The Romance of King Horn

By Hideo Yamaguchi

In the following paragraphs we will tell the story of King Horn in a simple manner as it is told in the Harleian version (see the text below).

Horn was a marvellously fair child, 'bryht so euer eny glas, so whit so eny lylye flour,' born of King Allof (known as Murry in another version of the story) and his queen Godhild. There was no fairer child than he and he was a bold and keen child as well. At the beginning of our narrative, we find him a stripling of fifteen years, unrivaled in the whole kingdom, living with twelve noblemen's sons as his boon companions. Among them there were two whom he loved most of all, Athulf Child and Fykenild, the one the best and the other the worst, as the story tells us.

One summer's day, as King Allof was riding in pleasure by the sea side, with only two companions beside him, he encountered fifteen ships of bold Saracens arrived on the strand, with the fell purpose of slaughtering all those who believed in Christ. In spite of a brave fight they put up against the ferocious invaders, the king and his followers were slain on the spot. The Saracens then harassed and wasted the whole land, killing the inhabitants unless they forsook their own law and followed the new masters. Most unhappy was the good queen Godhild, who wept sore for her lord and sorrowed deeply for her son Horn. But she went to live in a cave, where she served God alone.

Horn had fallen into the hands of the heathens together with his companions and would have been deprived of his life but for his incomparable fairness. They were sent aboard a boat and put to sea, however, for fear Horn might live to avenge himself upon the evil-doers.
The sea began to flow and Horn rowed very fast all day and night, till the following morning he spied the signs of land. Setting foot on the ground, Horn bade his ship a farewell ('Now, ship, have good days!') and charged her to steer softly, and if ever she should return to Sudenne, where he was born, to greet well those who knew him, particularly his good mother Godhild, and tell the heathen king of his safe arrival in the new land, and that he would soon find death at his own hand. As he parted from the floating ship, he wept bitter tears.

The children soon set out for the towns over dales and downs and were met by Aylmer, the king of Westerness or the western land, who kindly spoke to Horn, asking how they came there, thirteen brave youngsters all. Horn Child told the king that they were from the South and of Christian blood, how the pagans had come and driven them out to sea in a boat without sail or rudder. But now they were at the mercy of the king. Aylmer was, however, not an unkind man. Hearing that the boy's name was Horn, said that the name would some day 'spring from king to king' like a loud horn and that the fame of his fairness would spread wide about the Westerness. The king took Horn home and left him in the charge of Athelbrus his steward, to be given full instruction in hunting, playing the harp, and in carving and serving with the cup. Horn learned with readiness all that he was taught, and soon became everybody's favourite within and outside the court. Rymenyld, daughter of the king, meanwhile, fell passionately in love with him, pining for him day and night.

Rymenyld was so distressed in her heart that finally she sent for Athelbrus, and when he came to her, she bade him bring Horn to her bower. Fearing some mischief might ensue, Athelbrus took Athulf, Horn's brother, with him instead, to learn her will. But when Rymenyld learned her mistake, she was beside herself with anger. With threats to drive him out of the bower, she pressed Athelbrus to fetch Horn in the guise of a squire. The upshot of it all was success in her wooing and her promise made
to knight Horn within a fortnight. At his bidding, Athelbrus went into the hall and advised the king to knight him at the feast the following day. At the spring of day Horn with his twelve companions presented himself before the king and the dubbing ceremony took place with due solemnity. Athulf and the other companions were also knighted by Horn himself.

Rymenyld was impatient to marry Horn forthright, but he reminded her that he must ride with his spear and prove his knighthood before he ever took a wife. If ever he came back alive, he promised, he would take her to wife. In token of her love, she gave him a goldring to wear, on which was engraved the inscription, 'Rymenyld thy love the young.' She then said that if in time of danger, he would look on the ring and think of her, no harm would come to his life wherever he might happen to be. Athulf, his brother, was to have another.

With her blessing, Horn took his leave, mounted his steed, 'blac so euer eny cole,' and rode out in search of adventure. 'The foal began to spring and Horn to sing merrily.' After riding more than a mile, he found a ship at the seashore, laden with heathens, who he learned had a murderous purpose. In the ensuing fight, the Saracen leader fell under the blow of Horn's sword and a hundred more of their best. The young hero returned to the hall and told the king what feat he had performed.

The following day, the king rode out hunting.

Meanwhile, Horn found Rymenyld weeping in her bower, and learned the cause of her sorrow. She had dreamed of a great fish, which she had meant to catch, breaking her net and getting away. With comforting words, he plighted his troth, promising to take her as his own, but he was aware that some evil was now impending. As King Aylmer rode, Fykenyld, who was envious of Horn, was telling him that Horn plotted against his life and would take Rymenyld to wife, urging him to send the rascal out of the land, before he committed more disgrace. Returning home, the king discovered Horn in the embrace of her
daughter's arms, and commanded him to leave the land at once.

