 250.1, 346.1

2C. The phrase "dear master" occurs in 177.1, 183.1, 187.3, 448.3
3. dearly, at a high price: "God that bought me dear" is in 92.2; the knight says the abbot will pay dearly for his land in 111.4

✷**Derne** (1: 21.2) — *hidden, secret, so a "derne street" is a concealed path. A little note for fans of J. R. R. Tolkien. Remember the name "Dernhelm," used by Éowyn in The Lord of the Rings? "Dernhelm" means "hidden helm" or, in effect, "disguised head." Éowyn gave everything away — if you know your Middle English.*

✷**Desceyved** (1: 290.4) —*to deceive, deceived*

✷**Det** (1: 94.3) — *debt*

✷**Deth** (2: 218.3, 219.4) — *death. Cf. "Dede."*

✷**Dettour** (1: 104.3) — *debtor*

✷**Devylkins** (1: 73.3 [**a** devylles]) — *Devil's, but with diminutive ending. I could find no other use of the word in Middle English poetry; I wonder if the diminutive was used to make the passage seem less blasphemous. At least one online dictionary claims that the word is sixteenth century, so this may be the earliest usage.*

Devylles: see Devylkins

Did: see Do

Dight: see Dyght

Dine: see Dyne

Dinere: see Dynere

Disgrate: see Dysgrate

✷**Do** (17 [**a** doo *in 5.4*), **Done** (6), **Doost** (2: 105.1, 219.3), **Dyd** (2), **Dyde** (17) — *to do, doest/dost, did, done. Functions both as an active verb, to perform an action (5.4: "It wold do you moch good") and as an auxiliary (10.3, "wolde he never do company harme" instead of "wolde he never harme a company"). Note that the use of do-auxiliary (a very peculiar feature of the English language rarely found in other languages) is less common in Middle than in Modern English, but it (ahem) does occur.*

✷**Donkesly** (1: 452.2) — *probable error for Doncaster. See Dancastere*

Donkestere: see Dancastere

✷**Donne** (2: 417.3, 446.4) — *dun, brown. Both uses are in the phrase "the dun deer," which is a commonplace in ballad literature — e.g. we see Johnny o' Braidesley going out to "ding the dun deer doon" in the ballad Johnie Cock [Child 114], a story which perhaps has some faint Robin Hood links.*

Done: see Do

✷**Doo** (1: 172.2 [**a** do]) — *doe. Not to be confused with the verb "Do," though the spellings are often confused in the prints.*

Doost: see Do

✷**Dore** (5: 29.4, 125.1, 159.4, 161.1, 225.1) — *door*
1. *As a part of the phrase "Lodge door," the place where Robin meets the Knight and the Monk (29.4, 225.1) (written "Lodgë-dore" by **FJC**). Is this the same as Robin's trystel-tree?*

✷**Double-Dyched** (1: 309.3) — *surrounded by a double ditch. A normal motte-and-bailey castle had a single ditch. so this represents an extra level of fortification*

✷**Doubled** (1: 248.4) — *doubled, i.e. "doubled your cast" means to pay back twice the amount bet.*

Doune: see Downe

Dout: see Doute

Dout (1: 10.2), ✷**Doute** (3: 207.1, 236.1, 406.4) — *fear ("to doubt" at this time meant something like "to believe, expect"; Robert Bruce in 1306 murdered a rival and declared "I doubt I have slain the Red Comyn," meaning, "I think I've killed the Red Comyn.")*

Down: see Downe

Doune (1: 263.1), ✷**Downe** (10) — *down*

Drank: see Drynke

Dranke: see Drynke

Drapar: see Draper

✷**Draper** (1: 73.3 [**a** drapar]) — *draper, i.e. merchant in cloth/clothing*

Draw: see Drawe

✷**Drawe** (2: 193.4, 314.1), **Drewe** (3: 167.1 [**a** drew], 347.2 [**a** drowe], 350.1)— *to draw, drew*

1. *draw a sword (167.1, 350.1) or arrow (347.2)*
2. *draw (off), withdraw, take off (in 193.4, Little John draws off the Sheriff's outer clothing)*
3. *draw (shut), i.e. close [a drawbridge] (314.1)*

✷**Drede** (5: 186.3, 206.3, 235.3, 428.2, 450.3) — *dread*

Dreri: see Drery

✷**Dreri** (1: 22.1 [**a** dreri]) — *dreary, woeful, sad, deeply concerned*

Drew: see Drawe

Drewe: see Drawe

Drinke: see Drynke

Dronken: see Drynke

Dronkyn: see Drynke

Drowe: see Draw

Dranke (2: 172.4 [**a** drank], 431.1), **Dronke** (1: 163.1 [**a** drank]), **Dronken** (1: 173.1 [**a** dronkyn]), ✷**Drynke** (9) — *to drink, drank, (173.1 "had dronken"="had drunk")*

✷**Dryve** (1: 300.2), **Dryved** (1: 350.4), **Dryveth** (1: 265.3) — *to drive, drives, drove*

1. *to be driven/impelled/forced to do something: the Knight is "driven" to Robin (265.3)*
2. *forced to flee, routed: the sheriff's men cannot drive Robin's (300.2); Robin's men can dryve the Sheriff's (350.4)*

Dryved: see Dryve

Dryveth: see Dryve

✷**Durst** (1: 186.3) — *probably "dared" (etymologically derived from the passive of þar, "to be necessary," according to Davis Et Al, p. 151, so it is just possible that it means "to be able", but regularly confused with "dar/daure/durre," dare); see the note on Stanza 186*

Dwel: see Dwell

Dwele: see Dwell

Dwel (1: 164.3), **Dwele** (1: 438.3), ✷**Dwell** (6), **Dwelled** (7), **Dwelleth** (1: 7.4) — *to dwell*

Dwelled: see Dwell
Dwelleth: see Dwell
✷**Dyche** (1: 342.3) — *ditch*
Dyd: see Do
Dyd: see Do
Dydly: see Dedely
✷**Dyed** (11 [**a** dyede in 147.2]) — *to die, died. It is interesting to note that every use of the verb refers to the crucifixion of Jesus (see note on Stanza 62).*
1. *him/God that died on (a) tree (62.4, 101.4, 110.2, 123.4, 147.2, 303.4, 307.2, 341.2)*
2. *him that died on rode (333.2, 340.4, 456.2)*

Dyede: see Dyed
✷**Dyght** (4: 19.4 [**a** dight], 131.2 [**a** y dyght; ***FJC*** ydyght], 320.2, 371.1), **I-dyght** (1: 392.1), **Ydyght** (1: 132.2 [**a** idyght]) — *to make ready, prepare, prepared; see also "dyghtande"*
1. dedes (that) be dyght (320.2): *the deeds that have been accomplished, hence "the deeds you accuse me of"*

✷**Dyghtande** (1: 388.4) — *prepared, made ready; cf. "Dyght"*
✷**Dyne** (9), **Dyned** (2: 27.3, 259.3) — *to dine, dined*
Dyned: see dyne
✷**Dyner** (10), **Dynere** (4: 16.4, 32.2, 34.3 [**a** dinere], 190.3) — *dinner*
Dynere: see Dyner
✷**Dysgrate** (1: 48.2 [**a** disgrate]) — *disgraced, deprived of his place*
✷**Dysheryte** (2: 87.4, 95.4) — *to be disinherited, deprived of his inheritance, i.e. will lose his lands*
✷**Eased** (1: 101.2) — *to ease, eased, relieved, made comfortable*
✷**Eche** (1: 213.4) — *each*
✷**Edwarde** (3: 353.4, 384.1, 450.3) — *Edward, i.e. Edward the King. This must be a reference to one of the first four Edwards: Edward I (reigned 1272-1307), Edward II (1307-1327), Edward III (1327-1377), or Edward IV (1461-1470 and 1471-1483). Various scholars have argued for each of the four, but* if *an actual king is intended, the events in the "Gest" best fit Edward II. Edward IV may have been the king when the "Gest" was first published, but the poem was probably written before his time. For their relations, see the genealogy of The Plantagenet Dynasty.*
✷**Eftsones** (1: 238.3) — *in your turn, in return, in due time, immediately*
✷**Eke** (3: 323.2, 366.2, 437.2) — *also*
✷**Elle** (1: 132.1) — *ell. A unit of length, the "cloth yard," equivalent to 45 inches or about 1.15 meters.*
✷**Elles** (5: 45.4 [**a** ellys], 46.1 [**a** ellys], 46.3 [**a** ellis], 117.3, 420.2) — *else*
Ellis: see Elles
Ellys: see Elles
✷**Ende** (1: 50.2) — *end, fate, doom*
✷**Enemye** (1: 319.3 [**d** enmye; **a** *has the plural* enemys) — *enemy*
Enemys: see Enemye

✷**Enfourme** (1: 395.3) — *to inform, tell, transmit information*
Englond: see Englonde
Englond (3), ✷**Englonde** (9) — *England*
✷**Ere** (1: 239.4) — *before*
✷**Erely** (1: 88.1) — *early*
✷**Erle** (1: 19.1) — *earl. Note that earl was the highest rank of the nobility until the reign of Edward III, when the rank of Duke was created, with the rank of Marquis added even later; also, all Dukes were originally royal, but later there were non-royal Dukes. So a mention of earls rather than dukes might be a dating hint. On the other hand, there were a lot more earls than dukes, so earls might be a more suitable target for robbery.*
✷**Est** (2: 20.3, 212.3) — *east. Both uses are in the context of the outlaws searching for a victim.*
✷**Ete** (8) — *to eat*
✷**Even** (2: 42.4, 120.4) — *even, here used in the sense "exactly"*
✷**Ever** (20) — *ever*
Everichone: see Everychone
Evermore (used in 294.3 by ***FJC***; **b** ever more) —*always, above all*
✷**Every** (12) — *every*
✷**Everych** (2: 230.1, 371.3) — *every one. Compare everychone.*
✷**Everychone** (2: 98.4 [**b** ever ychone *(sic.)*], 174.4 [**a** everichone, **b** every chone *(sic.)*]) — *every one. Compare Everych*
Evyl: see Evyll
Evyl (1: 296.4), ✷**Evyll** (4: 220.1, 349.2, 429.3, 452.4) — *evil*
✷**Ewe** (1: 215.2) — *yew, the preferred material for longbows. The best yew was Spanish, and had to be imported; acquiring wood for the bows of Robin's men may not have been a trivial task.*
✷**Eyen** (5: 23.1 [**a** iyn], 28.3 [**a** iyen], 58.1 [**a** iyen], 359.4, 370.4) — *eyes (singular usually "ee"). Compare Scots "een."*
✷**Eyght** (1: 247.4) — *eight*
✷**Eyghtene-and-two** (1: 68.4 [**a** .xxviij.; **b** eyghtene]) — *twenty. Conjectural reading; **FJC**, based on **a**, has "eight and twenty." The line is almost certainly corrupt.*
✷**Eyre** (2: 52.2 [**a** ayre], 119.3 [**a** heyre]) — *heir. Specifically the future owner of one's property, since in 52.2 it refers to the knight's son (who, even if disinherited, would probably retain any titles the knight holds) but in 119.3 refers to whoever gets the knight's lands.*
✷**Face** (1: 410.2) — *face*
✷**Fader** (1: 9.1) — *father. Used specifically and solely of God the Father; there are no references to human fatherhood in the "Gest." (The knight is a father, but the word is not used of him.)*
Faileth: see Fayleth
Fal: see Fall

✸**Fall** (2: 56.2, 69.2 [**a** fal]), **Falleth** (1: 406.1), **Fell** (3: 28.4, 58.1, 400.3) — *to fall, and related senses:*
1. *fall, fell; to lose balance* (28.4, 58.1)
2. *befall, become, come about* (56.2)
3. *lose one's place* (69.2)
4. *to be permitted, achieve a state, find one's self in a situation* (400.3, 406.1)

✸**False** (3: 113.3, 114.3, 455.4) — *false in the sense of traitorous, not true to one's calling, violating fair play*
1. *false knight (113.3, 114.3)*
2. *false play, i.e. deceptive actions (455.4)*

Falleth: see Fall

✸**Fare** (2: 280.4, 403.2) —
1. *to fare, live, experience (verb) (280.4)*
2. *success, hopes (probably a noun) (403.2)*
3. *fare, food (noun): in* **a***'s text of 122.2, but not in this edition of the text*

Farewel: see Farewell

✸**Farewell** (2: 57.3 [in **a** *in the form* fare welfrende; ***FJC*** farewel], 58.3 [**a** farewell]) — *farewell*

✸**Fast** (8)
1. *directly, with intensity (122.4, 430.1?)*
2. *firmly (closed, bound) (159.4, 337.3)*
3. *quickly, rapidly (174.2, 318.1?, 346.2)*
4. *well done, properly done? (388.4)*

Fastinge: see Fastynge

✸**Fastynge** (6: 25.3, 30.3, 143.3, 156.1, 157.2, 220.4 [**a** fastinge *in* 25.3, 30.3, 143.3, 156.1, 157.2]) — *fasting, abstaining from food*

✸**Fat-Heded** (1: 91.3) — *big-headed. Are we perhaps to understand that the monk involved (the high cellarer of St. Mary's) is fat, and hence perhaps not living an ascetic life?*

✸**Fatte** (1: 393.2) — *fat*

Faught: see Fought

✸**Fay** (2: 137.2, 362.2), **Fayth** (1: 287.3) — *faith, fidelity*
1. *in (good) fay (137.2) — interjection*
2. *of testing the sheriff's faith, to see if he will hold to his promise (287.3)*
3. *true in his fay (362.2) — of a knight who was faithful*

✸**Fayle** (2: 278.1, 278.3), **Fayled** (5), **Fayleth** (1: 398.3), **Faylyed** (1: 357.4) — *to fail, fall short, lack*

Fayled: see Fayle

Fayleth: see Fayle

Faylyed: see Fayle

Fayn: see Fayne

Fayn (1: 187.2 [**a** fayne]), ✸**Fayne** (4: 205.2, 343.2, 345.4, 430.4) — *fain, would/will be happy to*

Fayr: see Fayre

✷**Fayre** (19 [**ap** fayr in 334.2]), **Feyre** (1: 52.4 [**a** fayre]) — *fair, attractive, noticeable, with skill/ability, openly; also:*
1. *fair, beautiful (334.2)*
2. *attractive, well-said (31.2)*
3. *obediently? (449.1)*

✷**Fayrest** (1: 184.3) — *fairest, most attractive*

Fayth: see Fay

Fe: see fee

✷**Feders** (1: 285.3) — *feathers*

✷**Fedred** (1: 288.2), **I-fedred** (1: 275.2 [**b** I fedred, ***FJC*** ifedred) — *feathered*

Fe (1: 433.4), ✷**Fee** (4: 107.2, 140.2 [conjectural reading], 150.4, 171.2 [**a** fe]) — *fee, payment for service*
1. *a payment for one's service: 20 marks in 150.4, 171.2; cf. 433.4, referring to the fees of Robin's men*
2. *in fee (107.2, 140.2): to be in the employment of someone, or to be an ally in return for payment: the justice is has been paid a fee by the monk in 107.2*

✷**Felaushyp** (1: 229.2) — *fellowship, that is, the state of being fellows. Robin considers being a good fellow, that is, being part of his fellowship, very important in deciding who to help and who to rob.*

✷**Felawe** (1: 14.4), **Felowes** (1: 171.4) — *fellow. The word has a very wide range of meanings in this period; see the note on Stanza 14. Fellowship seems to be very important to Robin.*

✷**Felde** (2: 52.4, 427.4) — *field*
1. *in the field, as a place of work or battle* (52.4)

Fell: see Fall

Felowes: see Felawe

✷**Fende** (1: 106.4) — *to defend. "fend me of": defend me from*

✷**Fenne** (1: 352.4) — *fen*

Fer: see Ferre

✷**Fere** (4: 27.2 [so **ac**; **b** three], 61.2 [so **a**; **b** also], 231.4, 423.3) — *company*
1. *"in fere" = together, in company. (27.2, 61.2, 231.4, 423.3). The phrase "in fere" also occurs in 38.2 and 53.3 in the "Monk."*

✷**Ferre** (9 [**a** fer in 16:3) — *far*

✷**Ferther** (1: 219.2) — *farther*

✷**Fessauntes** (1: 33.1) — *pheasants. These were one of the most important game birds of the period.*

✷**Fet** (1: 145.3) — *to fetch, fetched. See also "Fette."*

Fete: see Fote

✷**Fette** (1: 172.1) — *to fetch, fetched. See also "Fet."*

Feyre: see Fayre

✷**Fifty** (2: 216.1, 224.1) — *fifty*

Fine: see Fyne

✸**Fle** (2: 167.3, 429.1), **Fled** (1: 300.4), **Flee** (1: 331.4 [**p** flye]) — *to flee*
Fled: see Fle
Flee: see Fle
✸**Flore** (1: 159.2) — *floor*
✸**Folde** (1: 407.4) — *to fold, folded: the king folded up his sleeve to strike a blow.*
✸**Fole** (1: 420.2) — *fool*
✸**Folowed** (2: 140.2, 374.2) — *to follow, followed*
✸**Foly** (1: 51.3) — *folly*
Fonde: see Founde
✸**Fone** (1: 106.4) — *plural of "foe," so foes, enemies: "Fend me from my fone": "defend me from my enemies"*
Footes: see Fotes
✸**For** (119) — *for*
For ay: see ay
✸**Forbede** (1: 307.1) — *to forbid*
✸**Force** (1: 227.3)**, Fors** (1: 13.1 [**a** "noforce"]), **Forse** (1: 45.3 [**a** force]) — *force, significance*
1. *"Thereof no force," i.e. "that has no power," so "it doesn't matter (13.3, 227.3)*
2. *"Made a knight of force": referring to distraint of knighthood — that is, of forcing someone with enough property to assume the duties of a knight. (45.3)*

✸**Forest** (6), **Foreste** (2: 329.1 [**a** forest], 377.1) — *forest*
Foreste: see Forest
Forget: see Forgete
✸**Forgete** (1: 175.4 [**a** forget]) — *to forget, leave behind. Cf. "Foryete."*
✸**Forgyve** (1: 200.4) — *to forgive*
Foriete: see Foryete
✸**Formost** (1: 218.3) — *foremost*
Fors: see Force
✸**Forsaketh** (1: 341.1) — *to forsake, forsakes. In this case, refuses to take up or ignores a task (referring to the task of rescuing the Knight)*
Forse: see Force
✸**Forsoth** (2: 52.1 [**c** forsothe], 375.4 [**b** for soth]) — *forsooth, i.e. an interjection declaring the truth of the statement. See also "Soth."*
1. *"Forsoth as I you say," i.e. "I tell you the truth" or "I tell you sooth" (375.4)*
2. seemingly as an interjection (52.1)

✸**Forth** (10), **Forthe** (7) [in **a**, often "Furth"] — *forth, usually in the sense of "go forth."*
Forthe: see Forth
✸**Forther** (1: 258.4) — *farther, away from here*
✸**Forty** (3: 379.4, 381.1, 382.1) — *forty*
✸**Foryete** (1: 155.4 [**a** foriete]) — *to forget, forgotten. Cf. "Forgete."*
✸**Fostere** (1: 367.1) — *forester (which often seems to have been pronounced "foster" in Middle English)*

Fete (1: 348.2), ✸**Fote** (6: 22.3, 161.1, 188.2, 253.4, 332.4 [**a** fote], 346.2), **Fotes** (1: 73.2 [**a** footes]) — *foot, feet*
1. *referring to the body part (22.3, 161.1)*
2. *of foote (188.2), on foote (346.2): running/moving on foot rather than on horseback (188.2)*
3. *foot as a measure of distance: 12 inches, or one third of a yard, or .305 meters (73.2)*
4. *under foot: under control, in subjection (253.4)*
5. *bound foot and hand/hand and foot (332.4)*
6. *on his feet, i.e. standing upright (346.2)*

Fotes: see Fote

✸**Fought** (1:168.1 [**a** faught]) — *fought*

✸**Foules** (1: 33.2) — *foul, birds*

✸**Founde** (6: 42.3 [**a** fonde], 66.3 [**a** fonde], 249.4 [**p** fonde], 250.3 [**p** found], 262.3, 335.3 [**a** fonde]), **Y-founde** (1: 2.4 [**a** founde]) — *to find, found. N.B.* ***a*** *and* ***epq*** *never use* **b***'s spelling* found*e in places where they exist.*

Four: see Foure

✸**Foure** (14: 49.3, 55.3, 67.3, 68.3, 85.2, 86.4, 92.4, 109.3, 120.4, 130.3, 270.1, 276.3, 277.1, 279.1) — *four. However, every use in the "Gest" is a reference to the £400 that is involved in the transactions between the Knight, the Monk, and Robin; there are no references in the "Gest" to the number four (4). In several instances, we see the roman numeral shorthand .cccc. instead of "four hundred" — e.g.* ***a*** *in 120.4, 130.3;* ***b*** *in 279.1. (In addition, f often has something like ".iiii.hundred," but that of course is not original.) It is likely that the archetype had .cccc. more often than the copies, each of which sometimes converted it to words.*

Fourteenyght: see Fourtynyght

✸**Fourth** (1: 291.1) — *fourth*

✸**Fourtynyght** (2: 325.2 [**a** fourteenyght, **dq** fourtenyght], 380.2) — *fourteen nights, fortnight, two weeks*

✸**Fre** (10: 25.2, 31.2, 87.2, 265.2, 274.2, 275.2, 288.2. 293.2, 334.2 [**adp** free], 338.2), **Free** (1: 109.4, [140.2 ***FJC*** *cj.*]) — *free*

✸**Frebore** (1: 1.2) — *free-born, a description referring especially to yeomen but also the nobility and gentry*

Free: see Fre

✸**Frembde** (1: 138.3) — *meaning uncertain; perhaps a form of "fremmed/fremede/fremde" "not akin," "unrelated," "foreign," "stranger," so "not related to anyone there," "without an ally"? Or perhaps the line is corrupt*

✸**Frende** (9), **Frendes** (3: 59.1, 62.1, 403.2) — *friend, friends*

✸**Frere** (3: 119.4, 198.2, 408.4) — *friar*

✸**Frese** (1: 215.2) — *to freeze? stay still? hold firm? meaning uncertain; text perhaps corrupt; see note on Stanza 215*

✸**Fro** (5: 60.1, 97.4, 166.3, 178.3, 443.4) — *from, away from*

Ful: see Full

✷**Full** (64 [**a** ful in 49.4, 167.1, etc.]) — *full*
1. *Usually as intensifier, equivalent to modern "very" (which does not occur in the "Gest"): "full sone" (21.4), "full curteyse" (24.1), "full curteysley" (29.3), full good, etc.*

Fured: see Furred

✷**Furred** (1: 194.2 [**a** fured]) — *furred*

Furth: see Forth

✷**Furthest** (1: 284.2) — *farthest*

✷**Fyfty** (2: 228.3, 397.3) — *fifty*
1. *Referring to the 52 guards of the High Cellarer (228.3)*

Fyl: see Fyll

✷**Fyll** (4: 44.1, 61.3 [**a** fyl]. 234.3, 251.1) — *to fill. All four uses are in the phrase "Fyll of the best wyne," meant as a way to encourage someone or celebrate something.*

✷**Fynde** (6) — *to find*

✷**Fyne** (3: 161.2, 194.2 [**a** fine], 393.4, 399.2) — *fine*
1. *in the phrase "wel(l) and fine" (161.2)*

✷**Fyngers** (1: 403.4) — *fingers*

✷**Fynly** (1: 284.3) — *fine, goodly, well-made*

✷**Fyrst** (1: 103.3) — *first*

✷**Fyve** (4: 142.1, 181.3, 368.1, 371.2) — *five*

✷**Gadred** (1: 448.1) — *to gather, gathered*

✷**Game** (4: 82.2, 136.1, 283.4, 426.2) — *game, contest*

✷**Gan** (21) — *began, came about, took place, can; auxiliary verb. See also "can," with which it is often interchanged. The root is "gynne," related to "begin."*

✷**Gange** (1: 397.2) — *to go. Compare Scots "gang."*

✷**Garlonde** (4: 398.1, 398.3, 402.3, 403.3) — *garland.*
1. *A rose garland, or wreath, used as a target. In 398.1, 398.3, the references is explicitly to a "rose garlonde"; in 402.4, 403.3, the word "rose" is not used, but it's the same garland.*

✷**Garment** (1: 421.2) — *garment*

✷**Gate** (3: 96.4, 126.3, 152.1), **Gates** (2: 98.2, 314.1) — *gate, gates*

Gates: see Gate

Gave: see Gyve

Gentil: see Gentyll

Gentill: see Gentyll

Gentilmen: see Gentylmen

Gentyl: see Gentyll

Gentil (1: 282.1), **Gentill** (1: 75.2 [**a** only; not in **b**]), ✷**Gentyll** (22 [**a** gentyl in 28.1]) — *gentle, i.e. of the gentry (or higher rank). Interestingly, the word is used of Robin, a yeoman, in 75.2, etc. Cf. "Gentyllman."*

✷**Gentyllman** (1: 99.3), **Gentyllmen** (2: 1.1 [**a** gentilmen], 317.1), **Gentyllmen** (1: 144.1 [**a** gentilmen) — *gentleman, gentlemen, i.e. those of the gentry or higher, although the implication of the "Gest" is that the term can be used of yeomen — as indeed came to be true*

over time, when "gentleman" often came to refer to those who had the manners of the upper classes, and perhaps the money, though not the landed estates.

Gentylmen: see Gentilmen

✷**Gest** (5: 6.4, 16.3, 18.3, 209.3, 297.2) — *guest. This is the only meaning found in the text of the "Gest" (which may, after all, not have had that title when written). In the title as transmitted, it is not certain whether "Gest" means "Jest" or "Geste" (song of deeds) or perhaps, as in the poem itself, "Guest." All are possible — after all, the poem is mostly driven by the guests Robin takes in: the Knight, the Cellarer, the Sheriff, and King Edward. For what it's worth, Paul Strohm think that "Chaucer, for example, frequently uses the term [geste] to refer to subjects from antiquity. In general, however,* geste *might be classed with* spelle *as informative, but more inclusive than terms which we ordinarily regard as [defining a genre]" (Strohm, p. 354). Davis Et Al, pp. 65-66, however, note two places where Chaucer uses "gest" for a guest. Chaucer also used "ge(e)ste" for tales, and once as a verb, "to tell a tale." He did not use it for "jest." According to Onions, p. 494, the sense of "idle tale" is attested from the fifteenth century, "joke" from the sixteenth. Thus if the title means "jest" rather than "geste," it strongly hints at a late date.*

Get: see Gete

Get (3: 110.3, 175.2, 426.3), ✷**Gete** (6: 118.4, 130.3 [**b** got], 151.3, 353.3, 368.4, 434,4), **Getest** (3: 64.4, 106.2, 110.4) — *to get, acquire*

Getest: see Gete

Gilt: see Gylte

Give: see Gyve

✷**Glad** (4: 192.1, 197.1 [**a** glade] 215.1, 431.1) — *glad*

1. *in the phrase "make glad cheer": 192.1, 197.1, 215.1*

✷**Gladdynge** (1: 297.2) — *gladdening, making glad, meeting the needs of. In the Wakefield play of Noah, Noah prays "That he wold send anone oure fowles som fee / to glad us" (lines 490-491; Sisam, p. 201; the idea is that the birds Noah sends out of the ark to seek land after the flood would bring good news).*

Glade: see Glad

✷**Gladly** (3: 34.1, 103.1, 232.1) — *gladly*

✷**Gloves** (1: 137.1) — *gloves*

✷**Glyde** (1: 299.2) — *to glide, fly*

✷**Go** (12), **Goo** (3: 67.2 [**a** go], 429.3, 450.4), **Goynge** (1: 253.1), Went (19), **Wente** (3: 20.1, 68.1, 126.1) — *to go; went; to travel, move. Cf. "Gone," which is both verb and adjective.*

✷**God** (67) — *God. Very often used in oaths, e.g. "By God that dyed on tree."*

✷**Goddes** (1: 391.2) — *God's*

Gode: see Good

Godes: see Goodes

Gold: see Golde

Gold (1: 378.2), ✷**Golde** (7) — *gold*

✷**Gone** (17) — *gone, both as verb and as adjective. Cf. "Go."*

Goo: see Go

✷**Good** (99; in almost all instances where they exist — about 40 times in all — **a** and **epq** spell "gode"; in 31.3, 144.4, 338.1, 347.1, **a** spells "goode") — *good*

Goode: see Good

✷**Goodes** (1: 53.4 [**a** godes]) — *goods, property, particularly movable property*

✷**Goodnesse** (1: 412.3) — *goodness*

✷**Goost** (1: 9.2 [**a** gost]) — *ghost, spirit; the only reference in the "Gest" is to the Holy Spirit*

Gost: see Goost

Goynge** (i.e. "going"): **see Go

✷**Grace** (2: 353.3, 412.3) — *grace, mercy, (unearned) forgiveness*

Gramarcy: see Gramercy

✷**Gramercy** (5: 34.2 [**a** gramarcy], 36.1 [**a** gramarcy], 232.2, 383.4, 444.1) — *a term of thanks, with perhaps an element of surprise, from a French root meaning "great mercy/thanks."*

✷**Graunte** (4: 27.1, 280.4, 336.4, 439.4), **Graunted** (1: 192.4) — *to grant, granted. Of giving a gift or privilege, but generally with the sense of something given by a superior to an inferior. Thus the Knight, a social superior, grants to travel with the yeomen who accost him. It is one of the ironies of the "Gest" that the social superiors (the Knight, the Abbot, the Sheriff, the King) tend to receive gifts of the yeomen Robin and John rather than the reverse.*

Graunted: see Graunte

Gray: see Graye

Gray (1: 76.1), ✷**Graye** (2: 373.4, 422.2) — *gray*

Great: see Grete

Greate: see Grete

✷**Gredy** (1: 36.3) — *greedy*

✷**Gree** (1: 108.4) — *payment, something due; properly, a favor or good will. Make the gree: to come up with what is owed.*

✷**Grefe** (1: 268.1) — *grief*

✷**Grene** (44) — *green*

1. *Green, as the color in general (27)*
2. *Grene Wode/Greenwood/Green Wood (13), generally in the form "Green Wood"; often "Grene-wode" or such in the other editions)*
3. *Of the green clothing worn by Robin's men: (4: 418.1 green cloth; 421.2 green garment; 422.1 the king's men "clothed in Lyncolne grene"; 427.3 the company is in "mantels of grene")*

Grene-Wode: see Grene (2)

Grenelef: see Grenelefe

✷**Grenelefe** (4: 149.3 [**a** Grenelef], 150.1, 157.1, 183.3, 189.3) — *Greenleaf, personal name adopted by Little John while in the sheriff's service.*

✷**Grete** (28 [**a** greate in 51.3, 80.1, 81.4, 147.1; great in 59.4)

1. *to greet (251.2, 260.1); cf. "Greteth."*
2. *great (all other instances)*

✷**Greteth** (2: 179.1 [**a** gretith], 384.1) — *to greet. Cf. "Grete" (1)*

Gretith: see Greteth
✷**Greve** (1: 406.4) , **Greveth** (1: 69.2)— *to grieve*
Greveth: see Greve
✷**Grome** (2: 4.4, 224.3)
1. *groom (noun, for one who cares for horses or the like) (224.3)*
2. *meaning uncertain in 4.4; see note on Stanza 4*

✷**Grounde** (6: 2.2, 42.2, 86.2, 223.4, 347.4, 408.2) — *ground*
✷**Gylberte** (3: 292.3, 401.3, 404.1) — *personal name, Gilbert (of the White Hand). He does not seem to be part of Robin's band at the beginning (in the sections about Robin and the Knight), but is one of the more important outlaws in the archery contest sections.*
✷**Gylte** (2: 78.2 [**a** gilt], 277.4)
1. *gilded, covered in gold (78.2)*
2. *verb, to gild (277.4)*

✷**Gyrde** (1: 211.3) — *to gird/to be girt with, to encircle, put on, wear. Girding is often something done in recognition of a social obligation (as a knight is girded with silver spurs), but note that the only instance in the "Gest" refers to Little John girding* himself *with a sword.*
Gave (7), ✷**Gyve** (17 [**a** give in 75.3; **f** often has geve]) — *to give, gave, given*
Had: see Have
Haddest: see Have
Hade: see Have
Hadst: see Have
Haest: see Have
✷**Hal** (1: 114.2) — *hall*
Half: see Halfe
✷**Halfe** (3: 42.4, 365.1, 381.4), **Half** (1: 211.2) — *half*
✷**Halfendell** (1: 382.3) — *"half (of the total)", or possibly "one of the two sides of the pile" ("halfe" often means "side"); the word is rare. "Gamelyn," line 272, reports Gamelyn saying "I have nought yete halvendele sold my ware" after winning a wrestling contest, but it's not clear exactly what it means there, either.*
✷**Halke** (1: 366.2) — *probabl)y "hiding place," but the word is rare*
✷**Hall** (2: 102.2, 113.4) — *hall*
Hame: see Home
Hand: see Honde
Hande: see Honde
✷**Handfull** (1: 73.1) — *handful*
✷**Hanged** (1: 92.1) —*to hang, hung, executed by hanging. Cf. "Hangynge."*
✷**Hangynge** (1: 23.1 [**a** hanged]) — *hanging, in the sense of dangling, not in the sense of execution: used of the Knight's hood dangling in his eyes. Cf. "Hanged." Is it significant that* **b** *uses one word for execution by hanging, another for simply dangling down? It is not clear.*
✷**Happed** (1: 181.4) — *to happen, happened, came about, i.e "Hym happed all his will"="all his desire came to pass"*

Harde: see Herde
✱**Harder** (1: 198.1) — *harder, i.e. stricter*
✱**Hardy** (1: 166.1) — *hardy, strong, having good endurance*
Harken: see Herken
✱**Harme** (4: 10.3, 13.3, 139.3, 168.3) — *to harm*
1. *active verb: to do harm (with the auxiliary verb do) (10.3, 13.3, 168.3)*
2. *passive verb: to have harm, i.e. suffer harm (139.3)*

✱**Harnes** (1: 277.3) — *harness*
Harnessed: see Harnyssed
✱**Harnyssed** (1: 133.2 [**a**[vid] ***FJC*** harnessed]) — *harnessed*
✱**Hart** (2: 185.4 [**a** harte], 188.4 [**a** herte]), **Harte** (1: 447.1 [**e** herte]) — *hart, i.e. male deer, especially red deer, especially an older, stronger animal. A hart was generally the animal most wanted by hunters. Pursuing or shooting a hart sometimes marked an adventure; see the note on Stanza 447*
Harte: see Hart
Hast: see Have
Haste: see Have
✱**Hasted** (1: 371.4) — *to hasten, hastened*
Hastely: see Hastly
Hastely (2: 56.3, 376.2), ✱**Hastly** (3: 371.1, 392.1, 429.1) — *hastily (but with the sense "quickly, efficiently," not "with excessive speed")*
✱**Hat** (1: 372.2), Hattes (1:220.3) — *hat, hat's*
Hath: see Have
Hattes: see Hat
✱**Haukes** (1: 331.4) — *hawks*
✱**Haukynge** (1: 331.3) — *hawking*
Had (41 [***FJC*** hade in 52.1]), **Haddest** (1: 105.2), **Hadst** (1: 121.3 [*cj.*; **a** had, **b** haddest), **Haest** (1: 35.4), **Hast** (14), **Haste** (1: 418.1), **Hath** (13), ✱**Have** (76) — to *have, has, had. Both a verb indicating possession and, as in modern English, an auxiliary verb; most of the uses are the latter.*
✱**He** (207), **Him** (1: 262.1), **His** (135), **Hym** (85), **Hys** (2: 58.1 [**c** his], 451.4) — *he, him, his. (N.B. although* **a** *usually uses "his," it is more likely than* **b** *to use "hys," e.g. in 42.1, 43.2, 58.2.) Cf. "Hem."*
✱**Hede** (12), **Hedes** (1: 131.4 [**a** hedys])
1. *to heed: 60.3*
2. *head (of a person): 122.3, 200.3, 220.1, 290.2, 305.2, 348.3, 360.1, 364.1, 369.4, 400.1*
3. *(arrow) head (131.4, 285.3)*

Hedes: see Hede
✱**Hedge** (1: 342.3) — *hedge*
Hedys: see Hede
✱**Helpe** (6), **Helpeth** (1: 269.3), **Holpe** (3: 128.2, 268A.3, 280.1) — *to help, helps, helped*
Helpeth: see Helpe

✷**Hem** (1: 323.1 [**a** him, **dq** hym) — *him? them? In Chaucer, "hem" consistently means "them"; similarly in "Piers Plowman." By the fifteenth century, usage was changing, and the word is not elsewhere used in the "Gest." Is this a residual reading of* **b***'s that was not corrected when the text was modernized, or is it an error for "him" or "them"? We can't tell.*

✷**Hende** (2: 25.2, 251.2)

1. *probably gracious, courteous, noble; possibly close, nearby (25.2)*
2. *gracious, courteous, noble, fair (251.2)*

✷**Hens** (1: 395.2) — *hence*

✷**Hepe** (1: 204.4) — *possibly "heap, pile"; perhaps "hip," as in "rose hip." The word can also mean "great quantity, multitude, host." See the note on Stanza 204.*

Her: see She

Herd: see Herde

Herd (1: 221.4), ✷**Herde** (6: 26.4, 185.3, 239.4, 286.1, 334.1 [**a** harde], 445.3)

1. *heard, of a sound one hears (26.4, 239.4, 286.1, 334.1, 445.3)*
2. *herd (of deer): 185.3. Cf. "herdes"*

✷**Herdes** (1: 358.2) — *herds. Cf. "herde" (2)*

✷**Here** (28) — *Cf. "She," including the forms. her/hir*

1. *here: 7.4, 35.2, 47.3, 54.3, 61.4, 100.3, 105.4, 121.1, 144.2, 179.2, 188.4, 198.4 [**a** her], 200.1, 217.2, 233.2, 270.1, 270.3, 273.4, 277.1, 313.4, 319.3, 320.2, 391.1, 446.1. See also "her" (1)*
2. *hear: 8.4, 144.4, 345.4, 365.4.*

Harken (1: 255.2), ✷**Herken** (2: 282.2, 317.2 [**a** herkyn]) — *to hearken, i.e. hear and pay attention*

Herkyn: see Herken

Herte: see Harte

✷**Hertes** (1: 215.3) — *hearts*

✷**Heven** (2: 48.3, 280.3) — *heaven*

Heygh: see Hye

Heyre: see Eyre

Him: see He

Hir: see She

His: see He

Hit: see Hyt

✷**Hode** (51), **Hodes** (1: 449.1), **Hoode** (1: 351.2)

1. *Robin Hood.*
2. *of hoods other than Robin's: 23.1, 29.3, 226.1, 226.4, 263.3, 351.2, 364.2, 449.1. Note that the sole use of "hoode"is one of these — the knight was apparently bound in a "hoode"*

Hodes: see Hode

✷**Holde** (12) — *to hold, i.e. both to grasp in one's hand and to hold still/stop/stay still*

✷**Holdernesse** (1: 149.1) — *Holderness, town in Yorkshire, on the north side of the Humber, which Little John in his disguise as Reynold Greenleaf claims was his home. See the Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest"*

✷**Hole** (1: 328.1) — *healed (also perhaps to imply "made whole")*
Holpe: see Helpe
✷**Holy** (2: 9.2, 94.3)
1. *holy, referring to the Holy Ghost/Spiri (9.2)*
2. *wholly (94.3)*
Hame (2: 149.4 [**a** home), 190.4 [**a** home]), ✷**Home** (10) — *home*
Hand (1: 351.3)**, Hande** (5: 17.1 [**a** honde], 208.1, 292.4, 332.4 [**b** honde], 401.4)**,** ✷**Honde** (10), **Hondes** (1: 363.4) — *hand, hands*
1. *Of Gylberte of the White Hand (292.3, 401.4)*
Hondes: see Honde
✷**Hondred** (22 [**a** hundered in 67.3] [**a** hundreth in 140.2])**, Hondreth** (5: 49.3 [**a** hundred, **c** hondred], 130.3, 133.1, 160.3, 247.4 [so **p**; **b** *omits*]), **Houndred** (1: 68.3 [**a** hundred]), **Hundred** (1: 47.3 [so **a**; **b** uses .C.) — *hundred. N.B. Spelling of numbers may be editorial, as the prints often use Roman numerals.* fg *often spell "hundreth"*
Hondrede: see Hondred
✷**Honger** (1: 89.3) — *hunger*
Hontynge: see Huntynge
Hoode: see Hode
✷**Hore** (1: 176.4) — *hoar, i.e. ancient, majestic, hoary. See note on Stanza 176*
✷**Horne** (6: 182.2, 229.1, 358.4, 389.1, 447.2, 447.4), **Hornes** (1: 296.2)
1. *an animal's horn or antlers: 358.4*
2. *a horn used for making horn calls:*
2A. *Robin Hood's horn: 229.1, 389.1, 447.2, 447.4*
2B. *the Sheriff's horn: 182.2, 296.2*
Hornes: see Horne
✷**Hors** (8) — *horse*
✷**Hosen** (1: 193.4) — *hose (clothing for the pelvis and legs)*
✷**Hounde** (1: 182.2 [**a** houndes]) — *hounds*
Houndes: see Hound
Houndred: see Hondred
✷**Houre** (1: 168.4 [**a** owre])**, Houres** (2: 30.4 [**a** ouris, **c** oures], 143.4), **Oures** (1: 25.4) — *hour, hours*
Houres: see Houre
✷**Hous** (1: 164.3 [so **a**; **b** householde], 174.1 [for "tresure hous" **a** reads treasourehows; ***FJC*** treasoure-hows]) — *house*
✷**Housbonde** (1: 13.3 [**a** husbonde]) — *husbandman, hence farmer, agricultural worker; see also "Husband," the spouse of a wife*
Householde: see under Hous
✷**How** (6 [**a** howe in 317.3]) — *how*
Howe: see how
Hundered: see Hondred
Hundred: see Hondred

Hundreth: see Hondred
Hontynge (1: 155.2 [**a** huutynge *(sic.)*]), ✸**Huntynge** (1: 182.2 [**a** hnntynge *(sic.)*]) — *hunting*
✸**Hurt** (1: 299.4), **Hurte** (1: 302.1) — *to hurt, to be hurt/injured*
1. *passive: to be hurt (299.4, 302.1)*
Hurte: see hurt
✸**Husband** (1: 46.1 [so **c**; **a** husbande, **b** housband]) — *husband; see also "Housbonde," one who works at husbandry*
Husbande: see Husband
Husbonde: see Housbonde, Husband
Hy: see Hye
Heygh (1: 91.4), **Hy** (1: 93.1), ✸**Hye** (9) — *high (often in the sense of "chief, senior," so ""heygh selerer"/"hy selerer" (91.4, 93.1), "hye jusyce" (94.1), etc.))*
Hyght: see behote
✸**Hyll** (1: 366.2) — *hill*
Hym: see He
✸**Hymselfe** (2: 98.3, 133.3) — *himself. N.B.* **b** *spells "hym selfe" in both uses*
✸**Hynde** (1: 164.2) — *hind. See note on Stanza 164*
✸**Hypped** (1: 429.4) — *to hop, hopped. Since, in this case, it refers to the disabled, it might be better to think of it as meaning "to limp" or "to walk with a crutch."*
Hys: see He
✸**Hyt** (1: 347.3 [**a** hit]) — *to hit, strike, make contact (in this case, with an arrow)*
✸**I** (208), Me (123) — *I, me*
I-bent: see Bende
I-bounde: see Bounde
I-brought: see Brought
I-chaunged: see Chaunged
I-dyght: see Dyght
I-fedred: see Fedred
✸**I-nocked** (1: 132.3 [**a** nocked, **b** I nocked]) — *nocked, referring to the cap at the end of an arrow. See the textual note on Stanza 132.*
I-pyght: see Put (1: 136.2): *put up, offered as a prize*
I-quyt: see Quyte
I-sette: see Sette
I-slayne: see Sle
I-take: see Take
I-twyse: see Twyse
✸**I-wys** (10) — *(I) know, i.e. "truly"*
Ibrought: see Brought
Idyght: see Dyght
If: see Yf
Ifedred: see Fedred

✷**In** (127) — *in*
✷**In-fere** (2: 231.4, 423.2) — *in fere=company, i.e. together, in a group. See also "fere."*
In-to: See Into
Inough: see Inowe
Inough (1: 43.4 [**a** inowe, **b** I nough]), ✷**Inowe** (2: 59.3 [**a** ynowe, **b** I nowe, **c** Inowe], 326.3 [**aq** ynowe, **bd** I nowe]), **Ynough** (2: 13.2 [**a** I nowe, **b** y nough], 32.3 [**a** ynought *(sic.)*, **c** inough]), **Ynowe** (1: 248.3 [**p** ynough]) — *enough*
In-to (1: 372.4), ✷**Into** (4: 94.2 [**b** in to], 101.1 [**b** in to], 140.1 [**a** in to], 372.4 [**b** in to]) — *into*
Is: see Be
Isette: see Sette
✷**It** (67 [**a** yt in 50.4, 65.3)]) — *it*
Iust: see Iuste
✷**Iuste** (1: 52.4 [**a** iust, **bc** iuste]). *It is not clear, whether we accept the reading of* **a** *or* **bc**, *whether we should read as "iust(e)" or "just(e)" (I have read as "iuste" to try to avoid prejudicing the issue), but the best guess is that the meaning is "joust"; see note on Stanzas 52–53. Also cf. "Joustes"*
Iyen: see eyen
Iyn: see eyen
✷**Japes** (1: 63.1 [**a** iapis/japis, **b**, iapes/japes) — *japes=jokes, jests*
Japis: see Japes
✷**Johan** (83) — *personal name, "John." In* **b**, *the name is consistently spelled "Johan"; in* **a** *and* **epq**, *it is usually spelled John̄=Johnn although* **a** *sometimes manages to misspell it;* **f** *and* **g** *typically use "John." This resulted in an inconsistency in the texts of* ***FJC****, etc.: in Child, the name was spelled "Johan" about 28 times, "John" about 15 times, "Johnn" about 40 times (meaning that Child almost always followed* **a** *where it was extant but was inconsistent elsewhere). But the usage of* **b** *is consistent and is followed here.*
1. John the Apostle (63.4)
2. Little John (all other uses)

Johan: see Johan
John: see Johan
✷**Joustes** (1: 116.1 [**b** ioustes]) — *jousts, mock battles. In this instance, unlike 52.4, the meaning seems certain enough that I have ventured to read "joustes" rather than "ioustes, but the prints of course do not have the letter J. Cf. "Iuste."*
Just: see Iuste
Justice: see justyce
✷**Justyce** (12: 93.3, 94.1, 96.1, 104.4, 106.1, 106.3, 107.1, 117.1, 118.2, 123.2 [**a** justice], 123.3 [**a** justice], 266.3), **Justyse** (1: 119.4 [**a** justice]) — *justice (a royal official, not the abstract quantity). The meaning of this office in context is far from clear; see the note on Stanza 93. Note that* **a** *spells "justice" in the only to readings for which it exists.*
Justyse: see Justyce
✷**Kechyn** (1: 163.3) — *kitchen*

✷**Kene** (1: 350.2) — *keen (of a sword, so in context it means sharp, dangerous, deadly)*
✷**Kepe** (1: 290.2), **Kepeste** (1: 319.3 [**a** kepest]) — *to keep, guard, maintain*
Kepest: see Kepe
Kepeste: see Kepe
✷**Kest** (1: 421.1), **Keste** (1: 422.2) — *to cast, i.e. cast off, cast away, set aside, take off (of clothing)*
Keste: see Kest
Kinge: see Kynge
Kirtell: see Kyrtell
✷**Knave** (1: 81.2), **Knaves** (1: 429.2) — *knave, servant. Note that there is little of the later sense of "rogue"; it's simply a lower-class person.*
1. *servant (81.2); Little John becomes the Knight's knave, standing "in a yeoman's stead." Note that, although "yeoman" at this time meant a free man, it could also refer to a yeoman of a household. In effect, John goes from one sort of yeoman to the other*
2. *People below the rank of yeomen (429.2). Chaucer, for instance, seems to use the term to mean "servant," "peasant." and "villain." Langland also seems to alternate between "servant" and "ordinary person." The phrase "both yemen and knaves" thus seems to mean "both the high and the low," or at least "both the middle class and those below that."*
Knaves: see Knave
✷**Kne** (11 [**a** knee in 29.4]), **Knee** (1: 263.4) — *knee*
Knee: see Kne
✷**Knele** (2: 115.3, 411.2), **Kneled** (4: 102.3, 182.4 [**a** knyled], 390.1, 410.4) — *to kneel, kneeled/knelt*
Kneled: see Knele
Knelyd: see Knele
Knight: see Knyght
Knightes: see Knyghtes
✷**Knowe** (7) — *to know*
Knight (1: 75.3), ✷**Knyght** (96 [**a** knyhht in 37.4]), **Knyghtes** (14 [**a** knightes in 144.3]) — *knight, knight's. Usually but not always refers to Sir Richard at the Lee. Note that* **a** *frequently but not always spells "knight"; this usage is too common to be noted here.*
Knyghtes: see Knyght
Knyhht: see Knyght
✷**Kyndenesse** (3: 51.4, 128.3, 312.3) — *kindness. Probably to be pronounced "kindëness."*
✷**Kynge** (54 [a kinge in 322.4, 345.3), **Kynges** (7: 319.3, 321.3, 366.3, 367.2, 376.1, 377.3, 433.1) — *king, king's (N.B. all instances of "kynges" are the possessive, "king's"; there are no references to "kings" plural)*
1. *the kynge's dere, i.e. the king's deer (366.3, 377.3)*
✷**Kynne** (1: 451.4) — *kin*
✷**Kyrkely** (1: 454.3) — *probably to be understood as "Kirklees," the lee of the kirk (church). There was a priory of Kirklees in western Yorkshire; see the note on Stanzas 451, 454. Cf. "Kyrkesly"*

✷**Kyrkesly** (1: 451.3) — *probably to be understood as "Kirklees," the lee of the kirk (church). There was a priory of Kirklees in western Yorkshire; see the note on Stanzas 451, 454. Cf. "Kyrkely"*

✷**Kyrtell** (2: 194.1 [**a** kirtell], 299.3) — *kyrtle, tunic, curt (short) coat*