Horn placed the saddle on his steed, put on his armour, and told his love that the dream had come true and that he was now going away into an unknown land, there to dwell seven years, at the end of which period, he told her, if he did not return, she should not hesitate to take a husband. They kissed themselves for a while, and Rymenyld fell fainting to the ground.

Taking his leave, he entrusted his 'love new' to Athulf's care, and then set sail out of Westernness. Where he landed, he found two king's princes, one called Athylid and the other Beryld. He introduced himself to them as Godmod, that is, 'good-hearted' (Cutberd of the other versions) and was led by them before the king in the hall. With Beryl's kind intercession, Horn was soon received into the king's service, and welcomed warmly for his exceeding fairness.

It happened at Christmas about the noontide that there came a giant armed in the heathen fashion, who challenged the king to fight against the strong pagans now arrived on land. Thereupon the king named Godmod, Beryld, and Athylid as the three defenders of the land, but was sore afraid that they would lose the battle. Horn, however, saying that it was not proper for three Christians to fight one heathen rival, as was proposed by the giant, offered to fight alone. At the prime hour, the following morning, he rode out with the king as witness. He found the giant in a green field with his companions, and struck him down with his blows, driving away the others. Asking for remission for a while, the giant confessed that he had never received so hard dints in any land except at the hand of King Murry, that is, Allof, whom he had slain in Sudenne. These words aroused Horn's black anger, for this was the man who had driven him out of his land and who had killed his own father. He looked on his ring and thought of Rymenyld the young and ran his sword through his enemy's heart. The king's sons had been both slain by the pagans. Horn pursued them as they fled to their ship and smote them
down in a little while, thus avenging himself on his father's death. The princes were buried, with great pomp, in a church of lime and stone. The king then called together all his knights and praising Horn's brave deed, offered to make him his heir and marry him to his only daughter, for 'nys non so feyr of blod ant bone.' Ermenylf, the fair maid, was as bright as any summer's day. Horn declined the offer, but stayed in king's service full six years.

Now for seven years Horn had sent no message to Rymenyld in Westernness, who was in great sorrow for it. There now arrived a king, who desired to take her to wife, and as the kings were all agreed on this wedding and the days were short, Rymenyld took no time in instructing Athulf to address a letter to Horn for her sake and sending a messenger to seek for the knight wherever he might be. Horn met this page by chance one day while hunting and learned of this marriage between Rymenyld and King Mody of Reynes, which was to take place on Sunday. Horn then told the page that he was the very one that was sought for and sent him back to Rymenyld with a message that he would be with her on Sunday before the prime. Unfortunately, this messenger got drowned in the sea and was cast up under her chamber wall. She wrung her hands for sorrow.

Horn went to King Thurston and disclosed to him all that had happened to him up to that time, and sued for his help in winning back his love, promising on the other hand to marry Athulf his good brother to Ermenylf. With the King's consent, he sent after the fighting men and then set sail for Westernness.

When the ship arrived, the matins had already been rung and the mass sung for the wedding of Rymenyld the young and Mody the king. As soon as Horn landed, he left his folk waiting under a wood and went alone as if he had sprung out of stone, so the story tells us. On the way he met a palmer, from whom he learned about the bridal in the town and how the bride wept and said that she did not want to be spoused with gold, for her troth
was elsewhere plighted. The sadness of the plight in which the bride found herself was so impressive. Horn exchanged his clothes with the palmer, and took the staff and the scrip, for he had an idea. He twisted his lips and blackened his face and neck with coal, and came to the gate-keeper. This gate-keeper, who refused to let him in, he threw down the bridge. Hastening to the hall, he sat down low in the beggars' row and saw Rymenyld sitting as if she were out of wit, weeping ruefully. He also noticed the absence of Athulf there, who was then in a high tower looking far and wide for the coming of his brother over the water.

As the law of the land demanded, Rymenyld carried a horn in her hand after meal in the hall in order to pour wine and ale all around. Horn called out to Rymenyld to come and serve the beggars first of all the people. She filled him a gallon bowl with brown beer and took it to him, but he said that he would drink only from a white cup and that he was a fisher, come west to seek his fortune, with his net ready in a fair pond. Alluding to her dream of the fish net, he told her that he had come there to see if his net had caught any fish and that if there was any therein, she should win it. 'Drink to Horn from the horn,' he demanded.

Rymenyld looked at him and wondered what he could mean by these words, but she filled the horn with wine and drank to him, saying, 'Drink thy fill and then tell me if thou hast ever seen Horn lie under a wood.'