Lad: see Led

✷**Lady** (15), **Ladye's** (1) — *lady, lady's*

1. Of the Virgin Mary: 9.3, 10.1, 65.3, 76.3, 206.3, 235.3, 248.4, 249.3, 251.2, 256.3, 271.3, 336.3
2. Of the Knight's wife: 126.3, 127.1, 334.2, 338.2

✷**Lancasshyre** (1: 357.1) — *Lancashire; cf. "Lancastshyre."*

Lancaster: see Lancastshyre

✷**Lancastshyre** (1: 53.1 [**a** Lancaster, **c** Lancasasshyre]) — *probably Lancashire; possibly Lancaster; see the note on Stanza 53 and the textual note on Stanzas 53–54. Cf. "Lancasshyre."*

Lande: see Londe

Landes: see Londe

Lap: see Lappe

✷**Lappe** (1: 194.4 [**a** lap]) — *to wrap, surround*

✷**Large** (2: 161.3, 407.2) — *great, unrestricted. Both uses involve giving or taking permission, i.e. "I gyve the large leve" (407.2)="go ahead and do all you want to do/are able to do."*

✷**Last** (2: 403.1, 446.2) — *last*

Lat: see Let

Late: see Let

✷**Launsgay** (1: 134.1) — *light lance*

✷**Lawe** (1: 124.1), **Lawes** (1: 319.4 [so **bd**^{vid}**q**; **a** lawe]) — *law, laws*

Lawes: see Lawe

✷**Lay** (8), **Layd** (1: 308.3 [**d** layde]), **Layde** (2: 350.3 [**d** layd], 434.2), **Laye** (2: 142.2 [**a** lay], 196.1 [**a** lay]) **Layed** (1: 316.1 [**ap** layde, **d** layd]) — *to lay, laid. In most instances it refers to simply being placed somewhere, or (in 155.3) to laying in bed, but in 455.2 it appears to refer to Sir Roger of Doncaster sleeping with the Prioress of Kirklees. In 350.3, the idiom is "laid on," i.e. attacked, wounded. See also "Layne."*

Layd: see Lay

Layde: see Lay

Laye: see Lay

Layed: see Lay

Layne: see Lye

Le: see Lee

✷**Leasynge** (2: 322.2, [**adq** lesynge], 353.2) — *probably lying, telling falsehoods, concealment, hiding, from a root meaning "lose."*

✷**Lechoure** (1: 46.3) — *lecher*

Led: see Lede

Ledde: see Lede

Lad (2: 332.3 [**ap** led], 388.1)**, Late** (1: 337.1), **Led** (1: 46.4 [so **ac**; **b** lede]), **Ledde** (1: 134.2), ✸LEDE (7), **Let** (9 [**a** late in 208.2]), **Lete** (6: 17.2 [**a** latemuch for lete much], 43.1 [**a** let], 201.1 [**a** lat], 261.1, 304.3, 385.2)

1. *noun: company, group (a troop being led): 368.2*
2. *verb: to lead, led (all other uses)*

✸LEDES-MAN (1: 369.1) — *man who leads, leader, guide. Knight/Ohlgren propose to emend this to "Bedes-man," bead-man, carrier of the rosary.*

Le (2: 360.4, 410.3), ✸LEE (3: 310.2, 331.2, 431.4) — *Lee/Lea (all uses refer to Sir Richard). Since we are not certain where he lives, we cannot know which lee or lea is meant.*

✸LEEGE (1: 362.3) — *liege, feudal superior*

✸LEFE (1: 225.2) — *glad, willing; used in the phrase "loth or lefe," loath or willing*

✸LEFTE (3: 125.4, 305.4, 428.4) — *left (a verb, i.e. to remain)*

Lend: see Lende

Lend (1: 40.4 [**bc** len]), ✸LENDE (3: 153.2 [so **a**; **b** gyve], 244.4, 395.4), **Lene** (1: 81.1 [**a** lende]), **Lent** (6), **Lentest** (1: 121.2)

1. *to lend, lent (10 uses) (note that Robin, at least, knows that "loan" is not a verb but a noun!)*
2. *to stay together, dwell together, come together (395.4)*
3. *to give, gave (165.1, where the cook lends=attacks Little John with three blows)*

✸LENED (1: 3.2) — *lent, leaned*

✸LENGER (4: 105.4, 258.2, 341.4, 438.3), **Lengre** (1: 443.4) — *longer*

Lengre: see Lenger

Lent: see Lende

Lentest: see Lende

Lenyd: see Lened

✸LEPED (1: 73.2) — *to leap, leapt, skipped ahead*

✸LERE (3: 16.2, 28.4, 426.2)

1. *to learn (16.2, 426.2); cf. "Lerne"*
2. *face, countenance (28.4)*

✸LERNE (1: 352.2) — *to learn; cf. "Lere"*

✸LESE (2: 56.1, 364.1) — *to lose*

✸LESSON (1: 16.2) — *lesson, instruction*

✸LEST (1: 186.4) — *lest*

Lesynge: see Leasynge

✸LET (8), **Lete** (4: 261.1, 304.3, 331.4, 385.2)

1. *delay, be hindred (38.4) (compare the Biblical "without let or hindrance")*
2. *let, allow, permit (all other uses). Cf. "Leten"*

Lete: see Let

✸LETEN (1: 454.4) — *to let, allow, release, but in the specific context of "let blood, be blooded." Cf. "Let." To be let blood was considered medical care, but it could be fatal if mishandled — as, indeed, happened to Robin according to Robin Hood's Death*

Leugh: see Loughe

Leutye: see Lewte
✸**Leve** (15)
1. *to leave, depart, abandon (12.1, 257.4, 298.3, 352.1, 414.3)*
2. *believe? trust? (76.4, where most editions read "grant")*
3. *to allow, grant, permit (112.2)*
4. *leave, permission (noun) (151.3, 327.1, 376.3, 406.2, 407.2, 443.3)*
5. *leave, departure ("to take leave") (281.1, 444.3)*

Leved: see Lyve
✸**Lever** (3: 88.3, 158.4, 333.3) — *liefer, i.e. sooner, rather, in preference to*
✸**Leves** (1:329.2 [**ap** levys]) — *leaves*
Levys: see Leves
✸**Lewte** (3: 154.2 [**a** trueleutye, *i.e.* true leute], 169.2, 298.4) — *loyalty. Always in the phrase "my true lewte." It is the word Sir Bertilak uses in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" to describe Gawain's falling short of his ideals: "Bot here you kakked a lyttle, sir and lewté yow wonted": "but here you fell short a little, sire, and loyalty you wanted" (line 2366; Tolkien/Gordon, p. 65; cf. Bennett/Gray, p. 216); Gawain refers to his own failure of lewté in line 2381.*
Life: see Lyfe
Listin: see Lysten
Litel: see Lytell
Lithe: see Lyth
Littell: see Lytell
Lived: see Lyve
✸**Lo** (1: 188.4) — *Lo! (interjection: Look there!)*
✸**Lockes** (1: 174.3 [**a** lokkes]) — *locks*
✸**Lodge** (3: 19.3, 29.1, 225.1)
1. *to lodge, i.e. visit, dwell (19.3)*
2. *as part of the phrase "lodge door" (written lodgë-dore in **FJC**): dwelling place (*29.1, 225.1*), the place where Robin meets the Knight and the Monk. Is it the same as his trystel-tree?*

Lodge-Dore: see Dore* and *Lodge *(**FJC** hyphenates the words)*
✸**Loke** (6), **Loked** (7) — *to look, looked*
Loked: see Loke
Lokkes: see Lockes
Lond: see Londe
✸**Londe** (17 [**a** lond in 56.1, lande in 202.4]) **Londes** (6 [**ap** landes in 320.3]) — *land, lands*
Londes: see Londe
✸**London** (2: 253.1, 322.3) — *London. In the Middle Ages, as now, England's biggest city and (along with Westminster) the place where the government usually operated*
✸**Longe** (13)
1. *long (distance) (132.1, 289.2, 297.4)*
2. *long (time) (115.3, 143.1, 157.1, 198.4, 220.4, 235.2, 266.2, 268.2 268.4)*

✷**Longeth** (1: 442.1) — *to long/longs, to yearn*
✷**Lorde** (12), **Lordes** (3: 102.1, 303.3, 386.3)
1. *feudal or clerical superior, generally* not *a baron (99.2, 102.1, 158.2)*
2. *husband (used by the Knight's wife in referring to him) (127.1, 337.1, 338.3)*
3. *a person of mastery, a rebel, an independent lord (324.3)*
4. *(liege) lord, referring to the King (362.3, 364.3, 386.3, 411.3, 413.3, 439.3, 444.1)*
5. *The Lord's/God's (303.3)*

Lordes: see Lorde
✷**Lordynge** (1: 380.4) — *lord (perhaps with a diminutive sense, "Lordling")*
✷**Lorne** (1: 51.2) — *lost, separated from*
✷**Lost** (3: 85.4, 127.2, 404.3) — *lost*
✷**Lote** (1: 400.3) — *lot, allotment, portion*
✷**Loth** (1: 225.2) — *loath, unhappy, desiring another outcome*
✷**Lothely** (1: 113.1) — *with loathing*
✷**Loud** (1: 319.1 [**a(d)** loude]), **Loude** (1: 389.2) — *loud(ly)*
1. *"loud gan crye": cried loudly (319.1)*
2. *"loud... gan blow": blew (his horn) loudly (389.2)*

Loude: see Loud
Leugh (1: 273.2), ✷**Lough** (1: 74.1 [**a** loughe]), **Lughe** (1: 430.1) — *to laugh, laughed. The spelling of "to laugh" seems to have been unsettled at this time. Chaucer seems to have used both "laugh(e)" and "lough(e)." Langland used "lough." Earlier texts often had louȝe, almost certainly to be read as louχe, as in modern Scots "leucht." The Old English root is* hlæhhan. *Thus "leugh" is likely a typesetter's error.* **fg** *usually update to "laught" or "laughed" but have "lough" in 430.1*
✷**Love** (10), **Loved** (2: 9.4, 10.1), **Lovest** (1: 303.2) — *to love, loved, loves*
Loved: see Love
Lovest: see Love
✷**Lowe** (2: 43.2, 284.2) — *probably "low"*
1. *John goes "to his mayster [full] lowe": was it John or Robin who was low (humble)?*
2. *In an archery contest, the archers try to shoot "fayre and low" (284.2). Does this mean direct shaft rather than a dropping shaft (that is, one shot at an angle less than 45°)? (Dropping shafts were harder to aim but could travel a greater distance.) Or is it just a word that (sort of) rhymes with "shawe" two lines later?*

Lughe: see Lough
✷**Lust** (1: 6.2), **Lyste** (1: 446.3) — *lust, desire*
✷**Lye** (3: 43.1, 248.1, 349.1), **Layne** (1: 380.1) — *to lie (upon the ground or other place), lain*
1. In the phrase "*Little John let it lie full still*" (43.1, 248.1)

✷**Lyest** (2: 114.1, 222.1) — *to lie, speak falsehood*
✷**Lyfe** (7 [**a** life in 11.4]) — *life*

✸**Lyght** (5: 74.4, 90.3, 134.3, 261.4, 263.1)
1. *little (74.4)*
2. *free, untroubled (90.3)*
3. *merry, light-hearted (of a song) (134.3)*
4. *day, daylight (261.4)*
5. *to light off, lit off, got off (of a horse) (263.1)*

✸**Lyke** (2: 285.4, 417.1), **Lyketh** (1: 165.4 [**a** lyked])
1. *verb: to like, enjoy: 165.4, 417,1*
2. *the like, the equivalent of: "In Englond is none lyke"="There's nothing like this in England" (285.4)*

Lyked: see Lyke

✸**Lyncolne** (1: 422.1) — *Lincoln (in the phrase "Lincoln Green," referring to the color of the clothing worn by Robin's men)*

✸**Lynde** (1: 374.4) — *linden, linden-trees, trees, hence the forest*

✸**Lyne** (1: 398.2) — *ordinarily "line." but in this case it might be a variant of "lynde," linden tree*

Lyste: see Lust

✸**Lysten** (4: 1.1 [**a** listen], 144.1 [**a** lystyn], 282.1, 317.1)
1. *to listen, hear. Always in the phrase "Lythe and listen," i.e. "hear and listen," hence "listen well." See discussion in the notes on Stanza 1.*

Lystyn: see Lysten

Lytel: see Lytell

Lytel (7), ✸**Lytell** (78), **Lyttell** (2: 41.1, 206.1), **Lytyll** (1: 81.1) [**a** *also has, at various places,* Litel, Littell, Litill, Littell, Lityll, *with* Littell *being perhaps the most common*] — *little. Usually "little" means the same in Middle English as in Modern: small, short, brief, minimal. However, it has been suggested by Skeat that it can sometimes mean "mean, deceitful, tricky." This might explain its use for Little John and Little Much; see the note on Stanza 3B. Almost always used of Little John; the exceptions are:*
1. *little birds (33.3)*
2. *little Much (69.1, 73.3, 77.1, 293.3, 307.1)*
3. *a little page (224.3)*
4. *a little money (237.3)*
5. *a little left behind (257.4)*
6. *a short distance (309.2)*
7. *a little desire (446.3)*
8. *a short time (448.2)*
9. *little pride, dejection (22.2)*

Lithe (1: 1.1 [**a** lythe]), ✸**Lyth** (2: 144.1, 282.1), **Lythe** (1: 317.1) — *to attend, listen, so listen up! or hear me! Always in the phrase "Lythe and listen," i.e. "hear and listen," hence "listen well." See discussion on Stanza 1.*

Lythe: see Lyth

Lytil: see Lyttell

Lytill: see Lyttell
Lytyll: see Lyttell
Leved (1: 46.2 [**a** lyved), **Lived** (1: 160.3), ✷**Lyve** (4: 162.3, 370.2, 377.3, 428.4)
1. *to live, to live (verb) (46.2, 160.3, 162.3, 377.3)*
2. *live, as in alive (349.4)*
3. *in the phrase "on live," i.e. alive (370.2, 428.4)*

Lyved: see Lyve
✷**Lyveray** (2: 70.3, 161.3)
1. *livery, the badge or clothing of a servant, usually identified by color (70.3)*
2. *liberty, freedom of the place (of John taking as much drink as he wished) (161.3)*

Made: see Make
✷**Magdaleyne** (1: 440.3) — *Mary Magdalene, the patron saint of penitents, to whom Robin claims to have dedicated a chapel. Frequently pronounced "madeleyne" or "maudlin" in Britain, but the latter pronunciation seems unlikely in this case.*

Maistar: see Maister
Made (14), ✷**Make** (23), **Maked** (1: 104.2) — *to make, made*
1. *in variations of the phrase God/him that made me (47.2, 64.1, 100.2, 104.2)*
   1A. *by God that made us all (114.4)*
2. *in variations on the phrase "I make mine avowe (to God)" (158.3, 164.1, 165.3, 169.1, 180.1, 187.1, 190.1, 240.1, 249.1, 343.1, 346.3, 408.1, 415.3)*
3. *in the phrase "make glad cheer" (192.1, 197.1, 215.1) ("good cheer" in 394.1)*

✷**Male** (3: 134.2, 247.3, 255.4) — *baggage, luggage, personal items being transported*
✷**Male-Hors** (1: 374.1) — *horse to carry male=luggage; cf. "male." It is likely that a male-horse would be a sumpter*
✷**Man** (34), **Men** (32), **Mennes** (1: 433.4) — *men, men's, typically with the sense "servants, underlings," as one might say "officers and men" — man, usually in the sense of servant or retainer as opposed to "male human being."*
✷**Maner** (4: 8.1, 37.3, 51.1, 257.3) — *manner, custom, style; compare "Maners."*
✷**Maners** (1: 254.2) — *possibly manners, but more likely manors, holdings, estates (most holdings were organized about a manor). Thus it is probably not the plural of "Maner."*

Mantel: see Mantell
Mantel (1: 211.4), ✷**Mantell** (4: 42.1, 194.3 [**a** mantel], 230.1, 247.1), **Mantels** (1: 427.3) — *mantle, coat*

Mantels: see Mantell
✷**Many** (19) — *many*
✷**Marchaunt** (1: 71.3) — *merchant. Like yeomen, they were a free class below the nobility and gentry*
✷**Mare** (1: 403.4) — *dialect version of "more," used to rhyme with "fare"; cf. "More"*

Mari: see Mary
✷**Marke** (6: 142.1, 150.4, 171.2 [**a** merketo, *i.e.* merke to], 243.3, 246.3, 270.3) — *Mark. Coin of account (i.e. they didn't mint them), worth two-thirds of a pound, or 160 pence. Keep in mind that neither marks nor pounds were minted for most of this period; coinage was of*

smaller denominations. Marks were (sort of) useful because it made it possible to divide pounds into thirds as well as halves, quarters, etc. Note that "marke" is used as a collective plural, i.e. "twenty marke" instead of "twenty marks"; when "markes/merkes" is used in the "Gest," it means a target.

1. *Twenty marke as the annual fee of a skilled archer or other servant (150.4, 171.2). Twenty marke is 3200 pence, or about 8.75 pence per day. This would be a pretty good pay rate for an archer in the fifteenth century, but it isn't absurdly high.*
2. *Twenty marke as the amount of money the Cellarer falsely claimed to have (243.4, 246.3)*
3. *Twenty marke as interest on the knight's 400 pound loan (270.3). Twenty marke on a loan of 600 marke is 3.33% interest annually, which is low but not absurdly low at a time when there was a precious metal standard and inflation was very low.*
4. *Five marke as a prize for the yeoman who won the "wrastelyng" (142.1)*

✷**Markes** (1: 146.4), **Merkes** (1: 397.4) — *target (of an archery contest). Not to be confused with "Marke," the monetary term*

✷**Mary** (4: 54.4 [**a** Mari], 84.4, 233.1, 440.3)

1. *Mary, as in the name of St. Mary's Abbey (54.1, 84.4, 233.1)*
2. *Mary Magdalene, the patron saint of penitents, to whom Robin claims to have dedicated a chapel.*

We note with interest that the name "Mary" is not used of the Virgin Mary in the poem, nor is the word "Virgin"; she is typically "Our Lady" or "Our Dear Lady" (see e.g. Stanza 9); also (Jesus's) "dame" and a "mayden."

✷**Masars** (1: 175.3) — *drinking cups*

Master: see Maister

✷**Maugre** (1: 225.4) — *displeasure, ill-will; in the phrase "maugre in theyr tethe," i.e. against their will.*

✷**May** (23) — *may (auxiliary verb)*

✷**Mayden** (1: 112.1) — *maiden, referring to the Virgin Mary*

✷**Mayntayne** (2: 77.2 [**a** mayntene], 324.2 [**a** mayntenethe, i.e. mayntene the; **q** manytene]) — *to maintain, allow to continue in a position (of the Knight in 77.2, of Robin's band in 324.2)*

Mayntene: see Mayntayne

Maysteer: see Maister

Mayster: see Maister

✷**Mayster** (26. **b** always uses this spelling, but other witnesses use a variety of forms: Maistar [**a** in 11.1], Maister [**a** in 5.3, 25.3, 26.1, 151.1, 186.1, 207.1; **f** occasionally; **g** regularly], Master [**a** in 70.1; **f** occasionally], Maysteer [**a** in 43.2]) — *master. Used generally of Robin*

1. *Used by John to address Robin (5.3, 11.1, 70.1, 71.1, 75.1, 177.1, 207.1, 227.1, 236.1, 303.1)*
2. *Used by Gilbert to address Robin (404.3)*
3. *Used by Robin's men to address Robin (449.3)*
4. *Used by John of Robin but not as a form of address (25.3, 217.4, 220.3)*

5. *Used regarding John's master when the master is kept secret or unknown (26.1, 151.1, 221.1)*
6. *Of Robin in his role as John's master, but not in a direct quote (43.2, 248.2)*
7. *Used by John to address the Sheriff (183.1, 186.1, 187.3, 190.2)*
8. *Used by John of Robin "the master hart" (188.4)*
9. *Of any of Robin's men who is a better bowman than another (399.1)*

Me: see I

✸**MEDE** (1: 153.4), **Medes** (1: 304.1) — *deserts, what one deserves, reward*

Medes: see mede

✸**MELE** (1: 384.4) — *literally meal, ground grain, hence food; "mete and meal" = generous hospitality*

Men: see Man

Mene: see Meyne

Mennes: see Man

✸**MERCY** (3: 412.1, 413.3, 456.1) — *mercy*

Merke: see Marke

Merkes: see Markes

✸**MERVAYLE** (1: 235.1) — *marvel, marvelling*

✸**MERY** (18)

1. *merry, i.e. happy (126.1, 127.3, 145.1, 382.4, 445.2, 445.4)*
2. *merry England (71.3, 198.3, 306.3, 361.4, 437.4)*
3. *Robin Hood's merry men/meyne (205.3, 262.4, 281.3, 287.1, 316.3, 340.3, 382.3)*

Messangere: see Messengere

✸**MESSENGERE** (3: 76.3 [**a** messangere], 210.1, 242.1) — *messenger*

✸**MESSES** (1: 8.4 [**a** messis]) — *masses*

Messis: see Messes

✸**MESURE** (2: 72.3, 74.3) — *measure (in both instances, measuring distance or amount of cloth)*

✸**MET** (6) — *see also Mete*

1. *to measure, measured (73.1)*
2. *to meet, met, welcomed (126.3, 182.1, 228.3, 375.1, 409.4)*

✸**METE** (12) — *see also Met*

1. *to meet (18.4, 21.4, 209.4, 344.4, 370.1, 383.3)*
2. *to measure, measured (72.2)*
3. *meat, i.e. meal — "at/to mete"="at dinner" (99.2. 102.1, 316.4, 384.4)*
4. *either "meet" or "be measured against" (145.4)*

✸**MEYNE** (6: 31.4, 95.2, 97.2, 262.4, 335.4 [**a** mene], 419.4) — *company, band, troop*

1. *Of Robin and his men (31.4, 262.4, 335.4)*
2. *Of the abbot of St. Mary's and his associates (95.2)*
3. *Of the Knight's companions as he comes to St. Mary's (97.2)*
4. *Of the King's company (419.4)*

Mi: see My

Might: see Myght

***Mijn**: see Myn*
Miller's: see Myller's
✱**Mo** (3: 94.1, 186.2, 342.2) — *more*
✱**Moch** (11: 5.4 [**a** moche], 26.4, 44.3 [**a** moche], 66.4 [**a** moche], 77.1 [**a** Much], 90.4, 208.2 [**a** Much], 254.4, 256.1, 313.2 [**d** moche], 456.4), **Moche** (4: 17.2 [**a** Much], 250.4, 312.1 [**d** myche], 380.3)
1. *Much the Miller's Son, for whom see "Much" (17.2, 77.1, 208.2)*
2. *much, to such a great degree, as in "much of an item," "much more," very much" (all other uses)*
It seems likely that the original used the spelling "moch" or "moche" for the word much *and "Much" or "Muche" for Much the miller's son (or just possibly the reverse), but the prints regularly confused the two.*
Moche: see Moch; also Much/Muche
✱**Molde** (1: 142.2) — *mould, ground*
✱**Mone** (1: 64.2) — *moon*
✱**Moneth** (2: 79.3, 86.3), **Monethes** (3: 152.2, 199.1 [**a** monthes], 433.2)— *month, months*
Monethes: see moneth
✱**Money** (5: 49.3, 109.4, 237.3, 242.2, 273.4), Mony (1: 64.4 [**a** money]) — *money*
✱**Monke** (30), **Monkes** (6) — *monk, monks*
Monkes: see monke
Monthes: see moneth
Mony: see Money
✱**More** (32) — *more; cf. "Mare" (used for "more" in 403.4)*
✱**Mornynge** (1: 445.2) — *morning*
✱**Morow** (1: 454.3) — *tomorrow (as part of a compound)*
✱**Mosse** (1: 352.4) — *moss*
✱**Moste** (1: 9.4) — *most*
✱**Mote** (6)
1. *to prosper, bring prosperity to (a very rare usage outside the "Gest") (234.2, 243.4, 452.4?)*
2. *moot, meeting, gathering (253.2), or just possibly "city" (so "Patience," line 422; Burrow/Turville-Petrie, p. 177) or "hill, mound" (with a castle? — see the Sketch plan of a Motte and Bailey castle:); the word can also mean "speech, speaking"; thus a moot is a gathering to discuss*
3. *may, must, might (the almost-universal meaning of "mote" as a verb) (349.2, 394.4, 452.4?)*
Mount: see Mounte
✱**Mounte** (1: 57.2 [**a** mount]) — *mount, mountain, hill. Referring to Calvary.*
Mountnaunce (1: 168.4) — *maintenance, i.e. remainder, rest of, completion of, whole of*

✷**Much** (9: 4.2, 61.2 [**a** Muche], 69.1, 73.3 [**a** Muche], 83.2, 214.2, 223.1, 293.3 [**d** Muche], 307.1 [**d** Muche]). *See also Moch.*
1. *Much (the Miller's Son) (4.2, 61.2, 69.1, 73.3, 83.2, 214.2, 223.1, 293.3, 307.1). Other references to Much are in 17.2 [**a** Much, **b** Moche}, 77.1 [**a** Much, **b** Moch], 208.2 [**a** Much, **b** Moch]*

Muche: see Much (also Moch)

✷**Must** (7), **Muste** (1: 454.3) — *must*

Muste: see must

✷**My** (88 [**a** mi in 79.1, 157.4, 187.3, mijn in 200.3]) — *my*

✷**Myght** (21 [**a** might in 175.2]) — *verb: might, could, were able to*

✷**Myle** (4: 168.2, 181.3, 308.2, 374.4), **Myles** (1: 339.3) — *mile, miles*

Myles: see myle

✷**Myller's** (1: 4.2 [**a** milsers, **b** myllers, ***FJC*** miller's]) — *miller's. Note that it is only in 4.2 that Much is called "the miller's son."*

✷**Myn** (19), **Myne** (1: 180.1) — *mine*

✷**Mynde** (1: 15.4) — *mind*

Myne: see myn

✷**Myre** (1: 352.4) — *mire, muddy or swampy land that is hard to travel.*

✷**Myrth** (1: 144.4), **Myrthes** (1: 210.2) — *mirth, very likely including poetry, song*

Myrthes: see myrth

✷**Mysserved** (1: 190.3) — *mis-served, not served*

✷**Myster** (1: 244.3 [**p** mister]) — *need, requirement for*

✷**Name** (2: 1.4, 148.2) — *name*

Nat: see Not

✷**Nay** (8) — *nay, no*

✷**Ne** (14)
1. *as a particle to denote a contrast: neither...nor (14.3x2; see also 302.3 in **d**)*
2. *nor (38.4, 119.4, 158.1, 175.3, 202.4, 342.3, 441.2, 441.4); cf. "Nother"*
3. *no longer, not, no (negative intensifier?) (58.4)*
4. *not, never (128.3, 346.2, 364.1)*

✷**Nede** (7) — *need*

✷**Nedeth** (1: 252.1) — *to need, needs*

Neghbours: see Neyghbores

✷**Nere** (4: 119.2, 259.2, 357.2, 408.2 [also 160.2 in **a**])
1. *the near=closer to success (119.2)*
2. *near (259.2, 357.2, 408.2)*

✷**Never** (26) — *never*

✷**Newe** (2: 76.2, 277.4) — *new*

✷**Neyghbores** (1: 49.2 [**a** neghbours]) — *neighbours*

✷**Neyther** (2: 168.3, 302.3) — *neither*

Nigh: see Nye

✷**No** (52) — *no*

✷**Noble** (1: 323.4) — *noble? Used of Robin and his men, who are yeomen, not nobility*
Non: see No and None
Non (33.3 [so **c**; **a** none, **b** never]), ✷**None** (19 [**a** non in 2.2] [**b** no in 4.3]) — *none (sometimes used in the sense of "no")*
✷**Noo** (1: 6.2 [so **a**; **b** no) — *no? now? (probably the former, and very possibly an error in* **a***)*
✷**Nor** (2: 302.3 [**d** ne], 341.4 [**a** no]) — *nor*
✷**North** (2: 283.1 [**d** northe], 324.4 [**adq** northe]) — *north*
Northe: see North
Nat (8), ✷**Not** (30) — *not*
✷**Notes** (2: 431.2, 445.3) — *(musical) notes, of people (431.2) or birds (445.3) singing*
✷**Nother** (2: 441.3, 441.4) — *neither... nor (the two uses are in immediate conjunction, in the form nother...nother... ne, meaning either neither...nor...nor or neither...neither...nor)*
✷**Nothynge** (4: 167.3 [***FJC*** no thynge], 402.2, 425.3, 427.3) — *nothing*
Notingham: see Notyngham
Notyingham (1: 384.3), ✷**Notyngham** (18 [**a** Notingham in 146.3, 337.3, 344.1]), **Notynghame** (3: 15.3 [**a** Notyingham], 205.1 [**a** Notingham], 354.1) — *Nottingham. Primary town of Nottinghamshire. It was probably more important in the Middle Ages than it is now. It was often the northernmost stop in king's circuits. It was on a good road (Ermine Street/the Great North Road, called "Watling Street" in the "Gest"), plus it had a good castle and relatively good communications. Edward II was there in 1322-1323, and Edward IV and Richard III used it as their base at various times during the Wars of the Roses. See the Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest"*
Notynghame: see Notyngham
✷**Nought** (3: 38.1, 324.3, 426.2) — *naught, nothing*
✷**Noumbles** (1: 32.4 [so **ac**; **b** nombles]), **Numbles** (1: 172.2 [**a** nowmbles]) — *organ meats, entrails, sweetbreads*
✷**Now** (24), **Nowe** (10) — *now*
Nowe: see now
Nowmbles (1): see Noumbles
Nye (1: 451.4), ✷**Nygh** (1: 160.2 [a nere]) — *nigh, near (of kin)*
✷**Nyght** (9) — *night*
✷**Of** (170) — *of*
✷**Offyce** (1: 233.3) — *office: capacity, role, position (in the Church)*
✷**Oft** (1: 48.1 [**a** ofte]) — *oft, often*
Ofte: see Oft
✷**Okerer** (1: 46.3) — *usurer, one who lends money at interest*
✷**Olde** (4: 52.3, 257.3, 362.1, 429.3) — *old*
✷**On** (69) — *on*
✷**One** (18) — *one*
Ani (1: 164.3), **Any** (2: 278.4, 364.4), ✷**Ony** (15 [**a** usually ani/any]) — *any*
✷**Ope** (1: 161.2 [**a** open, **b** up]) — *open*
Open: see Ope

✷**Or** (33) — *usually "or," although one or two instances may be errors for "ere," "before"*
✷**Ordayne** (1: 326.3 [**aq** ordeyn]) — *to ordain, array, organize. The word "ordayne" might have been a touchy one to Edward II — in one of the early rebellions against him, the "Ordainers" were set up to manage his government — but the poet might not think of that*
✷**Order** (2: 197.3 [**a** ordre], 198.1), **Ordre** (2: 406.1) — *order (usually an order of monks or anchorites, as in 406.1 where the king is pretending to be a monk, but in 197.3 Robin uses it of his men; in 198.1 the sheriff compares Robin's order to a clerical order)*
Ordeyn: see Ordayne
Ordre: see Order
✷**Othe** (8) — *oath*
✷**Other** (8 [**a** othere in 22.4]) — *other*
Othere: see Other
✷**Ought** (1: 124.4) — *ought, not in the sense of "you should do this" but in the sense of anything/something: "For ought that you can saye": "Despite anything/whatever you might say"*
✷**Our** (64 [**a** oure in 16.4, 76.3, 345.3]), **Oure** (1: 321.3) — *usually our, although a few instances might mean "hour." Cf. "We."*
Oure: see Our
Oures: see Houres
Ouris: see Houres
✷**Out** (13), **Oute** (1: 68.3 [also several uses in **a**]) — *out*
Oute: see Out
Outlaw: see Outlawe
✷**Outlawe** (5: 2.1 [**a** out law, ***FJC*** outlaw], 2.3, 199.4, 291.1, 456.3), **Outlawes** (5: 300.1, 324.2, 411.1, 423.4, 447.3) — *outlaw, outlaws. At this time, a technical term for one who had not appeared in court. An outlaw was generally not a convicted criminal but was subject to capture and return to a jurisdiction for trial; also perhaps to summary punishment*
Outlawes: see Outlawe
✷**Over** (1: 56.4) — *over, beyond*
✷**Over-tolde** (1: 276.4) — *to over-pay, over-paid, given more than the amount due, paid beyond the tally*
✷**Owne** (2: 241.1, 452.3) — *own*
Owre: see Houres
✷**Page** (2: 80.3, 224.3) — *page, junior servant (usually a boy)*
Palferay: see Palfray
Palferay (1: 213.4), ✷**Palfray** (2: 263.1, 334.3 [**ap** palfrey]), **Pallfraye** (1: 77.1 [**a** palfray]) — *palfrey, riding horse (as opposed to a war horse or a sumpter/baggage horse). For the various types of medieval horse, see the note on Coursers. (1: 213.4), Palfray (2: 77.1, 263.1, 334.3)*
Palfrey: see Palfray
✷**Parke** (1: 357.3) — *park, deer park, hunting reserve*

✱**Parte** (3: 39.2, 39.4, 307.4)
1. *noun: part, portion, both times in the phrase "So God have part of me/thee" (39.2, 39.4)*
2. *verb: to depart, leave*

✱**Partye** (1: 382.2) — *parts, halves*

Pas: see Passe (1), Passed

✱**Pase** (1: 397.3) — *pace(s), steps, used as a measure of distance to know where to set the target in an archery contest*

✱**Passe** (2: 166.3 [**a** pas], 357.1)
1. *verb, to pass, pass on, depart (166.3). Cf. "Passed"*
2. *noun, in the phrase "passe of Lancasshyre" (357.1) Perhaps the meaning is "passes" (through the hills of the Pennines), perhaps "compass," i.e. the whole region. See textual note on Stanza 357*

✱**Passed** (2: 268A.1 [conjectural reading], 339.4) — *to pass, passed, passed on, departed. Cf. "Passe" (1).*

✱**Past** (1: 156.2) — *past*

✱**Pay** (17), **Paye** (2: 7.3, 130.4 [**a** topay, *i.e.* to pay) — *pay, payment, earned income (noun); also the verb "to pay"*

Paye: see Pay

✱**Payre** (4: 77.3 [**a** peyre], 78.2 [**a** peyre], 137.1, 284.3) — *pair*

✱**Peces** (1: 175.3 [**a** pecis]) — *pieces, which, in context, almost certainly means dishes, dinner furnishings, particularly those of metal*

Pecis: see Peces

✱**Pecok** (1: 132.2) — *peacock*

✱**Pees** (1: 117.4) — *peace*

✱**Pence** (1: 176.1 [**a** pens]) — *pence, silver pennies; plural of "Peny" (which see)*

Peni: see Peny

✱**Peny** (5: 40.2, 41.4, 104.1, 123.3 [**a** peni], 244.2, 246.4), — *penny. Cf. "Pens"=pence.*

Pens: see Pence

✱**People** (1: 427.1) — *people, citizens (in this case, of Nottingham)*

✱**Peter** (1: 63.4) — *(Saint) Peter, Jesus's leading disciple, regarded as the first Pope as well as the one having the keys to Heaven, but nonetheless not someone Robin trusts to fulfill a loan.*

Peyre: see Payre

Pie: see Pye

✱**Pith** (1: 409.1) — *pith, strength, might*

✱**Place** (8), **Places** (1: 454.2 [***FJC*** place]) — *place, places*

Places: see Place

Play: see Playe

Play (1: 282.4), ✱**Playe** (3: 141.4 [**a** play], 143.2 [**a** play], 455.4) — *play (noun)*
1. *reward for victory (141.4)*
2. *contest, game (143.2, 282.4)*
3. *"false play," resulting in Robin's death: playing at, trickery, behavior (455.4)*

✱**Plente** (1: 378.2): *plenty*

Plight: see Plyght

✸**Plomton** (1: 357.3) — *Plumpton (Park). There are several parks to which this might refer; see the note on Stanzas 357–358.*

Plough: see Ploughe

✸**Ploughe** (1: 13.4 [**a** plough]) — *plough/plow (probably refers to farm implements in general); in any case, equipment used by a farm worker in his work*

✸**Plucke-Buffet** (1: 424.3) — *a "pluck-buffet" game is probably a game in which two archers shoot at a target, and the one who fires the less accurate shot must accept a blow (buffet) from the more accurate archer.*

✸**Plyght** (1: 173.2 [**a** plight]): *plight, pledge. "To plight one's troth": to pledge an agreement (often for marriage, but in this case, for an alliance)*

✸**Pore** (4: 210.4, 268A.3, 275.4, 456.4) — *poor*

✸**Porter** (3: 98.3, 99.1, 100.1) — *porter, door-keeper. All three references are to the porter of St. Mary's Abbey.*

✸**Poule** (1: 63.4) — *(Saint) Paul*

Pound: see Pounde

✸**Pounde** (26 [**a** pound in 67.3, 120.4, 333.3, .li. in 130.3, 333.3; **b** .li. in 279.1, **p** .li. in 333.3]) — *pound (as a unit of money)*

✸**Poverte** (1: 69.4) — *poverty*

✸**Pray** (8), **Praye** (4: 78.3 [**a** pray], 127.4 [**a** pray], 238.2, 265.4) — *to pray. N.B.* **a**, *like* **b**, *uses both "pray" and "praye," but is more inclined toward "praye."*

Praye: see Pray

✸**Prees** (1: 116.3), **Prese** (1: 218.2) — *noun: (the) press, i.e. the crowd. "As ferre in prees"="as far in press" means "into the midst of the fight" (116.3); also refers (218.2) to the Cellarer's guard*

Prese: see prees

✸**Presed** (1: 140.1) — *to press, pressed, pushed*

✸**Present** (1: 275.4) — *gift, present*

✸**Profer** (1: 38.2) — *to proffer, offer, present*

Proud: see Proude

✸**Proud** (14 [**a** þude=prude in 2.1] [**d** proude in 291.3, 300.3, 326.1] [**dp** proude in in 313.2]), **Proude** (9) — *proud. N.B.* **a** *is much more likely than* **b** *to use the spelling "proude"*

Prude: see Proude

✸**Pryce** (1: 137.4) — *price, reward for victory*

✸**Pryckynge** (1: 229.4) — *to prick, put in line, hence hastening forward, taking their places*

✸**Pryde** (1: 22.2) — *pride*

✸**Pryoresse** (2: 451.3, 455.2) — *prioress, senior nun. Both references are to the Prioress of Kirklees.*

Pryour: see Pryoure

Pryour (1: 260.2), ✷**Pryoure** (2: 88.1, 90.1) — *prior. The #2 official in an abbey, behind the abbot. All three references are to the Prior of St. Mary's, the one sympathetic monk of that foundation (apart from the porter, who probably was a lay member)*

Purpos: see Purpose

✷**Purpose** (1: 27.3 [**a** purpos]) — *purpose, intent, plan*

✷**Purveyed** (2: 131.1, 133.1) — *to purvey: acquired, arranged for, dealt for/with*

✷**Put** (6), **I-pyght** (1: 136.2 [**b** spells as I up pyght) — *to put*

1. *I-pyght: put up, offered as a prize, probably from "put" although there is an archaic verb "pight" meaning "pitched" or "landed" or "placed upon"*

✷**Pye** (1: 194.1 [**a** pie]) — *probably pie-coloured, i.e. parti-coloured, so a coat of pie/pye is a parti-coloured coat. Dobson/Taylor, however, propose to read "cote of pie" as "cortepi," "short jacket."*

Pyght: see I-Pyght under Put

✷**Pyne** (1: 391.2) — *pain. In the phrase "By God's pain"=the crucifixion*

✷**Pype** (1: 137.2) — *pipe. Measure of volume: a standard pipe of wine was 126 gallons (475 liters), although there is no strong reason to think the pipe in the "Gest" was a standard pipe. It may simply have been a barrel.*

✷**Pyte** (2: 90.1, 302.4) — *pity*

✷**Quyke** (1: 57.1) — *quick=alive*

✷**Quyntyn** (1: 315.2 [**ap** Quyntyne]) — *(Saint) Quentin, an early martyr though one rarely invoked in England.. See note on Stanza 315.*

✷**Quyte** (1: 153.4), **I-quyt** (1: 343.4 [**a** I quyte, **b** I quyt]) — *to requite, repay, pay off, quit, be quit of*

1. *"To quyte hym wele his mede" (153.4): to replay him (the Sheriff) as he deserves*
2. *"I-quyt than shall it be" (343.4): then shall the debt will be paid back*

Ran: see Renne

✷**Rather** (1: 200.3) — *rather, in preference to*

Rawe: see Rowe

✷**Raye** (1: 230.2) — *uncertain; most likely meaning arrayed cloth, striped cloth*

Raynolde: see Reynolde

✷**Reddely** (1: 316.2 [**a** redely]), **Redly** (1: 223.2 [**q** rapely]) — *readily, quickly, willingly. Both uses are in the phrase "red(e)ly and anone." **q** in 223.2 reads "rap(e)ly and anon," a phrase also used in "Gamelyn," lines 219, 424*

✷**Rede** (4: 133.4, 137.1, 285.3, 393.3) — *red*

Redely: see Reddely

Reden: see Ryde

Redly: see Reddely

✷**Redy** (8) — *ready*

✷**Reken** (1: 254.3) — *to reckon, deal with, inspect, oversee, manage and collect accounts*

✷**Releyse** (1: 117.2) — *release, abandonment of claim (noun)*

Ran (2: 28.3, 181.3), ✷**Renne** (2: 60.1, 352.2) — *to run: renne=run; ran=ran*
1. *of eyes running with tears (28.3)*
2. *to run away, flee (60.1)*
3. *of running, as in a race (181.3)*
4. *to fight and live afoot, like an archer, rather than ride like a knight (352.2)*

✷**Renowne** (1: 434.4) — *renown, fame, respect*
✷**Rent** (1: 299.3) — *rent, torn, ripped*
✷**Rentes** (1: 378.1) — *rents, fees due from tenants*
✷**Rest** (1: 207.2) — *rest. Refers to the sun going down.*
Reuthe: see Ruthe
✷**Reve** (1: 12.3) — *to reave, rob, ruin, despoil, carry off (see "Reves (2)")*
Revere: see Ryver
✷**Reves** (1: 254.3) — *there are two possible meanings here:*
1. *reeves, i.e. overseers of property*
2. *reavers, robbers, those beyond the law*

Probably the Monk uses the word to mean "reeves," who would be employees of the abbey, but the poet may be trying to invoke both senses: The abbey's reeves may seem like reavers to their tenants.

✷**Rewarde** (1: 121.4 [**a** rewarded]) — *rewarded*
✷**Rewe** (1: 222.2), **Reweth** (1: 259.2) — *to rue, regret*
Reweth: see Rewe
Raynolde (2: 183.3 [**a** Rrynolde ***FJC*** Reynolde], 189.3), ✷**Reynolde** (3: 149.3, 150.1 [**a** Reynode, **b** Reynaud], 293.3)
1. *Little John in his role as "Reynold Greenleaf" (149.3, 150.1, 183.3, 189.3)*
2. *A member of Robin's band known only as Reynold (293.3)*

Richarde: see Rycharde
Riche: see Ryche
Ridinghe: see Ryde
Right: see Ryght
✷**Rightwys** (1: 240.3) — *probably "righteous," but perhaps to be read as two words, "right wise," i.e. thoroughly or truly wise*
✷**Robbe** (1: 12.3) — *to rob, hold up*
Robin: see Robyn
✷**Robyn** (182), **Robyns** (2: 288.4, 400.3 [both printed as "Robyn's]) — *Robin (Hood), Robin's. N.B.* **b** *consistently spells* Robyn, *but* **a** *occasionally has* Robin *or* Robyne (49.1). **f** *usually has* Robyn, *but is never reliable.* **g** *uses* Robin. **c**, **d**, *and* **e**, *as far as they are extant, seem to prefer* Robyn.
✷**Rode** (12)
1. *to ride, rode (a horse) (23.2, 23.4, 188.1, 253.3, 334.4, 373.3, 424,1) Cf. "Ryde."*
2. *the rood, i.e. the cross on which Jesus was crucified (309.4, 333.2, 340.4, 456.2)*

✷**Roger** (2: 452.2, 455.1) — *Sir Roger of Doncaster, Red Roger in some versions of the "Death," who conspired with the Prioress of Kirklees to kill Robin*

✸**Rome** (1: 141.1) — *room, space*
✸**Rose** (2: 398.1, 398.3) — *rose. Both uses are in the phrase "rose garlonde," "rose garland," of disputed meaning but probably a reference to a rose wreathe used as a target.*
Rose-Garlonde: see Rose and Garlonde
✸**Rounde** (1: 120.2) — *round, circular*
✸**Rout** (1: 318.2 [**ad** route]) — *to arouse, stir up*
Route: see Rout
Rawe (1: 306.4 [**d**[vid] rowe]), ✸**Rowe** (4: 60.2, 229.4, 389.4, 448.4) — *row, line, arrangement*
Reuthe (1: 139.1 [**a** ruthe]), ✸**Ruthe** (1: 61.1) — *pity, sympathy, sorrow*
✸**Ryall** (1: 122.2) — *royal, rich, fine*
✸**Ryally** (1: 216.4) — *royally*
Rychard (2: 310.2 [**d** Rycharde], 331.2 [**a** Richarde, **d** Rycharde, **p** Richard]), ✸**Rycharde** (4: 91.2, 360.4, 410.3, 431.4)
1. *Sir Richard at the Lee, Robin's friend (310.2, 331.2, 360.4, 410.3, 431.4)*
2. *Saint Richard (91.2). There has been much debate over which of several obscure saints this might refer to; Richard of Chichester has been the most common suggestion. However, it seems much more likely that the actual reference is to Richard le Scrope, Archbishop of York.*

✸**Ryche** (4: 54.3, 59.3, 71.2 [**a** riche], 71.4, 285.3) — *rich, opulent, both in the sense "wealthy" and "fine, elaborate"*
✸**Ryches** (1: 51.2 [**a** rychesse]) — *riches, wealth*
Rychesse: see Ryches
Reden (1: 134.3), ✸**Ryde** (4: 80.2, 258.4, 302.3, 363.3), **Rydeth** (1: 216.3), **Rydynge** (1: 21.3 [**a** ridinghe]) — *to ride, rides, riding (Reden="rode"). Cf. "Rode" (1).*
Rydeth: see Ryde
Rydynge: see Ryde
Right (1: 63.2), ✸**Ryght** (16 [so **c** in 32.3; **a** right; **b** *omits*] [**a** right in 77.2, 152.3])
1. *intensifier, "indeed," "truly" (32.3, 63.2, 152.3, 185.1, 220.2, 245.4, 264.4, 285.1, 372.3, 400.2, 415.4)*
2. *rights, social position, obligation (37.2, 53.3, 77.2, 89.2, 319.4)*
3. *safe, guarded* (313.1)

✸**Rynge** (1: 137.1) — *ring*
Ryver-syde: see Ryver
Revere (1: 33.2 [**a** ryvere]), ✸**Ryver** (1: 331.3 [**a** ryner *(sic.)*] — *river*
1. As a home of water-fowl (33.2)
2. The river-side (331.3) (***FJC*** ryver-syde)

✸**Sad** (1: 215.3) — *steadfast? firm? Parallel to "seker"=sure, which implies determination*
Sadell: see Sadle
Sadell (1: 76.2 [**a** saydle]), ✸**Sadle** (1: 136.3) — *saddle*
✸**Saf** (1: 224.3) — *save (de facto preposition, not a verb), i.e. except, apart from*
✸**Safly** (1: 117.3), **Savfly** (1: 207.3 [**ab** saufly; ***FJC*** savely]) — *safely, confidently, without danger of contradiction or loss*
Said: see Sayd

Saide: see Sayd
✸**Salte** (1: 56.4) — *salty*
✸**Salued** (1: 102.4) — *(perhaps to be read "salved"? **fg** read "saluted"): to greet,, salute, saluted*
✸**Same** (3: 133.3, 173.4, 195.3) — *same*
✸**Sange** (1: 431.2), **Syngynge** (3: 126.1, 373.3, 445.4) — *to sing, sang, singing*
✸**Sare** (1: 400.4) — *sore, grievously. "He smote them wondrous sare": He hit them very hard.*
Sat: see Syt
✸**Save** (9) — *to save*
1. *in the phrase "God thee save" (31.3, 177.1, 183.1, 264.1, 336.1)*
2. *in the phrase "Criste the save" (177.2, 183.2)*
3. *in the phrase "God me save" (413.2)*
4. *of the knight "saving" his son from the homicide charge by putting up bail (53.3)*

Savely: see Safly
Savfly: see Safly
Sawe: see Se
Say: see Sayd
✸**Say** (19), **Sayd** (195 [**a** typically sayde; **f** inconsistent; **g** said), **Saye** (5: 71.4, 84.2, 124.4, 150.1 [**a** sey], 236.2) — *to say, said (in a few places, like 150.1, "tell, tell me"). Other forms found in some texts include* said, saide, sayde, sayid
Sayde: see Sayd
Saydle: see Sadle
Saye: see Sayd
Sayid: see Sayd
✸**Sayles** (4: 18.1 [**a** Saylis], 20,1 [**a** Saylis], 209.1, 212.1) — *Sayles/Saylis, referring probably to Sayles plantation near the Great North Road. See note on Stanza 18.*
Saylis: see Sayles
✸**Saynt** (8: 54.4 [**a** Seynt], 84.4, 91.2, 201.2 [**a** saynte, ***FJC*** sayntë], 233.1, 315.2, 378.4, 390.4) — *saint*
1. *with reference to Saint Mary's Abbey (54.4, 84.4, 233.1)*
2. *Saint Richard (91.2); cf. "Rycharde"*
3. *Saint Quentin (315.2)*
4. *saynt charity (Saint Charity?) (201.2, 378.4)*
5. *Saint Austin=Augustine (390.4)*

Saynte: see Saynt
✸**Scarlet** (2: 71.1, 230.2) — *scarlet. This might be a color, but is more likely a reference to a type of cloth; see note on Stanza 71.*
Scarlo(c)k: name not used in this edition; see Scathelock
✸**Scathe** (1: 202.3) — *with harmful intent, i.e. the reverse of unscathed*

Scathelock (4: 4.1 [**a** Scarlok], 61.2 [**a** Scarlok], 83.2 [**a** Scarlok], 208.3 [**a** Scarlok]), ✸SCATHELOCKE (6: 17.3 [**a** Scarlo...]), 68.2 [**a** Scarlok], 74.1 [**a** Scarlok], 77.3 [**a** Scarlok], 402.1, 435.3), **Scatheloke** (1: 293.1 [**d** Scathelocke]) — *William Scathelock (so 17.3, 208.3, the only times he is given a Christian name), member of Robin's core band along with Little John and Much the Miller's Son. This is the spelling of* **b**, *which alternates between the spelling "Scathelock" and "Scathelocke." The text of* **a** *gives the name as Scarlok/Scarlock, and this is the reading adopted by other editions in 4.1, 17.3, 61.2, 68.2, 74.1, 77.3, 83.2, 208.3. There is no hint in any copy of the "Gest" of the name Will(iam) Scarlett. In one sense, it hardly matters whether the name is "Scarlock" or "Scathelock"; "Scarlok"/" Scathelocke" is not a surname but a description of his occupation: he is a lock-breaker. (Although, ironically, it is Little John who does the only lock-breaking in the "Gest.")*

Scathelocke: see Scathelock

Schert: see Sherte

✸SCORE (8) — *always a number, twenty*

1. *of a sum of money (68.4)*
2. *seven score of deer (185.3)*
3. *of Robin's seven score followers (229.3, 288.3, 389.3, 416.4 ["seven score and three"], 448.3)*
4. *seven score of bows (342.2)*

Sawe (8), ✸SE (27), **See** (7) — *to see, saw, observe, with the exceptions:*

1. *sea (56.4, 89.1, 97.4)*
2. *In the phrase "Christ thee save and see" (177.2, 183.2)*

✸SEALE (2: 384.2, 386.3) — *seal (noin). Of the royal seal, used to validate documents. See also "sele."*

✸SEASED (1: 356.3) — *to seize, seized (or, perhaps, took* seisin*; see note on Stanza 356)*

✸SECHE (2: 66.2, 250.2) — *to search. Both times in the phrase "to search all England through." Compare "Seke."*

See: see Se

✸SEKE (1: 255.4) — *to seek, search. Compare "Seche."*

✸SEKER (1: 215.3) — *sure, certain, assured (Old English "sikor"; spelled "siker" in Chaucer; also* Sir Orfeo, *line 11, siker; Sands, p. 392; compare Scots "siccar," certain, firm, secure; also prudent, also harsh), serious. In 215.3, where Little John tells his men to eep their hearts "seker and sad," I suspect the sense is "confident and steadfast."*

✸SELE (1: 361.2) —*to seal, to affix the seal (verb). See also "seale."*

✸SELERER (4: 91.4, 93.1, 233.4, 271.3) — *cellarer, i.e. the monk in charge of provisions. See the note on Stanza 93.*

✸SELFE (4: 116.3, 133.3, 279.3, 390.3) — *self*

✸SELL (2: 418.2, 419.3), Solde (1: 53.4) — *to sell, sold*

Semblaunce: see Semblaunte

✸SEMBLAUNTE (1: 22.1 [**a** semblaunce]) — *semblance, appearance*

✸SEMELY (2: 391.1, 440.2), **Semly** (1: 132.4 [**a** se mely, *i.e.* semely}) — *seemly, appropriate, proper. All three uses refer to something seen, so implicitly "attractive, good-looking"*

Semly: see Semely
Send (1: 260.3), ✸**Sende** (2: 16.3, 179.2), **Sent** (6) — *to send, sent*
Sende: see send
Sent: see send
Servaunt: see Servaunte
Servaunt (1: 241.3), ✸**Servaunte** (2: 109.1, 154.3 [**a** servaunt]) — *servant*
✸**Serve** (2: 109.2, 405.4), **Served** (5: 129.2, 191.2, 231.4, 304.2, 392.3), **Servest** (1: 241.4) — *to serve, served, serves*
Served: see Serve
Servest: see Serve
Servyce: see Servyse
Servyce (1: 304.1), ✸**Servyse** (2: 416.2, 417.1) — *service*
✸**Set** (14: 24.2 [**a** sette], 29.4 [**a** sette], 32.2 [**a** sette], 136.1, 223.3 [**q** sette], 263.4, 324.3, 334.3, 385.4, 393.1, 397.1, 432.4, 444.2, 449.2), **Sette** (4: 53.4, 54.1, 142.3 [**a** set], 191.1), **I-sette** (1: 102.1 [**b**^{vid} Isett]) — *to set. See also "Sete."*
1. *set (on one's knee) (24.2, 29.4, 263.4, 385.4, 432.4, 444.2, 449.2)*
2. *set/sat (to dinner) (32.2, 191.1)*
3. *pledged (as collateral) (53.4, 54.1)*
4. *set, sat down, so "to mete isette"="had sat down for their meal" (102.1); it is not entirely clear whether "i-sette" derives "to set" or some other verb, but the intended sense is clear.*
5. *set up, organized (136.1, 397.1)*
6. *set a broach (142.3): to tap a barrel*
7. *placed, aimed (223.3): aiming at the monk's breast*
8. *set at naught, ignore, rebel against (324.3)*
9. *set (on horse) (334.3)*
10. *set before (of a meal) (393.1)*

✸**Sete** (1: 133.3) — *probably "set" (as a noun), i.e. group of people; possibly "seat."*
✸**Seven** (12) — *seven*
✸**Sexty** (1: 186.2) — *sixty*
Sey: see Sayd
Seynt: see Saynt
✸**Shaft** (1: 285.2) — *shaft (of an arrow)*
Shal: see Shall
Shalbe: see under Shall
✸**Shall** (66 [**a** frequently shal; also shalbe in 16.1, 81.2; also woll in 56.2]), **Shalt** (10), **Shalte** (4: 199.2 [**a** shalt], 202.1 [**a** shalt], 245.2 [**p** shalt], 395.1) — *shall, shalt. See also "Sholde."*
Shalt: see Shall
Shalte: see Shall
✸**Shame** (3: 38.2, 80.1, 272.2) — *shame*
✸**Shamefully** (1: 337.2) — *shamefully, i.e. in a way below one's dignity*
✸**Shapen** (1: 50.2 [**a** shaped]), **Shope** (1: 64.2) — *to shape. Shapen=shaped*

Sharp: see Sharpe
Sharp (1: 186.1 [**a** sharpe]), ✸**Sharpe** (3: 140.3, 350.2) — *sharp*
✸**Shawe** (2: 14.2, 284.4) — *copse, thicket, from Old English sceaga. Both uses are in the phrase "the greenwood shaw." The greenwood shaw is also mentioned in the very first lines of the "Monk":*
In somer, when þe shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in feyre forest
To here þe foulys song.
We also find the word several times in Gamelyn*:*
Saugh Adam and Gamelyn under wode shawe *(line 638)*
"What seeke ye, yonge men, under the wode shawes?" *(line 670)*
And walked had a while under the wode shawes *(line 696)*
Hir (1: 334.3), **Her** (7), ✸**She** (13) — *she, her; "her" might also serve for "hers"*
For "Her" specifically:
1. *her (of the Knight's wife) (334.3)*
2. *her (of the Virgin Mary) (236.4, 241.3, 241.4, 242.1, 271.3*
3. *her (of the Prioress of Kirklees) (452.3).*
4. *here: 198.4. Cf. "Here" (2)*
✸**Shefe** (1: 131.3) — *sheaf, sheaves (of arrows)*
Shelinges: see Shelynges
✸**Shelynges** (2: 39.3 [**a** shelinges], 41.3 [**a** selinges; **bc** s.]) — *shillings*
✸**Shende** (1: 140.4), **Shente** (1: 396.4) — *to shame, disgrace; rebuke; also injure, ruin. The first meaning is likely in 140.4, the latter in 396.4*
Shente: see Shende
Sheref: see Sheryf
Sherief: see Sheryf
Sherif: see Sheryf
Sherife: see Sheryf
Sherifes: see Sheryf
Sherifs: see Sheryf
✸**Sherte** (1: 196.2 [**a** chert, ***FJC*** [s]chert]) — *shirt*
Sheref (1: 322.1 [**aq** shyref]), **Sherif** (1: 343.2 [so **a**; **d**^{vid} sheryf; **b** has "knight," so **b** never uses this spelling), ✸**Sheryf** (24 [**a** sherief in 189.1, 347.3, 349.1]), **Sheryfe** (18 [**a** sherife in 163.3; shryef in 183.3, sherief in 198.1]), **Sheryfes** (1: 300.3), **Sheryffes** (1: 153.1), **Sheryves** (2: 348.3 [**a** sherifs], 350.3 [**d** sheryffe[.]]), **Shryves** (1: 287.3 [**d** sheryffes]) — *sheriff, sheriff's. Most shires had a sheriff, appointed by the king. It should be noted that the Sheriff of Nottingham (and Derby) would have no authority in Yorkshire. It should obviously be noted that none of the early prints knew how to spell the word!*
Sheryfe: see Sheryf
Sheryfes: see Sheryf
Sheryves: see Sheryf

✷**Shet** (2: 146.1, 159.4)
1. *to shoot, shot (146.1); cf. "Shete"*
2. *to shut (159.4)*

✷**Shete** (1: 145.2) — *to shoot; cf. "Shet" (1)*

✷**Shoke** (1: 120.3) — *to shake, shook*

✷**Sholde** (9: 52.2 [**a** shulde], 138.4 [**a** shulde], 139.3 [**a** shulde], 142.3 [**a** shulde], 160.4 [(**a**) ***FJC*** shuld], 170.4 [**a** shulde], 283.2, 406.4, 426.3), **Sholdest** (4: 121.4 [**a** shuldest], 170.2 [**a** shuldest], 298.3, 307.3) — *should. See also "Shall."*

✷**Sholder** (1: 122.3 [**a** shulder]) — *shoulder*

✷**Sholderd** (1: 141.1 [**a** shulderd]) — *probably "shoved aside," related to the word for "shield," hence "warded off"*

Sholdest: see Sholde

✷**Shone** (1: 193.4) — *shoon, i.e. shoes*

Shope: see Shapen

Shot: see Shote

Shot (9), ✷**Shote** (11), **Shoted** (1: 289.4), **Shoteth** (2: 283.3, 284.1) — *to shoot, shot, shoots. Cf. "Shotynge" (2)*

Shoted: see Shote

Shoteth: see Shote

✷**Shotynge** (2: 286.4, 423.2) — *shooting*
1. *as a noun, referring to an archery contest (286.4)*
2. *participle of "to shoot," so "shooting" (423.2). Cf. "Shote."*

Shoulde: see Sholde

Shouldest: see Sholde

Shrewde: see Shrewed

Shrewde (1:164.2), ✷**Shrewed** (2: 104.3, 181.2 [**a** shrewde]) — *wicked, evil, vile, unrepentant. In 104.3, 164.2 it probably bears the sense "too smart for his place," "striving to go beyond what is proper"; in 181.2 it begins to approach the modern sense of "shrewd, tricky."*

Shryef: see Sheryf

Shryves: see Sheryf

Shuld: see Sholde

Shulde: see Sholde

Shulder: see Sholder

Shulderd: see Sholderd

Shuldest: see Sholde

Shyref: see Sheryf

✷**Shyt** (1: 314.1 [**p** schet]) — *to shut*

Silver: see Sylver

Sir: see Syr

Sirs: see Syr

Sith: see Syth

Sitteth: see Sytteth
Slawe: see Sle
Slayne: see Sle
I-Slayne (2: 138.4 [**a** slayne, **b** I slayne], 337.2 [**a** slayne, **b** I slayne]), **Slawe** (1: 306.2), **Slayne** (1: 388.3), ✸SLE (1: 453.2), **Slewe** (3: 53.1, 366.3, 447.1) **Slone** (1: 428.2), **Sloo** (2: 186.4 [**a** slo], 438.4) — to *slay, slew, slain*
✸SLEPE (1: 441.2) — *to sleep*
✸SLESTE (1: 146.2 [**a** slet, slit]), **Slist** (1: 292.2 [**d** clyst, **f** clefte]) — *to slice, sliced, cut in half. For 146.2, compare* **a***'s reading slet, slit — not the same action as to slice, though frequently involving the same tools*
Slet: see Sleste
✸SLEVE (1: 407.4) — *sleeve*
Slewe: see Sle
Slist: see Sleste
Slo: see Sle
Slone: see Sle
Sloo: see Sle
✸SMALL (2: 102.4, 445.3) — *small*
✸SMARTE (1: 188.2 [**a** smerte]), **Smerte** (1: 196.4)
1. *smart, quick, efficient (188.2)*
2. *to suffer pain (196.4)*

✸SMARTLY (1: 396.2) — *smartly, i.e. efficiently, properly, promptly*
Smerte: see Smarte
Smote: see Smyte
Smote (3: 348.3, 400.4, 402.4), ✸SMYTE (5: 200.3, 305.2, 360.1, 406.3, 407.1) — *to smite, smote, hit, attack*
✸SO (56 [**a** soo in 323.4, **b** omits, **q** so]), **Soo** (1: 118.4 [**a** so]) — *so; sometimes with the sense "thus"*
Solde: see Sell
Som: see Some
✸SOME (9 6.4 [**a** som], 7.3(x2) [**a** som in 7.3(1)] [**a** som *in 55.1, but with the meaning* somme="sum"], 210.3 [=210.4 *DT*], 345.3, 378.3, 419.3) — *some*
✸SOMERS (3: 216.2, 224.4, 374.1) — *sumpters, sumpter-horses, packhorses, baggage animals. For the various types of medieval horse, see the note on Coursers. See also "Somer's" and the reading of* **b** *in 23.4.*
✸SOMER'S (1: 23.4 [**a** somer, **b** somers]) — *summer's*
✸SOMME (1: 55.1 [**a** som]) — *sum, amount owed*
✸SOMTYME (1: 437.1) — *sometime, i.e. once, at a time in the past*
Son: see Sone

✷**Sone** (7: 4.2 [**a** son], 21.4, 52.1, 342.1, 344.4, 385.2, 421.4), **Soone** (2: 191.1 [**a** sone], 417.2) — *son* or *soon*
1. *son: of Much the miller's son (4.2) and the Knight's son (52.1)*
2. *soon (21.4, 191.1, 342.1, 344.4, 385.2, 417.2, 421.4)*

✷**Songe** (2: 134.3, 317.2) — *song*

✷**Sonne** (2: 64.2, 207.2) — *sun*

Soo: see so

Soone: see son

✷**Sore** (6: 95.1, 168.1, 302.1, 396.3, 402.4, 442.1)
1. *ill, low, vile(ly) (95.1)*
2. *bitterly, in great earnest (168.1, 442.1)*
3. *sorely, severely (of Little John's knee injury) (302.1)*
4. *intensifier: very much so, extremely (396.3)*
5. *strongly enough to be painful (402.4)*

Sori: see Sory

Soriar: see Soryer

✷**Sorowe** (4: 96.3, 191.4, 341.1, 438.4) — *sorrow; also burden, grief*

✷**Sory** (4: 46.1 [**a** sori], 89.4, 189.2, 239.2) — *sorry, poor, substandard, shabby, painful*

✷**Soryer** (1: 23.3 [**a** soriar]) — *sorrier, more unfortunate*

✷**Sote** (1: 195.3 [**a** sute]): *suit, i.e. clothing*

✷**Soth** (6: 130.2 [**a** soothe], 256.2, 294.4, 339.2, 375.4, 424.2), **Sothe** (1: 65.2) — *sooth, truth*
1. *in the phrase "for sooth" (294.4[**d** forsothe], 339.2)*
    1A. *in the phrase "for sooth as I thee say" or variants (339.3, 375.4, 424.2). See note on Stanza 373 (373.2, "Forsoth as I you say"); also "Forsoth."*
2. *in the sense of "learning the truth" (256.2)*

Sothe: see soth

✷**Soule** (2: 128.1, 456.1) — *soul*

Soupe: see Suppe

Souped: see Suppe

Souper: see Super

Spake: see Speke

✷**Spare** (3: 342.3 [**a** spared], 399.3, 402.2), **Spared** (1: 425.3) — *to spare, free of an obligation; also avoid, dodge*

Spared: see spare

✷**Speciall** (1: 452.3) — *special. Since it refers to the Prioress of Kirklees and her relationship with Sir Roger of Doncaster, it very likely means "lover." In Chaucer, "especial" carries the meaning "intimate" (Chaucer/Benson, p. 1244); the Old French "especial" means specifically "beloved" (Emerson, p. 439, citing p. 154, "Signs of the Doom," lines [5-6}: "A cloyster monk loved him ful wēl, And was til him ful special"). In the century after the "Gest" was completed, we find a song attributed to Henry VIII which concludes, "Adew, myne owne lady, Adew, my specyall, Who had my hart trewly, Be suere, and ever shall" (Greene, p. 161).*

✷**Spede** (3: 112.2, 113.4, 153.2)
1. *to speed, i.e. find success, in variations on the phrase "[God] grant us well to speed" (112.2, 153.2)*
2. to *hasten (away) (113.4)*

Spake (2: 84.1, 103.3), ✷**Speke** (3: 225.3, 261.2, 345.2), **Spekest** (1: 239.3) — *to speak, speaks, spoke*

Spekest: see speke

✷**Spende** (2: 49.4, 92.3), **Spent** (2: 380.3, 433.3) — *to spend (both in the sense of spending time and spending money), spent*

Spendyng: see spendynge

Spendyng (1: 383.2), ✷**Spendynge** (2: 278.1, 378.3) — *spending. See also "Spendynge-Sylver."*

✷**Spendynge-Sylver** (1: 245.3) — *spending-silver. If we assume a date before the reign of Edward III, there would have been no gold coinage, only silver pennies, so "spending-silver" is the effective equivalent of "spending-money." In any case, "silver" has long been used as a synonym for "money" — e.g. 1 Timothy 6:10, "The love of money is the root of all evil," actually says that "silver-love is the root of all evil." See also "Spendynge."*

Spent: see Spende

✷**Spones** (1: 175.3 [**a** sponis]) — *spoons*

Sponis: see Spones

✷**Spore** (1: 258.1), **Spores** (2: 78.2 [**a** sporis], 277.4) — *spur, spurs*

Spores: see Spore

Sporis: see Spore

✷**Sporned** (1: 161.1) — *spurned, i.e. attacked, disdained — in this case, since John spurned the door with his foot, "kicked"*

✷**Spred** (2: 42.1 [**a** sprede, **c** spored *(sic.)*], 247.1), **Spredde** (1: 316.1 [so **abp**; **d** spred]), **Sprede** (1: 11.2) — *to spread, usually of spreading a cloth*
1. *Of Little John spreading his mantle to count money (42.1, 247.1)*
2. *To spread a board, i.e. have one's meal (11.2)*
3. *To spread a cloth for the meal (316.1)*

Spredde: see Spred

Sprede: see Spred

✷**Squyer** (2: 14.3, 80.3 [**a** squyre]), **Squyere** (1: 7.3 [**a** squyer]), **Squyre** (1: 53.2), **Squyres** (1: 434.3) — *squire, squires, i.e. esquires, the social rank below knight (but above Robin's and John's status of yeoman)*

Squyere: see Squyer

Squyre: see Squyer

Squyres: see Squyer

✷**Stable** (1: 101.1) — *stable*

✷**Stalworthe** (1: 408.4) — *stalwart, brave, reliable*

Stande: see Stonde

✷**Stare** (1: 122.4) — *to stare*

Start: see Sterte
✸**State** (1: 48.4) — *state, state of being, condition, but also perhaps "estate," status in society*
✸**Staves** (1: 429.4) — *staves, staffs; in this context, crutches for the lame residents of Nottingham*
✸**Stede** (2: 133.2, 376.2), **Steed** (1: 81.3 [**a** stede]) — *stead, place, role in society*
Steed: see Stede
✸**Stele** (1: 174.3) — *steel*
✸**Sterope** (1: 22.3 [(**a**) ***FJC*** styrop]) — *stirrup*
Stert: see Sterte
Stert (3: 125.1, 211.1, 351.1), ✸**Sterte** (5: 93.2, 120.1 [**a** stert], 159.3 [**a** start], 340.1, 396.1) — *to start, started, went, proceeded*
Stifly: see Styfly
Stil: see still
Stil: see Styll
Still: see Styll
Stande (3: 146.4, 390.3, 404.4), ✸**Stonde** (5: 81.3 [**a** stande], 167.4 [**a** stande], 218.2, 348.2, 351.4), **Stode** (13), **Stoode** (1: 74.1 [**a** stode]), **Stondynge** (1: 375.2) — *to stand, stood, standing*
✸**Stone** (1: 204.4) — *stone. It is not clear whether this stone is a rock or is the stone of a fruit; see note on Stanza 204.*
Stode: see Stonde
Stoode: see Stonde
✸**Stout** (1: 355.4), **Stoute** (1: 163.4) — *stout(-hearted)*
Stoute: see Stout
✸**Strayt** (1: 176.3 [**a** steyte *(sic.)*, ***FJC*** streyte]), **Strayte** (1: 328.3 [**ap** streyght, **d** streyte), **Streyt** (1: 262.1) — *straight, directly, (leading/going) directly to*
Strayte: see Strayt
Strenges: see Stryntes
✸**Strete** (4: 18.2, 21.2, 209.2 [***FJC*** Watlynge-Strete], 344.2) — *street, road, pathway. Often used of Roman roads.*
1. *of "Watling Street"/Ermine Street/The Great North Road (18.2, 209.2)*
Streyght: see Strayt
Streyt: see Strayt
Streyte: see Strayt
✸**Stroke** (1: 46.2) — *conflict, fighting; not the same meaning as "strokes."*
✸**Strokes** (2: 165.2 [**a** strokis], 165.4 [**a** strokis]) — *strokes, blows. Not to be confused with "stroke" above*
Strokis: see Strokes
✸**Stronge** (8) — *strong; also sometimes "exceptional," "beyond the usual"*
✸**Stryfe** (1: 46.2) — *strife*
Strenges (1: 131.2 [**a** strynges]), ✸**Strynges** (2: 131.2, 215.4) — *strings (of a bow)*

✷**Stuarde** (3: 156.3, 157.3, 158.1) — *steward, keeper of the provisions, perhaps manager of some part of a household*
✷**Styf** (1: 373.1), **Styffe** (1: 437.2) — *stiff, rigid, upright*
Styffe: see Styf
✷**Styfly** (1: 167.4 [**a** stifly]) — *stiffly, firmly, without yielding, rigidly*
✷**Styll** (8: 43.1, 74.1 [**a** stil]. 122.1, 189.1 [**a** still], 248.1, 261.1, 281.4, 347.4 [**a** still])
1. *in the phrase "Little John let it lie full still" (43.1, 248.1)*
2. *still, unmoving (74.1, 122.1, 189.1, 347.4)*
3. *silent, no longer part of the conversation (261.1)*
4. *continuing: "he is still there" (281.4)*

Styrop: see Sterope
✷**Such** (4: 50.2 [**c** suche], 209.3 [***FJC*** *omits*], 252.4, 260.3), **Suche** (2: 34.3 [**c** syche], 160.1), **Sych** (1: 408.1) — *such*
Suche: see such
✷**Suffre** (1: 115.3), **Suffreth** (1: 89.3) — *to suffer, suffers*
Suffreth: see Suffre
✷**Super** (1: 191.1 [**a** souper]) — *supper*
✷**Suppe** (1: 315.4 [**ap** soupe]), **Supped** (1: 193.1 [**a** souped]) — *to sup, supped, to eat supper*
Sute: see Sote
✷**Swannes** (1: 33.1) — *swans*
Sware: see Swere
✷**Swerde** (3: 167.1 [**a** sworde], 171.3, 211.3, 305.1), **Swerdes** (1: 350.1) — *sword, swords*
Swerdes: see Swerde
Sware (1: 110.1), ✷**Swere** (6), **Swore** (6: 100.1, 147.1, 239.1, 333.1 [**ap** sware], 359.2, 390.4), **Sworne** (1: 204.1) — *to swear, swear an oath, swore, sworn*
Sworde: see Swerde
✷**Sworde-Men** (1: 169.3) — *swordsmen*
Swore: see Swere
Sworne: see Swere
Sych: see Such
✷**Syde** (4: 80.4, 299.4, 331.3 [***FJC*** ryuer-side for ryver side], 398.1), **Sydes** (1: 196.4) — *side, sides*
Sydes: see Syde
✷**Syght** (5: 132.4, 184.2, 184.3 [**a** syghtes], 187.2, 391.1) — *sight, sights (often with the sense of an amazing thing to see)*
1. *a seemly sight (132.4)*
    1A. *a wondrous seemly sight (391.1)*
2. *a fair sight (184.2, (184.3))*

Syghtes: see Syght

✷**Sylver** (7: 132.3 [**a** silver], 175.1 [**a** silver], 179.3 [**a** silver], 191.2 [**a** silver], 238.1, 252.1, 285.2) — *silver. (Note that* **b** *always uses the spelling "sylver," and* **a** *always has "silver" where it exists.) See also "Spendyinge-silver."*
1. *white silver/silver white (132.3, 191.2, 285.2)*
2. *silver vessels (175.1, 179.3)*
3. *silver as money (238.1, 252.1)*

✷**Symple** (4: 23.2, 61.4, 97.3, 233.2) — *simple*
1. *simple array (23.2), simple weeds (97.3) i.e. plain clothing*
2. *simple cheer, i.e. a basic source of happiness (61.4)*
3. *a person who is simple, i.e. ordinary, not an exalted person, not of a special position (233.2). The Cellarer seemingly refers to himself as being "symple here" not to admit to being a humble person but to imply he's more important elsewhere — as if to say, "Things would be different if I had you at home."*

Syngynge: see Sange

✷**Synne** (1: 10.2) — *sin, seemingly in the technical church sense of an action endangering the soul, since the reference is to "deadly sin." It is interesting that Robin doesn't consider robbing someone a deadly sin but does consider harming someone in a woman's company to be such a sin.*

Sir (3: 149.1, 157.3, 188.4 [n.b. **b** omits all three of these readings; the spelling "sir" is found only in **a**]), ✷**Syr** (43 [in about 12 of these **a** has "sir"]), **Syrs** (1: 321.3 [**a** Sirs]) — *sir, sirs*
1. *of Sir Richard by name (many other references are to him as "Sir" or "Sir Knight") (310.2, 331.2, 360.4, 410.3, 431.4)*
2. *addressed to Robin Hood, even though he is a yeoman (34.2, 43.4, 55.3, 59.2, 78.2, 79.2, 243.3, 248.3, 254.2, 415.1)*
3. *addressed to the Abbot of St. Mary's, even though he is a cleric (103.1, 108.1, 121.1, 124.1)*
4. *To the Sheriff's steward, even though he is a servant (156.3, 157.3)*
5. *addressed to the Cellarer of St. Mary's, even though he is a cleric (233.4, 244.4)*
6. *To the King in his disguise as an abbot (376.3, 383.2, 387.1, 405.3, 405.4)*
7. *Of Sir Roger of Donkesly/Doncaster (452.2, 455.1)*

Syrs: see Syr

Sat (1: 122.1), ✷**Syt** (2: 231.2, 280.3) , **Syteth** (1: 48.3 [(**a**) ***FJC*** sitteth]) — *to sit, sat, sits*

✷**Syth** (2: 162.1 [**a** sith], 257.2)
1. *since (162.1)*
2. *then, thereafter (257.2)*

✷**Syx** (1: 290.1) — *six*

✷**Table** (1: 120.2) — *table*

✷**Take** (15), **I-take** (3: 281.1 [**bd** I take], 327.1 [**abdq** I take], 338.3 [**a** take, **bd** I take]), **Toke** (19) — *to take, taken, took*

Takles: see Takyll

Takles (1: 288.2), ✸**Takyll** (2: 398.4, 404.3) — *tackle, equipment; in the "Gest" it seems to mean primarily "arrows"*

✸**Tale** (4: 126.2, 255.2, 273.1, 356.2) — *tale, story*

✸**Tap** (1: 160.1) — *tap, i.e. blow, buffet, injury*

✸**Targe** (1: 385.1) — *conjectural reading, for* **b***'s "tarpe." The meaning is in any case uncertain. "Tarpe" is unattested. "Targe" is "shield" (Emerson, p. 446), "(small) shield" (Sisam, p. 158, line 55 of "On the Death of Edward III"), "shield" (Chaucer/Benson, p. 1296; in the* Canterbury Tales, *I.471, the Wife of Bath's hat is said to be "As brood as is a bokeler or a targe"; in* Anelida and Arcite, *line 33, we read of "many a bright helm, and many a spere and targe"). Whatever the object is, it has to be able to bear the king's seal. The conjecture "targe" is the smallest change that can make any sense at all, but the object in question is in fact almost certainly something* written *and sealed, such as a charter, writ, or commission. It may be that the word the poet used has simply vanished. See also the discussion on Stanza 385 and the textual note on Stanza 385.*

Taried: see Tarry

✸**Tarry** (1: 268.4 [conjectural reading]), **Taryed** (2: 135A.2, 143.1 [**a** taried]) — *to tarry, tarried, delayed, waited*

Taryed: see Tarry

✸**Teche** (1: 199.3) — *to teach*

✸**Teeris** (1: 58.1 [**a** teris]), **Teres** (1: 28.3 [**a** teris]) (2: 28.3, 58.1) — *tears, teardrops*

Tel: see tell

Tel (1: 322.4 [**q** tell]), ✸**Tell** (11: 1.3 [**a** tel], 11.3, 39.1 [**a** tel], 41.2, 45.1, 55.2, 178.4, 243.2, 246.2, 265.4, 267.2), **Tolde** (10 [**a** telde in 323.1]), **Toldest** (1: 241.1) — *to tell, told, related the tale of (but "counted out" in 247.3)*

✸**Ten** (2: 39.3, 41.3) — *ten*

✸**Tene** (4: 78.4, 128.2, 211.2, 329.4) — *distress, harm, trouble; in 211.2 and perhaps 329.4 there is also a hint of anger, vexation. For the phrase "tray and tene" (211.2) see the note on "Tray."*

Teris: see Teeris

✸**Tethe** (1: 225.4) — *teeth, but the line "Maugre in theyr tethe" is probably idiomatic for "against their will"*

✸**Than** (55 [**a** thanne in 177.3]), **Then** (33 [**a** thanne in 60.4, 61.1]) — *then or than, depending on context; none of the prints seem to distinguish the two reliably*

✸**Thanke** (4: 242.3, 267.4, 269.2, 312.1), **Thanked** (1: 432.3) — *to thank, thanked*

Thanked: see Thanke

Thanne: see Than

✸**That** (186) — *that*

✸**The** (sometimes, though infrequently, found in the abbreviated form **ye=þe, þ^{e}**) (447) — *the or thee, depending on context. For the sense "thee," cf. also "Thou," "Thy."*

✸**Thefe** (1: 221.3) — *thief*

Thei: see They

Their: see Theyr

✸THEM (31), **Theym** (1: 430.2) — *them*
Then: see Than (yes, they're different words, but the prints don't distinguish!)
✸THER (4: 135.2, 173.2 [**a** theyre], 283.3 [**d** thee; ***FJC*** *allther for all ther*], 356.2); *cf. "There"*
1. *there (135.2)*
2. *there, or perhaps "other" (283.3)*
3. *their (173.2, 356.2)*

✸THERE (54) — *usually "there"; perhaps sometimes "their"; cf. "Ther."*
✸THEREOF (4: 13.1, 63.2, 227.3, 245.4) — *thereof*
1. *in the phrase "thereof no force" (13.1, 227.3)*

✸THERETO (3: 172.4 [**a** there too, ***FJC*** theretoo], 397.2, 440.4), **Therto** (3: 392.2, 393.4 414.2) — thereto
Theretoo: see Thereto
✸THERFORE (5: 152.3, 156.1, 157.3, 242.3, 329.4) — *therefore*
✸THERFRO (1: 442.2) — *therefrom, i.e. from there, far away from*
✸THERIN (3: 70.4, 101.3, 194.4) — *therein*
Therto: see Thereto
✸THESE (13) — *these*
✸THEY (94 [**a** thei in 175.2]) — *they*
Theym: see Them
Their (1: 186.1 [**b** his]), ✸THEYR (16), **Theyre** (1: [**a** theyre in 173.2 for **b** ther], 284.1 [**d** there, ***FJC*** allther for all theyr]) — *their*
Theyre: see Theyr
Thi: see Thy
Thinke: see Thynk
Thinketh: see Thynk
Thinne: see Thynne
Thirde: see Thyrde
✸THIS (53 [**a** thys in 35.2, 65.4]) — *this*
Tho: see Though
✸THOROWE (2: 66.2, 250.2) — *through, throughout; cf. "Through"*
1. *in the phrase "to search all England through" (66.2, 250.2)*

✸THOSE (1: 47.1) — *those*
✸THOU (119) — *thou, you. For another form/spelling, cf. "The," i.e. "The(e)"; also "thy." Also cf. "You."*
Tho (2: 160.3 [**a** thougt *(sic.)*, ***FJC*** though], 196.4 [**a** though]), ✸THOUGH (5: 119.1, 162.3, 233.2, 306.4, 426.4) — *though, although, even if*
✸THOUGHT (4: 82.2, 83.1, 153.3, 167.3) — *thought*
✸THOUSAND (1: 119.1) — *thousand*
✸THRE (21 [**a** three in 73.2) — *three*
Three: see Thre
✸THROUGH (3: 352.4, 451.2, 455.4) — *through; also "by means of"; cf. "Thorowe."*
✸THROWE (1: 448.2) — *short time*

✸**Thryes** (1: 292.1) — *thrice*
✸**Thryfte** (1: 220.1) — *fortune, wealth, prosperity, luck*
✸**Thus** (9: 143.1, 157.2, 164.4, 280.1, 297.2, 322.1, 404.2, 409.3, 422.4) — *thus*
✸**Thy** (54 [**a** thi in 121.1]) — *thy, your. Cf. "The" (i.e. "The(e)"), "Thou."*
✸**Thyder** (2: 371.4, 442.4) — *thither*
✸**Thyderwarde** (1: 187.3) — *thitherward, toward that place*
✸**Thyn** (2: 241.1, 409.1), **Thyne** (1: 203.3 [**a** thyn]) — *thine, your*
Thyne: see Thyn
✸**Thynge** (1: [***FJC*** in 167.3], 315.1) — *thing*
✸**Thynk** (1: 162.4 [**a** thinke]), **Thynkest** (1: 73.4), **Thynketh** (4: 37.2 [**c** thynke], 44.3 [**a** thinketh], 166.2 [**a** thinketh], 391.2) — *to think, thinks*
Thynkest: see Thynk
Thynketh: see Thynk
✸**Thynne** (2: 44.4 [**a** thine, ***FJC*** thinne], 70.2) — *thin; both times with reference to clothing, so ragged, threadbare*
✸**Thyrde** (1: 9.3 [**a** .iij., ***FJC*** thirde) — *third (as in first, second, third, not the fraction)*
✸**Thyrty** (1: 418.4) — *thirty*
Thys: see This
Tidinges: see Tydynge
Til: see Tyll
Till: see Tyll
Times: see Tyme
✸**To** (242), **Too** (2: 130.4 [**a** topay for to pay, 254.3) — *to; also sometimes too (but both instances of "too" in the "Gest" actually mean "too").*
To-Broke: see Broke
✸**To-Fore** (1: 223.3) — *before, toward, aiming for, to the fore(front). In the "Gest," Much is aiming straight at the Monk's breast.*
Togeder: see Togyder
Togeder (1: 409.4 [**b** to geder]), ✸**Togyder** (7: 32.1 [**a** togeder], 168.1 [**b** to gyder, **a** togedere], 173.2 [**b** to gyder], 395.4 [**b** to gyder], 424.1, 448.1 [**b** to gyder, **e** togeder], 453.1 [**b** to gyder]) — *together*
Togedere: see Togyder
✸**To-Morne** (1: 200.1 [**b** to morne, **a** to morowe, ***FJC*** to-morowe) — *rare form, probably "tomorrow" but possibly "this morning"; cf. To-Morrowe*
✸**To-Morrowe** (1: 84.3) — *tomorrow. Cf. To-morne*
To-Morowe: see To-Morrowe
Toke: see Take
✸**Token** (1: 252.3) — *token, sign, symbol*
Tolde: see Tell
Toldest: see Tell
✸**Tonge** (1: 241.1) — *tongue*
Too: see To

Toune: see Towne

✸**Tournement** (1: 116.1) — *tournament, i.e. presumably contest of knightly skills. These were particularly popular in the reign of Edward III, who needed to train up knights for his wars; Edward himself not infrequently took part. Prior to the time of Edward III, a tournament might be more of a disorderly melee — much more dangerous than the later tilting events.*

✸**Towarde** (1: 423.3) — *toward*

Toune (2: 84.3, 322.3 [**adq** towne]), ✸**Towne** (5: 158.2, 372.4, 423.3, 428.3) — *town*

✸**Tray** (1: 211.2) —*misery (so Sisam, from Old English "trega"). Also possibly a feeling of betrayal. The line "with tray and with tene" occurs also in the Townely/Wakefield Play of Noah, line 533; Sisam, p. 203; Rose-Wakefield, p. 105, seems to interpret it there as "grief."*

✸**Traytour** (1: 319.2) — *traitor*

✸**Tre** (17), **Tree** (8) — *tree* (both **a** and **b** are inconsistent in their spelling)

1. *"by God/him/the Lord that dyed on a tree" (God that: 62.4, 101.4, 110.2, 123.4, 307.2, him that: 147.2, 341.2; the Lord that: 303.4)*
2. *Robin's trystel tree (274.4, 286.2, 298.2, 387.4, 412.2). For this, see the note on Stanza 176.*
3. *A grene wode tree: (79.4, 195.2, 197.4, 237.4, 262.2, 310.4, 312.4, 328.4, 335.2, 377.2, 449.4)*
4. *just some tree to lean on (3.2)*
5. *Compare "bowe-tree" as a unit of measure in 72.4*

✸**Treason** (1: 296.3) — *treason, betrayal*

✸**Treasure** (1: 276.2) **Tresoure** (1: 67.2) —*treasury (and surely to be pronounced "treasurë," not "treasoor"). Both instances involve Robin telling John to go to the treasury so that he can make a gift of money. See also "Tresure," as in "Tresure hous."*

Tree: see Tre

Trenyte: see Trynyte

Tresoure: see Treasure

Tresourehows/Tresoure-Hows : see Tresure, Hous

✸**Tresure** (1: 174) — *treasure. Used only in the phrase tresure hous, which is probably equivalent to "Treasure" (which see).*

Treue: see Trewe

Treuth: see trouth

Treue (1: 362.2), ✸**Trewe** (11), **True** (2: 109.1, 154.2 [**a** has four other uses of "true" as opposed to "trewe"]) — *true*

Treuth: see Trouth

✸**Trewely** (2: 109.2, 272.3) — *truly*

✸**Trewest** (1: 249.3) — *truest*

Treuth (1: 267.2), ✸**Trouth** (3: 39.1 [(**a**) truth, **c** treuthe], 246.2 [**p** trouth], 278.3), **Trouthe** (3: 41.2 [**a** truthe, **c** truthe], 55.2 [**a** trouth], 273.3)— *truth, but also perhaps "trouthe," as in Chaucer's "Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe" (*The "Franklin's Tale," *line 1479), a broad term for fidelity (=troth), honesty, humility, and understanding one's place*

Trouthe: see Trouth

✸**Trouthes** (1: 173.2) — *troths, faithfulness; cf. "Trouth."*
✸**Trowe** (3: 45.3, 409.2, 420.4) — *to know, understand*
True: see trewe
✸**Trust** (1: 349.3 [**a** truste, **d** struste *sic.)*]) — *to trust. Cf. "Trusty"; note that* **a** *appears to confuse the verb "to trust" (trust/truste) and the adjective "trusty" (truste/trusty), while* **b** *uses "trust" for the former and "trusty" for the latter.*
Truste (1: 207.4 [so **a**; **b** trusty]), ✸**Trusty** (1: 215.4) — *trusty. Cf. "Trust"; note that* **a** *appears to confuse the verb "to trust" (trust/truste) and the adjective "trusty" (truste/trusty), while* **b** *uses "trust" for the former and "trusty" for the latter.*
Truth: see Trouth
Trenyte (1: 180.2), ✸**Trynyte** (1: 359.2) — *trinity, i.e. the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*
✸**Trystell** (4: 274.4, 286.2, 298.2 [**d** trystell], 387.4), **Trystyll** (1: 412.2): *always in the phrase "trystell tree" (and usually hyphenated by* ***FJC****). The phrase probably means "trysting tree," i.e. "tree under which to meet," although it might be "trusty tree" (this is the usual meaning of the word "trist" in Middle English, and* **fg** *convert it to "trusty tree"). See also the note on Stanza 176.*
Trystyll: see Trystell
✸**Twayne** (1: 435.2) — *twain, i.e. two*
Twelfe: see Twelve
Twelfe (1: 86.3), ✸**Twelve** (5: 79.3, 152.2, 199.1, 315.3 [so **b**; **ap** .xl.=forty], 433.2) — *twelve*
✸**Twenty** (7) — *twenty*
1. *twenty wynter (52.1)*
2. *twenty marke, i.e. 13 and a third pounds (150.4, 171.2, 243.3, 246.3, 270.3)*
3. *twenty yere and two, referring to Robin's last years in the greenwood (450.2)*

✸**Two** (15) — *two*
I-twyse (1: 272.1 [**b** I twyse]), ✸**Twyse** (1: 401.1) — *twice*
Tydenge: see Tydynge
Tydenges: see Tydynge
Tydinges: see Tydynge
Tydenge (1: 386.4), **Tydinges** (1: 345.3 [**a** tidinges, **d** tydynges]), ✸**Tydynge** (2: 43.3 [**a** tidynges], 394.3), **Tydynges** (2: 178.3, 387.1) — *tidings, news*
Tydynges: see Tydynge
Tyl: see tyll
Tyl (2: 109.3, 156.2 [**a** til]), ✸**Tyll** (13 [**a** till in 6.3, to in 32.2]) — *till, until (sometimes with a sense of "up to," "up until")*
✸**Tylleth** (1: 13.4) — *to till, tills, does farm work*
✸**Tyme** (3: 96.3, 308.3, 441.2), **Tymes** (2: 146.1, 170.3 [**a** times]) — *time, times, occasions*
Tymes: see Tyme
✸**Tyndes** (1: 186.1) — *tines, points, of the antlers. The amazing nature of the animal is that it is said to have sixty tines; normally, to bag a twelve-point buck is a significant accomplishment.*

✸**Tyne** (1: 398.4) — *(to be) separated from, (to be) deprived of*
✸**Uncurteys** (1: 159.1) — *uncourteous*
✸**Under** (25) — *under*
Understode: see Understond
✸**Understond** (1: 216.4), **Understonde** (1: 356.2 [**b** under stonde, ***FJC*** understode]) — *to understand*
Understonde: see Understond
✸**Undertake** (1: 96.2) — *to undertake, so (in this case) to warrant, guarantee; see the Townely/Wakefield Play of Noah, line 274; Sisam, p. 194; in Chaucer, sometimes "assert" (Chaucer/Benson, p. 1301)*
✸**Unketh** (3: 6.4 [**a** unkoutg *(sic.)*, ***FJC*** unkouth], 18.3 [**a** unknuth *(sic.)*, ***FJC*** unkouth], 209.3) — *unfamiliar, unknown, exotic; Old English un-cūþ; compare Chaucer's "Troilus," 2.151; "House of Fame" 1279; "Sir Orfeo." line 535.*
Unkouth: see Unketh
✸**Unneth** (1: 358.3) — *with difficulty. Old English un-ēaþe; Sir Orfeo, lines 211, 416; Minot's "On the Death of Edward III," line 4; common in Chaucer*
✸**Unto** (2: 5.2 [**a** untoo], 134.4), **Untoo** (1: 5.2) — *unto, to*
Untoo: see unto
✸**Untyll** (3: 54.2, 97.2, 390.3) — *until, unto, to*
✸**Up** (18) — *up*
Up-Chaunce: see under Chaunce
✸**Upon** (13) — *upon*
Us: see We
✸**Venyson** (1: 393.2) — *venison, deer meat*
✸**Verysdale** (1: 126.4) — *Verysdale. Location uncertain; see note on Stanza 126.*
✸**Vessell** (3: 175.1, 179.3, 191.3) — *probably both a single and a collective plural: vessels, drinking cups, serving utensils*
✸**Vouch** (1: 381.4) — *to vouch, give, commit, offer*
✸**Vylaynesly** (1: 113.2) — *villainously, vilely, with vile*
✸**Walke** (4: 18.1, 80.4, 209.1, 368.3), **Walked** (3: 2.2, 329.1, 344.2) **Walketh** (1: 14.2) — *to walk, walked, walks*
Walked: see Walke
***Walketh: see Walk*e**
✸**Walle** (1: 314.4), **Walles** (1: 318.4) — *wall, walls*
✸**Walled** (1: 309.4) — *walled, surrounded by walls*
Walles: see walle
✸**Wan** (2: 148.4 [**a** wane], 425.1):
1. *probably "dwelt"; perhaps "won" (148.4). Note that* **a** *and* **b** *have different forms here; it is possible that* **a** *intended a different verb than* **b**. *In combination with wonnynge=dwelling, then "your wonnying wane"="where do you earn your living" or "where does your earning dwell," i.e. "where do you live?" See also "wonnest."*
2, *won, earned, received (of the blows the King receives from Robyn) (425.1)*

Wand: see Wande

Wand (1: 292.2 [**d** wande]), ✱**Wande** (2: 146.2, 401.2) — *wand, i.e. stake or rod holding up a target*

Wane: see Wan

Ward: see Warde

Ward (1: 253.1), ✱**Warde** (2: 332.3, 337.3) — *in all three instances in the "Gest," either meaning #1 or #2 below is possible; any of the three is possible for 332.3, 337.3*

1. *as a portion of the word "toward," split in two parts: "to ... warde"*
2. *ward, district, region*
3. *prison, guarded location*

✱**Ware** (1: 213.3) — *aware; also possibly "wary"*

Warte: see Be

Was: see Be

✱**Wasshe** (1: 231.1), **Wasshed** (1: 32.1) — *to wash (in this context, to wash the hands before a meal). It appears that washing the hands together was considered a form of social bonding; certainly it was considered polite behavior at this time.*

Wasshed: see Wasshe

✱**Water** (1: 202.4) — *water. In this context it clearly refers to large bodies of water, very possibly the sea.*

Watlinge: see Watlynge

✱**Watlynge** (2: 18.2 [**a** Watlinge], 209.2) — *Both times in the phrase "Watlynge Strete," i.e. "Watling Street." Properly "Ermine Street" or "The Great North Road." The road from London to Nottingham and on to the Scottish border. See the Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest" and the note on Stanza 18.*

✱**Wavyd** (1: 22.4) — *to wave, waved, hung down*

✱**Way** (7), **Waye** (6) — *way. (N.B. **a** always uses the spelling "way"; **b** is inconsistent between "way" and "waye")*

1. *two mile way, i.e. the time it takes to walk two miles (168.2)*
2. *"the game shall bear a way": Shall win the prize (283.4)*

Waye: see way

✱**Wayte** (2: 18.3, 209.3) (also **ad** have "wayted" in 331.1 for **b**'s "awayte") — *wait, await; all instances in the "Gest" have a sense of "wait to ensnare/catch"; cf. "Awayte."*

Wayted: see wayte

✱**We** (28), Us (9) — *we, us. Cf. "Our" (which sometimes means "hour")*

✱**Wedde** (3: 54.1, 214.3, 298.3) — *noun/verb, a pledge or to pledge as security. In Langland, "A" text, the verb is in 4.129, "I wedde myne eris"; the noun in 3.187, "I durste han leid my lif, and no lesse wed." Related to "wed, wedding," which is the primary use in Chaucer.*

✱**Wedded** (1: 337.1) — *to be wedded to, i.e. "my wedded lord"="my husband"*

✱**Wede** (2: 368.4, 371.3), **Wedes** (1: 97.3) — *weeds, i.e. clothes, clothing; now used primarily in the phrase "widow's weeds"*

Wedes: see Wede

✱**Wednesday** (1: 155.1) — *Wednesday*

Weest: see West
✸**Wekes** (1: 34.4 [**a** wekys]) — *weeks*
Wekys: see Wekes
Wel: see Well
Welcom: see Welcome
Welcom (1: 272.4), ✸**Welcome** (17 [a welcom in 24.3, 24.4, 25.1]), **Welcomed** (1: 98.4) — *to welcome,, welcomed. There is an interesting tendency to use the word in pairs, as if to say, "Twice welcome": 24.3 and 24.4 (with still a third use in the next line, 25.1); 30.1 and 30.2; 264.3 and 264.4; 311.3 and 311.4.*
Welcomed: see Welcome
Wele: see Well
Wel (1: 161.2), **Wele** (1: 153.4), ✸**Well** (38) — *well, thoroughly, properly*
✸**Welt** (1: 366.4) — *in most dialects, "weld(e)," to possess, control, wield, make use of.*
✸**Welthe** (1: 436.4) — *wealth, riches*
✸**Wende** (8) — *go, travel, depart; also turn, sometimes even toss*
✸**Wenest** (1: 63.3) — *to think, imagine, expect (compare "ween"; Old English wēne)*
Went: see Go
Wente: see Go
✸**Wentebrydg** (1: 268A.1; also, as "Wentbrydge," in the ***FJC*** text of 135.1): *conjectural reading. Wentbridge, the bridge on the Great North Road/Ermine Street (the "Watling Street" of the "Gest.") over the river Went and the village there, in Yorkshire. "Wentberg," which is probably another version of "Wentbridge," is mentioned in stanza 6.1 of the "Potter."*
Wept: see Wepte
✸**Wepte** (1: 61.1 [**a** wept]) — *wept*
Were: see Be
Werte: see Be
✸**West** (3: 7.4, 20.3 [**a** weest], 135A.4, 212.3) — *west*
✸**Wete** (2: 141.2, 287.3), **Wyte** (1: 230.4 [**p** wete]), **Wytte** (1: 321.3 [**a** wyt]) — *learn, know, be aware; usual Middle English form wite/wyte/witte; compare "wat" (still used in some Scots dialects), "wot"*
✸**Whan** (26 [**a** whane in 188.3, whanne in 83.1 and 335.1, when in 173.1]), **When** (3: 52.3 [**a** whanne], 82.3 [**a** whanne], 430.3) — *when*
Whane: see Whan
Whanne: see Whan
✸**What** (26) — *what*
Wheder: see Whether
When: see Whan
✸**Where** (16) — *where*
✸**Whether** (4: 11.3 [**a** wheder], 210.1, 225.2, 254.1)
1. *whether (210.1, 225.2)*
2. *where, whither (11.3, 254.1)*