Horn drank from the horn a while and secretly threw his ring into the bottom of it. In her bower the queen found the familiar goldring in the horn, and was very much afraid that he was now dead. So she sent for the same palmer to ask about Horn. The palmer had met Horn, in his wanderings, by the strand. In his voyage westward, she was told, Horn fell ill and died, trusting the palmer with the ring to be returned to Rymenyld the young. The story grieved her deeply; she mourned for Horn's supposed death and said, 'Heart, break thou!' So saying she fell
down on bed and seized a knife in an attempt to kill the loath-
some king and herself both, if Horn did not come within the same
night. As she aimed her knife at her heart, she was held back
by Horn in his arms, who now revealed himself in his true form.
Long was their rejoicing over their reunion. He hurried out of
the hall to bring his men who lay hiding by the wood's end to
prevent the wedding, and she went out of her bower to seek out
Athulf. At the news the princess brought him, he sprang forth
and ran after Horn. Joyful also was the meeting of the two men.
They together started for the castle; and breaking through the
gates, Horn attacked and killed many guests that he found therein.
Fykenild's falsehood, however, he did not see through, for he
and his men all swore that they had never betrayed him. The
wedding bells were then rung merrily and no tongue could tell all
the rejoicings that there were made.

Horn sat in the chair and addressed the king, saying that he
was born in Sudenne and that his father was a king, and pro-
testing that the king had driven him out of land under the wrong
impression that he had attempted to betray his trust. He declared
that he would never sue for the hand of Rymenyld before he
conquered Sudenne and learned the king's counsel. Then he set
sail with Athulf his brother and his Irish companions and under
a fair wind reached Sudenne within five days.

As the two brothers went their way, they found in the field
a knight lying under a shield with a cross drawn upon it. Horn
roused the sleeping knight out of his sleep and under pain of
death urged him to tell what his business was. The knight
recounted to Horn how the Saracens had come and made him
renounce Christ's law, how they had slain King Murry (Allof)
and how he wondered why Horn did not return to avenge his
father's death. Here he was watching for the home-coming of
the young prince. Athulf was his child (though I do not know
how to reconcile this piece of information with the fact that
Athulf was Horn's brother). Then they were overjoyed to meet
each other. Horn also learned from the old man that his mother was still living. With his Irishmen by his side, he was now ready to attack the heathens.

Horn began to blow his horn so that his folk knew his return and ran to him very eagerly. They rallied together and fought the Saracens killing them, old and young. Then Horn caused chapels and churches to be built, the bells to be rung and the priests to sing masses for the occasion. He sought for his mother in the rocky wall, greeting her with kisses. It was then that he was crowned and merry feasts made.

To return to Fykenild. He went about while Horn was away. He gained support from the rich by bribing them, young and old. He caused a castle to be built of lime and stone, surrounded by water, hard of access except for birds with wings, or unless the sea withdrew. Fykenild was plotting to disgrace Rymenyld and set the day for the wedding. Woe was Rymenyld, who wept tears of blood for sorrow. That same night, Horn dreamed an ominous dream, in which Rymenyld his love was shipwrecked and when she tried to swim for the shore, Fykenild prevented her with his sword hilt. Awaking in his bed, Horn told Athulf that deceitful Fykenild was going to do some harm to his love and that they must be quick to rescue her. Horn rode back to his ship and set sail with his knights, driven by a fair wind. Meanwhile, Fykenyld sought after Rymenyld the bright before daybreak, leading her under cover of darkness into the new castle. There they began the feast before sunrise. At this hour, Horn’s ship stood under Fykenyld’s bower, though he did not know where he was. The sea began to withdraw, and there he saw Arnoldin, Athulf’s cousin, awaiting him and learned now about Fykenild’s wiles and the wedding that took place that day.

Master of all kinds of art, Horn disguised himself as a harper, so did his companion knights. Their swords they wore under their garments and went towards the castle, singing merrily, so that Fykenild might hear. They were called in, these harpers,
jugglers, and fiddlers, as they professed to be. Horn sat on a
bench and sang a lay for Rymenyld. She said 'Weylawey!' and swooned away. The sight smote Horn to the heart. He
looked on his ring and thought of Rymenyld the young. Then
walking up, he struck down Fykenild's crown and threw down all
his men in a row.

Soon after this, Horn elected Arnoldin to be the king of
Westerness, for he was gentle and mild. Taking with him
Rymenyld and Athelbrus, her father's steward, he set out in a
ship and arrived in the land where Mody was the king. He slew
him with his hand and filled his place by Athelbrus as a reward
for the old man's good service.

After all this passed, Horn arrived in Ireland under a fair
wind, and made Athulf Child wed Ermenylld there. Then he
returned to Sudenne, to his own folk, and made Rymenyld his
own queen. They lived in true love ever after, fearing God's
law. But they are now both dead and gone, may Christ lead us
to heaven. Amen.