Which: see Whiche
Which (1: 121.2), ✸WHICHE (2: 270.2, 279.2) — *which*
While: see Whyle
White: see Whyte
✸WHO (5: 26.1, 142.4, 221.1, 232.4, 398.3) — *who*
✸WHY (1: 266.2) — *why*
✸WHYLE (7: 59.3 [**a** while], 163.2 [**a** while], 181.2 **a** wyle], 261.4, 308.4, 363.3, 376.4), **Whyles** (3: 2.2, 278.4, 349.4) — *while*
1. *in the sense of "a while," i.e. "for a certain period of time" (163.2, 278.4, 308.4, 349.4 376.4)*
2. *(probable mis-spelling of) wyle, i.e. wile, trick, method of deceit (181.2)*

Whyles: see Whyle
✸WHYTE (8: 132.3, 133.4, 136.2, 191.2 [**a** white], 285.2, 292.4, 393.3, 401.4) — *white*
1. *white silver/silver white, referring to the metal (132.3, 191.2, 285.2)*
2. *Gilbert of the White Hand (292.4, 401.4)*
3. *white clothing (133.4)*
4. *a white bull (136.2)*

Wight: see Wyght
Wil: see Wyll
Will: see Wyll
Wille: see Wyll
Willyam: see Wyllyam
Wine: see Wyne
✸WITH (71 [**a** wyth in 46.4]), **Wyth** (1: 292.4 [**d** with]) — *with*
✸WITHALL (1: 359.1) — *withall. Basically an interjection or intensifier, "indeed" or "very much so," although it probably also carries as sense of "with this."*
✸WITHIN (3: 49.1 [**a** withyn], 309.2, 325.2) — *within, in the space/period of*
✸WITHOUT (3: 80.3 [**a** withoute], 322.2, 353.2) — *without*
Withoute: see Without
Withyn: see Within
✸WO (3: 189.3, 296.3, 297.1) — *woe. All three instances involve maledictions between Robin and the sheriff. Compare "Woo," which may or may not be the same word.*
✸WODE (38). *N.B. **FJC** and other editions often put this in hyphenated or combined forms such as grenewod, so their frequency count is somewhat lower.*
1. *"Grene wode"/"Grene wode tree": (14.2, 25.1, 79.3, 170.2, 176.4, 195.2, 196.3, 197.4, 204.3, 237.4, 262.2, 265.3, 268.3 [this reading is conjectural, not in **b**], 284.3, 295.4, 298.1, 301.2, 310.4, 312.4, 327.3, 328.4, 334.4, 335.2, 341.3, 352.3, 353.1, 373.3, 374.3, 377.2, 379.3, 414.3, 444.4, 445.1, 449.4, 450.1)*
2. *wood, but not the green wood: 205.4, 309.2*
3. *wud/wod, i.e. mad, furious (Old English wōd); still found in Scots dialect (340.2)*

Wol: see Wyll
Wold: see Wolde

✸**Wolde** (35 [**a** wold in 8.3]) — *would*
Woll: see Wyll
Wolte: see Wyll
✸**Wolwarde** (1: 442.3) — *presumably with wool toward the skin (a form of penitence because the wool caused scratching and irritation), but the word is rare*
✸**Woman** (3: 10.4, 249.3, 451.2) — *woman*
✸**Wonder** (6)
1. *to wonder, be amazed (verb) (44.3)*
2. *wondrously, extremely, excessively (adjective) (95.1, 359.1, 391.1, 400.4)*
3. *wonder, surprise — in the phrase "no wonder" (196.3)*

✸**Wonnest** (1: 315.3 [**ap** wonnest]) — *to live, dwell, reside. See also "wane."*
Wonnest: see Wonest
✸**Wonnynge** (1: 148.4 [**a** wonynge]) — *dwelling, living, living-place. Laurence Minot uses it at the very beginning of his poem IV: "Edward oure cumly king, In Braband has his woning." See under "wane."*
✸**Wont** (1: 358.1), **Wonte** (1: 417.4) — *wont, i.e. desire, wish, expectation*
Wonte: see wont
✸**Woo** (1: 438.2) — *alas, woe, woe is me; part of the phrase "well a woe," a common lament in this period: wela+woe: very much woe, from Old English wel+lā (intensifier). The exact form varies greatly: weylaway ("Þat wel is comen te weylaway," from "Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt," line 17, Dickins/Wilson, p. 127; "Weilaway! whi seist þou so?" from "De Clerico et Puella," line13, DickinsWilson, p. 122)); weilawei (Ancrene Riwle, line 32; Dickins/ Wilson, p. 92); wailawai ("And al þy song is wailawai," "The Owl and the Nightingale," line 220; Burrow/Turville-Petrie, p. 89), etc. Compare "Wo," which may or may not be the same word.*
Word: see Worde
Word (1: 103.3), ✸**Worde** (4: 16.1, 45.1, 362.4, 407.3), **Wordes** (1: 31.2) — *word, words*
Wordes: see Worde
✸**Worlde** (3: 111.2, 313.1, 386.1) — *world. Note that, at this period, educated people knew that the world was spherical (though the common people might not), but they thought it was the center of the universe surrounded by celestial spheres. So "world" had a somewhat different sense then than now — something like the space allotted to mortals, or the heart of the universe*
✸**Wors** (1: 160.4) — *worse, less able*
Worship: see Worshyp
✸**Worshyp** (1: 9.1 [**a** worship]) — *to worship*
✸**Worst** (1: 293.4), **Worste** (1: 154.3 [**a** worst]) — *worst*
Worste: see Worst
Worth: see Worthe

Worth (1: 296.3), ✸**Worthe** (2: 4.4 [**a** worth], 189.3)
1. *worth, having the value of (4.4)*
2. *In the phrase "wo the worthe" (189.3)/"wo worth the" (296.3), that is, "you are worthy of woe."To this compare "Judas" [Child 23], line 8, "Judas, þou were wrþe me stende þe wid ston."*

Worthi: see worthy

✸**Worthy** (10: 36.3, 37.3 [**a** worthi], 66.1, 111.1, 138.2, 219.3, 227.1, 250.1, 295.2, 346.1) — *worthy*
1. *"by dear worthy God" (36.3, 37.3, , 66.1, 111.1, 219.3, , 227.1, 250.1, 346.1)*
2. *of the worthy winner of a contest (138.2 295.2)*

✸**Woundes** (1: 305.3) — *wounds*

✸**Wrastelyng** (1: 135.2), **Wrastelynge** (1: 268A.2 [268.2]) — *wrestling, wrestling contest*

Wrastelynge: see Wrastelyng

✸**Wronge** (5: 46.4, 90.4, 94.4, 254.4, 268A.4) — *wrong (often with a sense of betrayal)*

✸**Wroth** (4: 206.3, 220.3, 235.3, 359.1) — *wroth, wrathful, angry.*
1. *of the Virgin Mary being wroth with Robin "for she sent me not my pay" (206.3, 235.3)*

✸**Wrought** (1: 111.2) — *wrought, shaped, created*

✸**Wycked** (1: 451.2) — *wicked*

✸**Wyde** (2: 305.3, 326.4) — *wide*

✸**Wyfe** (2: 50.3, 334.1), **Wyves** (1: 429.3) — *wife, wives, women*
1. *The knight's wife (50.3, 334.1)*
2. *of "old wyves that might evyll goo," i.e. the old, disabled women of Nottingham* (429.3)

✸**Wyght** (9: 148.1 [**a** wight], 152.4 [**a** wight], 195.1 [**a** wight], 224.1, 229.3, 286.3, 288.3, 389.3, 448.3) — *brave, valiant, strong; also agile, active. Elsewhere often spelled "wicht" (so, e.g., in Barbour's "Bruce" to describe the Scots forces, and in Laurence Minot's "The Taking of Calais," line 5; Sisam, p. 154); probably from Old English "wiht."*
1. *Of Little John (148.1)*
2. *Of Robin Hood's "wight young men/yeomen" (195.1, 229.3, 286.3, 288.3, 389.3, 448.3)*
3. *Of the High Cellarer's company of guards (224.1)*
4. *Of the horse the Sheriff gives to Little John: good, strong (152.4)*

✸**Wylde** (2: 297.4, 411.1) — *wild, untamed, uncontrolled*

Wyle: see Whyle

✸**Wyll** (34 [**aq** welle, ***FJC*** wille in 321.3], [**a** wyl in 59.2, 63.2, 162.1] [**a** woll in 40.2, 56.3, 150.3, 171.4, 121.3] [**a** wolde in 62.2], [**e** woll in 438.4]), **Wylte** (1: 418.2), **Woll** (2: 321.4 [**aq** will], 325.1 [**a** wyl, **q** wyll]), **Wolte** (1: 150.2 [**a** wolde]) — *will/shall; would/should (verb), except as noted:*
1. *noun: purpose, desire (79.2, 180.3. 181.4, 321.3 347.2, 366.4).*
2. *verb: wish, desire to have (364.4, 367.3)*

✸**Wyllyam** (2: 17.3 [**a** Willyam], 208.3) — *William, apparently the Christian name of Scathelock, although used only twice*

Wylte: see wyll

✸**Wyne** (11 [**a** wine in 44.1])
1. *"Fill of the best wine" (44.1, 61.3, 234.3, 251.1)*

✸**Wynke** (1: 441.2) — *to wink*

✸**Wynne** (1: 314.4) — *to win, i.e. to win through to, reach, arrive at*

✸**Wynter** (4: 47.3, 52.3, 160.3 [**a** ier=year], 162.3) — *winter, winters. All four uses carry the sense of counting through the seasons, so they in effect mean "year."*

✸**Wype** (1: 231.1), **Wyped** (1: 32.1) — *to wipe, wiped, cleaned, dried. Always used in conjunction with "wasshe" (which see) as part of a courteous dinner ritual*

Wyped: see Wype

✸**Wyse** (1: 297.3) — *manner, way — part of the compound (other) wise*

✸**Wystly** (1: 410.2) — *variant on "wit(t)(e)ly" (see "wete" above): discerningly, with recognition*

Wyt: see Wete

Wyte: see Wete

Wyth: see With

Wytte: see Wete

Wyves: see Wyfe

Ydyght: see Dyght

✸**Ye** (52) — *you, ye*

✸**Yede** (4: 160.2 [**a** went], 322.3, 346.2, 408.2) — *ȝede, one form of the past tense of "gon," so "went, traveled"; also "entered"; compare Scots "gaed." From Old English ge-ēode.*
1. *yielded, broke (of Little John almost breaking the butler's back, 160.2). Compare "yede atwynne," came apart, separated: "Handlyng Synne," Sisam, p. 9, line 191)*
2. *journeyed (322.3, 346.2). To "yede I this fast on fote" of 346.2 compare "on fote ȝede," Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, line 2363 (Tolkien/Gordon, p. 65; Sisam, p. 54, where it is line 295; "on fote ȝede" is there glossed as "to live"*
3. *fell (408.2)*

✸**Yeft** (1: 295.3) — *reward, prize. Elsewhere spelled "ȝift(is)," a variant form of the word "gift(s)"*

✸**Yelde** (1: 399.1) — *to yield*

✸**Yeman** (14 [**a** yoman in 26.3, 80.3, 129.3, 138.1, 139.1, **q** yoman in 223.3]), **Yemen** (8), **Yoman** (2: 37.4 [**b** yeman], 139.3), **Yeman's** (1: 81.3)— *yeoman, yeomen, yeoman's: yeoman=free man, the social rank between villains and servants on the one hand and the gentry (knights, squires) on the other. Many were craftsmen, others small landowners. "Yeoman" was also a title for certain offices, such as "yeoman of the household" or "yeoman of the forest." Robin, John, and their followers are described as yeomen, and are clearly proud of the title. See also the note on Stanza 1.*
1. *of Robin as yeoman (1.3, 26.3, 129.3, 222.3)*
    1A. *of Robin as yeoman of the forest (222.3)*
2. *of John as yeoman (3.4, 255.3)*
3. *"these yeomen all three": John, Much, and Scathelock (20.2, 212.2)*
4. *of the yeoman who won the wrestling at Wentbridge (138.1, 139.1, 139.3, 141.3, 268A.3)*

5. *of Robin's seven score followers (229.3)*
6. *other uses (14.1, 37.4, 80.3, 135A.3, 178.1, 224.1, 269.3, 377.3, 406.3, 429.3)*

Yeman's: see Yeman

✸YEMANRY (1: 45.4) — *yeomanry; the state of being a yeoman as opposed to some other class*

Yemen: see Yeman

✸YERDES (3: 72.1, 397.1, 418.4)

1. *yards, the measure of distance (72.1, 418.4). Both uses refer to measuring cloth.*
2. *fields, for archery competition (397.1)*

✸YERE (10) — *year. Compare "wynter" as a means for measuring years/age.*

✸YES (3: 413.1, 414.1, 420.1) — *yes*

✸YET (18 [**a** yit in 118.4, 169.4) — *yet*

Y-founde: see Founde

If (4: 35.1 [**c** yf], 246.3, 303.2, 405.1), ✸YF (25) — *if*

Yit: see Yet

✸YLKE (5: 87.3, 95.3, 173.4, 303.3, 394.3) — *every; each. Other Middle English spellings include "ilc," "ilche," "ilk," "ilke," "yche." Compare Scots "ilk, ilka."*

Ynch: see Ynche

✸YNCHE (1: 4.3 [**a** yuch, ***FJC*** ynch]) — *inch*

✸YNNE (1: 10.4 [**a** in] — *in, inside (adverb, not preposition, according to Sisam, glossay, entry on "Inne/Ynne")*

Ynoughe: see Inowe

Ynowe: see Inowe

✸YOLE (1: 420.4) — *Yule. The winter solstice holiday, at which retainers were normally given new clothing. The summer solstice — Midsummer's Day — was also a time for retainers to be given clothing, but this is not mentioned in the "Gest."*

Yoman: see Yeman

✸YON (1: 218.2) — *yon*

✸YONDER (3: 185.1, 256.1, 297.4) — *yonder*

✸YONGE (10)

1. *young men, not identified as Robin's (145.2, 148.1, 436.1 [also* **b** ***FJC*** *in 224.1; omitted by* **q***])*
2. *Robin's young men:*
   - 2A. *Robin's wyght young men (195.1, 286.3, 288.3, 389.3, 448.3)*
   - 2B. *Robin's merry young men (287.1, 340.3 [**a** omits])*

✸YORKE (1: 84.3) — *York. Chief town of Yorkshire, and seat of the Archbishop of York. St. Mary's Abbey was just outside the town. York is about 36 kilometers, or 23 miles, north-northeast of Barnsdale Bar and Ferrybridge, which seem to be about the center of Robin Hood country. From York to Doncaster, by the roads of the time, is about 55 kilometers, or 35 miles. See also the* *Sketch Map of the Sites Mentioned in the "Gest"*.

✸YOU (24), **Your** (35) — *you, your. Cf. "Thou."*

Your: see You

Yt: see It

Glossary of Technical Terms

Not all of these terms are used in the "Gest," or indeed anywhere in the Robin Hood corpus, but they can be important to understanding the legal and social systems of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

- *butt, butts:* Targets for archers. Usually the target was placed on a mound of earth. Properly the butts are the targets, but often the word referred to the mounds as well. The spacing of the butts of course depended on the skill of the archers; very good archers might shoot at targets more than 200 yards away. Note that Robin has his men shoot at rods with rose garlands, rather than ordinary butts, in Stanzas 397–398.
- *cellarer:* The official at an abbey or other institution responsible for the cellar — that is, the supply of food and other needs. At an ordinary abbey, where vows of poverty meant something, the cellarer's job was not particularly consequential. But the "Gest" views the Abbot of St. Mary's as being fond of fine food, and not having much interest in poverty, so the Cellarer is important in keeping him fed — and so is entrusted with a great deal of responsibility and money.
- *eyre:* A forest visitation (or visitation of other sorts). An eyre would determine violations and trespasses of the forest law and issue fines.
- *forest:* In legal terms, *forest* had nothing to do with trees or woodlands; they were regions where the forest laws applied — meaning that the residents of the forest had fewer rights and were subject to more royal interference than those in other regions. For this reason, people in "forest" regions were always trying to have the monarchy lift the "forest" designation. It should be noted that Barnsdale, although it had many trees and was not heavily settled, was not technically "forest" and was not under forest law.
- *forest law:* The laws governing the royal forests, which restricted how the land could be used — e.g. hunting game and cutting trees was generally prohibited. See *venison* and *vert.* The basic law went back to William the Conqueror, who wanted to assure that he had game for hunting — but even kings less involved in the hunt were often intent on expanding the forests, because they were also a source of revenue. So strict were the laws that violators might be fined heavily or even mutilated for offenses.
- *foresters:* Royal officials responsible for maintaining the royal forests and enforcing the forest laws. In early medieval times, these were among the most important of the King's servants, and widely despised because they protected the trees and game that ordinary people wanted and needed to live. However, their role and significance varied over time.
- *livery:* The giving of some sort of signifying mark to identify a relationship. We tend to think of livery as clothing, and so it appears at some points in the "Gest" (see the note on Stanzas 70–72) — but often what was given was not clothing but a livery *badge,* such as could be worn around the neck (e.g.). Over-use and abuse of livery was a common complaint in the Plantagenet period — e.g. there were

several attempts to address it in the reign of Richard II. But since the very people who were most inclined to offer livery were the parliamentary lords who had to approve and enforce the legislation, the problem never seemed to go away.

- *mark:* when used to describe money, it is a term for two-thirds of a pound, or 160 pence. It should be noted that neither marks nor pounds were minted in this period; both were "money of account." Calculating by marks allowed odd fractions of pounds to be more easily expressed — a very big deal in a society that still used primarily Roman numerals: You could express any figure of thirds of a pound as some combination of marks and pounds. So one and a third pounds was two marks; one and two thirds pounds was a pound plus a mark; two and a third pounds was a pound plus two marks, etc. It was also useful in a society that levied taxes in "tenths" or "fifteenths": A tenth was one pound of tax for ten pounds of revenue; a fifteenth was one mark of tax for ten pounds of revenue.
- *mortmain:* A statute promulgated by Edward I to prevent large amounts of property from being willed to the church, as too much land was going to the church and becoming relatively unproductive (at least as a source of taxes). It was widely evaded, both because the church wanted more assets and because many people, especially those without direct heirs, preferred their land to go to the church in hopes of heavenly rewards. See the note on Stanza 55.
- *prior:* the second-highest official in an abbey (or the senior official of a priory). There would thus be great potential for conflict between abbots and friars — as we see between the Abbot and Prior of St. Mary's in the "Gest."
- *outlaw:* a technical term for one who failed to answer a summons for trial. Thus an outlaw had not been found guilty of a crime, but had placed himself outside the law. As such, he could be taken by anyone who could find him — although, since outlawry was essentially local, he could usually escape by flight, and might even be outlawed without knowing about it!
- *sheriff:* We tend to think of a sheriff as a law-enforcer, but it was different in the medieval period. In the early Norman period, in particular, the sheriff was the crown's representative to the shires — responsible for enforcing the law, to some extent, but there weren't that many laws. He was primarily responsible for preventing riot and bringing in the revenue. For a full discussion of the office, see the note on Stanza 15.
- *trailbaston:* A special court intended to deal with highway robbery. Instituted in 1304/1305, it came to be used as a source of royal revenue, so it was not entirely trusted. "The Outlaw's Song of Trailbaston" was an instance of its misuse — and one which has significant similarities to some of the greenwood tales.
- *venison:* The animal life of the royal forests, not restricted to deer although this was the most important sort. The primary purpose of the forest laws was to protect the venison. When Robin tells the disguised King that he and his men live by the King's deer, he is in effect admitting to crimes against venison. To be sure, Barnsdale was not royal forest, so the rules were different, but Robin also

apparently cleared out Plumpton Park of game, so one way or another, Robin and his men were guilty.

- *vert:* Plant life, especially trees. To damage the *vert* of the royal forests was a crime which could result in severe punishment. We don't explicitly hear of Robin and his men cutting down trees, but it is hard to imagine how they could have avoided needing firewood in winter. But, in this case, the fact that Barnsdale wasn't a royal forest is genuinely significant; they are clearly guilty of offenses against venison, but maybe not against vert.
- *yeoman:* A word with several meanings, since there were different types of yeomen — yeomen of the forest, yeomen of the household, and just plain yeomen. It is possible that Robin Hood was several of these: A yeoman of the forest before being outlawed, and a yeoman of the household after the King pardoned him. But most of the references in the "Gest" seem to be to ordinary yeomen — that is, free men who owned their own property and had the right to their own employment. This made them relatively rare in the earlier medieval period, although yeomen became common in the fifteenth century. This is a place where the fact that there are multiple sources of the "Gest" may be significant. Yeomen were rare in the period of Edward II in the early fourteenth century but fairly common in the fifteenth. The "Robin and the Knight" source is the one that is most concerned with yeomanry, and it could well be set in the fifteenth century. It is the "Robin and the King" source that is set in the reign of Edward II, and it isn't as concerned with yeomanry.

Appendix III: Chronology

The chronology below shows historical events, events relevant to the history of Robin Hood literature, and the events in my reconstruction of the "Gest's" history of Robin Hood. The latter are shown in **Highlight**. By looking at the **highlighted** events, one can put together a biography of Robin that seems to conform with the requirements of the "Gest": A king named Edward, Robin Hood who is an outlaw but not an outlaw against the King, a noteworthy longbowman, 22 years in the greenwood after leaving royal service, etc. I emphasize that my dates are conjectural, and do not represent actual history; they are an attempt to describe the history *in the historical fiction that is the "Gest."*

- 1066. William the Conqueror overcomes the Saxons to become King of England
- 1087. William II Rufus King of England.
- 1100. Henry I King of England
- 1121. First Ranulf of Chester (earl until 1129)
- 1129. Second Ranulf of Chester (earl until 1153)
- 1135. Stephen King of England
- 1154. Henry II King of England
- 1181. Third Ranulf of Chester (earl until 1232)
- 1189. Richard I King of England
- *c.* 1193. Date John Major claimed Robin Hood was active.
- 1199. John King of England.
- 1216. Henry III King of England.
- 1261. Likely date of the earliest reference to "Robinhood" or "Robehode" or similar as a robber. There are several others in the late thirteenth century. These do not, however, seem to be references to "the" Robin Hood; rather, they indicate that "Robehode" was a name used for robbers. Thus it might well be that, when a legend started to evolve of a great outlaw and great archer, the name "Robin Hood" attached to it.
- 1266. Date Walter Bower claimed Robin Hood was active.
- 1272. Edward I King of England.
- *c.* 1285. Date Andrew Wyntoun claimed Robin Hood was active.
- *c.* 1293. **Birth of Robin Hood, in Lancashire or Yorkshire.**
- May 22, 1306. Edward II made knight with many others **(including Sir Richard?)**
- 1307. Edward II King of England.
- 1314. Battle of Bannockburn.
- 1315. The Great Famine. **Robin surely in Barnsdale by this time, perhaps as a result of participating in Adam Banaster's rebellion. But he might have arrived some years earlier..**
- *c.* 1316. **Robin Hood ransoms Sir Richard at the Lee. The payment of the loan may just possibly have happened on April 3.**
- 1322. Battle of Boroughbridge. **Edward II in north of England.**
- 1323. **Robin Hood joins Edward II's court.**

- 1324. **Robin Hood leaves Edward's court to return to Barnsdale.**
- 1326. Overthrow of Edward II.
- 1327. Edward II formally deposed and killed. Edward III King of England.
- 1345. **Death of Robin Hood at Kirklees.**
- 1346. **Battle of Crécy. Members of Robin's former band likely took part.**
- 1377. Richard II King of England. Approximate date of the "B" version of *Piers Plowman,* the first literary mention of Robin Hood.
- 1399. Richard II deposed. Henry IV King of England
- 1413. Henry V King of England.
- *c.* 1420: Andrew Wyntoun's chronicle refers to Robin Hood in Inglewood and Barnsdale.
- 1422. Henry VI King of England
- 1439. Piers Venables is compared to Robin Hood in a petition to parliament.
- *c.* 1440-1455. Likeliest date of the composition of the "Gest."
- *c.* 1445: Walter Bower refers to Robin as a "famous murderer."
- 1460. Battle of Wakefield.
- 1461. Battles of Ferrybridge. Battle of Towton. Henry VI deposed. Edward IV King of England.
- *c.* 1468. Sundry hints of Robin Hood tales in the Paston Letters.
- 1469. Robin of Redesdale's rebellion, which may have been inspired by Robin Hood stories
- 1470. Edward IV deposed; Henry VI restored.
- 1471. Henry VI re-deposed and killed. Edward IV restored.
- 1483. Death of Edward IV. Edward V succeeds but is never crowned. Richard III King of England.
- 1485. Battle of Bosworth. Henry VII King of England.
- *c.* 1490. Possible date of the *editio princeps* of the "Gest," perhaps printed by Caxton.
- 1501. Gavin Douglas mentions Robin and Gilbert of the White Hand.
- *c.* 1506. Likely date of Wynkyn de Worde's edition of the "Gest."
- 1509. Henry VIII King of England
- 1515. Henry VIII sees a Robin Hood performance
- 1521. John Major dates Robin Hood to the reign of Richard I.
- *c.* 1530. Death of Richard Pynson gives absolute last possible date for the earliest printing of the "Gest."
- 1534. Death of Wynkyn de Worde gives absolute last possible date for the first surviving complete printing of the "Gest."
- 1598. Anthony Munday is paid £5 for a Robin Hood play.
- 1663. First of the Robin Hood garlands.

Appendix IV: "By Saint Richard!": Richard Scrope and the Abbot's Oath

From the very beginning of scholarship about the "Gest," scholars have puzzled about the oath used by the Abbot of St. Mary's in Stanza 91: "By God and Saynt Rycharde." There seems to be no canonical saint that the Abbot would be likely to swear by. Richard of Chichester is the saint most often mentioned — he at least has the virtue of being English and a recognized saint and of coming from a period well before the "Gest" could have been written. But he wasn't well-known, and he wasn't northern; there was no evident reason for the Abbot to swear by him — or, indeed, by the compiler of the "Gest" to have known who he was!

So if the "Gest's" Saint Richard wasn't a generally recognized saint, who was he? One possible answer is, A saint who was generally known in Yorkshire, where the "Gest" was written, but whose fame did not go beyond Yorkshire.

And, when one makes that suggestion, the answer is obvious: Richard le Scrope, the archbishop of York, who was executed in 1405 by King Henry IV for a mass protest that Henry decided was an out-and-out rebellion. Scrope was a relatively apolitical (at least until 1405) individual who seems to have been a blameless bishop, and from the moment he died, miracles were reported around his tomb. The people of Yorkshire unquestionably regarded him as a saint (and he certainly came closer than a lot of the alleged saints people have proposed). Yorkshiremen *would* swear "by Saint Richard."

Of course Scrope lived and died three-quarters of a century after the reign of Edward II, the time in which the "Gest" seems to be set; an abbot who actually lived in the time of Edward II could not have sworn by him. But the invocation of Scrope is from the source I've called "Robin and the Knight," and the setting in the time of Edward II is characteristic of the source "Robin and the King." The former source shows no signs of any chronological anchors; it is perfectly reasonable that the author would swear by a saint of great local significance at the time the source was written.

Indeed, there is a certain logic to the Abbot swearing by Saint Richard, because the "Gest" was probably compiled during the Lancastrian era, and Richard Scrope was executed by the Lancastrian King Henry IV. Swearing by Saint Richard potentially indicates that the Abbot is not particularly faithful to the King — perfectly logical when one realizes that he is the enemy of Robin and Sir Richard, who *are* loyal to the King.

I personally have little doubt that "Saint Richard" is Richard le Scrope, though I freely admit that there is no supporting evidence except the improbability of any other candidate. And the identification is important: if "Saint Richard" is indeed Scrope, then the "Gest" absolutely must come from some time after 1405 — probably several decades after, when the Scrope cult was at its height. (Particularly since the Robin and the Knight source would have to be written then incorporated into the "Gest.") This obviously eliminates the possibility that the "Gest" comes from the time of Chaucer! To facilitate those who wish to judge for themselves, the next few pages collect all I could compile about Scrope — his family background (he was a younger son of a family that had produced two different baronial lineages), his history, and what people then and now thought about him.

Key dates in the life of Richard Scrope

- *c.* 1348: Birth of Richard le Scrope, third son of Henry, first Lord Scrope of Masham. We have no precise information about his date of birth; estimates listed on p. 3 of Goldberg range from 1346 to *c.* 1350.
- 1368: Scrope given his first living, at Ainderby Steeple, almost certainly before he was of age to be ordained (Goldberg, p. 19).
- September 1376: Ordained as acolyte and subdeacon (Goldberg, p. 19).
- 1377: Ordained priest (Goldberg, p. 19).
- ?: Obtains B.A. from Oxford (Goldberg, p. 19).
- before 1375-1379: Studies at Cambridge, earning his degree in civil law in 1375 and in canon law in 1379 (Goldberg, p. 19). During this period (November 1375-September 1379) he also served as Official to Thomas Arundel, then Bishop of Ely, later to be Archbishop of Canterbury (Goldberg, p. 19).
- 1378: Acts as an envoy to the Scots (Goldberg, p. 20).
- 1378-1380: Chancellor of Cambridge University (Goldberg, p. 19)
- *c.* 1380: Transfers to Rome, probably to work as a canon lawyer (Goldberg, p. 20).
- August 1382: Scrope becomes Dean of Chichester (Goldberg, p. 13), though he continues to reside in Rome (Goldberg, p. 20).
- 1385: The canons of Chichester nominate Scrope as their bishop when the old Bishop dies, but Richard II overrides the choice (Goldberg, p 20).
- 1386: Perhaps as compensation for losing the Bishopric of Chichester, Scrope appointed Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield (Goldberg, p. 20).
- 1397: Scrope is sent to Rome by Richard II to seek the canonization of Edward II (Given-Wilson, p. 267; BennettM, p. 121). At the end of the year, Archbishop Robert Waldby of York dies unexpectedly (BennettM, p. 121).
- 1398: Scrope appointed Archbishop of York. Since Scrope was in Rome at the time, the available information does not let us know if this was Richard II's idea or the Pope's. BennettM, p. 121, says that the canons of York had selected Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham, to the post, and thinks that it was the Pope who made the appointment.
- 1399: Henry of Bolingbroke, exiled Duke of Lancaster, overthrows Richard II and becomes King Henry IV. One of those executed in the process was William Scrope, Earl of Wiltshire, Richard's second cousin. According to BennettM, p. 179, Archbishop Scrope was the one who read out Richard II's (involuntary) resignation of the throne, (which hints that Scrope approved of the change), but he does not seem to have been part of the group who made the plans for Richard's removal
- 1403: Henry IV wins the Battle of Shrewsbury, defeating the forces of Harry "Hotspur" Percy, son of Henry Percy, First Earl of Northumberland. Northumberland, despite his defeat, will rebel again in 1405 and eventually be executed in 1408.

- 1405: Scrope apparently creates a manifesto of grievances against Henry IV and posts written copies around York. The text does not survive, although Walsingham's Latin translation is widely thought to be reasonably accurate (Goldberg, p. 31). Since this was at the same time as Northumberland's second rebellion, many have thought that Scrope also sought Henry IV's overthrow. But the general feeling (at the time that this is written) is that Scrope was not a rebel but a reformer; he wanted Henry IV to keep his broken promises (about taxes, church rights, and so forth), not to replace him on the throne. In this view, Scrope was not a participant in Northumberland's rebellion. (I incline to agree with this view, but it doesn't matter. What matters is that thousands of people in Yorkshire felt that Scrope was not a rebel.)
- 1405: Confrontation on Shipton Moor, where some thousands of men led by Scrope and the Earl of Norfolk Thomas Mowbray confront Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, the king's representative (Given-Wilson, pp. 267-268). There was no battle; there were no casualties at all on the royal side (Given-Wilson, p. 277). Westmorland apparently promised to bring their grievance to the king, whereupon the rebels sent their men home — and Westmoreland arrested Scrope, Mowbray, and others (Given-Wilson, p. 268). Henry IV naturally assumed Scrope's action was part of Northumberland's rebellion, although most contemporary accounts say there was no connection and most of the accounts that do are by authors who at other times denied the connection! (Given-Wilson, p. 272).
- June 8, 1405: Henry IV hurries to York and, upon arriving, orders the execution of Scrope and Mowbray despite the opposition of his own chief justice, Archbishop Arundel of Canterbury, and others (Given-Wilson, p. 269). Reports of Scrope's death claimed that he asked the executioner to strike five blows in memory of the five wounds of Christ (Goldberg, p. 15; Piroyansky, p. 57). Another report says that his last words for "It is for the laws and good government of England that I die (Given-Wilson, p. 269). About twenty others, including another priest, were also executed. Naturally there were comparisons with the death of Thomas Becket more than two centuries earlier — but in this case the king was even more directly involved. The fact that Scrope was executed on Whitmonday, a fairly holy day, no doubt helped encourage the cult. It was also the holy day of York's one official saint, William Fitzherbert, a twelfth century Archbishop of York (Goldberg, p. 101). St. William was not a martyr, but no doubt the coincidence had the people of York thinking about the coincidence!

  Henry seems to have made a strong attempt to humiliate Scrope before the execution, ordering that the archbishop be carried on an extremely poor horse and that he be clothed in a cloak rather than his episcopal robe. But this backfired: People remembered that Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on a humble animal (a donkey rather than a horse), and that his garments were taken

at the time of the crucifixion (Goldberg, pp. 103-104). Rather than humiliating Scrope, Henry's actions invited comparison with the "suffering servant" of Isaiah.

- June 11, 1405: The first report of a miracle associated with Scrope takes place just three days after his death, when he appears to a man named John Sibson, telling him to to ask forgiveness for a plan he had made, thirty years earlier to commit murder (he never went through with it) and now clear some of the obstacles Henry IV had set around Scrope's tomb. The latter task supposedly should have required more than one man's strength, but Sibson manages it (Goldberg, p. 94). There are dubious aspects to this story, but more miracles will follow. Clement Maidstone, who died *c.* 1456, wrote a *Martyium Ricardi Archepiscopi* which lists three: Sibson's feat, Henry IV's leprosy (see below), and a miraculous harvest in the field where Scrope died (Goldberg, p. 117). Stephen K. Wright (Goldberg, pp. 118-119) observes that Maidstone's account contains most of the traits of a typical martyrdom account, but also has some very unusual traits for such a tale: It is of a contemporary person, in a real place, with actual historical details. This differs dramatically from your dime-a-dozen martyrdom tale, which typically involved some third-or-so century person in some vague place with no precise details and absolutely no reason to think it actually happened.
- late 1405: The Pope, without naming names, excommunicates those involved in Scrope's death (Given-Wilson, p. 277).
- September 21, 1405: Henry IV attempts to suppress the incipient cult by blocking access to Scrope's tomb (Piroyansky, p. 50).
- December 3, 1405: The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel, and the Chancellor, Bishop Thomas Langley, write to the President and Chapter at York "forbidding veneration of Scrope or believe in his 'miracula pretensa'" (McKenna, p. 614).
- 1405 and after: The attempts to suppress Scrope's cult fail; within the next decade, pilgrimage and votive offerings were made to him (Goldberg, p. 16), a Book of Hours was created based on his exploits (the Bolton Book of Hours, York Minster Library MS. Additional 2, made probably before 1425; it features a drawing of Scrope captioned "S. Ricardus," i.e. "Saint Richard), and two tales of martyrdom were written, probably by Thomas Gascoigne of the University of Oxford and by Clement Maisdstone (Piroyansky, pp. 50-51).
- 1406: The issue of Scrope's and Mowbray's treason is brought before Parliament, but Parliament never acts on it (Given-Wilson, pp. 271-272), indicating that there was strong doubt that Scrope was guilty of treason.
- June 3, 1406: The city of York regains its right to self-government, but only after paying more than £500 in fines (Goldberg, pp. 74-75). One can't help but think that Henry's probably-undeserved collective punishment of York made them more inclined to view their martyr as a saint.
- No later than 1407: Henry IV contracts a severe skin disease. He will never again be healthy until his death in 1413 at the age of about 45. Although we don't know

what he suffered from, in later legend, his disease became leprosy, and it appeared within days of Scrope's execution (Given-Wilson, p. 270; Piroyansky, p. 59, notes that leprosy was a disease particularly associated with divine punishment). This was generally regarded as Henry's punishment for killing Archbishop Scrope. During the Yorkist era, John Capgrave went so far as to write, "The Kyng aftir that tyme lost the beute [beauty] of his face. For, as the comoune opinion went, fro that tyme onto his deth he was a lepir, and evyr fowlere and fowlere. For in his deth, as thei recorded that sey [saw] him, he was so contracte [contracted, i.e. shrunken], that his body was scarse a cubite of length" (quoted in McKenna, p. 613. The account of his shrinkage is of course false). It's worth noting, though, that Adam Usk says that Henry lost all the hair of his head after his anointing (though it eventually grew back), supposedly due to lice in the oil, so maybe his health problems started before 1405 (BennettM, pp. 204-205).

- 1408: Pope Gregory XII absolves Henry and the others who executed Scrope (Piroyansky, p. 52), but with conditions, e.g. Henry was supposed to found three religious houses in memory of Scrope. Henry IV did not manage this, but Henry V seems to have done it.
- 1413: Henry V succeeds his father Henry IV.
- July/August 1415: Richard, Earl of Cambridge, Henry, 3rd baron Scrope of Masham (the Archbishop's nephew), and others are charged with a conspiracy against Henry V (Allmand-Henry, pp. 74-76). Henry Scrope confessed to knowing about the conspiracy but not to taking part; Henry had to concoct a novel interpretation of the Law of Treason, not sanctioned by parliament, to justify a capital sentence (Allmand-Henry, p. 77). Cambridge, Scrope, and Sir Thomas Grey of Heton are all executed for their parts in the conspiracy, but their fates differ: all are beheaded, but Cambridge is executed quickly, and his head and body are buried together. Grey is executed quickly, but his head is displayed at Newcastle. Scrope, and only Scrope, is drawn to the place of execution on a hurdle (painful and demeaning) and then executed, with his head being displayed over York's Micklegate. Furthermore, Henry (probably illegally) confiscated most of his lands (Allmand-Henry, pp. 77-78) and denied his wishes for his burial. This even though Scrope was his former Treasurer. For whatever reason, Henry V acted against Baron Scrope much as his father had acted against Archbishop Scrope.
- 1418: A widow leaves a bequest of garments to three people: two attested saints and "Saint Richard Scrope" (Goldberg, p. 177)
- 1419-1420: Donations in Scrope's honor amount to some £150 (Goldberg, p. 146), at a time when the expected annual income of a landed knight was £40. In other words, that is a *lot* of donations.
- 1422: Henry V dies, succeeded by his son Henry VI, who is less than a year old.
- 1429: A contemporary chronicler says miracles are still happening at Archbishop Scrope's tomb (Piroyansky, p. 52)

- *c.* 1440: A stained glass depiction in York Minster shows Scrope with a halo (Goldberg, p. 12).
- 1461: Edward IV and the Yorkist dynasty overthrows Henry VI and the Lancastrians
- 1462: Edward IV asks Convocation to consider Scrope's canonization (Piroyansky, p. 54), and the Chapter of York, at Edward's encouragement, discusses Scrope's canonization and translation (Goldberg, p. 198), though nothing much came of that (Piroyansky thinks possibly the expense of seeking canonization was more than the York diocese wanted to spend; Christopher Norton, on p. 207 of Goldberg suggests that Edward's action actually interfered with Scrope's hopes for sainthood, because it turned what was a popular cult into a political issue).
- 1471: Edward IV and the Yorkists, who had been deposed in 1471, use Scrope's memory to castigate Henry VI, the Earl of Warwick, and the Lancastrians (Piroyansky, p. 53); the Yorkists seem to have regarded Scrope as one of their family saints.
- 1509: An inventory reveals the large number of objects which had been, and still were, being devoted to Scrope (Piroyansky, p. 55).
- *c.* 1536. Henry VIII's break with Rome starts the English church on a path away from veneration of saints.
- late 1500s: Shakespeare gives Scrope a minor part in *Henry IV, Part I* and makes his rebellion a significant event in *Henry IV, Part II.* There is little sign that Shakespeare knew anything above Scrope except what he could draw from Holinshed; the portrayal isn't a blatant lie like his portrayal of Richard III, but it certainly is not reliable.

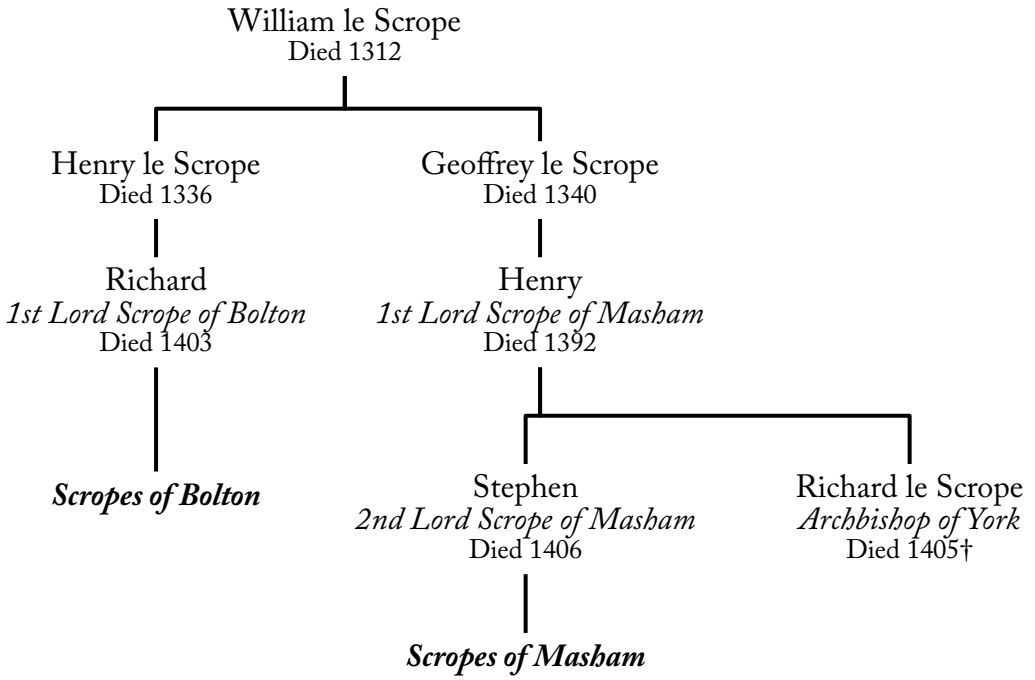


Figure 21: The Ancestry of Archbishop Scrope

About Shakespeare's Portrayal of Scrope:

It hardly matters for our purposes, but there are some interesting notes about Shakespeare's portrayal of Scrope. First is the fact that, in *Henry IV, Part II,* he is explicitly shown as a rebel, but his trial and execution are not included in the play. Also, *Henry IV, Part II* is one of the relatively rare Shakespeare plays for which we have two significantly independent texts, the Quarto and the First Folio. They are substantially different (the Folio is more than 150 lines longer) — and Scrope is at the heart of many of the differences (Goldberg, p. 131). S. K. Wright, on pp. 131-133 of Goldberg, notes that Scrope's speeches in the Quarto are more than two dozen lines shorter (meaning that Scrope has borne a very large fraction of the changes, which are thought to be cuts in the Quarto text). The longer Folio version of the speeches show a more complex, philosophical Scrope; Wright thinks the passages were cut for political reasons, because they made Scrope look like a more reasonable man.

Some Modern Opinions about Scrope:

"A clerical career was of course not unusual for a younger son, but there is every reason to believe that he took his entry into holy orders very seriously" (Goldberg, p. 3).

"Scrope seems to have taken upon himself to act as a mediator between his public — nobility, cleary and burgesses alike — and the Crown. His reformist program, written in English and hung on church-doors and on the city-gates of York, voiced certain complaints and abuses, to which remedies were suggested" (Piroyansky, p. 49). The complaints included excessive clerical taxes, lords being denied their properties (Given-Wilson, p. 274, thinks this was Mowbray's idea, not Scrope's, which makes sense), relief from excessive lay taxes, and punishment for those who usurped the wealth of the Commons. The call was for a parliament to address these issues. Although it wasn't really a very constructive program, it certainly wasn't violently rebellious.

"Scrope emerges as a conscientious, indeed to use his own pun, scrupulous churchman and pastor." (E.g., at a time when clerical celibacy was literally understood — *celibacy* means not getting married; it doesn't mean being chaste; many Catholic priests had illegitimate children — Scrope seems to have practiced not merely celibacy but chastity.) "He seems to have taken an active interest in his cathedral church.... His devotional interests no doubt reflect a wider devotional climate with its focus on the mixed life — the blending of the contemplative life... with the active life of the world — and on the person of Christ, but there are some aspects that are perhaps more distinctive. In particular devotions to the Eleven Thousand Virgins, to the Holy Name, and to the Five Wounds can all be tied to him and are not retrospective hagiographic creations" (Goldberg, p. 14).

Opinions about What Drove Scrope:

Are we sure Scrope was a rebel, as opposed to someone who wanted reforms? No. The Percies had certainly been rebels, but there were a lot of people who were not happy with Henry IV. The Welsh rebellion was going strong. The Scots were not friendly. Henry's hopes of doing something about the French were coming to nothing. He was always broke and seeking money. From outside, Henry must have looked like an absolute flop as a king. And so people were always trying to force reforms on him.

Because he was executed with such speed, Scrope did not have time to prepare a will (Goldberg, p. 27). So we really don't know much about his actual feelings at the time of his execution, except that he seems to have shown genuine humility and accepted his fate with dignity.

There was one other Yorkshire saint, a Saint William, who was venerated at the cathedral there. But his cult really never took off. If someone was going to swear by a Yorkshire Saint in the fifteenth century, "Saint Richard Scrope" would be the obvious choice — even though it meant swearing by someone not officially canonized.

A Song: The Death of Archbishop Scrope ("The Byshop Scrope That Was So Wise")

This song has not survived in tradition, and there is only one copy, but it is widely regarded as a carol to Scrope. If so, it is obviously a strong indication of a belief in his sanctity! Both Richard Leighton Greene and its most recent editor, S. K. Wright, think it was intended as a carol (Wright, on p. 123 of Goldberg).

Note the executioner's request for forgiveness (presumably indicating that he did not think Scrope worthy of execution) and the Archbishop's request to be slain with five blows, to recall the five wounds of Christ; also the mention of Whitmonday, the day of Scrope's execution.

Hay hay hay hay,
Thynke on Whitsonmonday.

The bysshop Scrope that was so wyse,
Nowe is he dede and lowe he lyse,
To Hevyns blys yhit may he ryse
Thurghe help of Marie that mylde may.

Hay....

When he was broght unto the hyll,
He held hym both mylde and styll;
He toke his deth w[i]t[h] full gode wyll,
As I have herde full trewe men say.

Hay....

He that shulde his dethe be,
He kneled downe uppon his kne,
"Lord, yo[ur] deth forgyffe it me
Full hertly here to yowe I pray."

Hay....

"Here I wyll the com[m]ende,
Th[o]u gyff me fyve strokys w[i]t[h] thy hende,
And than my wayes th[o]u latt me wende
To Hevyns blys that lastys ay."

Hay....

The source of the piece is Trinity College (Cambridge) MS. R.4.20. The manuscript has been in the Trinity College library since 1665. It is believed to be from the early fifteenth century — meaning that it was copied within a few decades of Scrope's death. The hand of the main run of the text is very regular and carefully ruled, indicating a professional scribe. The main contents are two widely-copied works, *Mandeville's Travels* and John Lydgate's *The Siege of Thebes.* However, the Scrope poem is not by the hand that wrote most of the book (Goldberg, pp 120-121). It occurs two pages from the end, in the middle of folio 171 recto (as of this writing, scans are at https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=R.4.20. Go to the end; it is the last pair of pages that are entirely intact). It is the sixth of eight pieces copied onto these last leaves by a hand that did not mark any distinction from the previous piece and did not rule its lines. (Perhaps an indication that the scribe of these additions was not a professional scribe, since professionals — including the one who wrote the rest of the book — usually ruled their lines.) There is every reason to think these final poems were later additions by the various owners of the book, though the style of the writing still marks it as fairly early. The writing is sufficiently coarse and worn that there are some places where the text is uncertain.

Is There Significance to the Abbot Invoking Saint Richard?

Can we infer anything from the Abbot invoking Saint Richard (other than that the "Gest" in its current form is post-1405)?

- Does invoking a non-canonical saint mean that the Monk is not a good churchman? (I doubt it.)
- Does invoking a saint who was executed by the first Lancastrian king say something political? For instance, if the time of the "Gest" is in the Lancastrian period, does that mean the Monk opposes the King? On the other hand, if it's the Yorkist period, is he pro-Edward IV? If so, then why would he be the enemy of Robin, who so loves the king?

  Also, the abbey later tries to send its Cellarer to the King to negotiate. Admittedly they send him a very large gift while doing so. But that might be their regular dues to the king — in the period of Scrope's rebellion and after, England was fighting Owen Glendower in Wales, and against the French, and sometimes against the Scots, too. The Lancastrians required very high taxes and still were forever broke! If you wanted to get listened to, mightn't you pay your taxes in full and not invoke anti-Lancastrian saints?
- According to Piroyansky, p. 59, the cult around Scrope came to portray him as "the exemplary bishop" — an ideal example of the office. Might the Abbot swear by him because the Abbot is an obvious beneficiary of the Church hierarchy, while the anarchistic Robin, although a devoted follower of Christianity, and of Mary in particular, was opposed to the hierarchy. (I doubt this, too; it's too complicated.)

- Scrope is reported to have been deeply interested in a feast of the time, that of the Eleven Thousand Virgins; he composed a sequence for this festival (Piroyansky, p. 60). Possibly partly as a result, he came to be linked somewhat with the Virgin Mary — possibly even, in some instances, being contrasted with her (Piroyansky, pp. 60-61). Could Robin, the follower of the True Virgin, be contrasted with the Abbot, follower of Scrope the lesser virgin? (Again, I doubt it; the idea is too dependent on what we know now.)

The simplest conclusion is that the Abbot invoked St. Richard just because he was a convenient Yorkshire saint, but we perhaps should keep in mind the possibility that the Abbot was an opponent of the Lancastrians.

What does the mention of Saint Richard tell us about the date and place of the "Gest"?

At minimum, the mention of Saint Richard forces us to date this part of the "Gest" to some time after 1405. (Although, since the "Gest" is composite, it is possible that some of the other parts are older.) Can we be more specific than "After 1405"? And does it give us any other information?

One thing to note is that Scrope was primarily a northern figure. Both of the Scrope lordships were northern (Bolton is in Lancashire; Masham, the branch of the family that produced Richard, is in North Yorkshire; and Richard was of course Archbishop of York). An invocation of Scrope is natural for a northerner but would be odd from a southerner. A southerner might know of "Saint Richard" but wouldn't invoke him. The geography of the "Gest" also implies a northern source — the author knows Yorkshire but shows little evidence of knowing Nottinghamshire or points south of that.

Dating is harder. We probably have to allow a little time for the Scrope cult to establish itself; by itself, that probably means we need a date after the reign of Henry IV. A date in the reign of Henry IV is unlikely anyway, because Henry would not have wanted a mention of Scrope even on the lips of a "bad guy." The reign of Henry V is slightly more possible, but given his problems with the Scropes of Masham, that still seems unlikely.

Thus we are almost forced to a date in the reign of Henry VI or later, at least for the Richard at the Lee part of the story and the final redaction. However, a date after 1460, when Edward IV ascended, has its own problems. Scrope was a Yorkist saint, and if the "Gest" is after 1460, then the obvious temptation is to treat the King Edward of the last two fits as Edward IV. But the Gest's King Edward is a good guy, and the Abbot of Saint Mary is a bad guy. Would the poet portray a bad abbot as swearing by a Yorkist saint if the Yorkists were in power? It seems a very dangerous idea.

So my personal feeling is that this suggests a date in the early to mid fifteenth century, i.e. 1425-1460. A final date before 1425 seems especially unlikely. Like all evidences of the date of the "Gest," this one is not very specific or reliable, but it supports a "most likely" date of 1440-1455.

Appendix V: Documents Relevant to Understanding the "Gest"

The documents in this section are not intended to document all early mentions of Robin Hood; for this, see Knight/Ohlgren or Dobson/Taylor. Rather, they are intended to document the context of the "Gest." They include versions of several early Robin Hood ballads, several other pieces from the "Robin Hood Period," certain possible sources and influence, and some historical background information.

The Bible — 1 Samuel 29 (David sent away by the Philistines before Aphek)

This version based on the Latin Vulgate, as found in the late manuscripts, rather than on the Hebrew or the Greek. This would be the Bible Robin would have known in Catholic England. Modern versions tend to call the places mentioned "Aphek" and "Jezreel"; the King of Gath is "Achish."

[1] So all the troops of the Philistines were gathered together to Afec, while Israel camped by the fountain in Jezrahel. [2] And the lords of the Philistines marched with their hundreds and their thousands, while David and his men were in the rear with Achis. [3] And the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achis said to the princes of the Philistines: "Do you not know David, who was the servant of Saul the king of Israel, and has been with me many days or years? I have found no fault in him from the day that he fled to me to this day. [4] But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him, and they said to him, "Let this man return, and stay in the place you chose for him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest he turn on us when we shall begin to fight. For how can he otherwise appease his master, but with our heads? [5] Is not this David, of whom they sang in their dances,

Saul slew his thousands,
and David his ten thousands?"

6 Then Achis called David, and said to him: "As the Lord lives, you are upright and good in my sight, both in your going out, and your coming in with me in the army: and I have not found fault in you, from the day you came to me to this day: but you do not please the princes. [7] So go back, and go in peace, and do not offend the eyes of the princes of the Philistines." [8] David said to Achis: "But what have I done, and what have you found in me thy servant, from the day you first saw me until this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" [9] Then Achis answered David, "I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God, but the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' [10] So arise in the morning, you, and the servants of your Lord who came with you: and get up before day, and go on your way as soon as it is light.

[11] So David and his men arose in the night, so that they might set out in the morning, and they returned to the land of the Philistines, but the Philistines went up to Jezrahel.

Selections from the Rule of St. Benedict

Based on the text in Bettenson, pp. 116-128, compared with online sources. Note, in section III, how Benedict gave the Abbot absolute control over everything.

III. On Calling the Brothers to Counsel

Whenever any important matters have to be dealt with in the monastery, let the abbot call together the whole community and state the question to be acted upon. Then, having heard the brothers' advice, let him turn the matter over in his own mind and do what he shall judge to be most appropriate. The reason we have said that all should be summoned for counsel is that the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best.

But let the brothers give their advice with all the deference required by humility, and not presume stubbornly to defend their opinions; but let the decision rather depend on the abbot's judgment, and let all submit to whatever he shall decide for their welfare.

However, just as it is proper for the disciples to obey their master, so also it is his task to dispose all things with prudence and justice. In all things, therefore, let all follow the Rule as guide, and let no one be so rash as to unreasonably deviate from it. Let no one in the monastery follow his own ideas; and let no one presume to contend with his abbot inside or outside of the monastery. But if anyone should presume to do so, let him face the discipline of the Rule. At the same time, the abbot himself should do all things in the fear of God and in observance of the Rule, knowing that beyond a doubt he will have to render an account of all his decisions to God, the most impartial judge. But if the business to be done in the interests of the monastery be of lesser importance, let him take counsel with the senior [brothers] only.

XXXIX. On the Amount of Food

We think it sufficient for the daily meal, whether at the sixth or the ninth hour, that every season have two cooked dishes. This is on account of individual infirmities, so that one who for some reason cannot eat of the one may make his meal of the other. So let two cooked dishes suffice for all the brothers; if any fruit or fresh vegetables are available, a third dish may be added. Let one pound weight of bread suffice for the day, whether there be only one meal or both dinner and supper. If they are to have supper, the cellarer shall reserve a third of that pound, to be given them at supper.

If it happens that the work was heavier, it shall be within the Abbot's discretion and power to add something to the fare. Above all things, however, excess must be avoided and a monk must never be overtaken by indigestion; for there is nothing so opposed to the Christian character as over-indulgence.

LIII. Of the Reception of Guests

All guests who arrive should be received like Christ, for he will say, "I came as a guest, and you took me in" [Matt. 25:35]. And let due honor be shown to all, especially to the servants of the faith and to pilgrims. As soon as a guest is announced, therefore, let the Superior or the brethren meet him with all loving service.

The Coronation Oath of Edward II

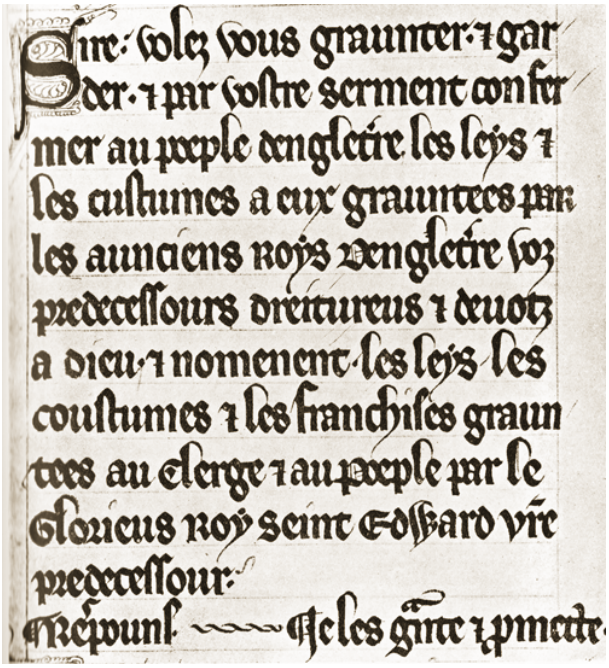

Sire: volez vous graunter & gar
der & par vostre serment confer
mer au poeple denglettre les leys &
les custumes a eux grauntees par
les aunciens roys denglettre voz
predecessours dreitureus & deuotz
a dieu & nomenent les leys les
coustumes & les franchises graun
tees au clerge & au poeple par le
glorieus roy seint Edward vre
predecessour.
Respunt Je les gart & promette.

Figure 22: Contemporary Copy of Edward II's Coronation Oath
Written in the book hand of the early fourteenth century. A copy of the Bible used in a service attended by Robin would have been written in a hand much like this, if perhaps not so beautifully. Note the lines framing the writing area: These were drawn with a straight edge and a point to provide rules to let the scribe write in straight lines. Versions of the oath exist in Latin and French. This is the first clause of the French oath. A transcription is below; variations found in the version in Chrimes/Brown (p. 4) are shown in [brackets]. Punctuation variants are not noted.

Sire: volez vous graunter • & [e] gar/der & par vostre serment confer/mer au poeple denglet^{er}re les leys & / les custumes a eux grauntees par / les aunciens Roys [rois] Denglet^{er}re voz / predecessours dreitureus [droitureus] & devotz / a dieu • et nomenent • les leys les / coustumes & les franchises graun/tees [grantez] au Clerge & au Poeple par le / Glorieus Roy seint Edward v^{ost}re / predecessour. Respounds. ∿∿∿ Je les g^{r}ante & p^{ro}mette.

Translation from p. 157 of Hutchison: Sire, will you grant and keep and by your oath confirm to the people of England the laws and customs given to them by the previous just and god-fearing kings, your ancestors, and especially the laws, customs and liberties granted to the clergy and people by the glorious king, the sainted Edward [i.e. Edward the Confessor], your predecessor. [Response:] *'I will preserve them.'*

There are three other clauses, which largely reiterate this. The first promises to preserve the Church, the second promises to judge impartially, and the third promises to observe the just laws and customs of the realm. Note that, in the Articles of Deposition, Edward II is charged with violating these oaths.

Adam Davy's Dreams about Edward II

Probably written c. 1308 in praise of (and perhaps in hopes of getting a reward from) the new King. It may well be our earliest description of him. The dialect is that of London. Original in MS. Bodleian Laud Misc. 622, believed to be of the late fourteenth century. This text from Emerson, p. 227. The text here includes the first 38 lines of 167 total.

There are five dreams in all; this is the first. In the fifth dream (line 113; Emerson, p. 230) the author calls himself "Adam þe marchal of Stretford-atte-Bowe"; this is all we really know of him.

The poem never explicitly states that it is about Edward II, but a process of elimination says that it was: Edward I was never Prince of Wales. Neither was Edward III. Edward the Black Prince was Prince of Wales but never King. Edward IV was never Prince of Wales, either, even if one ignores the fact that the manuscript seems to have been written before his time. This leaves only Edward II as a monarch who was both Prince and King. The Shrine of Saint Edward (line 11) is presumably the Shrine of Edward the Confessor, of whom Edward II was fond. The decapitation of Saint John, referred to in the last lines of the selection, was commemorated August 29.

As will be true of most Middle English poems in this appendix, the Middle English is on the left, with a modernized version in italics on the right.

To oure Lorde Jesu Crist in hevene — *To our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven*
Ich today shewe myne swevene, — *I today show my sleep (dream)*
Þat ich mette in one niȝht — *That I had in one night*
Of a kniȝht of mychel miȝht; — *Of a knight of great might,*
His name is ihote Sir Edward þe Kyng, — *His name is Sir Edward the King*
Prince of Wales, Engelonde þe fair þing. — *Prince of Wales, England's fair thing.*
Me mette þat he was armed wel — *I dreamed that he was arméd well*
Boþe wiþ yrne and wiþ stel, — *Both with iron and with steel.*
And on his helme þat was of stel — *And on his helm that was of steel,*
A coroune of gold bicom hym wel. — *A crown of gold became him well.*
Bofore þe shryne of Seint Edward he stood, — *Before the shrine of St. Edward he stood*
Myd glad chere and mylde of mood, — *Amid glad cheer and mild of mood,*
Mid two kniȝttes armed on eiþer side — *Amid two knights, armed, on either side*
Þat he ne miȝht þennes goo ne ride. — *That from there he might neither go nor ride*
Hetilich hil leiden hym upon — *Hatefully they laid him upon*
Als hil miȝtten mid swerede don. — *Also him smiting with swords down.*
He stood þere wel swiþe stille, — *He stood there all very still,*
And þoled al togedres her wille; — *And suffered altogether her will.*
Ne strook ne ȝaf he aȝeinward — *No stroke yet did he answer*
To þilk þat hym weren wiþerward. — *To those that to him were enemies.*
Wounde ne was þere blody non, — *Nor wounds there he suffered none*
Of al þat hym þere was don. — *From all that there to him was done.*
After þat me þouȝht onon, — *After that me thought anon,*
As þe tweie kniȝttes weren gon, — *As the two knights were gone,*
In eiþer ere of oure kyng, — *In either ear of our king*
Þere spronge out a wel fare þing. — *There sprung out a very fair thing.*
Hii wexen out so briȝht so glem — *He waxed out so bright, so gleaming*
Þat shyneð of þe sonnebem, — *That shinéd of the sunbeam*
Of divers coloures hii weren — *Of diverse colors he were*
Þat comen out of boþe his eren; — *That came out of both his ears*
Foure bendes all by rewe on eiþer ere, — *Four bonds in a row on either ear,*
Of divers colours, red and white als hii were; — *Of diverse colors, red and white they were*
Als fer as me þouȝht ich miȝht see — *As far as I thought I might see*
Hii spredden fer and wyde in þe cuntre, — *He spread far and wide in the country,*
Forsoþe me mette þis ilke swevene — — *Forsooth I dreamed this very dreaming* —
Ich take to witnesse God of hevene — — *I take to witness God of heaven* —
Þe Wedenysday bifore þe decollacioun of Seint Jon, — *The Wednesday before the decapitation of Saint John,*
It is more þan twelve moneþ gon. — *This was more than twelve months gone (ago).*

The Deposition of Edward II

Summarized from the six articles on pp. 169-170 of Hutchison. According to Chrimes/ Brown, who print the French text on pp. 37-38, "This document is not an official record but was probably drawn up by William of Mees, secretary to John Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, acting treasurer from 14 November, 1326."

The Articles of Deposition (1327)

It has been decided that prince Edward, the eldest son of the king, shall have the government of the realm and shall be crowned king, for the following reasons:

1. First, because the king is incompetent to govern in person.
   (The article goes on to charge him with being controlled by evil counselors, and with refusing to accept the advice of better men.)

2. Item, throughout his reign he has not been willing to listen to good counsel nor adopt it or give himself to the good government of the realm, but he has always given himself up to unseemly works and occupations, neglecting to satisfy the needs of his realm.

3. Item, through the lack of good government he has lost the realm of Scotland and other territories and lordships in Gascony and Ireland… *(as well as damaging his relations with France and other powers).*

4. Item, by his pride and obstinacy… he has destroyed the holy Church… and also many great and noble men of this land he has put to a shameful death, imprisoned, exiled, and disinherited.

5. Item, wherein he was bound by his oath to do justice to all, he has not willed to do it… *(but has worked for his own profit, violating his Coronation Oath).*

6. Item, he has stripped his realm, and done all that he could to ruin his realm and his people, and what is worse, by his cruelty and lack of character he has shown himself incorrigible without hope of amendment, which things are so notorious that they cannot be denied.

Laurence Minot: "Edward Oure Cumly King"

Orthography modified to match modern conventions. The text is based on MinotHall, p. 11, checked against the online TEAMS text (https://metseditions.org/editions/KYXE2b3qulgeDF5BLIGg9ku5MPbAgrl2, checked July 22, 2026). Original in the British Library, MS. Cotton Galba E.ix, c. *1425.*

The "King Edward" involved is Edward III. The format used is 6-line tail rhyme, a fairly common meter in this period (it's the stanza Chaucer used in "Sir Thopas," his spoof of courtly romances), but one that seems to have had very little popular vogue.

1	Edward oure cumly king,	*Edward our comely King,*
	In Braband has his woning	*In Brabant was his dwelling,*
	With mani cumly knight.	*With many comely knights.*
	And in þat land, trewly to tell,	*And in that land, truly to tell*
	Ordanis he still for to dwell,	*Ordains he still for to dwell*
	To time he think to fight.	*Till the time he thinks to fight.*
2	Now God þat es of mightes maste,	*Now God that is of most might,*
	Grant him grace of þe Haly Gaste	*Grant him grace of the Holy Ghost*
	His heritage to win.	*His heritage to win.*
	And Mari moder of mercy fre,	*And Mary mother of mercy free,*
	Save oure king and his menȝe	*Save our King and his company*
	Fro sorow and schame and syn.	*From sorrow and shame and sin.*
3	Þus in Braband has he bene,	*Thus in Brabant has he been*
	Whare he bifore was seldom sene,	*Where before he was seldom seen*
	For to prove þaire japes.	*For to test their taunts.*
	Now no langer wil he spare,	*Now no longer will he spare*
	Bot unto Fraunce fast will he fare	*But unto France he fast will fare*
	To confort him with grapes.	*To comfort him with grapes.*
4	Ffurth he ferd into France —	*Forth he fared into France.*
	God save him fro mischance	*God save him from mischance!*
	And all his cumpany.	*And all his company.*
	Þe nobill duc of Braband	*The noble Duke of Brabant*
	With him went into þat land,	*With him went into that land*
	Redy to lif or dy.	*Ready to live or die.*

5 Þan þe riche floure de lice
Wan þare ful litill prise;
Fast he fled for ferde.
Þe right aire of that cuntre
Es cumen with all his knightes fre
To schac him by þe berd.

Then the rich fleur-de-lis
Won there full little praise
Fast he fled for fear
The rightful heir of that country
Is come with with all his knightés free
To shake him by the beard.

6 Sir Philip þe Valayse,
Wit his men in þo dayes,
To batale had he thoght.
He bad his men þam purvay
With owten lenger delay,
Bot he ne held it noght.

Sir Philip of Valois
With his men in those days
To battle he had thought.
He bade his men them purvey
Without longer delay
But he held it naught.

7 He broght folk ful grete wone,
Ay sevyn oganis one,
Þat ful wele wapnid were.
Bot sone when he herd ascry
Þat king Edward was nere þarby,
Þan durst he noght cum nere.

He brought folk, a full great many
As seven against [the English] one
That full well armed were.
But soon as he heard the cry
That King Edward was near thereby
Then durst he not come near.

8 In þat mornig fell a myst,
And when oure Ingliss men it wist,
It changed all þaire chere.
Oure king unto God made his bone,
And God sent him gude confort sone —
Þe weder wex ful clere.

In that morning fell a mist
And when our English men realized this,
It changéd all their cheer.
Our king unto God asked this boon,
And God sent him good comfort soon;
The weather waxed full clear.

9 Oure king and his men held þe felde
Stalwortly with spere and schelde,
And thoght to win his right,
With lordes and with knightes kene
And oþer doghty men bydene
Þat war ful frek to fight.

Our King and his men held the field
Stalwartly with spear and shield
And thought to win his right
With lords and with knightés keen,
And other men there to be seen
That were full ready to fight.

10 When sir Philip of France herd tell
Þat king Edward in feld walld dwell,
Þan gayned him no gle.
He traisted of no better bote,
Bot both on hors and on fote
He hasted him to fle.

When Sir Philip of France heard tell
That King Edward in field would dwell,
That gained him no glee.
He trusted of no better result
But both on horse and on foot
He hastened for to flee.

11 It semid he was ferd for strokes
When he did fell his grete okes
Obout his pavilyoune.
Abated was þan all his pride,
For langer þare durst he noght bide —
His bost was broght all doune.

It seemed he was afraid of strokes
When he did fell his great oaks
About his pavilion.
Abated then was all his pride,
For longer there he durst not bide;
His boast was brought all down.

12 Þe king of Beme had cares colde,
Þat was fur hardy and bolde,
A stede to umstride.
Þe king als of Naverne
War faire feld in þe ferene
Þaire heviddes for to hide.

The King of Bohemia had cares cold
That was far(?) hardy and bold
A steed to dismount(?).
The king also of Navarre
Was fair fallen in the ferne
Their heads for to hide.

13 And leves wele, it es no lye,
Þe felde hat Flemangrye
Þat king Edward was in,
With princes þat war stif ande bolde
And dukes þat war doghty tolde
In batayle to bigin.

And believes well, it is no lie,
The field had the Flemings
That King Edward was in,
With princes that were stout and bold,
And dukes that were doughty told
In battle to begin.

14 Þe princes þat war riche on raw
Gert nakers strike and trumpes blaw
And made mirth at þaire might.
Both alblast and many a bow
War redy railed opon a row
And ful frek for to fight.

The princes that were rich in their rows
Made drums to strike and trumpets blow
And made mirth at their might.
Both arms(?) and many a bow
Were readily raised upon a row
And full ready for to fight.

15 Gladly þai gaf mete and drink
So þat þai suld þe better swink
Þe wight men that thar ware.
Sir Philip of Fraunce fled for dout
And hied him hame with all his rout —
Coward! God giff him care.

Gladly they gave meat and drink
So that they should better work
The strong men that there were.
Sir Philip of France fled for doubt
And headed for home with all his rout.
Coward! God give him care.

16 Ffor þare þan had þe lely flowre
Lorn all halely his honowre,
Þat sogat fled for ferd.
Bot oure king Edward come ful still,
When þat he trowed no harm him till
And keped him in þe berde.

For there then had the lily flower
Lost entirely his honor
That so did flee for fear.
But our King Edward came full still
When that he knew no harm came till
And faced him in the beard.

Laurence Minot: "The Taking of Calais"

Orthography modified to match modern conventions. The text is based on Sisam, pp. 153-156, checked against the online TEAMS text ((https://metseditions.org/editions/KYXE2b3qulgeDF5BLIGg9ku5MPbAgrl2, checked July 22, 2026)). Original in the British Library, MS. Cotton Galba E.ix, c. *1425. Edward III besieged Calais in the aftermath of his victory at Crécy in 1346. Philip of Valois (stanza 4/line 32) was King of France at this time, and John, Duke of Normandy, his son and heir.*

	How Edward als þe romance sais	*How Edward, as the romance says,*
	held his sege bifor Calais.	*Held his siege before Calais.*
1	Calays men, now mai ȝe care,	*Calais men, now may you care,*
	And murni[n]g mun ȝe have to mede;	*And mourning have as your reward.*
	Mirth on mold get ȝe no mare:	*Mirth on the ground you get no more;*
	Sir Edward sall ken ȝow ȝowre crede.	*Sir Edward shall make you know your creed*
	Whilum war ȝe wight in wede	*While once you were strong in clothing,*
	To robbing rathly for to ren.	*To robbing quickly to run,*
	Mend ȝow sone of ȝowre misdede;	*Mend you soon of your misdeeds*
	Ȝowre care es cumen, will ȝe it ken.	*Your cares are come; you will it know.*
2	Kend it es how ȝe war kene	*Known it is how you were keen*
	Al Inglis men with dole to dere.	*All Englishmen with sorrow to hurt*
	Þaire gudes toke ȝe al bidene;	*Their good you took all together;*
	No man born wald ȝe forbere.	*No man born would you forbear.*
	Ȝe spared noght with swerd ne spere	*You spared nought with sword or spear,*
	To stik þam and þaire gudes to stele.	*To slay them, and their goods to steal*
	With wapin and with ded of were	*With weapons, and with deed of war,*
	Þus have ȝe wonnen werldes wele.	*Thus have you earned your living well.*
3	Weleful men war ȝe, I wis,	*Wealthy men were you, I know*
	Bot fer on fold sall ȝe noght fare;	*But far on field you shall not fare;*
	A bare sal now abate ȝowre blis	*A boar shall now reduce your bliss,*
	And wirk ȝow bale on bankes bare.	*And work you harm on bankës bare.*
	He sall ȝow hunt als hund dose hare,	*He shall you hunt as hound does hare,*
	Þat in no hole sall ȝe ȝow hide;	*That in no hole shall you yourselves hide.*
	For all ȝowre speche will he noght spare	*For all your speech he will not spare*
	Bot bigges him right by ȝowre side.	*But hold himself right by your side.*

4 Biside ȝow here þe bare bigins
To big his boure in winter tyde,
And all bi tyme takes he his ines
With semly se[r]gantes him biside.
Þe word of him walkes ful wide;
Iesu save him fro mischance!
In bataill dar he wele habide
Sir Philip and Sir John of France.

Beside you here the bare beginnings
To build his bower in winter time
And all in time he takes his place
With seemly guards by his side.
The word of him is spread full wide;
Jesus save him from mischance!
In battle's risk he will abide
Sir Philip and Sir John of France.

5 Þe Franche men er fers and fell
And mase grete dray when þai er dight;
Of þam men herd slike tales tell.
With Edward think þai for to fight,
Him for to hald out of his right
And do him treson with þaire tales.
Þat was þaire purpos day and night,
Bi counsail of þe cardinales.

The French men are fierce and fell,
And make great stirring when they are ready
Of them men heard such tales told!
With Edward they thing for to fight,
Him for to hold out of his right,
And do him treason with their tales.
That was their purpose day and night,
By council of the cardinals.

6 Cardinales with hattes rede
War fro Calays wele thre myle;
Þai toke þaire counsail in þat stede
How þai might Sir Edward bigile.
Þai lended þare bot litill while,
Till Franche men to grante þaire grace.
Sir Philip was funden a file;
He fled and faght noght in that place.

Cardinals with hattës red,
Were from Calais well three miles.
They took their counsel in that place
How they might Sir Edward beguile.
They stayed there but little while
To French men to grant their grace
Sir Philip['s courage] was found to fail;
He fled and fought not in that place.

7 In þat place þe bare was blith,
For all was funden þat he had soght.
Philip þe Valas fled ful swith
With þe batail þat he had broght.
For to have Calays had he thoght
All at his ledeing loud or still,
Bot all þaire wiles war for noght —
Edward wan it at his will.

In that place the boar was blyth
For all was found that he sought
Philip the Valois fled full swiftly
With the battalion that he had brought.
For to have Calais had he thought
All at his command, loud or still.
But all their wiles were for naught;
Edward won it at his will.

8 Lystens now and ȝe may lere,
Als men þe suth may understand,
Þe knightes þat in Calais were
Come to Sir Edward sare wepeand.
In kirtell one, and swerd in hand,
And cried, 'Sir Edward, þine [we] are.
Do now, lord, bi law of land
Þi will with us for evermare'.

Listen now and you may learn
As men the truth may understand
The knights that in Calais were
Come to Sir Edward poorly weaponed.
In kirtle one, and sword in hand,
And cried, "Sir Edward, yours [we] are,
Do now, lord, by law of land,
Your will with us forevermore."

9 Þe nobill burgase and þe best
Come unto him to have þaire hire;
Þe comun puple war ful prest
Rapes to bring obout þaire swire.
Þai said all, Sir Philip, oure syre
And his sun Sir John of France
Has left us ligand in þe mire
And broght us till þis doleful dance.

The noble burgesses and the best [people]
Come to him to have their payment
The common people were fully ready
Ropes to bring about their necks.
They all said, "Sir Philip, our sire,
And his son Sir John of France
Have left us lying in the mire
And brought us to this doleful dance.

10 Oure horses, þat war faire and fat,
Er etin up ilkone bidene;
Have we nowþer conig ne cat
Þat þai ne er etin and hundes kene.
All er etin up ful clene;
Es nowther levid biche ne whelp
Þat es wele on oure sembland sene,
And þai er fled þat suld us help.

Our horses, that were fair and fat,
Are eaten up, each one together.
We have neither coney nor cat
That they are not eaten, and keen hounds
All are eaten up full clean;
There is left neither bitch nor whelp.
[Our fate] is well on our semblance seen,
And they fled who should have us help[ed].

11 A knight þat was of grete renowne,
Sir John de Viene was his name,
He was wardaine of þe toune
And had done Ingland mekill schame.
For all þaire boste þai er to blame,
Ful stalworthly þare have þai strevyn;
A bare es cumen to mak þam tame:
Kayes of þe toun to him er gifen.

A knight that was of great renown,
Sir John de Viene was his name,
He was warden of the town,
And had done England much shame.
For all their boasts they are to blame;
Full stalwartly there have they striven
A bear has come to make them tame;
Keys of the town to him are given.

12 The kaies er ȝolden him of þe ȝate;
Lat him now kepe þam if he kun.
To Calais cum þai all to late,
Sir Philip and Sir John his sun.
Al war ful ferd þat þare ware fun;
Þaire leders may þai barely ban.
All on þis wise was Calais won;
God save þam þat it so gat wan!

The keys are yielded to him of the gate.
Let him now keep them if he can.
To Calais came they all too late,
Sir Philip and Sir John his son.
All were full afraid that there were found;
Their leaders may they barely ban (curse)
All in this way was Calais won;
God save them that it so did win.

Jean Froissart: The Battle of Crécy

The Battle of Crécy was the first great victory of the English longbow: The army of Edward III, outnumbered by the French by perhaps as much as five to one or more, nonetheless beat off the French assault at minimal loss to itself. And it was the longbow that won the battle.

Jean Froissart's Chronicles *is an account of the conflict between England and France which covers much of the fourteenth century. It isn't really a history as we would now define the term — more of an historical novel, emphasizing chivalry and honor. But Froissart had talked to people who had been involved in the English campaigns in France, and in the case of Crécy, there wasn't much need for exaggeration. In any case, Froissart's account tells how the English viewed the success of their arms, even if the exact details aren't true.*

The account which follows is based on two English translations of Froissart, both in the Penguin Classics series, one translation by John Joliffe, the other by Geoffrey Brereton. Portions of the account in italics are summaries; plain text *indicates that I am quoting more or less in full, although ellipses indicate short sections I have left out. The section numbers are from the Joliffe translation.*

[125-126] Edward [III], trying to return home after raiding France, found it hard to cross the Somme; all the bridges were guarded. King Philip [VI, of Valois], with an army of a hundred thousand men, tried to cut Edward off. Edward managed to cross the river at the ford of Blanchetaque. Edward gathered his army at Crécy; Philip assembled his forces at Abbéville. The French forces were said to be eight times as numerous as the English.

[127] On Friday... King Edward camped on the plain. The area was well-supplied, and he had plenty of supplies in reserve. The King dined with his lords and earls, and they had a good time before going to bed....

The baggage was sent to the rear, and men-at-arms as well as archers were dismounted.

The King ordered... that the army be divided into three "battles." In the first was his young son, the Prince of Wales, with the Earls of Warwick and Oxford.... There were about eight hundred men-at-arms in the Prince's battle, plus two thousand archers and a thousand others including the Welsh.... The second battle included the Earls of Northampton and Arundel... in all there were about five hundred men-at-arms in this battle, plus twelve hundred archers. The third battle was commanded by the King, with... about seven hundred men-at-arms and two thousand archers....

[128] That Saturday morning, the King of France got up early to hear mass in Saint Peter's Monastery in Abbeville, where he was staying. The [blind] King of Bohemia, the Count of Alençon, the Count of Blois, the Count of Flanders, the Duke of Lorraine, and all the chief nobles were with him. There wasn't room for the whole army at Abbéville, so many of them stayed at Saint Riquier and other villages. The King and the army, one of the largest ever seen, set out at sunrise. When they had travelled about five miles, he was advised to put the army in battle order, and to put the foot soldiers in front lest they be trampled by the horsemen. The king sent four valiant knights ahead *[to survey the English position.... The four were hesitant to speak; at last Le Moine de Bazeilles described the English position:]*

"They are drawn up in three battles, carefully aligned, and are evidently awaiting you. If no one has a better idea, my advice is that you stop the army here for the rest of the day and camp. For by the time the rear elements arrive and the army is properly organized, it will be late and the troops will be tired and disordered — and the enemy is fresh and alert and knows what they must do. In the morning you can better arrange your line of battle... for you can rest assured that they will still be there."

The King gave orders for this.... Those in the front ranks halted; those in the rear did not, but kept pushing forward, saying they would not stop until they reached the front, so that those in front were pushed even farther forward. The disorder was entirely due to pride — every man wanted to surpass his neighbor, despite the orders from the marshals.... So they advanced, in total disarray, until they came in sight of the enemy. It would have been much better had the front rank stood firm — but when they saw the enemy they at once retreated, in total disarray, which alarmed those in the rear, who thought they had been fighting and had been repelled. That made room for some to advance, if they wished, and some did advance while others stayed still. The roads between Abbéville and Crécy were all blocked by locals who... drew their swords and cried, "Kill, kill!" even though they hadn't seen an enemy.

No one who was not present... can possibly imagine the confusion of that day....

[129] The English, who had been drawn up in three battles, sitting quietly on the ground, calmly rose to their feet and formed their ranks when they saw the French approaching. The Prince's battle was in front, with its archers arranged in a triangular formation, with the men-at-arms behind them. The Earls of Northampton and Arundel, who commanded the second battalion, were carefully drawn up on the Prince's flank, prepared to support him should need arise.

Realize that, on the French side, the kings, dukes, counts, and barons did not advance at the same time, but one by one, as they pleased. The moment King Philip saw the English, his blood boiled, such was his hatred. He commanded his marshals, "Order the Genoese forward! Let the battle begin, in the name of God and Saint Denis." There were about fifteen thousand Genoese crossbowmen — but they weren't ready for battle, being very tired and having marched more than fifteen miles in full armor and carrying their crossbows. They told the constable that they were not fit to fight, and the Count of Alençon, when he was told, declared, "This is what we get for employing such rabble; they fail when we need them!" Meanwhile a violent storm broke out.... The storm quickly passed, and the sun came out, bright and clear, shining directly into the eyes of the French; the English had the sun behind them.

When the Genoese achieved some sort of order, and were ready to attack the English, they began to shriek very loudly in order to dismay the English — but they held their ground and paid no attention. [The Genoese] shouted again, loud and clear, and advanced a little; the English did not move. A third time they shouted, very loudly, and came forward, aiming and firing their crossbows. The English archers stepped forward a pace, then let fly their arrows in such unison that they were as thick as snow. The Genoese had never faced such archery, and when they felt the arrows pierce their

arms, heads, and coats of mail, they were badly dismayed; some cut the cords of their crossbows, others threw them to the ground, and all turned their backs and fled. The French had a large body of mounted men-at-arms to watch over the Genoese. When the latter tried to run away, they were stopped. For the King of France, seeing them retreat in disorder, cried out in fury, "Kill all that rabble, kill them! They're only getting in our way!"

[King Charles of Bohemia, with the army despite being almost blind, asked his men to lead him into the battle so that he could fight despite his disability. They tied their horses together to enable this. All were killed, with the reins of their horses still tied together.]

King Philip was enraged to see his army being cut to pieces by a handful of the English; despite being advised to retreat by John of Hainault... he advanced without a word to join his brother, the Count of Alençon, whose banner was atop a small rise. The Count of Alençon was advancing in good order against the English; riding past the archers, he was able to engage the Prince of Wales's battle, fighting long and courageously — as did the Count of Flanders elsewhere in the field. *[King Philip tried to join the attacks, but was unable to do so because of the crowd. Others also fail in their attacks but are able to retreat because the English refuse to break ranks.]*

The battle, which took place between Crécy and La Broye, was a stern and murderous affair; many feats of arms went unrecorded. It was already late when the fighting began, which harmed the French more than anything else, for by nightfall many knights and squires had lost their commanders, and they wandered about attacking the English piecemeal, with all the little parties being wiped out. For the English had decided that morning to take no prisoners and hold no one to ransom, because they were outnumbered so badly.

[At one point in the battle, the Black Prince found himself hard pressed, and sent to Edward III for reinforcements. Edward commanded his son to hold firm, and declared that no help would be sent while his son was still alive.]

At the end of the day, around vespers, King Philip departed the field in despair, with only (five) barons around him.... The king rode away, grieving and wailing, to the castle of La Broye. When they reached the gate, they found it locked, and the drawbridge up.... The captain was summoned, and appeared on the battlements, asking who was calling out so late at night. King Philip heard his voice and cried, "Open, open, captain; it is the unhappy King of France." The captain knew the King's voice, and he already knew he had been defeated, from fugitives who had fled past the castle. So he lowered the drawbridge and opened the gate. The king came in with his five companions, staying until midnight. But the king would not shut himself up or stay still there; they had a glass of wine, then rode off, taking with them guides who knew the area. They left at midnight and rode so hard that they reached Amiens at daybreak. The King stopped at a abbey, and declared that he would go no further until he knew who had been slain and who had escaped.

[It was John of Hainault who saved Philip VI, who had had a horse killed under him and stayed long in the field; the Count forcibly led the King from the field.]

On that day, the English archers brought a tremendous advantage to their side. Many say that it was by their shooting that the day was won, although the knights did many noble deeds.... But the archers certainly had one great success: it was entirely by their fire, at the beginning, that the Genoese, who were fifteen thousand in number, were turned back. And a great many French men-at-arms… were overthrown by the Genoese....

The Financial Resources of Edward III

During the medieval period, kings had five basic sources of revenue: The income from their own properties, lay subsidies, clerical subsidies, customs revenue, and the proceeds of war. There were a few other items, such as income from wardships and the judicial system (including the royal forests), but these were usually smaller. Other than the revenue from the royal holdings, all of these were somewhat unreliable — subsidies had to be voted by parliament or convocation, and then they had to be collected. Customs revenue was dependent on trade and could be affected by war. War proceeds were generally minor, although they could spike tremendously after a major victory.

Combine this with the fact that records were kept rather poorly in the medieval period and it should be no surprise that it can be hard to figure out what the king actually earned. But some data is available. Ormrod on p. 189 gives a table of lay subsidies during the reign of Edward III; p. 190 lists clerical subsidies; p. 192 has a partial list of customs revenue. If we ignore the proceeds of war, and assume a constant £22,000 for the revenue for the royal property, we can produce an approximate year-by-year figure for Edward III's revenue. Note that much of this includes extraordinary taxation to pay for his wars.

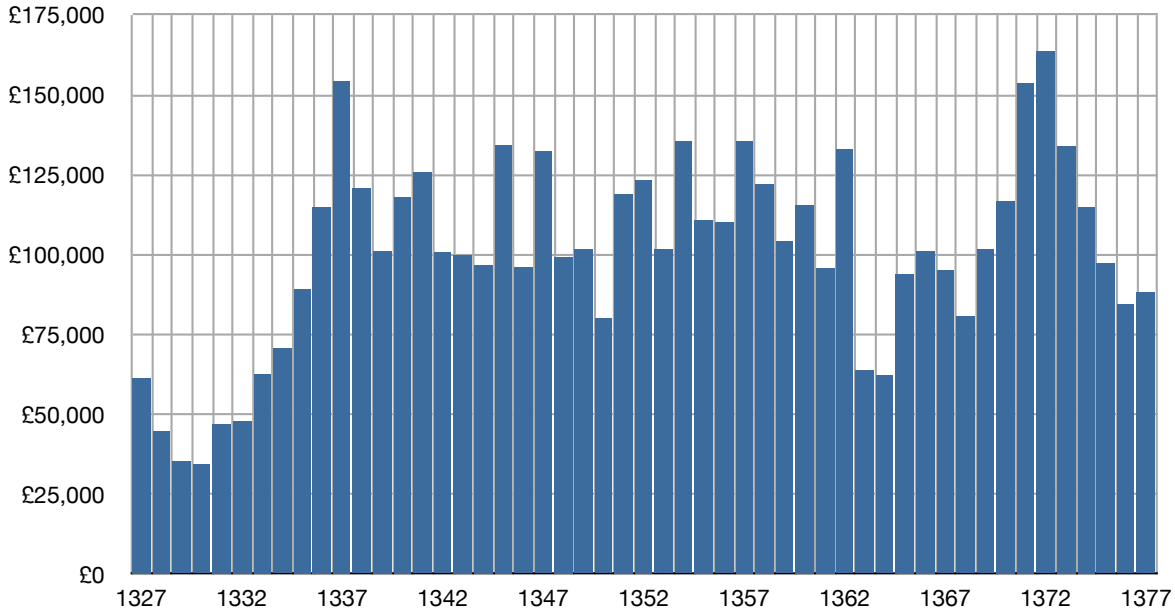


Figure 23: Estimate of Edward III's Annual Revenue
Figures are in total pounds collected annually

Two footnotes should be added. First, we have no customs data for 1336-1351. I have, therefore, estimated in by assuming a continuous rise from 1335 to 1351. Second, subsidies usually took time to collect. I have handled this by averaging the clerical and lay subsidies over three years — so, e.g., the total revenue for 1360 would be £22,000 (royal property income) plus £86,500 (customs revenue) plus the lay revenues for 1359-1361 divided by three plus the clerical

revenues for 1359-1361 divided by three. (For the years 1327 and 1377 we of course can use only two years of data.) The average annual revenue in this period works out to £100,528, with a minimum of £34,400 (in 1330, the year Edward III assumed power in his own name) and a maximum of £163,677 (1372). The figures used to create the graph are shown below:

Year	Total Income		Year	Total Income
1327	£61,400.00		1353	£101,567.00
1328	£44,767.00		1354	£135,400.00
1329	£35,300.00		1355	£110,900.00
1330	£34,400.00		1356	£110,033.00
1331	£47,000.00		1357	£135,533.00
1332	£47,900.00		1358	£122,133.00
1333	£62,633.00		1359	£104,100.00
1334	£70,633.00		1360	£115,500.00
1335	£89,300.00		1361	£95,800.00
1336	£114,900.00		1362	£133,000.00
1337	£154,287.00		1363	£63,700.00
1338	£120,713.00		1364	£62,200.00
1339	£101,107.00		1365	£93,900.00
1340	£118,133.00		1366	£101,200.00
1341	£125,760.00		1367	£95,000.00
1342	£100,720.00		1368	£80,600.00
1343	£99,880.00		1369	£101,700.00
1344	£96,840.00		1370	£116,767.00
1345	£134,333.00		1371	£153,667.00
1346	£96,027.00		1372	£163,667.00
1347	£132,253.00		1373	£134,000.00
1348	£99,347.00		1374	£115,000.00
1349	£101,640.00		1375	£97,200.00
1350	£80,000.00		1376	£84,467.00
1351	£119,060.00		1377	£88,200.00
1352	£123,367.00			

Considering that these figures arose as a result of the extraordinary taxation required to pay for Edward III's wars (note the sharp decline after 1360 when the Treaty of Bretigny brought a temporary end to the war with France), it will show you how big a chunk of cash £800 represented! And this is after inflation caused by the Black Death; the equivalent in the reign of Edward II would have been somewhat less.

Piers Plowman: The Robin Hood section

From the so-called "B" text, Passus V, lines 386-397. Text based on on Langland/Schmidt, p. 82, with the punctuation reduced.

Thanne cam Sleuthe al bislabered, with two slymed eighen
I moste sitte, seide the segge, or ellis sholde I nappe.
I may noght stonde ne stoup ne withoute stool kneele.
Were I brought abedde, but if my tailende it made,
Sholde no ryngynge do me ryse er I were ripe to dyne.
He began Benedicite with a bolk, and his brest knokked
And raxed and rored — and rutte at the laste.
What, awake, renk, quod Repentaunce, and rape thee to shryfte.
If I sholde deye by this day, quod he, me list nought to loke
I kan noght parfitly my Paternoster as the preest it syngeth,
But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolf Erl of Chestre
Ac neither or Oure Lord ne of Oure Lady the leese that evere was maked.

Modern paraphrase:

Then came Sloth, all be-slobbered, with two slimy eyes
'I must sit,' said the slug, 'or else should I nap.
I cannot stand up, stoop, nor kneel without a stool.
Were I brought to bed, unless my rear end [bowels] forced me up,
No amount of bell-ringing would get me up until I was ready to eat.
He began the 'Benedicte' with a belch, and beat his breast,
And stretched, and groaned, and at the end started to snore.
'What? Wake up, wretch!" cried Repentance, 'Hurry up and be shriven!'
'If I should die this day,' he said, 'I don't need to wake up for it.
I can't say my 'Our Father' perfectly as the priest sings it —
But I know rhymes of Robin Hood and Ranulf Earl of Chester,
But not those of Our Lord or Our Lady — not even the least that was made.

John Ball's Letter to the Peasants of Essex

Believed to have been written 1381. British Library, MS. Royal 13.E.ix. The manuscript is thought to have been copied around 1400. Text from Sisam, pp. 160-161.

Iohon Schep, som tyme Seynte Marie prest of ȝork, and now of Colchestre, greteth wel Iohan Nameles, and Iohan þe Mullere, and Iohan Cartere, and biddeþ hem þat þei bee war of gyle in borugh, and stondeth togidre in Godes name, and biddeþ Peres Plouȝman go to his werk, and chastise wel Hobbe þe Robbere, and takeþ wiþ ȝow Iohan Trewman, and alle hiis felawes, and no mo, and loke schappe ȝou to on heued, and no mo.

Iohan þe Mullere haþ ygrounde smal, smal, smal;
Þe Kynges sone of heuene schal paye for al,
Be war or ye be wo;
Knoweþ ȝour freend fro ȝour foo;
Haueth ynow, and seith 'Hoo';
And do wel and bettre, and fleth synne,
And sekeþ pees, and hold ȝou þerinne;
and so biddeþ Iohan Trewman and alle his felawes.

Modernization:

John Schep*, some time Saint Mary's prest of York, and now of Colchester, greets well John Nameless†, and John the Miller, and John Carter, and bids them to be ware of guile in the town, and stand together in God's name, and bids Piers Plowman go to his work, and chastise well Hobbe the Robber, and take with you John Trueman, and all his fellows, and no more, and join you together with one head, and no more.

John the miller has ground small, small, small;
The king's son of heaven§ shall pay for all.
Be ware unless you will (suffer) woe;
Know your friend from your foe;
Have enough, and then say '(no more)';
And do well and better, and flee sin,
And seek peace, and hold you therein;
and so bid John Trueman and all his fellows.

* Short for "shepherd," a title John Ball took in his role as a priest
† I.e. "just plain John"
§ Jesus

The Battle of Ferrybridge

A description of the Battle of Ferrybridge, fought in 1461 immediately before the great Battle of Towton. The description is from a letter by the future Archbishop of York George Neville, the younger brother of Edward IV's great ally the Earl of Warwick, to the papal legate Francesco Copponi. Derived from Lander, p. 92. The significance of the battle is that it was almost in Robin's back yard; had he been in the Barnsdale area around the time it took place, he would surely have known about it!

The King*, the valiant Duke of Norfolk, my brother aforesaid† and my uncle, Lord Fauconberg,§ travelling by different routes, finally united with their all their companies and armies near the country round York. The armies having been re-formed and marshaled separately, they set forth against the enemy, and at length on Palm Sunday‡, near a town called Feurbirga¶, about sixteen miles from the city, our enemies were routed and broken in pieces. Our adversaries had broken the bridge which was our way across, so that our men could only cross by a narrow way which they had made themselves after the bridge was broken. But our men forced a way by the sword, and many were slain on both sides. Finally the enemy took to flight, and very many of them were slain as they fled.

* Edward IV (died 1483)

† Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (died 1471)

§ William Neville, Lord Fauconberg, later Earl of Kent (died 1463)

‡ Battle of Towton, March 29, 1461. The two battles of Ferrybridge took place March 27 and 28.

¶ i.e. Ferrybridge

From Gregory's Chronicle, as cited on p. 23 of Dockray:

[March 28:] Lord Fitzwalter was slain at Ferrybridge, and many more with him were slain and drowned and the Earl of Warwick was hurt in his leg with an arrow.

Palm Sunday[:] the king met with the lords of the north [at the battle of Towton].

The Early Play of Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne ("Robin Hood and the Sheriff")

A fragment found in MS. Trinity College, Cambridge, R.2.64. A document on the back of the single-page text refers to the fifteenth year of King Edward IV, which is 1475-1476; the play itself is probably of about the same date. Although the exact history of the document cannot be traced, it seems to have been associated with the Paston Letters. The brief text appears to be a dramatization of the same story as "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" — although Robin's enemy is here a knight, not a yeoman. It is not clear which version is older.

The text is not divided into parts. The version below makes a guess at them. We seem to have five characters, Robin, the Knight (Sir Guy?), the sheriff, and at least two outlaws, one of whom may be Friar Tuck. The assignment of parts below is, of course, conjectural. The text is essentially that of Child, pp. 90-91, but with modified punctuation; I have compared it against Dobson/Taylor, pp. 205-206, and Knight/Ohlgren, pp. 276-277.

Knight: Syr Sheryffe, for thy sake — *Sir Sheriff, for thy sake*
Robyn Hode wull y take. — *Robin Hood will I take.*
Sheriff: I wyll the gyffe golde and fee, — *I will thee give gold and fee,*
This beheste þou holde me. — *[If] this promise you hold [for] me.*
[Perhaps the sheriff exits and Robin enters. Alternately, Robin might be on the far edge of the stage and the knight might go to him.]
Knight: Robyn Hode ffayre and fre, — *Robin Hood, fair, and free,*
Undre this lynde shote we. — *Under this linden shoot we.*
Robin: With the shote y wyll, — *With thee shoot I will,*
Alle thy lustes to full fyll. — *All thy desires to fulfill.*
Knight: Have at the pryke, — *Have at the target!*
Robin: And y cleve the styke. — And *I cleave the stick [or "mark"]*
Knight: Late us caste the stone, — *Let us cast the stone.*
Robin: I grante well, be Seynte John. — *I agree, by Saint John!*
Knight: Late us caste the exaltre, — *Let us cast the axle-tree.*
Robin: Have a foote before the. — *Half a foot beyond you!*
Syr knyght, ye have a falle. — *Sir Knight, you have a fall.*
Knight: And I the, Robyn, qwyte shall. — *And I [on] you, Robin, to be requited shall*
Owte on the, I blewe my horne,* — *Out on you! I blow my horn.*
Hitt ware better be unborne. — *It were better you were unborn.*
Robin: Let us fight at oltrance. — *Let us fight to the outrance.*
He that fleth, God gyfe hym myschaunce. — *He that flees, God give him mischance.*
[Robin is victorious; the knight is killed or unable to fight back.]
Now I have the maystry here, — *Now I have the mastery here.*
Off I smyte this sory swyre. — *Off I smite this sorry neck*
This knygthys clothis wolle I were, — *This knight's clothing will I wear,*
And on my hode his hede will bere. — *And on my head his hood will bear.*

[at this point it appears that Robin exits and his men take the stage. Dobson/Taylor suggest that the speakers in the next scene are Little John and perhaps Scarlet, but it is probably best to list them simply as first outlaw and second outlaw. This early in the history of the legend, Much is probably a better companion for John anyway. Also, although all sources seem to assign some of these lines to a second outlaw, it strikes me as possible that they should be assigned to the Sheriff or one of his followers.]

First Outlaw: Well mete, felowe myn.	*Well met, fellow mine;*
What herst þou of gode Robyn?	*What hearest thou of good Robin?*
Second Outlaw: Robyn Hode and his menye	*Robin Hood and his company*
With the Sheryffe takyn be.	*With* [i.e. *by?] the sheriff taken be.*
First Outlaw: Sette on foote with gode wyll,	*Set [out] on foot with good will,*
And the Sheryffe wull we kyll.	*And the sheriff will we kill.*
Second Outlaw: Beholde wele Ffrere Tuke,†	*Behold well Friar Tuck,*
Howe he dothe his bowe pluke.	*How he doth his bow pluck!*
Sheriff: ȝeld yow, Syrs, to the Sheryffe,	*Yield you, sirs, to the sheriff,*
Or elles shall yeur bowes clyffe.	*Or else shall your bows be cleft.*
(First?) Outlaw: Now we be bounden alle in same;	*Now we be bound all the same;*
Frere [T]uke, this is no game.	*Friar Tuck, this is no game.*
Sheriff: Co[m]e þou forth, þou fals outlawe;	*Come thou forth, thou false outlaw;*
Þou shall b[e] hangyde and y-drawe.	*Thou shall be hanged and drawn.*
(First?) Outlaw: Now allas, what shall we doo?	*Now, alas, what shall we do?*
We [m]oste to the prysone goo.	*We must to the prison go.*
Sheriff: Opy[n] the yatis faste anon,	*Open the gates fast, at once,*
An[d] [d]oo theis thevys ynne gon.	*And do these thieves in take.*

* *Knight/Ohlgren assign the line about blowing the horn to Robin, Dobson/Taylor to the knight. Since Robin appears to have won every contest so far, he seems to be in no danger and has no reason to sound his horn. It seems more reasonable that the knight sounded the horn to call the sheriff. The line about being unborn is assigned to Robin by Dobson/Taylor, to the Knight by Knight/Ohlgren. I take it as a threat by the knight: "Now I have you!" Robin, not willing to sit there and be taken, attacks the knight and wins.*

† *Dobson/Taylor assign these two lines to Little John, i.e. the First Outlaw*

Robin Hood and the Monk [Child 119]

Based on MS. Cambridge Ff. 5.48, c. 1480. Text generally determined based on the majority reading of Child, Dobson/Taylor, and Knight/Ohlgren (as based on a casual comparison). Note the lacunae in stanzas 30, 36.

The Cambridge manuscript is the only substantial copy of the "Monk," but there is a tiny fragment of another copy. It is catalogued as London, British Library, Bagford Ballads, volume 1, article 6 (C.40). It contains only stanzas 69.3-72.4, 77.2-80.2. I have noted the major variants in an apparatus to those stanzas, using the sigla ***C*** *for the Cambridge MS.,* ***B*** *for Bagford.*

The feeling of this Robin Hood tale is very different from the "Gest" and the "Potter," which are both rather merry tales. This is a blood-and-thunder romance involving (among other things) a murder simply to silence an innocent witness. Nonetheless it has some themes found elsewhere. For example, the notion of Little John and Much disguising themselves as royal messengers has a parallel in the Wakefield Second Shepherds' Play, where the thieving shepherd Mak tries to pass himself off as a yeoman of the king (Speirs, p. 342). This element is found with variations in the "Gest" in two different ways: when Robin becomes an actual servant of the King and, earlier, when John enters the service of the Sheriff without being an honest servant.

In stanzas 19-23 a "great-headed monk" recalls being robbed of a hundred pounds by Robin – more than a little similar to the "fat-headed" Cellarer who was robbed in the "Gest."

The main scene of action is Nottingham and Sherwood, not Yorkshire and Barnsdale.

We also note that, as in the "Gest," Little John (4.1) and Much the Miller's Son (8.1) as important members of Robin's band. Will Scathelock is less significant but is mentioned in 63.1. Robin's interest in the Virgin Mary is mentioned in 7.4 etc. (which, unlike the "Gest," uses her name readily). In 18.1 Robin goes to "St. Mary's Church"; might this be a replacement for St. Mary's Abbey that is so important in the "Gest"? There is a mention of "him that died on tree" (4.2), the oath so often used in the "Gest." There is a "bright brand" in 14.4, and a "trystel-tree" in 37.1. Thus, thus, though the dialect is not much like the "Gest" as we have it now, there are many points of contact in the language.

It should perhaps be noted that the action in stanza 72 is almost impossible. A sketch of Nottingham Castle as it was in the Middle Ages is shown on p. 193 of Lander. It is atop a high bluff, with an inner keep and outer wall. There is no window from which one could safely jump.

Fans of J. R. R. Tolkien may note line 74.4, "As liȝt as lef on lynde." Almost the earliest of all Middle-Earth poems was "Light as Leaf on Lindentree," which Tolkien seemingly began working on as early as 1919-1920; it is the first glimpse of what became the story of Beren and Lúthien, his own favorite of all his stories, and the foundation upon which much of his universe was built.

1 In somer, when þe shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
To here þe foulys song,

In summer, when the groves do shine
And leaves be large and long,
It is full merry, in the fair forest,
To hear the foul's song.

2 To se þe dere draw to þe dale,
And leve þe hilles hee,
And shadow hem in þe leves grene,
Under the grenewode tre.

To see the deer draw to the dale
And leave the hillës high,
And shadow them in the leaves green
Under the greenwood tree

3 Hit befel on Whitson[tide]
Erly in a May mornyng,
The son up feyre can shyne,
And the briddis mery can syng.

It came about on Whitsuntide,
Early on a May morning,
The sun began fairly to shine,
And birds merrily to sing.

4 'This is a mery mornyng,' seid Litull John
'Be hym þat dyed on tre;
A more mery man þen I am one
Lyves not in Cristiante.

"This is a merry morning," said Little John
By him that died on tree.
A more merry man than I am one
Lives not in Christiantë.

5 'Pluk up þi hert, my dere mayster,'
Litull John can sey,
'And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
In a mornyng of May.'

"Pluck up your heart, my dear master,"
Little John did say,
"And think it is a full fair time
In a morning of May.

6 '**Ȝ**e, on thyng greves me,' seid Robyn,
'And does my hert mych woo,
Þat I may not no solem day
To mas nor matyns goo.

"Aye, [but] one thing grieves me," said Robin
"And does my heart much woe:
That I may not on a solemn day
To mass or matins go.

7 'Hit is a fourtnet and more,' seid he,
'Syn I my savyour see;
To day wil I to Notyngham,' seid Robyn,
'With þe myght of mylde Marye.'

"It is a fortnight and more," he said
"Since I did my Savior see.
Today I will [go] to Nottingham," said Robin,
"With the might of mild Mary."

8 Than spake Moche, the mylner sun,
Ever more wel hym betyde!
'Take twelve of þi wyght ȝemen,
Well weppynd, be þi side.
Such on wolde þi selfe slon,
Þat twelve dar not abyde.'

Then spoke Much, the mil[l]er's son,
Ever more well him betide!
'Take twelve of your strong yeomen
Well-armed, by your side.
Those who would by yourself you slay
Those twelve [will] not dare abide.'

9 ‘Of all my mery men,’ seid Robyn,
‘Be my feith I wil non have,
But Litull John shall beyre my bow,
Til þat me list to drawe.’

“Of all my merry men,” said Robin,
“By my faith I will none have,
“But Little John shall bear my bow
Until I choose to draw.”

10 ‘Þou shall beyre þin own,’ seid Litull Jon,
‘Maister, and I wyl beyre myne,
And we well shete a peny,’ seid Litull Jon,
‘Under þe grene wode lyne.’

“You shall bear your own,” said Little John
“Master, and I will bear mine,
And we will shoot [for] a penny
Under the greenwood tree.

11 ‘I wil not shete a peny,’ seyd Robyn Hode,
‘In feith, Litull John, with the,
But ever for on as þou shetis,’ seide Robyn,
‘In feith I holde þe thre.’

“I will not shoot [for] a penny,” said Robin Hood
“In faith, Little John, with you,
But ever as you shoot for one [penny],” said Robin
‘In faith I will [wager] you three.”

12 Thus shet thei forth, þese yemen too,
Bothe at buske and brome,
Til Litull John wan of his maister
Five shillings to hose and shone.

Thus they shot forth, these yeomen two
Both at brush and broom,
Till Little John won of his master
Five shillings for hose and shoes.

13 A ferly strife fel þem betwene,
As they went bi the wey.
Litull John seid he had won five shillings,
And Robyn Hode seid schortly, nay.

A great strife fell them between
As they went by the way.
Little John said he had won five shillings
And Robin Hood said shortly, “Nay.”

14 With þat Robyn Hode ~~lyed~~ Litul Jon,
And smote hym with his hande;
Litul Jon waxed wroth þerwith,
And pulled out his bright bronde.

With that Robin Hood called Little John a liar
And smote him with his hand.
Little John waxed wroth therewith
And pulled out his bright brand

15 ‘Were þou not my maister,’ seid Litull John,
‘Þhou shuldis by hit ful sore;
Get þe a man wher þou wi[lt],
For þou getis me no more.’

“Were you not my master,” said Little John
“You should suffer by it full sore.
Get you a man where you will,
For you get me no more.”

16 Þen Robyn goes to Notyngham,
Hym selfe mornyng allone,
And Litull John to mery Scherwode,
The pathes he knew ilkone.

Then Robin goes to Nottingham,
Himself mourning alone,
And Little John to merry Sherwood
The paths he knew each one.

17 Whan Robyn came to Notyngham,
Sertenly withouten layn,
He prayed to God and myld Mary
To bryng hym out save agayn.

When Robin came to Nottingham,
Certainly without disguise
He prayed to God and mild Mary
To bring him out again.

18 He gos in to Seynt Mary chirch,
And kneled down before the rode;
Alle þat ever were þe church within
Beheld wel Robyn Hode.

He goes into Saint Mary's church,
And knelt down before the rood,
All that were the church within
Beheld well Robin Hood.

19 Beside hym stod a gret-hedid munke,
I pray to God woo he be!
Ful sone he knew gode Robyn,
As sone as he hym se.

Beside him stood a great-headed monk —
I pray to God woe be to he!
Full soon he knew good Robin
As soon as he did him see.

20 Out at þe durre he ran,
Fful sone and anon;
Alle þe ȝatis of Notyngham
He made to be sparred everychon.

Out of the door he ran
Full soon — at once.
All the gates of Nottingham
He made to be barred every one.

21 'Rise up,' he seid, 'þou prowde schereff,
Buske þe and make þe bowne;
I have spyed þe kynggis felon,
For sothe he is in this town.

"Rise up," he said, "you proud sheriff,
"Hurry up and make yourself ready.
I have spied the king's felon;
Forsooth he is in this town.

22 'I have spyed þe false felon,
As he stondis at his masse;
Hit is long of þe,' seide þe munke,
'And ever he fro us passe.

I have spied the false felon
As he stands at his mass
It is late in the day," said the monk,
"And soon he will from us pass.

23 'Þis traytur name is Robyn Hode,
Under þe grene wode lynde;
He robbyt me onys of a hundred pound,
Hit shalle never out of my mynde."

"This traitor's name is Robin Hood
Under the greenwood trees.
He robbéd me once of a hundred pounds;
It will never be out of my mind."

24 Up þen rose þis prowde schereff,
And radly made hym ȝare;
Many was þe moder son
To þe kyrk with hym can fare.

Up then rose this proud sheriff
And rapidly did prepare;
Many was the mother's son
To the church with him did fare.

25 In at þe durres þei throly thrast,
With staves ful gode wone;
'Alas, alas!' seid Robyn Hode,
'Now mysse I Litull John.'

In at the doors they fiercely thrust
With staves many the one.
"Alas, alas," said Robin Hood,
"Now miss I Little John."

26 But Robyn toke out a too-hond sworde,
Þat hangit down be his kne;
Þer as þe schereff and his men stode thyckust
Thedurwarde wolde he.

But Robin took out a two-handed sword
That hung down by his knee
There where the sheriff
and his men stood thickest,
Thitherward pressed he.

27 Thryes thorow at þem he ran þen,
For soþe as I yow sey,
And woundyt mony a moder son,
And twelve he slew þat day.

Thrice through at them he ran then,
Forsooth as I you say,
And wounded many a mother's son,
And twelve he slew that day.

28 His sworde upon the schireff hed
Sertanly he brake in too;
'Þe smyth þat þe made,' seid Robyn,
'I pray to God wyrke hym woo!

His sword upon the sheriff's head,
Certainly he broke in two.
"The smith that made you," said Robin,
"I pray to God work him woe!"

29 'Ffor now am I weppynlesse,' seid Robyn,
'Alasse! agayn my wyll;
But if I may fle þese traytors fro,
I wot þei wil me kyll.'

"For now I am weaponless," said Robin,
"Alas, against my will.
Unless I may flee these traitors from,
I know they will me kill."

30 Robyn [in to her] churche ran,
Thro out hem everilkon…
<…>

Robin [into her (Mary's)] church ran,
Between them everyone…
[…Child thinks at least six stanzas missing]

31 Sum fel in swonyng as þei were dede,
And lay stil as any stone;
Non of theym were in her mynde
But only Litull Jon.

Some fell in swooning as they were dead
And lay still as any stone;
None of them were in her mind
But only Little John.

32 'Let be your rule,' seid Litull Jon,
'Ffor his luf þat dyed on tre,
Ȝe þat shulde be duȝty men;
Het is gret shame to se.

"Let be your rule," said Little John,
"For his love that died on tree,
You that should be doughty men;
It is great shame to see.

33 ‘Oure maister has bene hard bystode — *“Our master has been hard beset*
And ȝet scapyd away; — *And yet escaped away.*
Pluk up your hertis, and leve þis mone, — *Pluck up your hearts, and stop moaning*
And harkyn what I shal say. — *And hearken what I shall say.*

34 “He has servyd Oure Lady many a day, — *”He has served Our Lady many a day,*
And ȝet wil, securly; — *And yet will, securely.*
Þerfor I trust in hir specialy — *There fore I trust in her specially;*
No wyckud deth shal he dye. — *No wicked death shall he die.*

35 ‘Þerfor be glad,’ seid Litul John, — *“Therefore be glad,” said Little John,*
‘And let þis mournyng be; — *“And let this mourning be,*
And I shal be þe munkis gyde, — *And I shall be the monk’s guide*
With þe myght of mylde Mary. — *With the might of mild Mary.”*

36 <…> — *[...Much is probably mentioned here…]*
<…> — *[…]*
‘We will go but we too. — *”We will go but we two,*
And I mete hym,’ seid Litul John — *And I meet him,” said Little John.*

37 ‘Loke þat ye kepe wel owre tristil-tre, — *“Look that you keep well our trystel-tree*
Under þe levys smale, — *Under the leavës small,*
And spare non of this venyson, — *And spare none of this venison*
Þat gose in thys vale.’ — *That goes in this vale.”*

38 Fforþe then went þese yemen too, — *Forth then went these yeomen two,*
Litul John and Moche on fere, — *Little John and Much together,*
And lokid on Moch emys hows; — *And looked on Much’s uncle’s house*
Þe hye way lay full nere. — *The highway lay full near.*

39 Litul John stode at a wyndow in þe mornyng, — *Little John stood at the window in the morning*
And lokid forþ at a stage; — *And looked forth from the upper story*
He was war wher þe munke came ridyng, — *He knew where the monk came riding*
And with hym a litul page. — *And with him a little page.*

40 ‘Be my feith,’ seid Litul John to Moch, — *“By my faith,” said Little John to Much*
‘I can þe tel tithyngus gode; — *“I can tell you tidings good.*
I se wher þe munke cumys rydyng, — *I see where the monk comes riding;*
I know hym be his wyde hode.’ — *I know him by his wide hood.”*

41 They went in to the way, þese ȝemen boþe, *They went into the way, these yeomen both*
As curtes men and hende; *As courteous men and gracious.*
Þei spyrred tithyngus at þe munke, *They asked tidings of the monk*
As they hade bene his frende. *As if they had been his friend.*

42 'Fro whens come ȝe?' seid Litull Jon, *"From whence come ye?" said Little John.*
'Tel us tithyngus, I yow pray, *"Tell us tidings, I you pray,*
Off a false owtlay [callid Robyn Hode], *Of a false outlaw [called Robin Hood]*
Was takyn ȝisterday. *Was taken yesterday.*

43 'He robbyt me and my felowes bothe *He robbed me and my fellows both*
Of twenti marke in serten; *Of twenty marks in certain.*
If þat false owtlay be takyn, *If that false outlaw be taken,*
For soþe we wolde be fayn.' *Forsooth, we would be fain.*

44 'So did he me,' seid þe munke, *"So he did me," said the monk,*
'Of a hundred pound and more; *"Of a hundred pounds and more.*
I layde furst hande hym apon, *I laid the first hand him upon;*
Ȝe may thonke me therfore.' *You may thank me therefore."*

45 'I pray God thanke you,' seid Litull John, *"I pray God thank you," said Little John,*
'And we wil when we may; *"And we will when we may.*
We wil go with you, with your leve, *We will go with you, with your leave,*
And bryng yow on your way. *And bring you on your way.*

46 'Ffor Robyn Hode hase many a wilde felow, *For Robin Hood has many a wild fellow*
I tell you in certen; *I tell you in certain;*
If þei wist ȝe rode þis way, *If they knew you rode this way,*
In feith ȝe shulde be slayn." *In faith you should be slain."*

47 As þei went talking be þe way, *As they went talking by the way,*
The munke and Litull John, *The monk and Little John,*
John toke þe munkis horse be þe hede, *John took the munk's horse by the head,*
Fful sone and anon. *Full soon and in time.*

48 Johne toke þe munkis horse be þe hed, *John took the monk's horse by the head,*
For soþe as I yow say; *For sooth as I you say;*
So did Much þe litull page, *So did Much the little page*
Ffor he shulde not scape away. *That he should not escape away.*

49 Be þe golett of þe hode
John pulled þe munke down;
John was nothyng of hym agast,
He lete hym falle on his crown.

By the throat of the hood
John pulled the monk down;
John was nothing of him afraid;
He let him fall on his crown.

50 Litull John was so agrevyd,
And drew owt his swerde in hye;
The munke saw he shulde be ded,
Lowd mercy can he crye.

Little John was so aggrieved,
[He] drew out his sword with speed.
The monk saw that he should be dead;
"Lord, mercy!" did he cry.

51 'He was my maister,' seid Litull John,
'Þat þou hase brow3t in bale;
Shalle þou never cum at oure kyng,
Ffor to telle hym tale.'

"He was my master," said Little John
"That you have brought into danger.
You shall never come to our king
For to tell him [the] tale."

52 John smote of þe munkis hed,
No longer wolde he dwell;
So did Moch þe litull page,
Ffor ferd lest he wolde tell.

John smote off the monk's head;
No longer would he dwell.
So did Much the little page
For fear lest he would tell.

53 Þer þei beryed hem boþe,
In nouþer mosse nor lyng,
And Litull John and Much in fere
Bare þe letturs to oure kyng.

There they buried them both,
Neither in moss nor heath,
And little John and Much together
Bore the letters to our king.

54 <…>
He knelid down upon his kne,
'God 3ow save, my lege lorde,
Jhesus yow save and se!'

[Little John reaches the King, and…]
He knelt down on his knee,
"God you save, my liege lord
Jesus you save and see."

55 'God yow save, my lege kyng!'
To speke John was full bolde.
He gaf hym þe letturs in his hand;
The kyng did hit unfold.

"God you save, my liege king!"
To speak John was full bold.
He gave him the letters in his hand;
The king did it unfold.

56 Þe kyng red þe letturs anon,
And seid, 'So mot I the,
Þer was never 3oman in mery Inglond
I longut so sore to se.

The king read the letters at once
And said, "So must I [thank] you.
There never was yeoman in merry England
I longed so sore to see.

57 ‘Wher is the munke þat þese shuld have brouȝt?’ *“Where is the monk who should these have brought?”*
Oure kyng can say. *Our king did say.*
‘Be my trouth,’ seid Litull John, *“By my troth,” said Little John,*
‘He dyed after þe way.’ *“He died along the way.”*

58 Þe kyng gaf Moch and Litul Jon *The king gave Much and Little John*
Twenti pound in sertan, *Twenty pounds in certain,*
And made þeim ȝemen of þe crown, *And made them yeomen of the crown*
And bade þeim go agayn. *And bade them go on again.*

59 He gaf John þe seel in hand, *He gave John the seal in hand,*
The scheref for to bere, *The sheriff for to bear,*
To bryng Robyn hym to, *To bring Robin him to,*
And no man do hym dere. *And no man do him harm.*

60 John toke his leve at oure kyng, *John took his leave of our king,*
þe sothe as I yow say; *The truth as I you say;*
Þe next way to Notyngham *The nearest way to Nottingham*
To take he ȝede þe way. *To take he started on the way.*

61 Whan John came to Notyngham, *When John came to Nottingham,*
The ȝatis were sparred ychon; *The gates were barred, every one.*
John callid up the porter, *John called upon the porter;*
He answerid sone anon. *He answered him at once.*

62 ‘What is þe cause,’ seid Litul Jon, *“What is the cause,” said Little John,*
‘Þou sparris þe ȝates so fast?’ *“You bar the gates so fast?”*
‘Because of Robyn Hode,’ seid [þe] porter, *“Because of Robin Hood,” said the porter*
‘In depe prison is cast. *“In deep prison is cast.”*

63 ‘John and Moch and Wyll Scathlok, *“John and Much and Will Scathelock,*
Ffor sothe as I yow say, *Forsooth as I you say,*
Þei slew oure men upon oure wallis, *They slew our men upon our walls*
And sawten us every day.’ *And sought us every day.”*

64 Litull John spyrred after þe schereff, *Little John asked after the sheriff,*
And sone he hym fonde. *And soon he did him find.*
He oppyned þe kyngus prive seell, *He opened the king’s privy seal*
And gaf hym in his honde. *And gave him in his hand.*

65 Whan þe scheref saw þe kyngus seell,
He did of his hode anon:
'Wher is þe munke þat bare þe letturs?'
He seid to Litull John.

When the sheriff saw the king's seal,
He did off his hood at once.
"Where is the monk who bore the letters?"
He said to Little John.

66 'He is so fayn of hym,' seid Litul John,
'Ffor soþe as I yow say,
He has made hym abot of Westmynster,
A lorde of þat abbay.'

"He is so fond of him," said Little John
"Forsooth as I you say,
He has made him abbot of Westminster
A lord of that abbey."

67 The scheref made John gode chere,
And gaf hym wyne of the best;
At ny3t þei went to her bedde,
And every man to his rest.

The sheriff made John good cheer
And gave him wine of the best;
At night they went to their beds
And every man to his rest.

68 When þe scheref was on slepe,
Dronken of wyne and ale,
Litul John and Moch for soþe
Toke þe way unto þe gale.

When the sheriff was asleep,
Drunk with wine and ale,
Little John and Much in truth
Took the[ir] way unto the jail.

69 Litul John callid up þe jayler,
And bade hym rise anon;
He seyd Robyn Hode had **brokyn** the prison,

And out of hit was gon.

Little John called up the jailor
And bid him rise at once;
He said Robin Hood
had broken the prison
And out of it was gone.

70 The porter rose anon sertan,
As sone as he herd John calle;
Litul John was redy with a swerd,
And bare hym **to** þe walle.

The porter arose at once, certainly,
As soon as he heard John call;
Little John was ready with a sword
And bore him to the wall.

71 'Now wil I be **porter**,' seid Litul John,
'And **take** þe keyes in honde.'
He toke þe way to Robyn Hode,
And sone he hym unbonde.

"Now I will be porter," said Little John,
"And take the keys in hand."
He took the way to Robin Hood
And soon he him unbound.

- **69.2** brokyn the] **B** *omits* the • **70.4** to] **B** throw to, *i.e.* through to • **71.1** porter] **B** jayler *i.e.* gaoler, jailer • **71.1** take] **B** toke • 71.2 honde **C**] hond **B**

72 He gaf hym a gode swerd in his hond,
His hed ther with for to kepe,
And ther as þe wallis were lowyst
Anon down can þei lepe.

He gave him a good sword in his hand.
His head [there]with for to keep.
And there, as the walls were lowest,
At once down they did leap.

73 Be þat þe cok began to crow,
The day began to spryng;
The scheref fond þe jaylier ded,
The comyn bell made he ryng.

At that the cock began to crow;
The day began to spring.
The sheriff found the jailor dead;
The common bell he made ring.

74 He made a crye thoroout al þe tow[n],
Wheder he be ȝoman or knave,
Þat cowþe bryng hym Robyn Hode,
His warison he shuld have.

He made a cry throughout the town,
Whether he be yeoman or knave,
That could bring him Robin Hood
His reward he should have.

75 'For I dar never,' seid þe scheref,
'Cum before oure kyng;
For if I do, I wot serten
For soþe he wil me heng.'

"For I dare never," said the sheriff
Come before our king.
For if I do, I know certain
Forsooth, he will me hang."

76 The scheref made to seke Notyngham,
Bothe be strete and stye,
And Robyn was in mery Scherwode,
As liȝt as lef on lynde.

The sheriff made to search Nottingham
Both by street and stye,
While Robin was in merry Sherwood,
As light as leaf on tree.

77 Then bespake gode Litull John,
To Robyn Hode can he say,
'I have done þe a gode turne for an ill,
Quit þe whan þou may.

Then bespoke good Little John,
To Robin Hood he did say,
"I have done you a good turn for an ill,
Repay me when you may.

78 'I have done þe a gode turne,' seid Litull John,
'For sothe as I þe say;
I have brought þe under the grene-wode lyne;
Fare wel, and have gode day.'

"I have done you a good turn," said Little John
"Forsooth as I you say;
I have brought you under the greenwood tree;
Farewell, and have good day."

- **72.2** there **B**] *omit* **C** • 77.3 ill (**B** i[..])] evyll **C** • 78.2 þe **B**] yow **C**

79 ‘Nay, be my trouth,’ seid Robyn,
‘So shall hit never be;
I make þe maister,’ seid Robyn,
‘Off alle my men and me.’

“Nay, by my troth,” said Robin;
“So shall it never be.
I make you master,” said Robin,
“Of all my men and me.”

80 ‘Nay, be my trouth,’ seid Litull John,
‘So shalle hit never be;
But lat me be a felow,’ seid Litull John,
‘No noder kepe I be.’

“No, by my troth,” said Little John,
“So shall it never be.
But let me be a fellow,” said Little John
“No other place would I be.”

81 Thus John gate Robyn Hod out of prison,
Sertan withoutyn layn;
Whan his men saw hym hol and sounde,
Ffor sothe they were full fayne.

Thus John got Robin Hood out of prison
Certainly without disguise.
When his men saw him whole and sound
Forsooth they were full fain.

82 They filled in wyne and made hem glad,
Under þe levys smale,
And ȝete pastes of venyson,
Þat gode was with ale.

They filled in wine and made them glad
Under the leavës small,
And ate pasties of venison
That good were with ale.

83 Than worde came to oure kyng
How Robyn Hode was gon,
And how þe scheref of Notyngham
Durst never loke hym upon.

Then word came to our king
How Robin Hood was gone,
And how the sheriff of Nottingham
Dared never look him upon.

84 Then bespake oure cumly kyng,
In an angur hye:
‘Litull John hase begyled þe schereff,
In faith so hase he me.

Then bespoke our comely king
In an anger high:
“Little John has beguiled the sheriff;
In faith, so has he me.

85 ‘Litul John has begyled us bothe,
And þat full wel I se;
Or ellis þe schereff of Notyngham
Hye hongut shulde he be.

“Little John has beguiled us both,
And that full well I see,
Or else the sheriff of Nottingham
High hangéd should be be.

86 ‘I made hem ȝemen of þe crowne,
And gaf hem fee with my hond;
I gaf hem grith,’ seid oure kyng,
‘Thorowout all mery Inglond.

I made them yeomen of the crown,
And gave them fee with my hand.
I gave them pardon,” said our king,
“Throughout all merry England.

- **79.1** Robyn **B**] Robyn Hode **C** • **79.3** Robyn **B**] Robyn Hode **C**

87 'I gaf theym grith,' þen seid oure kyng; *"I gave them pardon," then said our king,*
'I say, so mot I the, *"I say, so may I prosper you.*
For sothe soch a ȝeman as he is on *For such a yeoman as he is one*
In all Inglond ar not thre. *In all England [there] are not three.*

88 'He is trew to his maister,' seid oure kyng; *"He is true to his master," said our king,*
'I sey, be swete Seynt John, *"I say, by sweet Saint John.*
He lovys better Robyn Hode *He lovës better Robin Hood*
Then he dose us ychon. *Than he does us each one."*

89 'Robyn Hode is ever bond to hym, *"Robin Hood is ever bound to him,*
Bothe in strete and stalle; *Both in street and stall.*
Speke no more of this mater,' seid oure kyng, *Speak no more of this matter, said our King*
'But John has begyled us alle.' *"But John has beguiled us all."*

90 Thus endys the talkyng of the munke *Thus ends the story of the monk,*
And Robyn Hode I wysse; *And Robin Hood, I know;*
God, þat is ever a crowned kyng, *Got, that is ever a crownéd king,*
Bryng us alle to his blisse! *Bring us all to his bliss!*

Robin Hood and the Potter [Child 121]

Based on MS. Cambridge Ee.4.35, c. 1470. Note the lacunae in stanzas 54 and 66. Text generally determined based on the majority reading of Child, Dobson/Taylor, and Knight/ Ohlgren (as based on a casual comparison). I have retained Knight/Ohlgren's fit divisions, but these are editorial.

As with the "Monk,: we see several themes in this ballad which parallel the Gest: Robin's love of "Our Lady," and special treatment of women as a result (3.3-4). We see Robin seeking "fellowship" with the Potter (24.) The piece as a whole is the first example of the "Robin Hood Meets his Match" genre, which in the "Gest" is has a sort of parallel when "Little John Meets his Match" in the Sheriff's cook. In 41.4 we see the courteous practice of washing before a meal. In stanza 46 and after, we see Robin win an archery contest; in stanza 52 he cleaves a "pole' (as opposed to a wand, but it is again a great feat of archery). There may be a reference to the trystel-tree in 56.4. In 57, we see the sheriff offering a reward to see Robin Hood, which results in Robin (rather than John) tricking the sheriff into captivity. And the story ends (stanza 83) with a blessing on Robin Hood's soul, as at the end of the "Gest."

[Fit 1]

1	In schomer, when the leves spryng, The bloschoms on every bowe, So merey doyt the berdys syng Yn wodys merey now.	*In summer, when the leaves spring,* *The blossoms on every bow,* *So merry do the birds sing* *In woods merry now.*
2	Herkens, god yemen, Comley, corteys, and god, On of þe best that yever bare bowe, Hes name was Roben Hode.	*Hearken, good yeomen,* *Comely, courteous, and good,* *One of the best that ever bore bow;* *His name was Robin Hood.*
3	Roben Hood was the yeman's name, That was boyt corteys and ffre; Ffor the loffe of owre ladey, All wemen werschepyd he.	*Robin Hood was the yeoman's name,* *That was both courteous and free;* *For the love of Our Lady,* *All women worshipped he.*
4	Bot as the god yeman stod on a day, Among hes mery maney, He was ware of a prowd potter, Cam dryfyng owyr the leye.	*But as the good yeoman stood on a day* *Among his merry company,* *He was aware of a proud potter* *Came driving o'er the lee.*
5	'Yonder comet a prod potter,' seyde Roben, 'That long hayt hantyd þis wey; He was never so corteys a man On peney of pawage to pay.'	*"Yonder comes a proud potter," said Robin* *"That long had haunted this way.* *He was never so courteous a man* *One pound of pavage [toll] to pay."*
6	'Y met hem bot at Wentbreg,' seyde Lytyll John, 'And therefore yeffell mot he the! Seche thre strokes he me gafe, Yet by my seydys cleffe þey.	*"I met him there at Wentbridge," said Little John,* *"And therefore evil come upon he!* *Such three strokes he me gave* *Indeed by my sides cleft they.*
7	'Y ley forty shillings,' seyde Lytyll John, 'To pay het thes same day, Ther ys nat a man among hus all A wed schall make hem leye.'	*"I lay forty shillings," said Little John,* *"To pay out this same day:* *There is not a man among us all* *A fee shall make him lay."*
8	'Here ys forty shillings," seyde Roben, 'More, and thow dar say, Þat Y schall make þat prowde potter, A wed to me schall he ley.'	*"Here is forty shillings," said Robin,* *"More, if you dare say,* *That I shall make that proud potter* *A fee to me shall he lay."*

9 There thes money they leyde,
They toke het a yeman to kepe;
Roben beffore the potter he breyde,
A[nd] bad hem stond stell.

There this money they laid,
They took it to a yeoman to keep.
Robin before the potter he came
And bad him stand still.

10 Handys apon hes hors he leyde,
And bad the potter stonde foll stell;
The potter schorteley to hem seyde,
'Ffelow, what ys they well?'

Hands upon his horse he laid,
And bade the potter stand full still.
The potter shortly to him said,
"Fellow, what is your will?"

11 'All thes thre yer, and more, potter,' he seyde,
'Thow hast hantyd thes wey,
Yet were tow never so cortys a man
On peney of pavage to pay.'

"All these three years and more, potter," he said,
"You have haunted this way.
Yet were you never so courteous a man
One penny of pavage to pay."

12 'What ys they name,' seyde þe potter,
'Ffor pavage thow aske of me?'
'Roben Hod ys mey name,
A wed schall thow leffe me.'

"What is your name," said the potter,
"That pavage you ask of me?"
"Robin Hood is my name;
A payment shall you leave me."

13 'Wed well y non leffe,' seyde the potter,
'Nor pavag well Y non pay;
Awey they honde ffro mey hors!
Y well the tene eyls, be mey ffay.'

"Payment will I not give," said the potter,
Nor pavage will I not pay;
Get your hand off my horse,
Else I will punish you, by my faith."

14 The potter to hes cart he went,
He was not to seke;
A god to-hande staffe þerowt he hent,
Beffore Roben he leppyd.

The potter to his cart he went;
He did not have to search.
A good two-handed staff he took out of it;
Before Robin he leapt.

15 Roben howt with a swerd bent,
A bokeler en hes honde;
The potter to Roben he went,
And seyde, 'Felow, let mey hors go.'

Robin stood out with a sword bent,
A buckler in his hand.
The potter to Robin he went
And said, "Fellow, let my horse go."

16 Togeder then went thes to yemen,
Het was a god seyt to se;
Thereof low Robyn hes men,
There they stod onder a tre.

Together then went these two yeomen;
It was a good sight to see.
Thereof laughed Robin his men;
There they stood under a tree.

17 Leytell John to hes ffelow he seyde,
'Yend potter well steffeley stonde.'
The potter, with an acward stroke,
Smot the bokeler owt of hes honde.

Little John to his fellow he said,
'Yonder potter will firmly stand.'
The potter, with a backhand stroke,
Smote the buckler out of his hand.

18 A[nd] ar Roben meyt get het agen
Hes bokeler at hes ffette,
The potter yn the neke hem toke,
To the gronde sone he yede.

And ere Robin might get it again,
His buckler at his feet,
The potter took him by the neck;
To the ground soon went he.

19 That saw Roben hes men,
As they stod onder a bow;
'Let us helpe owre master,' seyde Lytell John,
'Yonder potter,' seyde he, 'els well hem slo.'

That saw Robin his men,
As they stood under a bough.
"Let us help our master," said Little John.
"Yonder potter," he said,
"Else will him slay."

20 Thes wight yemen with a breyde,
To thes mast[er] they cam.
Leytell John to hes mast[er] seyde,
'Ho haet the wager won?

These strong yeomen with a rush
To their master they came.
Little John to his master said,
"Who has the wager won?

21 'Schall Y haffe yowre forty shillings,' seyde Lytl John,
'Or ye, master, schall haffe myne?'
'Yeff they were a hundred,' seyde Roben,
'Y feythe, they ben all theyne.'

"Shall I have your forty shillings," said Little John,
"Or ye, master, shall have mine?"
"If they were a hundred," said Robin,
"In faith, they would be all yours."

22 'Het ys fol leytell cortesey,' seyde þe potter,
'As I hafe harde weyse men sye,
Yeffe a pore yeman com drywyng over the way,
To let hem of hes gorney.'

"It is full little courtesy," said the potter
"As I have heard wise men say,
If a poor yeoman comes drawing over the way,
To disturb him in his journey."

23 'Be mey trowet, thow seys soyt,' seyde Roben,
'Thow seys god yeme[n]rey;
And thow dreyffe forthe yevery day,
Thow schalt never be let ffor me.'

"By my troth, you say sooth," said Robin;
"You speak good yeomanry.
And [if] you drive forth every day,
You shall never be disturbed by me."

24 ‘Y well prey the, god potter,
A felischepe well thow haffe?
Geffe me they clothyng, and þow schalt hafe myne;
Y well go to Notynggam.’

*“I well pray thee, good potter,
A fellowship will you have?
Give me your clothing,
and you shall have mine;
I will go to Nottingham.”*

25 ‘Y gra[n]t thereto,’ seyde the potter,
‘Thow schalt ffeynde me a ffelow gode;
Bot thow can sell mey pottys well,
Com ayen as thow yede.’

*“I grant thereto,” said the potter.
“You shall find me a good fellow.
Unless you can sell my pots well,
Come again as you go.*

26 ‘Nay, be mey trowt,’ seyde Roben,
‘And then Y bescro mey hede,
Yeffe Y bryng eney pottys ayen,
And eney weyffe well hem chepe.’

*“Nay, by my troth,” said Robin,
“And then I beshrew [curse] my head,
If I bring any pots again
If any wife will them buy.”*

27 Than spake Leytell John,
And all hes ffelowhes heynd,
‘Master, be well ware of the screffe of Notynggam,
Ffor he ys leytell howr ffrende.’

*Then spoke Little John
And all his fellows nearby
“Master, be well aware
of the sheriff of Nottingham,
For he is little our friend.*

28 ‘Thorow the helpe of Howr Ladey,
Ffelowhes, let me alone.
Heyt war howte!’ seyde Roben,
‘To Notynggam well Y gon.’

*“Through the help of Our Lady,
Fellows, let me alone.
Heyt war hout! [calls to a horse],” said Robin;
“To Nottingham will I gone.”*

29 Robyn went to Notynggam,
Thes pottys for to sell;
The potter abode with Robens men,
There he ffered not eylle.

*Robin went to Nottingham,
These pots for to sell.
The potter abode with Robin’s men;
There he feared no ill.*

30 Tho Roben droffe on hes wey,
So merey ower the londe:
Her es more, and affter ys to saye,
The best ys beheynde.

*So Robin drove on his way,
So merry over the land.
There is more, [which afterward] is to say;
The best is to be heard.*

[Fit 2]

31 When Roben cam to Notynggam, *When Robin came to Nottingham*
The soyt yef Y scholde saye, *The truth if I should say,*
He set op hes hors anon, *He [tied] up his horse at once*
And gaffe hem hotys and haye. *And gave him oats and hay.*

32 Yn the medys of the towne, *In the middle of the town*
There he schowed hes ware; *There he showed his ware;*
'Pottys! pottys!' he gan crey foll sone, *"Pots! Pots!" he did cry full soon,*
'Haffe hansell for the mare!' *"Have [a gift?] if you [buy] more!"*

33 Ffoll effen agenest the screffeys gate *Even right against the sheriff's gate*
Schowed he hes chaffare; *He showed his products*
Weyffes and wedowes abowt hem drow, *Wives and widows about him drew*
And chepyd ffast of hes ware. *And dealt fast for his ware.*

34 Yet 'Pottys, gret chepe!' creyed Robyn, *Yet "Pots — a great bargain!" cried Robin*
'Y loffe yeffell thes to stonde.' *"I do not want to let them stand" (?)*
And all that say hem sell *And all that saw him selling*
Seyde he had be no potter long. *Said he had not been a potter [for] long.*

35 The pottys that were worthe pens ffeyffe, *The pots that were worth pence five.*
He solde tham ffor pens thre; *He sold them for pence three;*
Preveley seyde man and weyffe, *Privately said man and wife,*
'Ywnder potter schall never the.' *'Yonder potter shall never succeed.'*

36 Thos Roben solde ffoll ffast, *Those Robin sold full fast,*
Tell he had pottys bot ffeyffe; *Till he had pots but five;*
Op he hem toke of hes car, *Up he took them from his car*
And sende hem to the screffeys weyffe. *And sent them to the sheriff's wife.*

37 Thereof sche was ffoll ffayne, *Thereof she was full fain;*
'Gereamarsey,' seyde sche, than, *'Grammarcy," said she, then*
'When ye com to thes contre ayen, *"When you come to this country again*
Y schall bey of the[y] pottys, so mo Y the *'I shall buy of your pots, [I tell you again]'*

38 'Ye schall haffe of the best,' seyde Roben, *"You shall have of the best," said Robin,*
And sware be the Treneyte; *And swore by the Trinity.*
Ffoll corteysley [sc]he gan hem call, *Full courteously she did him call,*
'Com deyne with the screfe and me.' *"Come dine with the sheriff and me."*

39 'God amarsey,' seyde Roben, *"God [give you] mercy," said Robin.*
'Yowre bedyng schall be doyn.' *"Your bidding shall be done."*
A mayden yn the pottys gan bere, *A maiden bore the pots in[side];*
Roben and the screffe weyffe ffolowed anon. *Robin and the sheriff's wife followed anon.*

40 Whan Roben yn to the hall cam, *When Robin into the hall came,*
The screffe sone he met; *The sheriff soon he met;*
The potter cowed of corteysey, *The potter could [have] courtesy,*
And sone the screffe he gret. *He soon did the sheriff greet.*

41 'Lo, ser, what thes potter hayt geffe yow and me, *"See, sir, what this potter has given you and me:*
Feyffe pottys smalle and grete!' *Five pots small and great."*
'He ys foll wellcom,' seyd the screffe, *"He is full welcome," said the sheriff,*
'Let os was, and to mete.' *"Let us wash, and to meat."*

42 As they sat at her methe, *As they sat at their meat*
With a nobell chere, *With a noble cheer,*
To of the screffes men gan speke *Two of the sheriff's men did speak*
Of a gret wager, *Of a great wager.*

43 Of a schotyng, was god and ffeyne, *Of a shooting, was good and fine,*
Was made the thother daye, *Was made the other day,*
Of forty shillings, the soyt to saye, *Of forty shillings, the sooth to say,*
Who scholde thes wager gayne. *Who should this wager win.*

44 Styll than sat thes prowde potter, *Still then sat this proud potter;*
Thos than thowt he, *This then thought he:*
As Y am a trow cerstyn man, *As I am a true Christian man,*
Thes schotyng well Y se. *This shooting will I see.*

45 Whan they had ffared of the best, *When they had eaten of the best,*
With bred and ale and weyne, *With bread and ale and wine,*
To the bottys the made them prest, *To the butts they made them haste*
With bowes and boltys ffoll ffeyne. *With bows and bolts full fine.*

46 The screffes men schot ffoll ffast, *The sheriff's men shot full fast*
As archares þat weren godde, *As archers that were good*
There cam non ner ney the marke *There came none nearer to the mark*
Bey halffe a god archares bowe. *[Than] half a good archer's bow.*

47 Stell then stod the prowde potter,
Thos than seyde he;
'And Y had a bow, be the Rode,
On schot scholde yow se.'

Still then stood the proud potter;
Thus then said he:
"If I had a bow, by the Rood,
One shot should you see."

48 'Thow schall haffe a bow,' seyde the screffe,
'The best þat thow well cheys of thre;
Thou semyst a stalward and a stronge,
Asay schall thow be.'

"You shall have a bow," said the sheriff
"The best you will choose of three.
You seem a stalwart and a strong [man];
Tested shall you be."

49 The screffe commandyd a yeman þat stod hem bey
Affter bowhes to weynde;
The best bow þat the yeman browthe
Roben set on a stryng.

The sheriff commanded
a yeoman that stood them by
After bows to go;
The best bow that the yeoman brought,
Robin set on a string.

50 'Now schall Y wet and thow be god,
And polle het op to they nere.'
'So god me helpe,' seyde the prowde potter,
'Þys ys bot ryg3t weke gere.'

"Now shall I know if you be good:
And pull it up to your ear."
"So God me help," said the proud potter
"This is but right weak gear."

51 To a quequer Roben went,
A god bolt owthe he toke;
So ney on to the marke he went,
He ffayled not a fothe.

To a quiver Robin went;
A good bolt out he took.
So nigh unto the mark he went,
He failed not a foot.

52 All they schot abowthe agen,
The screffes men and he;
Off the marke he welde not ffayle,
He cleffed the preke on thre.

All of them shot about again,
The sheriff's men and he
Of the mark he would not fail;
He clove the pole on three.

53 The screffes men thowt gret schame
The potter the mastry wan;
The screffe lowe and made god game,
And seyde, Potter, thow art a man.

The sheriff's men thought great shame
The potter the mastery won.
The sheriff laughed and made good game
And said, "Potter, you are a man

54 <…>
<…>
Thow art worthey to bere a bowe
Yn what plas that þow goe."

[…]
[…]
"You are worthy to bear a bow
In what place that you go."

55 ‘Yn mey cart Y haffe a bow,
Ffor soyt,’ he seyde, ‘and that a godde;
Yn mey cart ys the bow
That gaffe me Robyn Hode.’

“In my cart I have a bow,
Forsooth,” he said, “And that a good.
In my cart is the bow
That gave me Robin Hood.”

56 ‘Knowest thow Robyn Hode?’ seyde the screffe,
‘Potter, Y prey the tell thow me.’
‘A hundred torne Y haffe schot with hem,
Under hes tortyll-tre.’

“Know you Robin Hood?
said the sheriff.
“Potter, I pray you, tell you me.”
“A hundred turns I have shot with him
Under his trusty(?) tree.”

57 ‘Y had lever nar a hundred ponde,’ seyde þe screffe,
And sware be the Trinite,
<…>
‘Þat the ffals outelawe stod be me.’

“I would rather than a
hundred pounds,” said the sheriff —
and swore by the Trinity —
[…]
“That the false outlaw stood by me.”

58 ‘And ye well do afftyr mey red,’ seyde þe potter,
‘And boldeley go with me,
And to morow, or we het bred,
Roben Hode well we se.’

“If you will do after my advice,”
said the potter,
“And boldly go with me,
And tomorrow, ere we eat bread,
Robin Hood will we see.”

59 ‘Y well queyt the,’ kod the screffe,
‘And swere be God of meythe.’
Schetyng thay left, and hom þey went,
Her soper was reddy deythe.

“I will [re]quite [repay] you,” quoth the sheriff
“And swear by God of might.”
[The] shooting they left, and home went they
Their supper was ready prepared.

[Fit 3]

60 Upon the morrow, when het was day,
He boskyd hem fforthe to reyde;
The potter hes cart fforthe gan ray,
And wolde not leffe beheynde.

Upon the morrow, when it was day,
He hurried him forth to ride.
The potter his cart forth did array
And would not be left behind.

61 He toke leffe of the screffys wyffe,
And thankyd her of all thyng:
‘Dam, for mey loffe and ye well þys were,
Y geffe yow here a golde ryng.’

He took leave of the sheriff’s wife
And thanked her for all things.
“Dame, for my love, if you will this wear,
I give you here a gold ring.”

62 ‘Gramarsey,’ seyde the weyffe, *“Grammarcy,” said the wife.*
‘Sir, God eylde het the.’ *“Sir, God reward give you.”*
The screffes hart was never so leythe, *The sheriff’s heart was never so light*
The ffeyre fforeyst to se. *The fair forest to see.*

63 And when he cam yn to the fforeyst, *And when he came into the forest,*
Yonder the leffes grene, *Under the leavës green,*
Berdys there sange on bowhes prest, *Birds there sang on boughs freely;*
Het was gret goy to se. *It was great joy to see.*

64 ‘Here het ys merey to be,’ seyde Roben, *“Here it is merry to be,” said Robin*
‘For a man that had hawt to spende; *“For a man who has aught to spend.*
Be mey horne ye schall awet *By my horn you shall await*
Yeff Roben Hode be here.’ *If Robin Hood be here.”*

65 Roben set hes horne to hes mowthe, *Robin set his horn to his mouth,*
And blow a blast þat was ffoll god; *And blew a blast that was full good*
Þat herde hes men þat þere stode, *That heard his men that there stood*
Ffer downe yn the wodde. *Far down in the wood.*

66 ‘I her mey master blow,’ seyde Leytell John, *“I hear my master blow,” said Little John*
<…> *[…]*
<…> *[…]*
They ran as thay were wode. *They ran as they were mad.*

67 Whan thay to thar master cam, *When they to their master came,*
Leytell John wold not spare; *Little John would not wait:*
‘Master, how haffe yow ffare yn Notynggam? *“Master, how have you fared in Nottingham?*
How haffe yow solde yowre ware?’ *How have you sold your ware?”*

68 ‘Ye, be mey trowthe, Leyty[ll] John, *“Yes, by my troth, Little John;*
Loke thow take no care; *Look you take no care.*
Y haffe browt the screffe of Notynggam, *I have brought the sheriff of Nottingham*
For all howre chaffare.’ *For all our affair [profit, something to be sold].”*

69 ‘He ys foll wellcom,’ seyde Lytyll John, *“He is full welcome,” said Little John.*
‘Thes tydyng ys foll godde.’ *“These tidings are full good.”*
The screffe had lever nar a hundred ponde *The sheriff had rather than a hundred pounds*
He had [never sene Roben Hode.] *He had [never seen Robin Hood].*

70 ‘[Had I] west that befforen,
At Notynggam when we were,
Thow scholde not com yn ffeyre fforest
Of all thes thowsande eyre.’

*“Had I known that before,
At Nottingham when we were,
You should not come in [the] fair forest
In all these thousand years.*

71 ‘That wot Y well,’ seyde Roben,
‘Y thanke God that ye be here;
Thereffore schall ye leffe yowre hors with hos,
And all yowre hother gere.’

*‘That know I well,” said Robin,
“I thank God that you be here;
Therefore shall you leave
your horse with us
And your other gear.”*

72 ‘That fend I Godys forbod,’ kod the screffe,
‘So to lese mey godde.’
<…>
<…>

*That I maintain(?) [that]
God forbid,” said the sheriff,
“So to lose my good.”
[…]
[…]*

73 ‘Hether ye cam on hors ffoll hey,
And hom schall ye go on fote;
And gret well they weyffe at home,
The woman ys ffoll godde.

*“Hither you came on horse full high,
And home shall you go on foot.
And greet well your wife at home;
The woman is full good.”*

74 ‘Y schall her sende a wheyt palffrey,
Het ambellet be mey ffey,
<…>
<…>

*“I shall her send a white palfrey,
That ambles [smoothly], by my faith
[…]
[…]*

75 ‘Y schall her sende a wheyt palffrey,
Het hambellet as the weynde,
Nere for the loffe of yowre weyffe,
Off more sorow scholde yow seyng.’

*“I shall send her a white palfrey
That ambles as you go
Were it not for the love of your wife,
Of more sorrow should you sing.”*

76 Thes parted Robyn Hode and the screffe;
To Notynggam he toke the waye;
Hes weyffe feyre welcomed hem hom,
And to hem gan sche saye:

*Thus parted Robin Hood and the sheriff;
To Nottingham he took the way;
His wife fair welcomed him home
And to him did she say:*

77 ‘Seyr, how haffe yow ffared yn grene fforeyst? *“Sir, how have you fared in green forest?*
Haffe ye browt Roben hom?’ *Have you brought Robin home?”*
‘Dam, the deyell spede hem, bothe bodey and bon; *“Dame, the devil speed him, both body and bone.*
Y haffe hade a ffoll gret skorne. *I have had a great scorn.*

78 ‘Of all the god that Y haffe lade to grene wod, *Of all the good that I have taken to greenwood,*
He hayt take het ffro me; *He has taken it from me,*
All bot thes feyre palffrey, *All but this fair palfrey*
That he hayt sende to the.’ *That he has sent to you.”*

79 With þat sche toke op a lowde lawhyng, *With that she took up a loud laughing,*
And swhare be hem þat deyed on tre, *And swore by him that died on tree,*
‘Now haffe yow payed for all þe pottys *“Now have you paid for all the pots*
That Roben gaffe to me. *That Robin gave to me.*

80 ‘Now ye be com hom to Notynggam. *“Now you be come home to Nottingham,*
Ye schall haffe god ynowe.’ *You shall have good enough.”*
Now speke we of Roben Hode, *Now speak we of Robin Hood*
And of the pottyr ondyr the grene bowhe. *And of the potter under the green bough*

81 ‘Potter, what was they pottys worthe *“Potter, what were your pots worth*
To Notynggam þat Y ledde with me?’ *To Nottingham that I took with me?”*
‘They wer worthe to nobellys,’ seyde he, *“They were worth two nobles,” said he,*
‘So mot Y treyffe or the; *“So may I thrive, or you.*
So cowde Y [have] had ffor tham, *So could I have had for them,*
And Y had be there.’ *If I had been there.”*

82 ‘Thow schalt hafe ten ponde,’ seyde Roben, *“You shall have ten pound,” said Robin*
‘Of money ffeyre and ffre; *“Of money fair and free.*
And yever whan thow comest to grene wod, *And ever when you come to greenwood,*
Wellcom, potter, to me.’ *Welcome, potter, to me.”*

83 Thes partyd Robyn, the screffe, and the potter, *Thus parted Robin, the sheriff, and the potter*
Ondernethe the grene wod tre; *Underneath the greenwood tree.*
God haffe mersey on Roben Hodys solle, *God have mercy on Robin Hood’s soul*
And saffe all god yemanrey! *And save all good yeomanry!*

Robin Hood's Death [Child 120]

The longest and earliest version of this ballad, from the Percy Folio (Child's "A" text), is badly defective. This text, therefore, is Child's "B" version, the "English Archer" text, which Child concedes is "in the fine old strain." Its one substantial change from the Percy text in this version is the disappearance of the references to "Red Roger," who was surely the Roger of Doncaster of the "Gest." Robin, in the Percy version, kills Roger but is mortally wounded in the process. Except for (or perhaps because of) this lack, the "B" text is in some ways better than "A." I have nonetheless interpolated a few verses of "A," in [brackets], slightly modernized, to give a fuller account.

It is generally agreed that this is the same story as that told in the last stanzas of the "Gest," even though the Percy Folio version is roughly two centuries more recent than the likely date of the "Gest," but whether an early form of this song underlies the "Gest," or the "Gest" inspired this song, or whether both derive from a common source or legend, is unclear.

Note that, in addition to the story of Robin's death, it has the motif of Robin refusing to do any woman harm (stanza 15).

1 When Robin Hood and Little John
Down a down a down a down
Went o'ee yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood to Little John,
We have shot for many a pound.
Hey down a down…

2 But I am not able to shoot one shot more,
My broad arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me.

[The dame prior is my aunt's daughter
And nigh unto my kin,
I know she would me no harm this day,
For all the world to win.]

3 Now Robin he is to fair Kirkly gone
As fast as he can win,
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.

4 And when he came to fair Kirkly-hall,
He knocked all at the ring,
But none was so ready as his cousin herself
For to let bold Robin in.

5 'Will you please to sit down, cousin Robin,' she said,
'And drink some beer with me?'
'No, I will neither eat nor drink
Till I am blooded by thee.'

6 'Well, I have a room, cousin Robin,' she said,
'Which you did never see,
And if you please to walk therein,
You blooded by me shall be.'

7 She took him by the lily-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
While one drop of blood would run down.

8 She blooded him in a vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room;
There he did bleed all the live-long day,
Until the next at noon.

[And first it bled the thick, thick blood,
And afterward the thin,
And well then wist good Robin Hood
Treason there was within.]

9 He then bethought him of a casement there,
Thinking for to get down;
But was so weak he could not get leap,
He could not get him down.

10 He then bethought him of his bugle-horn
Which hung low down to his knee;
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.

11 Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under a tree,
'I fear my master is now near dead,
He blows so wearily.'

12 Then Little John to fair Kirklee is gone,
As fast as he can dree;
But when he came to Kirkly-hall,
He broke locks two or three.

13 Until he came bold Robin to see,
Then he fell on his knee:
'A boon, a boon,' cries Little John,
'Master, I beg of thee.'

14 'What is that boon,' said Robin Hood,
'Little John, [thou] begs of me?'
'It is to burn fair Kirkly-hall
And all their nunnery.'

15 'Now nay, now nay,' quoth Robin Hood,
'That boon I'll not grant thee.
I never hurt a woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company.

[16] I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at my end shall it be.'

16 'But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I'll let flee,
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.

17 'Lay a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet,
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green
Which is both right and meet.

In "A", this verse reads

And set my bright sword at my head
Mine arrows at my feet,
And lay my yew-bow by my side,
My met-yard wi....

18 'Let me have length and breadth enough,
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say when I am dead,
"Here lies bold Robin Hood."'

Last three verses omitted

Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford [Child 144]

Collated version, based on Child's "A" text (itself a collated version) compared against the Forresters text "Robin Hood and the Bishopp," Knight, pp. 39-43. The goal has been to retain all incidents from either text. In order to assure relative uniformity in orthography, both texts have been conformed to modern conventions.

Stanza numbers in the left margin are based on Child's. Brackets indicate that the text more nearly resembles the Forresters version.

Note that this is not an attempt to create a true critical text. This is a quick-and-dirty attempt to cover all the major incidents.

[1] Some will talk of lords and knights
And some of barons bold,
But I'll tell you how Robin Hood served the Bishop
When he robbed him of his gold.

2 As it befell in merry Barnsdale,
All under the greenwood tree,
The Bishop of Hereford was to come by
With all of his company.

3 'Come, kill a venison,' said bold Robin Hood,
'Come, kill me a good fat deer.
The Bishop of Hereford is to dine with me today,
And she shall pay well for his cheer.

4 'We'll kill a fat venison,' said bold Robin Hood,
'And dress it by the highway-side,
And we will watch the bishop narrowly,
Lest some other way he should ride.'

[-] 'You and I, master," said Little John,
'We will disguise us in shepherd's attire,
And when the bishop comes riding along,
We will be dancing by the fire.

5 Robin Hood dressed himself in shepherd's attire,
With six of his yeomen also,
And when the Bishop of Hereford came by,
They about the fire did go.

[-] And when the Bishop came riding along,
Full suddenly there he espied
Great store of venison spits three or four
And shepherds dancing there beside.

6 'O, what is the matter?' then said the Bishop,
'Or for whom do you make this ado?
Or why do you kill the king's venison
When your company is so few?'

7 'We are shepherds,' said bold Robin Hood,
'And we keep sheep all the year,
And we are disposed to be merry this day,
And to kill the King's fat deer.'

8 'You are brave fellows,' said the Bishop,
'And the King of your doings shall know,
Therefore make haste and come along with me;
Before the king you shall go.'

[-] 'Will it please you eat, my Lord,' then said Robin,
'And all your company?
And take part of a good fat buck
And dine here in Barnsdale with me?'

[-] 'No, proud fellows,' said the Bishop then,
'But with me you shall all go,
And when you come before our Royal King,
Your doings there I mean to show.'

9 'O pardon, o pardon,' said bold Robin Hood,
'O pardon, I thee pray!
For it becomes not your lordship's coat
To take so many live away.'

10 'No pardon, no pardon,' says the Bishop,
'No pardon I thee owe;
Therefore make haste, and come along with me,
For before the King you shall go.'

[-] ‘O good my Lord,’ said Robin Hood then,
‘You bear but a very hard mind.
Is there no entreaty of your Lordship at all
No friendship or favor to find?

[-] ‘Then I must tell thee, bishop,’ said Robin Hood,
‘I can thee no longer forbear.
It is pity that ever such a hard-hearted man
Should ever bishop’s clothing wear.’

11 Then Robin set his back against a tree,
And his foot against a thorn,
And from underneath his shepherd’s coat
He pulled out a bugle horn.

12 He put the little end to his mouth,
And a loud blast did he blow,
Till threescore and ten of bold Robin’s men
Came running all on a row.

13 All making obeisance to bold Robin Hood
’Twas a comely sight to see;
‘What is the matter, master,’ said Little John,
‘That you blow so hastily?’

[-] ‘Marry, good yeomen,’ said Robin Hood,
‘My lord is out of charity with me.
I cannot entreat his Lordship at all
To dine under the greenwood tree.’

[-] ‘But he says before our royal King
With him we must all go,
And when we come before our royal King,
Our doings there he means to show.

[-] ‘And for you good yeomen,’ said Robin Hood,
‘Though so well with your bows you can shoot,
If ever you come before his royal grace,
To beg pardon it is no boote.

[-] 'But as for the Bishop,' said Robin Hood,
'Though he be out of charity with me,
Ere ever he goes forth of Barnsdale again,
Better speeches I know he will ye.'

14 'O here is the Bishop of Hereford,
And no pardon we shall have.'
'Cut off his head, master,' said Little John,
'And throw him into his grave.'

15 'O pardon, O pardon,' said the Bishop,
'O pardon, I thee pray!
For if I had known it had been you,
I'd have gone some other way.'

16 'No pardon, no pardon,' said Robin Hood,
'No pardon I thee owe.
Therefore make haste and come along with me,
For to merry Barnsdale you shall go.'

17. Then Robin took the bishop by the hand,
And led him to merry Barnsdale;
He made him to stay and sup with him that night,
And to drink wine, beer, and ale.

[-] 'Fall to thy dinner, Bishop,' said Robin Hood,
'For now it is fallen to thy lot.
I will pardon thy life, proud Bishop,' he said,
'But thy purse I pardon not.'

[-] 'I must tell you, Master,' said Little John,
'Our reckoning is wondrous dear.
The Bishop of Hereford would rob us of our lives,
But we will make him pay for his cheer.'

[19] Little John he doffed of a shepherd's coat
And spred it there on the ground,
And straightway for of the Bishop's male
He told three hundred pounds.

20 'Here's money enough, master,' said Little John,
'And a comely sight 'tis to see;
It makes me in charity with the Bishop,
Though he heartily loveth not me.'

[-] 'For that take no care, John," said Robin Hood,
'Or ever the Bishop do pass,
And before he goes out of Barnsdale again,
I will entreat him to sing me a Mass.'

[-] 'Pardon me, good yeomen,' said the Bishop then,
'Pardon me I do you pray.
It is too late now for to sing a Mass;
It is past three o'clock of the day.'

[-] 'Sing a mass, Bishop,' said Robin Hood,
'For all thy haste and speed.
And do not think my time at all too late
To do so holy a deed.'

[-] The Bishop was fain to sing a mass there,
Ere ever he could depart,
But when he had done he swore he never sang
A mass with so heavy a heart.

[-] 'Come on, proud Bishop,' said Robin Hood,
'Though you be out of charity with me,
We will have a round to make our hearts merry,
Round about the greenwood tree.

21 Robin Hood took the Bishop by the hand,
And he caused the music to play,
And he made the Bishop to dance in his boots,
And glad he could so get away.

[-] 'Kneel down, Bishop,' said Robin Hood,
'Ere ever thou from us depart,
And for all that we have done unto thee,
Thou forgive us with all thy heart.'

[-] ‘Curse of God light on me,’ quoth the Bishop then,
‘If I speak not that which is true,
For all that ever you have done unto me,
I freely forgive unto you.’

[-] Then Robin Hood took the Bishop by the hand
And set him on his way again,
And then he did divide the Bishop’s gold
In Barnsdale amongst his merry men.

The King and the Barker (King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth)
Sample versions of the common tale of "The King and the Subject."

The King and the Miller of Mansfield

A version of the "King and the Barker"-type story also found in such tales as "King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth" [Child 273]. This version is from Percy's Reliques, *which undoubtedly means it has been touched up, but the general plot remains. This version is chosen because it takes place in Sherwood. Only the first of Percy's two parts is included. I have added quotation marks and other punctuation to make the speakers clearer.*

Henry, our royall king, would ride a hunting
To the greene forest so pleasant and faire;
To see the harts skipping, and dainty does tripping;
Unto merry Sherwood his nobles repaire;
Hawke and hound were unbound, all things prepar'd
For the game, in the same, with good regard.

All a long summers day rode the king pleasantlye
With all his princes and nobles eche one;
Chasing the hart and hind, and the bucke gallantlye,
Till the dark evening forc'd all to turne home.
Then at last, riding fast, he had lost quite
All his lords, in the wood late in the night.

Wandering thus wearilye, all alone, up and downe,
With a rude miller he mett at the last;
Asking the ready way unto faire Nottingham
'Sir,' quoth the miller, 'I mean not to jest,
Yet I thinke, what I think, sooth for to say,
You do not lightlye ride out of your way.'

'Why, what dost thou think of me, quoth our king merilly,
Passing thy judgment upon me so briefe?'
'Good faith,' sayd the miller, 'I mean not to flatter thee;
I guess the to be but some gentleman thiefe;
Stand thee backe, in the darke; light not adowne,
Lest that I presentlye cracke thy knaves crowne.'

'Thou dost abuse me moch,' quoth the king, saying thus;
'I am a gentleman; lodging I lacke.'
'Thou has not,' quoth th' miller, 'one groat in thy purse;
All thy inheritance hanges on thy backe.'
'I have gold to discharge all that I call;
If it be forty pence, I will pay all.'

'If thou beest a true man,' then quoth the miller,
'I swear by my toll-dish, I'll lodge thee all night.'
'Here's my hand,' quoth the king; 'that was I ever.'
'Nay, soft,' quoth the miller; 'thou may'st be a sprite.
Better I'll know thee, ere hands we will shake;
With none but honest men hands will I take.'

Thus they went all along unto the miller's house;
Where they were seething of puddings and souse, *(boiled pigs parts)*
The miller first enter'd in, after him went the king;
Never came he in so smoakye a house.
'Now,' quoth he, 'let me see here what you are.'
Quoth our king, 'Look your fill, and doe not spare.'

'I like well thy countenance, though hast an honest face.
With my son Richard this night thou shalt lye.'
'Quoth his wife, by my troth, it is a handsome youth,
Yet it's best, husband, to deal warilye.
Art thou no run away, prythee, youth, tell?
Shew me thy passport, and all shall be well.'

Then our king presentlye, making lowe courtesye,
With his hatt in his hand, thus he did day;
'I have no passport, nor never was servitor,
But a poor courtyer, rode out of my way;
And for your kindness here offered to mee,
I will requite you in everye degree.'

Then to the miller his wife whisper'd secretlye,
Saying, 'It seemeth, this youth's of good kin,
Both by his apparel, and eke by his manners;
To turn him out, certainlye, were a great sin.'
'Yea,' quoth hee, 'you may see, he hath some grace
When he doth speake to his betters in place.'

'Well,' quo' the millers wife, 'young man, ye're welcome here;
And, though I say it, well lodged shall be;
Fresh straw will I have, laid on thy bed so brace,
And good brown hempen sheets likewise,' quoth shee.
'Aye,' quoth the good man; 'and when that is done,
Thou shalt lye with no worse, than our own sonne.'

'Nay, first,' quoth Richard, 'good-fellowe, tell me true,
Host thou noe creepers within thy gay hose?
Or art thou not troubled with the scabbado?'
'I pray,' quot the king, 'What creatures are those?'
'Art though not lowsy, nor scabby?' quoth he:
'If thou beest, surely thou lyest not with me.'

This caus'd the king, suddenlye, to laugh most heartilye,
Till the teares trickled downe from his eyes,
Then to their supper were they set orderlye
WIth hot bag-puddings, and good apple-pyes;
Nappy ale, good and stale, in a brown bowle,
Which did about the board merrily trowle.

'Here,' quoth the miller, 'good fellowe, I drinke to thee,
And to all "cuckholds, wherever they bee."'
'I pledge thee,' quotth our king, 'and thanke thee heartily
For my good welcome in every degree,
And here, in like manner, I drinke to thy sonne,'
'Do then,' quoth Richard, 'and quicke let it come.'

'Wife,' quoth the miller, 'Fetch me forth lightfoote
And of his sweetnesse a little we'll taste,'
A fair ven'son pastye brought she out presentlye,
'Eate,' quoth the miller, 'but, sir, make no waste.
Here's dainty lightfoote!' 'In faith,' sayd the king,
'I never before eat so daintye a thing.'

'I wis,' quoth Richard, 'no daintye at all it is,
For we doe eate of it everye day.'
'In what place,' sayd our king, 'may be bought like to this?'
'We never pay pennye for itt, by my fay;
From merry Sherwood we fetch it home here;
Now and then we make bold with our kings deer.'

'Then I thinke,' sayd our king, 'that it is venison.'
'Eche foole,' quoth Richard, 'full well may know that:
Never are wee without two or three in the roof,
Very well fleshed, and excellent fat:
But, prythee, say nothing wherever thou goe;
We would not, for two pence, the king should it know.'

'Doubt not,' ten sayd the king, 'my promist secresye;
The king shall never know on't for mee.'
A cupp of lambs-wool they dranke to him then *an apple beverage*
And to their bedds they past presentlie.
The nobles, next morning, went all up and down,
For to seeke out the king in everye towne.

At last, at the miller's cott, soone they espy'd him out,
As he was mounting upon his fair steede,
To whem they came presently, falling down on their knee;
Which made the miller's heart woefully bleede;
Shaking and quaking, before him he stood,
Thinking he should have been hang'd, by the rood.

The king perceiving him fearfully trembling
Drew forth his sword, but nothing he sed;
The miller downe did fall, crying before them all,
Doubting the king would have cut off his head.
But he his kind courtesye for to requite,
Gave him great living, and dubb'd him a knight.

King James I and the Tinkler

Another "King and the Barker," this one a short version from pp. 292-295 of Bell. Although Bell labels the king "James I," note that the text does not assign him a number (it calls him "first," but that might be a reference to being first in the kingdom). Much more likely that it is intended to be James V, who was credited with activities like this.

And now, to be brief, let's pass over the rest,
Who seldom or never were given to jest,
And come to King Jamie, the first of our throne,
A pleasanter monarch sure never was known.

As he was a hunting the swift fallow-deer,
He dropped all his nobles; and when he got clear,
In hope of some pastime away he did ride,
Till he came to an alehouse, hard by a wood-side.

And there with a tinkler he happened to meet,
And him in kind sort he so freely did greet:
'Pray thee, good fellow, what hast in thy jug?
Which under thy arm thou dost lovingly hug?'

'By the mass!' quoth the tinkler, 'it's nappy brown ale,
And for to drink to thee, friend, I will not fail;
For although thy jacket looks gallant and fine,
I think that my twopence as good is as thine.'

'By my soul! honest fellow, the truth thou hast spoke,'
And straight he sat down with the tinkler to joke;
They drank to the King, and they pledged to each other;
Who'd seen 'em had thought they were brother and brother.

As they were a-drinking the King pleased to say,
'What news, honest fellow? come tell me, I pray?'
'There's nothing of news, beyond that I hear
The King's on the border a-chasing the deer.

'And truly I wish I so happy me be
Whilst he is a hunting the King I might see;
For although I've travelled the land many ways
I never have yet seen a King in my days.'

The King, with a hearty brisk laughter, replied,
'I tell thee, good fellow, if thou canst but ride,
Thou shalt get up behind me, and I will thee bring
To the presence of Jamie, thy sovereign King.'

'But he'll be surrounded with nobles so gay,
And how shall we tell him from them, sir, I pray?'
'Thou'lt easily ken him when once thou art there;
The King will be covered, his nobles all bare.'

He got up behind him and likewise his sack,
His budget of leather, and tools at his back;
They rode till they came to the merry greenwood,
His nobles came round him, bareheaded they stood.

The tinkler then seeing so many appear,
He slily did whisper the King in his ear:
Saying, 'They're all clothed so gloriously gay,
But which amongst them is the King, sir, I pray?'

The King did with hearty good laughter, reply,
'By my soul! My good fellow, it's thou or it's I!
The rest are bareheaded, uncovered all round.' —
With his bag and his budget he fell to the ground,

Like one that was frightened quite out of his wits,
Then on his knees he instantly gets,
Beseeching for mercy; the King to him said,
'Thou art a good fellow, so be not afraid.

'Come, tell thy name?' 'I am John of the Dale,
A mender of kettles, a lover of ale.'
'Rise up, Sir John, I will honour thee here, --
I make thee a knight of three thousand a year!'

This was a good thing for the tinkler indeed;
Then unto the court he was sent for with speed,
Where great store of pleasure and pastime was seen,
In the royal presence of King and of Queen.

Sir John of the Dale he has land, he has fee,
At the court of the king who so happy as he?
Yet still in his hall hangs the tinkler's old sack,
And the budget of tools which he bore at his back.

Marian Poetry

The Middle Ages produced vast amounts of poetry in praise of the Virgin Mary, clearly revealing their degree of reverence. A few samples are below.

Source: MS. Trinity College, Cambridge, B.14.39 (323), dated to the second half of the thirteenth century. From Luria/Hoffman, p. 172, #183, and DaviesLyrics, p. 64, #11. The two texts do not entirely agree; I have taken what seems to me the more likely reading at points of variation.

Levede, it thonke thee,	*Lady, I thank you*
With herte swithe milde,	*With heart (so) very mild*
That gohid that the havest idon me	*That good that you have done for me*
Wid thine swete childe.	*With your sweet child.*
Thu art god and swete and bright	*You are good and sweet and bright*
Of alle otheir icorinne;	*Above all other [you are] chosen.*
Of the was that swete wight	*Of you was that sweet wight,*
That was Jesus iboren.	*That was Jesus, born.*
Maide milde, bidd I thee	*Maid mild, bid I you*
Wid thine swete childe	*With your sweet child*
That thu herdie me	*That you guard me*
To habben Godes milce.	*To have God's mercy.*
Moder, loke one me	*Mother, look on me*
Wid thine swete eyen;	*With your sweet eyes;*
Reste and blisse gef thu me,	*Rest and bliss give you me*
My levhedy, then ic deyen.	*My lady, when I die.*

Source: British Library, MS. Cotton Caligula A.ii, dated to the fifteenth century. From Luria/Hoffman, p. 177, #188. Punctuation modified.

Upon a lady my love is lente,	*Upon a lady my love is set,*
Withoutene change of any chere,	*Without change of any appearance,*
That is lovely and continent	*Who is lovely and continent*
And most at my desire.	*And most at my desire.*
This lady is in my herte pight,	*This lady is in my heart settled;*
Her to love I have gret haste,	*Her to love I have great haste.*
With all my power and my might	*With all my power and my might,*
To her I make mine herte stedfast.	*To her I make my heart steadfast.*
Therfor will I non other spouse,	*Therefore I will have no other spouse,*
Ner none other loves, for to take,	*Nor any other love, for to take,*
But only to her I make my vowes	*But only to her I make my vows,*
And all other to forsake.	*And all others to forsake.*
This lady is gentill and meke,	*This lady is gentle and meek,*
Moder she is and well of all,	*Mother she is and source of all.*
She is never for to seke,	*She is never far to seek —*
Nother too grete ner too small.	*Neither too great nor too small.*
Redy she is night and day,	*Ready she is night and day*
To man and womman and childe in fere,	*To man and woman and child together,*
If they will aught to her say,	*If they will something to her say,*
Our prayeres mekely for to here.	*Our prayers meekly for to hear.*
To serve this lady we all be bounde,	*To serve this lady we all are bound,*
Both night and day in every place,	*Both night and day in every place,*
Where ever we be, in felde or towne,	*Wherever we be, in field or town,*
Or elles in any other place.	*Or else in any other place.*
Pray we to this lady bright,	*Pray we to this lady bright,*
In the worship of the Trinite,	*In the worship of the Trinity,*
To bringe us alle to heven light,	*To bring us all to heaven's light,*
Amen, say we, for charite.	*Amen, say we, for charity.*

Source: British Museum, MS. Harley 2253, dated to the first half of the fourteenth century. From Stevick,, pp. 52-53, #33. Orthography simplified and standardized. Compare the modern "The Joys of Mary" ("Joys Seven") as well as the John Lydgate piece which follows.

As I me rod this endre day,	*As I me rode this very day,*
By grene wode to seche pley	*By green wood to seek play,*
Wyth herte I thoughte al on a may,	*With (my) heart I thought all on a maid,*
Swettest of alle thing.	*Sweetest of all thing.*
Lith and I you telle may	*Listen and I you tell may*
Al of that swete thyng.	*All of that sweet thing.*
This mayden is swete and free of blood,	*This maiden is sweet and free of blood,*
Bryght and faire, of mylde mood,	*Bright and fair, of mild mood,*
Al she may don us good	*All she may [have] done [for] us [is] good*
Thurgh hir bisechyng:	*Through her beseeching.*
Of hire he took flessh and blood,	*Of her he took flesh and blood,*
Jhesus, hevened kyng.	*Jesus, Heaven's king.*
Of alle thyng I love hire meste,	*Of alle things I love her most,*
My dayes blisse, my nightes rest;	*My day's bliss, my night's rest,*
She counseileth and helpeth best	*She counsels and helps best,*
Both olde and yinge.	*Both old and young.*
Now I may if that you leste	*Now I may if that you listen*
The five joyes mynge.	*The five joys bring to mind.*
The firste joy of that womman: —	*The first joy of that woman*
Whan Gabriel from hevene cam	*When Gabriel from heaven came*
And seyde God shoulde bicomen man	*And said God should become man*
And of hire be born,	*And of her be born*
And bryngen up of helle-pyne	*And bringen up of hell-pain*
Mankind that was forlorn.	*Mankind that was forlorn.*
That othere joye of that may	*The other joy of that maid*
Was on Cristemasse day	*Was on Christmas day*
Whan God was born on thorough lay	*When God was born in complete light (?)*
And broghte us lightnesse,	*And brought us lightness*
The sterre was seen before day —	*The star was seen before day.*
Thise hierdes beren witnesse.	*These herdsmen bore witness.*

The thridde joy of that lady,
That men clepe the epiphany: —
Whan the kynges comen wery
    To presente hir sone
Wyth myrre, gold, and encense,
    That was man bicome.

The third joy of that lady
That men call the epiphany
When the kings come verily
To present her son
With myrrh, gold, and incense
That was man become.

The ferth joye we telle mowen:
On Ester-morwe whan it gam dawen
Hir son that was slawen
    Arose in flessh and bon;
More joy ne may me haven,
    Wyf ne mayden non.

The fourth joy we tell more:
On Eastern morn when it did dawn,
Her son that was slain
Arose in flesh and bone;
More joy may no one have
Wife or maiden none.

The fifte joye of that womman: —
Whan hir body to hevene cam
Hir soule to the body nam
    As it was wont to ben.
Crist leve us all wyth that womman
    That joye al for-to sen.

The fifth joy of that woman,
When her body to heaven came
Her soul to the body went
As it was wont to [have] been.
Christ grant us all with that woman
That joy all for to see.

Preye we all to oure lady,
And to the saintes that wone hir by,
That they of us han mercy,
    And that we ne mysse
In this world to ben holy
    And wynne hevenes blisse. Amen.

Pray we all to our lady
And to the saints that live her by
That they of us have mercy,
And that we not fail
In this world to be holy
And win heaven's bliss. Amen.

John Lydgate

Lydgate lived through much of the "Robin Hood Period," being born perhaps around 1370 and dying perhaps around 1450. He was immensely prolific, although much of his work was translation and much extremely dull. He is one of the few English poets to have been in clerical orders, which is reflected in some of his themes.. He gives us good samples of the southern dialect of the period; his birthplace was Lydgate in Suffolk, which gave him his name.

The first piece is from his work The Life of Our Lady, *reportedly written around 1420 at the request of Henry V and published by Caxton in 1484. Text from Duff-Bibliog, p. 74.*

How our lady received the seven yeftes of the holy ghost capitulo quinto

The fyrst *yeft* was the yeft of drede — *gift*
To eschewe eche thyng that shal god displese
The next pyte of veray womanhede
To *rewe* on al that she sawe in dysease — *rue*
The third connyng god / and man to please
The fourth strengthe *thorow* her stedfastenesse — *through*
Onely by virtu all vyces to oppresse....

Lydgate also wrote on a common theme of the medieval period, the Wheel of Fortune or the twisting of fate — against which Robin Hood arguably fought. The following is excerpted from DaviesLyrics, #97, pp. 191-192.

Let no man booste of *conning* nor virtu, — *cunning*
Of *tresour*, richesse, nor of sapience, — *treasure*
Of worldly support, for all cometh of Jesu:
Counsail, comfort, discrecioun and prudence,
Provisioun, forsight, and providence,
Like as the Lord of grace list dispoose:
Some man hath widdom, som man hath elloquence —
All stant on chaung, like a midsomer roose — *stands on change, i.e. passes away*

[lines omitted]

Where is now David, the moost worthy king,
Of Juda and Israel moost famous and notable?
And where is Salomon, moost soverein of conning,
Richest of bilding, of tresour incomparable?
Face of Absolon, moost fair, moost amiable?
Rekne up echon, of trouthe *make no gloose* — *count up each one; do not gloss over*
Rekne up Jonathas, of *frenship immutable* — *refers to Jonathan's love for David*
All stant on chaung, like a midsomer roose — *stands on change, i.e. passes away*

The Paston Letters

Richard Calle to Margery Paston

Modernized version from Fenn/Ramsay, Vol. II, pp. 25-26. Their Letter CCLXXIII. In the definitive Paston/Davis edition, which preserves the original spelling, it is #861, Paston/Davis, volume II, pp. 498-500. Another modern version is Paston/Davis-Modern, #85, pp. 178-180.

In 1469, Richard Calle, then probably in his late thirties, secretly married Margery Paston, then about twenty, the daughter of his employers John Paston I and Margaret Mautby Paston. The family had relied very heavily upon Calle, but their offense at this wedding was so strong that the two were forcibly separated, Margery being held by the family in the Norfolk area and Calle being guarded in London. The family tried to have the marriage overturned, but as Calle and Margery were genuinely in love and unwilling to give in, the family failed. The excerpts from Calle's letter show how strong his feelings — and his sufferings — were. The middle portion, which is mostly about how the two communicated, is omitted.

Mine own lady and mistress, and before God very true wife, I with heart full sorrowful recommend me unto you, as he that cannot be merry, nor nought shall be till it be otherwise with us than it is yet, for this life that we lead now is neither pleasure to God nor to the world, considering the great bond of matrimony that is made betwixt us, and also the great love that hath been and as I trust yet is betwixt us, and as on my part never greater; wherefore I beseech Almighty God comfort us as soon as it pleaseth him, for we that ought of very right to be most together are most asunder, meseemeth it is a thousand year ago since that I spake with you, I had lever* than all the good in the world I might be with you; alas, alas! good lady, full little remember they what they do that keep us thus asunder, four times in in the year are they accursed that let† matrimony; it causeth many men to deem in them they have large conscience in other matters as well as herein; but what lady suffer as ye have done; and make you as merry as ye can, for I wis, lady, at the long way, God will of his righteousness help his servants that mean truly, and would live according to his laws, &c.

I understand, lady, ye have had as much sorrow for me as any gentlewoman hath had in the world, as would God all that sorrow that ye have had rested upon me, and that ye had been discharged of it, for I wis, lady, it is to me a death to hear that ye be entreated otherwise than ye ought to be; this is a painful life that we lead. I cannot live thus without it be a great displeasure to God....

....I marvel much that they should take this matter so heedily§ as I understand they do, remembering it is in such case as it cannot be remedied, and my desert upon every behalf it is for to be thought there should be none obstacle against it; and also the worshipful that is in them is not in your marriage, it is in their own marriage, which I beseech God send them such as may be to their own worship and pleasure to God, and to their hears' ease, for else were it great pity. Mistress, I am afraid to write to you, for I understand ye have showed my letters that I have sent you before this time; but I pray you let no creature see this letter, as soon as ye have read it let it be burnt, for I would

no man should see it in no wise; ye had no writing from me this two year, nor I will not send you no more, therefore I remit all this matter to your wisdom; Almighty Jesu preserve, keep, and [guard?] you your heart's desire, which I wot well should be to God's pleasure, &c.

This letter was written with as great pain as ever wrote I thing in my life, for in good faith I have been right sick, and yet am not verily at ease, God amend it, &c.

Richard Calle

* lever=liefer, i.e. sooner, preferably
† let=hinder, interfere with
§ heedily=with great heed, carefully, cautiously

John Paston II to John Paston III

Modernized version from Fenn/Ramsay, Vol. II, pp. 78-79. Their Letter CCCXXXVI. In the definitive Paston/Davis edition, which preserves the original spelling, it is #275, Paston/Davis, volume I, pp. 460-461.

The "Robin Hood" letter. Dated April 16, 1473.

Worshipful and right heartily-beloved brother, I recommend me unto you, letting you weet that on Wednesday last past I wrote you a letter, whereof John Carbalde had the bearing, promitting* me that ye should have it at Norwich this day, or else to-morrow in the morning; wherein I pray you take a labour according after the tenure of the same, and that I may have an answer at London to Hoxon, if any messenger come, as e'en I may do for you....

[There follow several paragraphs of news from London and areas outside England.]

No more, but I have been and am troubled with mine over large and courteous dealing with my servants, and now with their unkindness; Platting, your man, would this day bid me farewell, to to-morrow at Dover, notwithstanding Thryston, your other man, is from me, and John Myryel, and W. Woode which promised you and Daubeney, God have his soul, at Caister, that if ye would take him in to be again with me that then he would never go from me; and thereupon I have kept him this three years to play Saint George, and Robin Hood, and the sheriff of Nottingham, and now when I would have good horse, he is gone into Bernysdale, and I without a keeper. Written at Canterbury, to Calais ward on Tuesday, and [if] hap be upon Good Friday, the 16th day of April, in the 13th year of Edward IV. Your

JOHN PASTON, *knight*

* *promitting: promising*

The Tale of Gamelyn

This is one of the stories often held up as an analog or source for the "Gest." For instance, it features an "outlaw king," which has an analogy to Robin. It also features a superlative hero — though Gamelin's attribute is raw strength rather than a skill such as Robin Hood's ability with the bow. It also features the real King rewarding the hero — though in "Gamelin," the reward is office and lands, whereas in the "Gest," Robin is merely made a courtier (and ends up abandoning his post). And Gamelin is the son of a knight, whereas Robin is a yeoman.

Gamelin also has a tendency to attack the established clergy, just as Robin does. There are also a lot of shared vocabulary, though this might be simply material derived from general folklore about outlaws that was used by both. Or maybe it's just that they're both northern tales.

"Gamelin," like the "Gest," probably appealed to an audience below the gentry, but it feels much more aspirational: Gamelyn wants his honors back. Robin just wants to be a free man. So I don't think it's quite the same audience — which may help to explain why the "Gest" went through multiple printings, whereas "Gamelin," despite sneaking its way into some manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales, *was never disseminated in print until the modern era.*

The text given here is based on a comparison of the texts of Gamelyn/Skeat, Sands (pp. 156-181) and Knight/Ohlgren (pp. 194-219). The fits marked are Knight/Ohlgren's, and are editorial; Sands and Skeat do not mark them. Skeat's text is 902 lines, as is that of Sands; that of Knight/Ohlgren has 898 lines. The differences between Skeat and Sands on the one hand and Knight/Ohlgren on the other are as follows: Sands, ll. 281-283 replace a single line in Knight/Ohlgren which is vaguely related to 283; Sands, ll. 375-376 are not found in Knight/Ohlgren, and the forms of 377-378 are very different.

Decisions as to which text to follow are somewhat arbitrary; this is not intended to be a critical edition of "Gamelyn"! I have not consulted the manuscripts other than looking at the apparatus in Gamelyn/Skeat, but have simply adopted the reading which sounds more likely by comparing the Skeat/Sands type (based primarily on Harleian 7334) and that of Knight/Olhlgren (based on Petworth manuscript). Knight/Olhgren, p. 184, claim that Harleian 7334, usually cited as Ha[4] in apparatus of the Tales *but cited as Hl by Skeat, is unreliable. This is true of the* Canterbury Tales *in general; Manley/Rickert, volume I, p. 221, say the Harleian manuscript's textual affiliations vary. But Manley/Rickert, volume I, p. 219, says that "Gamelyn" is on a short quire in the Harleian copy, which might indicate that it was taken from a different exemplar or is an insertion from elsewhere (although by the same scribe). In any case, "Gamelyn" has a different textual history than the* Tales; *the inferiority of the Harleian MS. for "Gamelyn" needs to be demonstrated, not asserted. I have not attempted to test this.*

Knowing this, I compared the two texts and, where they differed, made what amounts to an educated guess. No critical authority should be assigned to the result; I'm just trying to get you a usable text of "Gamelyn" that won't get me in copyright trouble! Fortunately, the variations between the manuscripts are mostly fairly slight.

Gamelyn/Skeat's text has a few instances of ȝ, but most resolve to y or g, and are so transcribed. I have tended to follow the spelling of whichever text I consulted first, so the orthography has no authority whatsoever. I have put only the more important variants in the apparatus (probably the majority of Skeat's variants involve the addition or subtraction of final

*-e; this affects the pronunciation but rarely the meaning). I use a * to mark places noted in the apparatus. Manuscript sigla follow Skeat (e.g. the Harleian MS. is Hl rather than Ha[4] as in* Canterbury Tales *apparatus); "rell" means "all uncited witnesses." Skeat's apparatus is singularly unsatisfactory; it is sometimes hard to tell what reading he means, and he doesn't even properly list the manuscripts he cites. Often I cite the reading of my text and then a variant labelled "Skeat," e. g.* 104 gadeling] Gamelyn *Skeat, meaning that in line 104 I have printed the text* gadeling, *but Skeat prints* Gamelyn, *and I do not know the basis for the difference. Variants of this type will usually indicate a place where I have followed Knight/Ohlgren's text, which differs more from Skeat's than does Sands, but for which no variant is marked in Skeat's apparatus*

I have not marked divergences in the placement of the caesura, and I have felt free to put it where I think it belongs. Punctuation primarily follows Knight/Ohlgren; the line numbering follows Sands and Skeat. "Gamelyn" is older than the "Gest," so the language is more obscure to modern readers. To save space, I have not printed a parallel text, and have glossed only minimally. There is a modern English edition in Ohlgren.

The line count of this version at first appears much less than the "Gest," but keep in mind that this text is printed in long lines — in other words, one line in this text is equivalent to two in the "Gest." So the two poems are in fact very close to the the same length; "Gamelyn" is only a few couplets/stanzas shorter.

[Fit 1]

Litheth and lesteneth and harkeneth aright,
And ye shul heere a talking of a doughty knyght;
Sire John of Boundes was his righte* name,
He coude of norture* and mochel of game.
Thre sones the knyght had and with his body he wan,
The eldest was a moche schrewe and sone he bygan.
His bretheren loved wel her fader and of hym were agast,
The eldest deserved his fader's curs and had it atte the last.
The good knight his fadere lyved so yore,
That deth was comen hym to and handled hym ful sore.
The good knyght cared sore sik ther he lay,
How his children shulde lyven after his day.
He had bene wide-wher but non husbonde he was,
Al the londe that he had it was verrey purchas.
Fayn he wold it were dressed amonges hem alle,
That eche of hem had his parte as it myght falle.
Thoo sente he in to contrey after wise knyghtes
To helpen *delen* his londes and dressen hem to-rightes. *divide*
He sent hem word by letters thei shulden hie *blyve*, *quickly*
If thei wolle speke with hym whil he was on live.
Tho the knyghtes harden sik that he lay,
Had thei no rest nother nyght ne day,
Til thei comen to hym ther he lay stille
On his deth-bedde to abide Goddys wille.
Than spak the goode knyght seke ther he lay,
"Lordes, I you warne for soth, without nay,
I may no lengere lyven heer in this *stounde*; *span of time*
For thurgh Goddis wille deth droueth me to grounde."
Ther nas noon of hem alle that herd hym aright,
That thei ne had reuthe of that ilke knyght,
And seide, "Sir, for goddes love ne dismay you nought;
God may do boote of bale that is now i-wrought."
Than spak the goode knight sik ther he lay,
"Boote of bale God may sende I wote it is no nay;
But I biseke you, knyghtes for the love of me,
Goth and dresseth my londes amonge my sones thre.
And, sires,* for the love of God deleth hem not amyss,
And forgeteth not Gamelyne my yonge sone that is.
Taketh hede to that oon as wel as to that other;

3: righte Hl] *omit rell* • 4 norture] norture ynough Hl • 37: sires Hl] *omit rell*

Seelde ye seen eny *eir* helpen his brother." *seldom; heir*
Thoo *lete* thei the knyght *lyen* that was nought in *hele*, *let; lie; health*
And wenten into counselle his londes for to *dele*; *deal=divide*
For to delen hem alle to one that was her thought.
And for Gamelyn was yongest he shuld have nought.
All the londe that ther was thei dalten it in two,
And leeten Gamelyne the yonge withoute londe goo,
And eche of hem seide to other ful loude,
His bretheren myght yeve him londe whan he good cowde.
And whan thei hadde deled the londe at here wille,
They come ayein* to the knyght ther he lay full stille,
And tolden him anoon right* how thei had wrought;
And the knight, ther he lay, liked it right nought.
Than seide the knyght, "Be Seint Martyn,
For al that ye han done* yit is the londe myne;
For Goddis love, neihebours stondeth alle stille,
And I wil dele my londe after* myn owne wille.
Johan, myne eldest sone shal have plowes fyve,
That was my fadres heritage whan he was on live;
And my myddeleste sone fif plowes of londe,
That I halpe forto gete with my right honde;
And al myn other purchas of londes and leedes
That I biquethe Gamelyne and alle my goode stedes.
And I biseke you, goode men that lawe conne of londe,
For Gamelynes love that my *quest* stonde." *bequest*
Thus dalte the knyght his londe by his day,
Right on his deth-bed sick ther he lay;
And sone aftirward he lay stoon stille,
And deide whan tyme come as it was Cristes wille.
Anoon as he was dede and under gras y-grave,
Sone the elder brother giled the yonge knave;
He toke into his honde his londe and his leede,
And Gamelyne him selven to clothe and to feede.
He clothed him and fedde him evell and eke wrothe,
And lete his londes forfare and his houses bothe,
His parkes and his woodes and did no thing welle;
And sethen he it abought on his faire felle.
So longe was Gamelyne in his brotheres halle,
For the strengest, of good will they doutided hym alle;

• 50 ayein (i.e. again) HL] *omit rell* • 51 right Hl] *omit rell* • done] y-doon Hl • after Hl Pt] right after *rell* • 71: and his] as his Hl

Ther was no-on therinne neither yonge ne olde,
That wolde wrathe Gamelyne were he never so bolde.
Gamelyne stood on a day in his brotheres yerde,
And byganne with his hond to handlen his berde;
He thought on his londes that lay unsawe,
And his faire okes that doune were i-drawe;
His parkes were i-broken and his deer bireved;
Of alle his good steedes noon was hym *byleved*; *left*
His houses were *unhilled* and ful evell *dight*; *unroofed; maintained/readied*
Tho thoughte Gamelyne it went nought aright.
Afterward cam his brother walking thare,
And seyde to Gamelyne, "Is our mete yare?" meal ready
Tho wrathed him Gamelyne and swor by Goddys boke,
"Thow schalt go bake thiself I wil nought be thi cook!"
"How? brother Gamelyne, howe answerest thou nowe?
Thou spake nevere such a worde as thou dost nowe."
"By my feithe," seide Gamelyne "now me thenketh nede;
Of alle the harmes that I have I toke never yit* hede.
My parkes bene to-broken and my dere bireved,
Of myn armure ne my stedes nought is me *byleved*; *left*
Alle that my fader me byquathe al goth to shame,
And therfor have thou Goddes curs brother be thi name!"
Than bispack his brother that *rape was of rees*, *was quick to anger*
"Stond stille, *gadelinge* and holde right thi pees; *fellow*
Thou shalt be fayn for* to have thi mete and thi *wede*; *weeds=clothes*
What spekest thow, *gadelinge** of londe othor of *lede*?" *fellow; tenants*
Thanne seide Gamelyne the child that was yinge,
"Cristes curs mote he have that me *clepeth gadelinge!* *names [a] fellow*
I am no wors *gadeling* ne no wors *wight*, *fellow; person/being*
But born of a lady and geten of a knyght."
Ne dorst he not to Gamelyn neer a foot goo,
But *clepid* to hym his men and seide to hem thoo, *named/called/declared*
"Goth and beteth this boye and reveth hym his witte,
And lat him lerne another tyme to answere me bette."
Than seide the childe yonge Gamelyne,
"Cristes curs mote thou have! brother art thou min,
And if I shal *algates* be beten anoon, *in any case*
Cristes curs mote thou have but thou be that oon!"
And anon his brother in that grete hete
Made his men to *fette* staves Gamelyn to bete. *fetch*

96 yit] ar *Skeat* • 103 for] *omit* Rl Sl Pt • 104 gadeling] Gamelyn *Skeat*

Whan that *everyich* of hem had a staf* *i-nome*, *every; taken*
Gamelyn was *ware* whan he segh hem come; *aware/wary*
Tho Gamelyn seigh hem come he loked overall,
And was *ware* of a *pestel* stode under the wall; *aware*; *pestle*
Gamelyn was light of foot and thider gan he lepe,
And *drof* alle his brotheres men right* on an *hepe* *drove; heap*
He loked as a wilde lyon and leide on good *wone*; *great force*
Tho his brother segh that he byganne to gon;
He fley up intill a loft and shette the dore fast;
Thus Gamelyn with his* pestel made *hem alle agast.* *them all afraid*
Some for Gamelynes love and some for eye,
Alle they droughe to halves whan he gan to pleye.
"What how now!" seyde Gamelyne "evel mot ye the!
Wil ye bygynne *conteck* and so sone *flee*?" *contest, fight*
Gamelyn sough his brother whider he was flowe,
And saugh wher he loked out at a wyndowe.
"Brother," sayde Gamelyne "com a litel nere,
And I wil teche thee a play at the bokelere."
His brother him answerde and seide by Seint Rycher,
"The while that pestel is in thine honde I wil come no nere;
Brother, I will make thi pees I swer by Cristes *ore*; *mercy? (hour [of death]?)*
Cast away the pestel and *wrethe* the namore." *be wrathful*
"I mot nede," seide Gamelyn, "wreth me at onys,
For thou wolde make thi men to breke myne boones,
Ne had I hadde mayn and myght in myn armes,
To han i-put hem fro me thei* wold have do me harmes."
"Gamelyn," seide his brother, "be thou nought wroth,
For to sene the haue harme me were right *looth*; *loth=unwilling*
I ne did it not, brother, but for a *fondinge*, *finding, i.e. test, trial*
For to loken or* thou art stronge and art so yenge."
"Come adoune than to me and graunt me my *bone* *boon=request*
Of oon* thing I wil the aske and we shull saughte sone."
Doune than cam his brother that fikel was and felle,
And was swith sore agast of the pestelle.
He seide, "Brother Gamelyn axe me thi boone,
And loke thou me blame but I it* graunte sone."
Thanne seide Gamelyn "Brother, i-wys,

119 had a staff] a staff had Hl • 124 right] right sone Hl Ln *Skeat* • 128 his] the Hl • 144 thei] he Hl • 148 or] if H1758 Ln *Skeat,* wher Pt • 150 oon Ln *al*] oo Hl Cp H1758 *Skeat,* a Rl, o Sl • 154 it] *omit* Hl

And we shulle been at one thou most graunte me this:
Alle that my fader me byquath whilst he was on lyve,
Thow most do me it have yif we shul not strive."
"That shalt you have, Gamelyn I swere be Cristes *oore*! *mercy? (hour?)*
Al that thi fadere the byquathe, though thou woldest have more;
Thy londe that lith ley full wel it shal be *sawe*,* *fallow? sown?*
And thin houses reised up that bene leide ful lawe."
Thus seide the knyght to Gamelyn with mouthe,
And thought eek on falsnes as he wel couthe.
The knyght thought on tresoun and Gamelyn on noon,
And wente and kisst his brother and whan thei were at oon
Alas, yonge Gamelyne no thinge he ne wist
With which a false tresoun his brother him kisste!

161 sawe *(perhaps meaning "fallow")*] sowe *(i.e. sown) Skeat*

[Fit 2]

Lytheth, and listeneth,* and holdeth your tonge,
And ye shul here talking of Gamelyn the yonge.
Ther was there bisiden cride a wrastelinge,
And therfore ther was sette a ramme and a ringe;
And Gamelyn was in good* wille to wende therto,
Forto *preven* his myght what he couthe doo. *prove*
"Brothere," seide Gamelyn, "by Seint Richer,
Thow most *lene* me tonyght a litel coursere *lend*
That is fresshe for the spore* on for to ride;
I moste on an erande a litel here beside."
"By God," seide his brothere "of steedes in my stalle
Goo and chese the the best spare noon of* hem alle
Of stedes or of coursers that stonden hem byside;
And telle me, goode brother, whider thou wolt ride."
"Her biside, brother is cried a wrastelinge,
And therfor shal be sette up a ram and a ringe;
Moche worschip it were brother, to us alle,
Might I the ram and the ringe bringe home to this halle."
A stede ther was sadeled smertly and *skete*; *quickly*
Gamelyn did a peire spores fast on his fete.
He sette his foote in the stirop the stede he bistrood,
And towardes the wrastelinge the yonge childe rode.
Tho Gamelyn the yonge was ride out atte gate,
The fals knyght his brother loked yit after thate,
And bysoughte Jesu Crist that is hevene kinge,
He myghte breke his necke in that wrestelinge.
As sone as Gamelyn com ther the place was,
He lighte doune of his stede and stood on the gras,
And ther he herde a frankeleyn "*wayloway*" singe, *compare "welawoe"*
And bygonne bitterly his hondes for to wringe.
"Goode man," seide Gamelyn, "whi *makestow* this fare? *make you*
Is ther no man that may you helpen out of this care?"
"Allas!" seide this frankeleyn, "that ever was I bore!
For tweye stalworthe sones I *wene* that I have *lore*; *know; lost*
A champioun is in the place that hath i-wrought me sorwe,
For he hath *sclayn* my two sones but if God hem *borowe*. *slain; redeem*
I wold *yeve* ten pound by Jesu Christ, and more, *give*
With the nones I fande a man wolde handel hym sore."

169 listeneth Pt (lysteneth Rl)] lesteneth Cp *Skeat,* lestneth Hl • 173 good Hl] *omit rell Skeat* • 177 spore Hl Pt] spores *rell* • 180 spare noon of] and spare non *Steat*

"Goode man," seide Gamelyn, "wilt thou wele doon,
Holde my hors the* whiles my man droweth of my shoon,
And helpe my man to kepe my clothes and my steede,
And I wil into place gon to loke if I may spede."
"By God!" seide the frankleyn, "it* shal be doon;
I wil myself be thi man to drowe* of thi shoon,
And wende thou into place, Jesu Crist the spede,
And drede not of thi clothes ne of thi goode stede."
Barefoot and *ungert* Gamelyn inne came, *un-girt, i.e. un-girded*
Alle that weren in the place hede of him nam,*
Howe he durst aventure him to* doon his myght
That was so doghty a champion in wrasteling and in fight.
Up sterte the champioun *rapely* anon,* *quickly; at once*
And toward yonge Gamelyn he byganne to gon,
And seide, "Who is thi fadere and who is thi sire?
For sothe thou art a grete fool that thou come hire!"
Gamelyn answerde the champioun tho,
"Thowe knewe wel my fadere while he myght goo,
The whiles he was on lyve, by seynt Martyn!
Sir John of Boundis was his name, and I, Gamelyne."
"Felawe," sayde the champioun, "also mot I thrive,
I knewe wel thi fadere while he was alyve;
And thi silf, Gamelyn, I wil that thou it heere,
While thou were a yonge boy a *moche shrewe* thou were." *great rascal*
Than seide Gamelyn and swor by Cristes *ore*, *mercy (hour?)*
"Now I am older *wexe* thou shalt finde me a more!" *waxed=grown*
"By God," seide the champioun "welcome mote thou be!
Come thow onys in myn honde shalt thou nevere *the*." *thrive*
It was wel within the nyght and the mone shone,
Whan Gamelyn and the champioun togider gon to gone*.
The champioun cast turnes to Gamelyne, that was prest,
And Gamelyn stode stille and bad hym doon his best.
Than seide Gamelyn to the champioun,
"Thowe art fast aboute to bringe me adoun;
Now I have i-proved mony *tornes* of thine, *moves, holds, acts*
Thow most," he seide, "proven oon or two of myne."

209 the] *omit Skeat* • 211 it] anon it *Skeat* • 212 to drowe] and drawen *Skeat* • 216 nam] they name *Skeat* • 217 to] of him to *Skeat* • 219 rapely] raply and Hl • 236 to gone Hl] *omit rell*

Gamelyn to the champioun *yede* smertely anoon, *moved, shifted*
Of all the tornes that he couthe he shewed him but oon,
And caste him on the lefte side that thre ribbes to-brake,
And therto his owne arme that *yaf* a grete crake. *gave*
Thanne seide Gamelyn smertly anon,
"Shal it bi *hold* for a cast or ellis for non?" *held=counted*
"By God!" seide the champioun, "whedere that it be,
He that cometh ones in thi honde shal he never *the*!" *thrive*
Than seide the frankelein that had the sones there,
"Blessed be thou, Gamelyn, that ever thou bore were!"
The frankleyn seide to the champioun on hym stode hym noon eye,
"This is yonge Gamelyne that taught thee to* pleye."
Ayein answerd the champioun that liketh no thing wel,
"He is alther maister and his pley is right felle;
Sithen I wrasteled first it i-go full yore,
But I was nevere in my lif handeled so sore."
Gamelyn stode in the place allone without *serk*, *sark=shirt*
And seide, "Yif ther be eny mo lat hem come to werk!
The champioun that *pyned* him to werke so sore, *pained*
It semeth by his contenaunce that he wil no more."
Gamelyn in the place stode as stille as stone,
For to abide wrastelinge but ther com none;
Ther was noon with Gamelyn that wold wrastel more,
For he handeled the champioun so wonderly sore.
Two gentilmen ther were that *yemede* the place, *managed/guarded*
Comen to Gamelyn — God *yeve* him goode grace! — *give*
And seide to him, "Do on thin hosen and thi shoon,
For soth at this tyme this feire is i-doon."
And than seide Gamelyn, "So mot I wel fare,
I have nought yete halvendele sold up my ware."
Thoo seide the champioun, "So broke I my sweere,
He is a fool that therof *beyeth* thou selleth it so dere." *buys*
Tho seide the frankeleyne that was in moche care,
"Felawe," he saide "whi lackest thou this* ware?
By Seynt Jame of* Gales that mony man hath sought,
Yit is it to good chepe that thou hast i-bought."
Thoo that wardeynes were of that wrastelinge
Come and broughte Gamelyn the ramme and the rynge,
And saiden, "Have, Gamelyn, the ring and the ram,
For the best wrasteler that ever here cam."

254 to] this *Skeat* • 276 this] his *Skeat* • 277 of] in *Skeat*

Thus wan Gamelyn the ram and the ring
And wente with moche joye home in the mornynge
His brother seih wher he came with the grete route,
And bad *shitte* the gate and holde hym withoute. *shut*
The porter of his lord was full soor agaast,
And stert anoon to the gate and lokked it fast.

[Fit 3]

Now lithenes and listneth* both yonge and olde,
And ye schul heere *gamen* of Gamelyn the bolde. *sport/sporting talk*
Gamelyn com therto forto have come inne,
And it was shette* faste with a stronge* pynne;
Than seide Gamelyn, "Porter, undo the yate,
For many good mannes sones stonden therate."
Than answerd the porter and swore by Goddys berd,
"Thow ne shalt, Gamelyne, come into this yerde."
"Thow lixt," seide Gamelyne "so brouke I my chyne!"
He smote the wikett with his foote and breke awaie the pyne.
The porter seih thoo it myght no better be,
He* sette foote on erth; he bygan to flee.
"By my feye," seide Gamelyn "that travaile is *i-lore,* *lost*
For I am of fote as light as thou if* thou haddest it* swore."
Gamelyn overtoke the porter and his *tene wrake*, *anger; repaid/paid back*
And gert him in the nek that the boon to-brake,
And toke* hym by that oon arme and threwe hym in a welle,
Seven *fadmen* it was depe as I have herde telle. *fathom*
Whan Gamelyn the yonge thus hadde plaied his playe,
Alle that in the yerde were drowen hem awaye;
Thei dredden him ful sore for werkes that he wroughte,
And for the faire company that he thider brought.
Gamelyn *yede* to the gate and lete it up wide; *went*
He lete inne all maner men that gone in wold or ride,
And seide, "Ye be welcome without eny greve,
For we wil be maisters heer and axe no man leve.
Yesterday I lefte," seide yonge Gamelyne,
"In my brother *seler* fyve tonne of wyne; *cellar*
I wil not this compaignye partyn a-twynne,
And ye wil done after me while eny sope is thrinne;
And if my brother *grucche* or make foule cheere, *grouses/complains*
Other for spense of mete and drink that we spenden here,
I am oure *catour* and bere oure alther purs, *supplier/caterer*
He shal have for his *grucchinge* Seint Maries curs. *grousing/complaining*
My brother is a *niggoun*, I swere be Cristes *oore*, *niggard; mercy [hour?]*
And we wil spende largely that he hath spared yore;

289 listneth Pt] lestneth Hl; listeneth *or similar rell* • 292 shette] i-schett *Skeat;* strong] *omit Skeat* • he Hl Cp] and *rell* • 302 if...it] though... *omit Skeat* • toke] gert *or* girt *Skeat (rell?)*

And who that maketh *grucchinge* that we here dwelle, *grouses/complaints*
He shal to the porter into the drowe-welle."
Seven daies and seven nyghtes Gamelyn helde his feest,
With moche mirth and solace was ther noon* *cheest*; *grumbling*
In a litel *torret* his brother lay *i-steke*, *turret; hidden*
And see hem waasten his good but dorst no worde* speke.
Erly on a mornynge on the eighte day,
The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gone her way.
"Lordes," seide Gamelyn, "will ye so *hie*? *hurry off*
Al the wyne is not yit i-dronke so brouke I myn ye."
Gamelyn in his herte was he ful woo,
Whan his gestes toke her leve fro hym for to go;
He wolde thei had lenger abide* and thei seide nay,
But bytaughte Gamelyn, "God and good day."
Thus made Gamelyn his feest and brought it wel to ende,
And after his gestis toke leve to *wende*. *travel*

328 noon] and no *Skeat* • 330 no worde] he not *Skeat* • lenger abide Hl] dwelled lenger *rell*

[Fit 4]

Litheth and lestneth and holdeth youre tunge,
And ye shal heere *gamen* of Gamelyn the yonge; *sport/sporting talk*
Harkneth, lordingges and lestneth aright,
Whan alle gestis were goon how Gamelyn was *dight*. *treated/prepared*
Alle the whil that Gamelyn heeld his *mangerye*, *manger=feast/entertainment*
His brothere thought on hym be *wroke* with his trecherye. *avenged*
Whan* Gamylyns gestes were riden and i-goon,
Gamelyn stood anon* allone frendes had he noon;
Tho aftere felle sone withinne a litel *stounde*, *space*
Gamelyn was i-take* and ful hard i-bounde.
Forth com the fals knyght out of the *solere*, *cellar*
To Gamelyn his brother he *yede* ful nere, *moved/shifted*
And saide to Gamelyn, "Who made the so bold
For to stroien the* *stoor* of myn household?" *store=goods, supplies*
"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "*wreth* the right nought, *be angry*
For it is many day i-gon sithen it was bought;
For, brother, thou hast i-had by Seint Richer,
Of fiftene plowes of londe this sixtene yere,
And of alle the beestes thou hast forth bredde,
That my fader me byquath on his dethes* bedde;
Of al this sixtene yere I *yeve* the the *prowe*, *give; profit*
For the mete and the drink that we han spended nowe."
Than seide the fals knyght (evel mote he thee!)
"Harkne, brothere Gamelyn what I wol *yeve* the; *give*
For of my body, brother *here geten** have I none, *heir begotten*
I wil make the myn here I swere by Seint John."
"*Par fay!*" seide Gamelyn "and if it so be, *By faith*
And thou thenke as thou seist God yeelde it the!"
Nothinge wiste Gamelyn of his brother gile;
Therfore he hym bygiled in a litel while.
"Gamelyn," seyde he, "oon* thing I the telle;
Thoo thou threwe my porter in the drowe-welle,
I swore in that wrethe and in that grete moote,
That thou shuldest be bounde bothe honde and fote;
Therefore I thee biseche, brother Gamelyn,
Lat me nought be forsowrn, brother art thou mine,

341 lestneth Hl] listen Pt; listeneth *or similar rell* • 347 whan] tho *Skeat* • 348 anon] *omit Skeat* • 350 i-take Hl] i-taken *or similar rell* • 354 the] my *Skeat* • dethes Pt] deth *rell* • 365 here getten] geten here Hl Cp Ln • 367 par fay] par ma foy *Skeat* • oon] o *Skeat*

Lat me binde thee now, bothe hand and feet,
For to holden myn avowe as I the *bihote."* *promised/planned/requested*
"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "also *mote* I thee! *prosper*
Thou shalt not be forsworen for the love of me."
Tho made thei Gamelyn to sitte — might he not stonde —
To* they had hym bounde bothe fote and honde.
The fals knyght his brother of Gamelyn was agast,
And sente efter fetters to feteren hym fast.
His brother made *lesinges* on him ther he stode, *lies*
And tolde* hem that commen inne that Gamelyn was *wood*. *wud=mad*
Gamelyn stode to a post bounden in the halle,
Thoo that commen in ther loked on hym alle.
Ever stode Gamelyn even upright,
But mete and drink had he noon neither day ne nyght.
Than seide Gamelyn, "Brother, by myn *hals*, *neck*
Now have I* aspied thou art a party fals;
Had I wist the tresoun that thou haddest y-founde,
I wold have *yeve* three* strokes or I had be bounde!" *give*
Gamelyn stode bounde stille as eny stoon;
Two daies and two nyghtes mete had he none.
Than seide Gamelyn that stood y-bounde stronge,
"Adam Spencere, me thenketh I faste to longe;
Adam Spencere now I biseche the,
For the *mochel* love my fadere loved the, *muckle=great/many/much*
If thou may come to the keyes lese me out of bonde,
And I wil *parte* with the of my free londe." *divide/share*
Thanne seide Adam that was the *spencere*, *steward*
"I have served thi brother this sixtene yere,
Yif I leete the gone out of his boure,
He wold saye afterwardes I were a traitour."
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "so brouke I myn hals!
Thow schalt finde my brother at the laste fals;
Therfore, brother Adam louse me out of bond,
And I wil *parte* with the of my free londes." *divide/share*
"Up swich a *forward*," seide Adams, "i-wis, *agreement*
I wil do therto al that in me is."
"Adam," seide Gamelyn "also mote I the,
I woll holde the covenaunt and thou wil *lose** me." *release*

382 to] tyl *Skeat* • 386 tolde (Hl Rl told)] tolden Ln • 392 have I] I have *Skeat* • 394 three] the *Skeat* • 414 lose Cp] helpe H1758; *omit rell*

Anoon as Adames lord to bedde was i-gon,
Adam toke the kayes and lete Gamelyn out anoon;
He unlocked Gamelyn both hondes* and fete,
In hope of avauncement that he hym *byhete*. *promised/planned/requested*
Than seide Gamelyn, "Thonked be Goddis sonde!
Nowe I am lose both fote and honde;
Had I nowe eten and dronken aright,
Ther is noon in this hous shuld bynde me this nyght."
Adam toke Gamelyn as stille as eny stone,
And ladde him into the *spence* *raply* and* anon, *pantry; quickly*
And sette him to sopere right in a privey *stede,* *stead=place*
He bad him do gladly and Gamelyn so dede.
Anoon as Gamelyn had eten wel and fyne,
And therto y-dronken wel of the rede wyne,
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "what is nowe thi *rede*? *advice*
Wher* I go to my brother and *gerd* of his heed?" *strike*
"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "it shal not be so.
I can teche the a *rede* that is worth the twoo. *advice, i.e. plan*
I wote wel for sothe that this is no nay,
We shul have a *mangerye* right on Sonday; *manger=feast/entertainment*
Abbotes and priours mony here shul be,
And other men of holy chirche as I telle the;
Thou shal stonde up by the post as thou were bounde fast,*
And I shal leve hem unloke — away thou may hem cast.
Whan that thei han eten and waishen her handes,
Thow shalt *biseke* hem alle to bringe the oute of bondes; *beseech*
And if thei willen *borowe* the that were good game, *guarantee*
Than were thou out of prisoun and I out of blame;
And if everich of hem saye to us nay,
I shal do an other I swere by this day!
Thow shalt have a good staf and I wil have another,
And Cristes curs haf that on that failleth that other!"
"Ye, for God," seide Gamelyn "I say it for me,
If I faille on my side ivel mot I thee!
If we shul algate assoile hem of here synne,
Warne me, brother Adam, whan we* shul bygynne."
"Gamelyn," seid Adam, "by Seinte Charité,
I wil warne the biforn whan that it shal be;

417 handes (*or* hondes)] hand Hl • 424 and Hl Cp] *omit rell* • 430 where Ln (wher Hl); for Cp; or *rell* • 437 bounde fast Pt Ln H1758] hond-fast *rel* • 450 we] I Hl

Whan I *twink* on the loke for to gone, *wink?*
And caste away thi* fetters and come to me anone."
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "blessed be thi bonys!
That is a good counseill *yeven for the nonys*; *given for the occasion*
Yif thei *werne* the me to bringe out of *bendes*, *deny; bonds*
I woll sette good strokes right on here *lendes*." *loins*
Tho the Sonday was ycom and folk to the feest,
Faire thei were welcomed both leest and meste;
And ever as thei at the halle dore comen inne,
They casten her *yen* on yonge Gamelyn. *eyes*
The fals knyght his brother ful of trecherye,
Al the gestes that ther were at the* *mangerye*, *manger=feast/entertainment*
Of Gamelyn his brother he tolde hem with mouthe
Al the harme and the shame that he telle couthe.
Whan they were i-served* of messes two other* thre,
Than seide Gamelyn, "How serve ye me?
It is nought wel served by God that alle made!
That I sitte fastinge and other men make glade."
The fals knyght his brother ther that he stode,
Told to all the* gestes that Gamelyn was *wood*; *wud=mad*
And Gamelyn stode stille and answerde nought,
But Adames wordes he helde in his thought.
Thoo Gamelyn gan speke dolfully withalle
To the grete lordes that seton in the halle:
"Lordes," he seide "for Cristes passioun,
Helpeth bringe Gamelyn out of prisoun."
Than seide an abbot, sorowe on his cheke,
"He shal have Cristes curs and Seinte Maries eke,
That the out of prison beggeth other *borowe*, *guarantor*
But ever worthe him wel that doth the moche sorowe."
After that abbot than speke another,
"I wold thin hede were of though thou were my brother!
Alle that the *borowe* foule mot hem falle!" *guarantor*
Thus thei seiden alle that were in the halle.
Than seide a priour, ivel mot he threve!
"It is moche skathe, boy, that thou art on lyve."
"Ow!" seide Gamelyn, "so brouk* I my bone!

454 thi] the *Skeat* • 464 the] *omit Skeat* • 467 i-served] served *Skeat;* other Hl] or *rell* • to all the] alle his *Skeat* • 489 brouk Hl] broke *(or similar) rell*

Now have I aspied that frendes have I non
Cursed mote he worthe both fleish and blood,
That ever doth priour or abbot eny good!"
Adam the spencere took up the clothe,
And loked on Gamelyn and segh that he was wrothe;
Adam on the pantrie litel he thought,
But two good staves to halle door he brought,
Adam loked on Gamelyn and he was warre anoon,
And cast away the fetteres and he bygan to goon;
Tho he come to Adam he took that oo staf,
And bygan to *worche* and good strokes *yaf*. *work/act; gave*
Gamelyn cam into the halle and the spencer bothe,
And loked hem aboute as thei hadden be wrothe;
Gamelyn sprengeth holy water with an oken spire,
That some that stode upright felle in the fire.
Ther was no *lewede* man that in the halle stode, *lewd=ordinary/common*
That wolde do Gamelyn enything but good,
But stoden bisides* and lete hem both *wirche*, *work/act*
For thei had no *rewthe* of men of holy chirche; *pity*
Abbot or priour, monk or *chanoun*, *canon*
That Gamelyn overtoke anoon they *yeden* doun *went/yielded*
Ther was noon of hem alle that with his staf mette,
That he ne* made hem overthrowe to quyte hem* his dette.
"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "for Seinte Charité,
Pay large lyverey for the love of me,
And I wil kepe the door so ever here I *masse*! *guard*
Er they bene *assoiled* ther shal noon passe."
"Dout the nought," seide Gamelyn "whil we ben *in fere*, *in company/together*
Kepe thow wel the door and I wil *wirche* here; *work/act*
Stere the, good Adam, and lete there none fle,
And we shul telle largely how mony that ther be."
"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "do hem but goode;
Thei bene men of holy churche drowe of hem no blode
Save wel the croune and do hem non harmes,
But breke both her legges and sithen her armes."
Thus Gamelyn and Adam wroughte ryght faste,
And pleyden with the monkes and made hem agaste.
Thidere thei come riding jolily with swaynes,
And home ayein thei were i-lad in cartes and in waynes.

507 bisides] besyde Hl, bisiden Sl (Rl), besyden Cp • 512 ne Pt Ln] *omit rell*; hem] him Hl

Tho thei hadden al ydo* than seide a grey frere,
"Allas! sire abbot what did we nowe heere?
Tho that we comen hider it was a colde rede,
Us had been bet at home with water and breed."*
Whil Gamelyn made ordres of monkes and frere,
Ever stood his brother and made foule chere;
Gamelyn up with his staf that he wel knewe,
And *girt* him in the nek that he overthrewe;
A litel above the *girdel* the *rigge-boon* he *barst*;*
And sette him in the fetters theras* he sat arst.
"Sitte ther, brother," seide Gamelyn,
"For to *colen** thi body as I dide myn."
As swith as thei hadde *ywroken* hem on her *foon*,
Thei asked water and wisshen anoon,
What some for her love and some for her* awe,
Alle the servantes served hem of the beste lawe.
The sherreve was thennes but a fyve myle,
And alle was y-told him in a lytel while,
Howe Gamelyn and Adam had ydo a *sorye rees,*
Boundon and i-wounded men ayein the kingges pees;
Tho bygan sone strif for to wake,
And the shereff aboute* Gamelyn forto take.

struck
waist, backbone, burst
cool
wreaked/avenged; foes
style, manner
great raze (attack)

529 ydo] y-don *Skeat* • 532 breed Hl Pt Ln] with breede *Skeat* • 537 he barst] to-barst *Skeat* • 538 theras] ther *Skeat* • 540 colen (colyn Hl)] coole Cp, coly Ln • 543 her] *omit* Hl Cp Ln • 550 aboute] come about 2 MS; was aboute *Skeat ex cj.*

[Fit 5]

Now litheth and lestneth so God *yif* you good fin! *give*
And ye shul heere good game of yonge Gamelyne.
Four and twenty yonge men that *heelden hem* ful bolde, *thought themselves*
Come to the shirref and seide that thei wolde
Gamelyn and Adam fetten by her fay;*
The sheref *yaf* hem leve soth as I you say; *gave*
Thei *hieden* fast wold thei not* *belinne*, *traveled; delay*
Till thei come to the gate ther Gamelyn was inne.
They knocked on the gate the porter was ny,
And loked out atte an hool as man that was *scleghe*. *cautious/sly*
The porter hadde biholde hem a litel while,
He loved wel Gamelyn and was dradde* of gyle,
And lete the wikett stonden *y-steke* ful stille, *fastened*
And asked hem without what was here wille.
For all the grete company thanne speke but oon,
"Undo the gate, porter and lat us in goon."
Than seide the porter "So brouke I my chyn,
Ye shul saie youre erand er ye come* inne."
"Sey to Gamelyn and Adam if here wil be,
We wil speke with hem two wordes* or thre."
"Felawe," seide the porter "stonde ther stille,
And I wil wende to Gamelyn to *witen* his wille." *know/learn*
Inne went the porter to Gamelyn anoon,
And saide, "Sir, I warne you here ben comen* youre *foon*; *foes*
The shireves *meiné* bene atte gate, *company/band*
Forto take you both; shul ye nat skape."
"Porter," seide Gamelyn, "so *mote* I well the! *prosper*
I wil alowe thee thi wordes whan I my tyme se.
Go ageyn to the yate and dwell with hem a while,
And thou shalt se right sone, porter, a gile."
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "hast* the to goon;
We han *foomen* atte gate and frendes never oon; *foemen*
It bene the shireves men that hider bene i-come,
Thei ben swore togidere that we shal be *nome*." *taken*
"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "*hye* the right *blyve*, *travel; quickly*
And if I faile the this day evel mot I thrive!

551 lestneth Hl] listen Pt; lesteneth Cp *Skeat* • 555 by her fay] be way Cp; away Hl Ln • 557 not] nought *Skeat* • 562 dradde] adrad *Skeat* • 548 come] comen *Skeat* • two wordes] wordes two *Skeat* • 574 comen] come *Skeat* • hast] look *Skeat*

And we shul so welcome the shyreves men,
That some of hem shal make her beddes in the fenne."*
Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out went,
And a good cart staf in his hondes* *hente*; *took/grabbed*
Adam *hente* sone another grete staff *took/grabbed*
For to helpen Gamelyne and good strokes *yaf*. *gave*
Adam felde tweyn and Gamelyn felde thre,
The other sette fete on erthe and bygan to* flee.
"What" seide Adam, "so evere here I mass!
I have a draught of right good wyne drynk er ye passe!"
"Nay, by God!" seide thei, "thi drink is not goode,
It wolde make a* mannys brayn to lyen on his hode."
Gamelyn stode stille and loked hym aboute,
And seih the shyref come with a grete *route*. *crowd/party/company*
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn "what* bene now thi *redes*? *advice*
Here comth the sheref and wil have our hedes."
Adam seide to* Gamelyn "My *rede* is now this, *advice*
Abide we no lenger lest we fare amys:
I *rede* that we to wode gon er that we be founde, *advise*
Better is* ther louse than in the* toune y-bounde."
Adam toke by the honde yonge Gamelyn;
And every of hem two dronk a draught of wyn,
And after token her cours* and wenten her way;
Tho fonde the scherreve *nyst but non aye.* *nest but no eggs*
The shirrive lighte adoun and went into the halle,
And fonde the lord y-fettred faste withalle.
The shirreve unfettred hym sone and that anoon,
And sente aftere a *leche* to hele his *rigge-boon*. *leech=physician; backbone*
Lat we now the fals knyght lien in hys care,
And talke we of Gamelyn and loke how he fare.
Gamelyn into the wode stalkede stille,
And Adam Spensere* liked full ylle;
Adam swore to Gamelyn, "By Seint Richer,
Now I see it is mery to be a spencer,
Yit* lever me were *kayes* for to bere, *keys*
Than walken in this wilde wode my clothes to tere."

588 fenne] den Hl • 590 hondes] hand he *Skeat* • 594 bygan to] bygone *Skeat* • 598 a Cp Pt H1758] *omit rell* • 601 "Adam," seyde Gamelyn "what] *or* Adam seyde, "Gamelyn, what"; compare 603 • 603 to] *omit Skeat, giving the same text as 601, which might affect the punctuation* • 606 is] is us *Skeat;* the] *omit Skeat* • 609 coursers Hl • 618 Spensere] the spenser *Skeat* • 620 yit] that *Skeat*

"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "dismay the right nought;
Mony good mannys child in care is i-brought."
As thei stode talkinge bothen *in fere,* *in fere=together*
Adam herd talking of men and right nyghe hem thought thei were.
Tho Gamelyn under the wode loked aright,
Sevene score of yonge men he seye wel *a-dight*; *prepared/equipped*
Alle satte at the mete compas aboute.
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "now have we no doute,
Aftere *bale* cometh *bote* thorgh Goddis myght;* *sorrow, rescue*
Me thinketh of mete and drynk that I have a sight."
Adam loked thoo under wode bough,
And whan he segh mete he was glad ynogh;
For he hopede to God to* have his dele,
And he was sore alonged after a good mele.
As he seide that worde the mayster outlawe
Saugh Adam and Gamelyn under wode *shawe*. *thicket*
"Yonge men," seide the maistere "by the good *Roode*, *rood=cross (of Christ)*
I am ware of gestes God send us none but goode;
Yonder ben twoo yonge men wonder wel *adight*, *prepared/equipped*
And paraventure ther ben mo whoso loked right.*
Ariseth up, ye yonge men and fetteth hem to me;
It is good that we *weten* what men thei be." *know*
Up ther sterten sevene from the dynere,
And metten with Gamelyn and Adam Spencere.
Whan thei were nyghe hem than seide that oon,
"Yeeldeth up, yonge men your bowes and your *floon*." *arrows*
Thanne seide Gamelyn that yong was of *elde*, *age*
"Moche sorwe mote thei have that to you hem yelde!
I curs noon other but right mysilve;
They* ye fette to you fyve than ye be twelve!"
Tho they harde by his word that myght was in his arme,
Ther was noon of hem alle that wolde do hym harme,
But seide to Gamelyn myldely and stille,
"Cometh afore our maister and seith to hym your wille."
"Yonge men," seide Gamelyn, "be your *lewté*, *loyalty*
What man is youre maister that ye with be?"
Alle thei answerd without *lesing*, *deceit*
"Our maister is i-crouwned of outlawe king."

631 Goddis myght] grace of god almight *Skeat* • 635 to] for to *Skeat* • 642 right] aright *Skeat* • 652 they Hl Cp (Rl)] though Sl Ln

"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "go we* in Cristes name;
He may neither mete ne drink *werne* us for shame. *deny*
If that he be *hende** and come of gentil blood, *virtuous*
He wil *yeve* us mete and drink and doon us som gode." *give*
"By Seint Jame!" seide Adam, "what harme that I gete,
I wil aventure* to the dore* that I had mete."
Gamelyn and Adam went forth *in fere*, *in company/together*
And thei grette the maister that thei fond there.
Than seide the maister king of outlawes,
"What seeke ye, yonge men, under the wode *shawes*?" *thickets*
Gamelyn answerde the king with his croune,
"He most nedes walk in woode that may not walke in toune.
Sire, we walk not here noon harme for to doo,
But yif we mete with a deer to shete therto,
As men that bene hungry and *mow* no mete fynde, *may*
And bene harde *bystad* under wode lynde." *beset*
Of Gamelyns wordes the maister had *reuthe*, *understanding/sympathy*
And seide, "Ye shul have ynow have God my trouthe!"
He bad hem sitte there adoun for to take reste;
And bad hem ete and drink and that of the beste.
As they set and eeten and dronke wel and fyne,
Than seide that on to that other, "This is* Gamelyne."
Tho was the maistere outlaw into counseile *nome*, *taken/joined*
And tolde howe it was Gamelyn that thider was i-come.
Anon as he herde how it was byfalle,
He made him maister under hym over hem alle.
Withinne the thridde weke hym come tydinge,
To the maistere outlawe that tho was her kinge,
That he shuld come home his *pees was i-made;* *i.e. he was pardoned*
And of that goode tydinge he was tho ful glade.
Thoo seide he to his yonge men soth forto telle,
"Me bene comen tydinges I may no lenger dwelle."
Tho was Gamelyn anoon withoute taryinge,
Made maister outlawe and crouned her* kinge.
Tho was Gamelyn crouned king of outlawes,
And walked had* a while under the wode *shawes*, *thickets*
The fals knyght his brother was sherreve and sire,
And *lete* his brother *endite* for hate and for ire. *had; indicted*

661 we] *omit Skeat* • 663 hende] kynde Cp • aventure] auntre Hl; aventure me *al;* to the door Hl Cp Ln] *omit rell* • 681 this is] is this *Skeat* • 694 her *(i.e. probably* their)] here Cp Ln • 695 had] *omit Skeat*

Thoo were his boond men sory and no thing glade,
Whan Gamelyn her lord *wolfeshede* was* made; *wolf's head=outlaw*
And sente out of his men wher thei might hym fynde,
For to go seke Gamelyne under the wode lynde,
To telle hym tydinges how the wynde was wente,
And al his good *reved* and alle* his men *shente*. *taken/robbed; abused*
Whan thei had hym founden on knees thei hem setten,*
And adoune with here hodes and her lord gretten;*
"Sire, wrathe you not for the good *roode*, *cross [of Christ]*
For we han brought you tyddyngges but thei be nat gode.
Now is thi brother sherreve and *hath the baillie,* *controls the bailiff*
And hath *endited* the and *wolvesheed* doth the crye." *indicted; wolf's head=outlaw*
"Allas!" seide Gamelyn, "that ever I was so sclak *slack*
That I ne had broke his nek tho I his rigge brak!
Goth, greteth hem wel myn husbondes and wif,
I woll be atte nexte shyre have God my lif!"
Gamelyn come well redy to the nexte shire,
And ther was his brother both lord and sire.
Gamelyn com boldelich into the *mote*-halle, *meeting*
And putte adoun his hode amonge the lordes alle;
"God save you alle, lordinggs that now here be!
But broke-bak sherreve evel mote thou thee!
Whi hast thou don me that shame and vilenye,
For to lat *endite* me and *wolfeshede* do me crye?" *indict; wolf's-head=outlaw*
Thoo thoghte the fals knyght forto bene awreke,
And leet take Gamelyn most he no more speke;
Might ther be no more grace but Gamelyn atte last
Was cast in-to prison and fettred full faste.
Gamelyn hath a brothere that *highte* Sir Ote, *was named*
Als good an knyght and *heende* as might gon on foote. *virtuous*
Anoon ther yede a messager to that good knyght
And tolde him altogidere how Gamelyn was *dight*. *treated/handled*
Anoon as Sire Ote herde how Gamelyn was *adight*, *treated/handled*
He was wonder sory was he no thing light,
And lete sadel a stede and the way *name*,* *took/followed*
And to his tweyne bretheren right right* he cam.
"Sire," seide Sire Ote to the sherreve thoo,
"We bene but three bretheren shul we never be mo;

700 was] was cryed and *Skeat* • 704 alle] *omit* Hl Cp Ln • 705 setten] sette *Skeat* • 706 gretten] grette *Skeat* • 733 name] he name *Skeat* • right right] anon right Hl *(Skeat)*, ful done Ln; right sone *pm*

And thou hast y-prisoned the best of us alle;
Swiche another brother ivel mote hym byfalle!"
"Sire Ote," seide the fals knyght, "lat be thi *curs*; *curse*
By God, for thi wordes he shal fare the wors;
To the kingges prisoun anon he is *y-nome*, *taken*
And ther he shal abide to the justice come."
"Par de!" seide Sir Ote, "better it shal be; *"By God!"*
I bid hym to maynprise that thou graunte me*
To the next sitting of delyveraunce,
And lat thanne Gamelyn stonde to his chaunce."
"Brother, in swich a forthward* I take him to the;
And by thine fader soule that the bigat and me,
But if he be redy whan the justice sitte,
Thou shalt bere the juggement for al thi grete witte."
"I graunte wel," seide Sir Ote, "that it so be.
Lat delyver him anoon and take hym to me."
Tho was Gamelyn delyvered to Sire Ote, his brother;
And that nyght dwellede the oon with that other.
On the morowe seide Gamelyn to Sire Ote the *hende*, *virtuous*
"Brother," he seide, "I mote forsothe from thee *wende* *travel*
To loke howe my yonge men leden her liff,
Whedere thei lyven in joie or ellis in strif."
"By God," seyde Sire Ote, "that is a colde *rede*, *counsel*
Nowe I se that alle the *carke* schal fallen on my hede; *burden/responsibility*
For whan the justice sitte and thou be not y-founde,
I shal anoon be take and in thi stede i-bounde."
"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "dismay thee nought,
For by saint Jame in Gales that mony men hath sought,
Yif that God almyghty holde my lif and witte,
I wil be ther redy whan the justice sitte."
Than seide Sir Ote to Gamelyn, "God shilde the fro shame;
Come whan thou seest tyme and bringe us out of blame."

744 me] him me Hl; to me Cp Ln • 747 forthward Hl] forward *rell*

[Fit 6]

Litheneth, and listeneth and holde you stille,
And ye shul here how Gamelyn had al his wille.
Gamelyn went ayein under the *wode-ris,* *wood-boughs*
And fonde ther pleying yenge men of *pris*. *high rank*
Tho was yonge Gamelyn glad and blithe ynoughe,
Whan he fonde his merry men under wode boughe.
Gamelyn and his men talkeden* *in fere,* *in company*
And thei hadde good game her maister to here;
His men* tolde him of aventures that they hadde founde,
And Gamelyn tolde hem agein howe he was fast i-bounde.
Whil Gamelyn was outlawe had he no cors;
There was no man that for him ferde the wors,
But abbots and priours, monk and *chanoun*; *canons*
On hem left he nought whan he myghte hem *nome*. *overcome*
While Gamelyn and his men made merthes ryve,
The fals knyght his brother — yvel mot he thryve! —
For he was fast aboute bothe day and other,
For to hiren* the *quest* to hongen his brother. *inquest*
Gamelyn stode on a day and as he byheeld
The wodes and the *shawes* and the wild feeld, *thickets*
He thoughte on his brothere how he hym *byhette* *planned/promised*
That he wolde be redy whan the justice sette;
He thought wel he* wold withoute delay,
Come tofore* the justice to kepen his day,
And saide to his yonge men, "*Dighteth you yare*, *prepare you fully*
For whan the justice sitte we motte* be thare,
For I am under *borowe* till that I come, *pledge/promise*
And my brother for me to prisoun shal be *nome*." *taken*
"By Seint Jame!" seide his yonge men, "and thou *rede* therto, *advise*
Ordeyn how it shal be and it shal be do."
While Gamelyn was comyng ther the justice satte,
The fals knyght his brother forgate he nat that,
To hire the men of his quest to hangen his brother;
Thoughe thei* had not that oon thei wolde have that other
Tho come Gamelyn from under the *wode-ris,* *wood-boughs*
And broughte with hym his yonge men of *pris* *high rank*
"I see wel," seide Gamelyn, "the justice is sette;

769 listeneth Rl Pr] lestneth Hl; lesteneth Cp *Skeat*i • 775 talkeden Rl Pt (Sl)] talked Hl • 777 his men tolde] they tolden *Skeat* • 786 hiren] hire *Skeat* • 791 he] that he *Skeat* • 792 tofore] afore *Skeat* • 794 motte] moote *Skeat* • 802 thei] he *Skeat*

Go aforn, Adam, and loke how it *spette*." *is prepared*
Adam went into the halle and loked al aboute,
He segh there stonde lordes grete* and stoute,
And Sir Ote his brother fettred well fast;
Thoo went Adam out of halle as he were agast.
Adam seide to Gamelyn and to his felawes alle,
"Sir Ote stant yfettered in the *mote* halle." *meeting*
"Yonge men," seide Gamelyn, "this ye heeren alle:
"Sir Ote stant yfettered in the *mote* halle." *meeting*
If God yif us grace well forto doo,
He shal it *abegge* that it broughte* therto." *pay for*
Thanne seide Adam that lockes had *hore*, *hoary/grey*
"Cristes curs mote* he have that hym bonde so sore!
And thou wilt, Gamelyn, do after my *rede*, *advice*
Ther is noon in the halle shal bere awey his hede."
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "we wilne nought done soo,
We wil slee the *giltif* and lat the other go. *guilty*
I wil into the halle and with the justice speke;
Of hem that bene *giltif* I wil ben *awreke*. *guilty*; *avenged*
Lat none *skape* at the door take, yonge men, *yeme*; *escape; warning*
For I wil be justice this day *domes to deme*. *dooms (judgments) to pass*
God spede me this day at my newe werk!
Adam, com on with me for thou shalt be my clerk."
His men answereden hym and bad* doon his best,
"And if thou to us have nede thou shalt finde us *prest*; *ready/prepared*
We wiln stonde with the while that we may dure;
And but we *worchen* manly pay us non *hure*." *work; hire=wages*
"Yonge men," seid Gamelyn, "so mot I wel the!
As trusty a maister ye shal fynde of me."
Right there the* justice satte in the halle,
Inne wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle.
Gamelyn lete unfetter his brother out of *beende*. *bonds*
Thanne seide Sire Ote his brother that was *hende*, *virtuous*
"Thow haddest almost, Gamelyn, dwelled to longe,
For the quest is out on me that I shulde honge."
"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "so God *yeve* me good rest! *give*
This day shuln thei be honged that ben on the quest;

808 grete] bothe grete Cp • 816 it broughte] brought it *Skeat;* brought Hl • 818 mote] most Hl Cp • 829 bad] bade him *Skeat* • the] as the Rl

And the justice bothe that is the *jugge-man*, *judge*
And the sherreve bothe thorgh hym it bigan.
Than seide Gamelyn to the justise,
"Now is thi power ydon, the most nedes rise;*
Thow hast *yeven domes* that bene *ivel dight*, *given dooms=judgment; evil done*
I will sitten in thi sete and *dressen* hem aright." *address/give redress/settle*
The justice satte stille and *roos nought anon;* *did not rise at once*
And Gamelyn cleved* his chekeboon;
Gamelyn toke him in his arm and no more spak,
But threwe hym over the barre and his arme brake.
Dorst noon to Gamelyn seie but goode, *dared*
For feerd of the company that withoute stoode.
Gamelyn sette him doun in the justise* sete,
And Sire Ote his brother by him and Adam at his fete.
Whan Gamelyn was i-set in the justise* stede,*
Herken of a *bourde* that Gamelyn dede. *jest*
He *lete fetter* the justise and his fals brother, *had fettered*
And did hem com to the barre that oon with that other.
Tho Gamelyn had thus ydon had he no rest,
Til he had enquered who was on his *quest* *jury*
Forto *demen* his brother Sir Ote for to honge; *deme=decide*
Er to* wiste which thei were hym thoughte ful longe.
But as sone as Gamelyn *wiste* where thei were, *knew*
He did hem everechon fetter *in fere,* *together/in company*
And bringgen hem to the barre and sette hem in rewe;
"By my feith!" seide the justise, "the sherrive is a *shrewe*!" *rogue*
Than seide Gamelyn to the justise,
"Thou hast *y-yeve domes* of the worst assise; *given judgments*
And the twelve *sesoures* that weren of the quest, *jurymen*
Thei shull been honged this day so have I good* reste!"
Thanne seide the sheref to yonge Gamelyn,
"Lord, I crie thee mercie brother art thou myn."
"Therfor," seide Gamelyn, "have thou Cristes curs,
For and thow were maister yit I shuld have wors."
For to make shorte tale and not to tarie* longe,
He ordeyned hym a quest of his men stronge;
The justice and the shirreve both honged hie,
To weyven with the* ropes and with the winde drye;

846 rise] arise *Skeat* • 850 cleved] in haste cleved H1758 *Skeat* • 855 justise] justices *Skeat* • 857 justice] justices *Skeat;* stead] sete Hl Rl Cp • 864 to] he *Skeat* • 871 good] omit Hl • 877 tarie Hl] *omit rell* • 880 the] *omit* Hl

And the twelve *sisours* — *sorwe have that rekke!* — *jurymen, sorrow to those who care*
Alle thei were honged fast by the nekke.
Thus endeth the fals knyght with his treccherye,
That ever had i-lad his lif in falsenesse and folye.
He was honged by the nek and nought by the purs,
That was the *meede* that he had for his faders curs. *reward*
Sire Ote was eldest and Gamelyn was ying,
They wenten with her frendes even to* the kinge;
Thei maden pees with the king of the best assise.
The king loved wel Sir Ote and made hym justise.
And after, the king made Gamelyn both in est and in west,
The* cheef justice of all his free forest;
Alle his *wight* yonge men the king *foryaf* her gilt, *strong; forgave*
And sithen in good office the king hath hem i-pilt,
Thus wane Gamelyn his land and his *lede*, *tenants/servants/peasants*
And wreke him on his enemyes and quytte hem her *mede*; *reward*
And Sire Ote his brother made him his heire,
And sithen wedded Gamelyn a wif bothe good and faire;
They lyveden togidere the while that Crist wolde,
And sithen was Gamelyn graven under molde.
And so shull we alle; may ther no man fle:
God bring us to that joye that ever shal be!

888 even to Hl] and passeden to Rl; and passed to Pt; and passed with Cp; and pesed with Ln • 889 mden] made *Skeat* • 892 the] omit *Skeat*

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Note: Citations in the text are to the "short name" listed at the head of each bibliographic entry. Items are listed in the bibliography in "short name" order.

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Index of Persons and Places in the Text of the "Gest"

This is an index only of names of people and places, plus offices (e.g. "Abbott of Saint Mary's," "Sheriff of Nottingham"). It is an index only for the 456 stanzas of the "Gest," and is listed by stanza number. References to these people and places outside the text of the "Gest" are included in the General Index.

Note that the stanzas cited below may not include the name or title of the person explicitly. For instance, if a stanza includes a speech by Robin Hood, it will be considered a Robin Hood stanza even if Robin's name is not mentioned. Obviously this can be somewhat arbitrary. But it matters most for only five characters (Robin, John, the Knight/Sir Richard, the Sheriff, and the King), and they are mentioned so frequently that you are looking at long blocks of text anyway.

Saints that the characters evoke are not listed; see the general index.

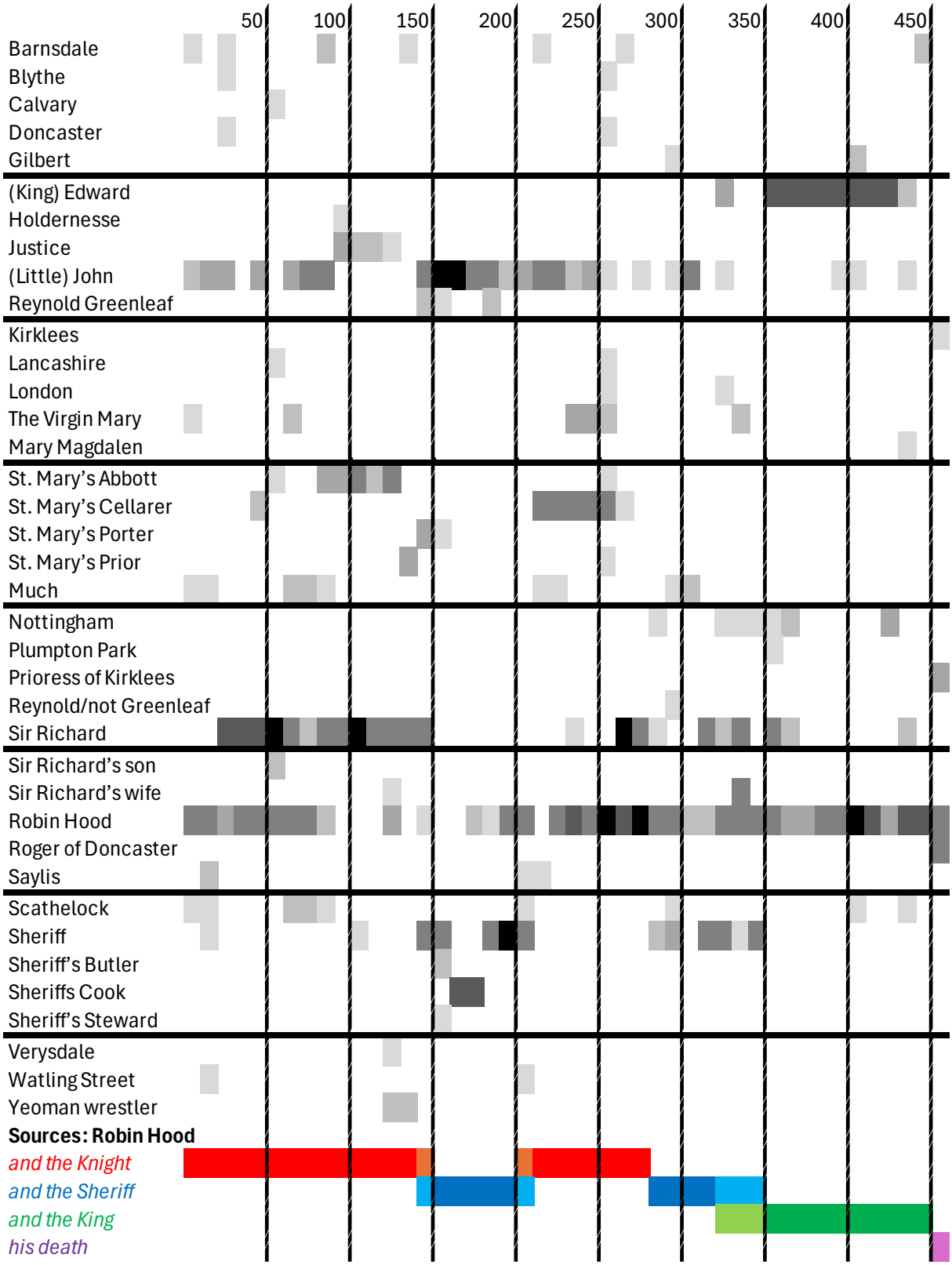
All names have been normalized to modern spellings, simply to ensure consistency.

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The chart on the following page tries to make this information visual. The "Gest" is broken up into blocks of ten stanzas, and the locations of each person or place is noted. If the person is not mentioned in that section of ten stanzas, then the the column for that block of ten will be white. If the person is mentioned in all ten stanzas, it will be black. If it is mentioned in one to nine stanzas, it will be in an intermediate shade, light representing fewer mentions and dark implying more. I've also indicated my guess as to sources, to try to show how they correlate.

There are several interesting points we can see from this. Note, for instance, Robin's constant presence, except in the stanzas from about #100-#200. This is when the Knight goes to St. Mary's, and then when Little John has his adventure with the Sheriff. But note that Little John, so regularly present in the first 350 stanzas, almost disappears at the end — just when the King comes on the scene. Much disappears completely in these stanzas — a clear indication that the section about the King is from a source who didn't have much to say about Little John, and likely didn't know Much at all. The Virgin Mary is largely missing in that section, too. And all the references to Nottingham are late in the "Gest," while references to Barnsale almost disappear.


50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450
Barnsdale
Blythe
Calvary
Doncaster
Gilbert
(King) Edward
Holdernesse
Justice
(Little) John
Reynold Greenleaf
Kirklees
Lancashire
London
The Virgin Mary
Mary Magdalen
St. Mary's Abbott
St. Mary's Cellarer
St. Mary's Porter
St. Mary's Prior
Much
Nottingham
Plumpton Park
Prioress of Kirklees
Reynold/not Greenleaf
Sir Richard
Sir Richard's son
Sir Richard's wife
Robin Hood
Roger of Doncaster
Saylis
Scathelock
Sheriff
Sheriff's Butler
Sheriffs Cook
Sheriff's Steward
Verysdale
Watling Street
Yeoman wrestler
Sources: Robin Hood
and the Knight
and the Sheriff
and the King
his death

General Index

N.B. *For items with many mentions, citations in* ***bold*** *are to the most important references. Note that this index includes the entire publication* except for *references in the text of the "Gest" (both the Middle English and modernized version), and is by page, whereas the Index of Persons and Places above is by stanza of the "Gest." Because those names and topics are included in the preceding index, persons and places in the text of the "Gest," whether the critical text or the modern translation, are generally not included in the index below, although places where they are mentioned* outside *the text of the "Gest" are included here. Also, because they would be cited on almost every page, the names "Robin Hood" and "Little John" are not indexed here, nor is "Gest"/"Gest of Robyn Hode." There isn't a whole lot of point in looking up "Sir Richard" or "Sheriff of Nottingham," either. There are some subtopics listed under those entries that might be useful.*

If you are using the PDF edition of this work, you can click on any of the references below to be taken to the appropriate page.

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