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Here follows the original Middle English text, with new
readings of my own.

**KING HORN**

*Harleian MS. 2253*

Her bygynneþ þe geste of kyng Horn. /f. 83/
¶ Alle heo ben blyþe / Dat to my song ylyþe,
a song ychulle ou singe / of Allof þe gode kynge.
kyng he wes by weste / þe whiles hit yleste,
ant godylt his gode quene; / no feyrore myhte bene.
ant huere sone hihte horn; / feyrore child ne myhte be born. 10
for reyn ne myhte by ryne / ne sonne myhte shyne
feyrore child pen he was, / bryht so euer eny glas,
so whit so eny lylye flour, / so rose red wes his colour.
He wes feyr ant eke bold / ant of fyftene wynter old.
Nis non his yliche / in none kinges ryche. /f. 83, back/ 20
tueye feren he hadde / pat he wip him ladde,
alleg richemenne sones, / ant alle suype Feyre gomes,
wyp him forte pleye. / mest he louede tueye;
pat on wes hoten Athulf chyld, / ant pat oper Fykenyl. 30
Athulf wes pe beste / ant fykenyl pe werste.
Hyt was vpon a someres day, / also ich ou telle may,
Allof pe gode kyng / rod vpon ys pleyzyng
bi pe see side, / per he was woned to ryde.
wip him ne ryde bote tuo; / al to fewe hue were do.
he fond by pe stronde, / aryued on is londe,
shipes fyftene, / of sarazynes kene.
he askede whet hue sohten / oper on his lond brohten.
a payen hit yherde / ant sone him onsuerede,
“py lond folk we wollep slon / pat euer crist leuep on;
ant pe we wollep ryht anon; / shalt pou neuer henne gon.” 50
pe kyng lyhte of his stede, / for po he heuede nede,
ant his gode feren tuo; / mid ywis huem wes ful wo.
swerd hy gonne gripe / ant to gedere smyte.
hy Smyten under shelde, / pat hy somme yfelde.
† pe kyng hade to fewe / azeyn so monie schrew. 60
so fele myhten epe / bringe pre to dpe.
pe payns come to londe / ant nomen hit an honde.
pe folk hy gonne quelle / ant sarazyns to felle.
per ne myhte libbe / pe fremede ne pe sibbe,
bote he is lawe forsoke / ant to huere toke.
of alle wymmanne / werst wes godyld panne.
for allof hy wepep sore / ant for horn zeet more.
Godild hade so muche sore / pat habbe myhte hue na more.

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hue wente out of halle, / from hire maidnes alle,
under a roche of stone. / per hue wonede al one.
per hue serued gode, / asezyn pe payenes forbode.
per hue seruede crist, / pat pe payenes hit nust.
ant euer hue bad for horn child, / pat crist him wrpe myld.
¶ Horn wes in payenes hond, / mid is feren of pe lond.
muche wes pe feyrhade / pat ihesu crist him made.
payenes him wolde slo / ant summe him wolde flo.
zyf hornes feyrnesse nere / yslawe pis children were.
pó spec on Admyrold, / of wordes he wes swype bold,
"horn, póu art swype kene, / bryht of hewe ant shene;
póu art fayr ant eke strong / ant eke eueneliche long.
3ef póu to lyue mote go, / ant pyne feren also,
pat ymay byfalle / pat 3e shule slen vs alle.
pare fore póu shalt to streme go, / póu ant py feren also. /f. 84/
to shipe 3e shule founde / ant sinke to pe grounde.
pe see pe shal adrenche; / ne shal hit vs of penche.
for 3ef póu were alyue, / wip suerd oper wip knyue
we shulden alle deze, / py fader deþ to beye."
pe children ede to pe stronde, / wryngynde huere honde,
ant in to shipes borde / at pe furste worde.
ofte hade horn be wo, / ah neuer wors þen him wes pó.
¶ pe see bygon to flowen / ant horn faste to rowen
ant pat ship wel swype drof, / ant horn wes adred per of,
hue wendem mid ywis / of huere lyue to misse.
al þe day ant al þe nyht, / o þat sprong þe day lyht,
Flotterede horn by þe stronde, / er he seye eny londe.
"feren," quop horn þe synge, / "y telle ou tydynge.
Ich here foules singe, / ant se þe grases springe.
blype þe 3e alyue, / vr ship is come to ryue."
of shipe hy gome founde / ant sette fot to grounde.
by þe see syde / hure ship bigen to ryde.
þenne spec him child horn, / in sudenne he was yborn,
"nou, ship, by þe flode, / haue dayes gode,
by þe see brynke / no water þe adrynke.
softe mote þou sterye, / þat water þe ne derye.
ȝef þou comest to sudenne, / gret hem þat me kenne. 150
gret wel þe gode / quene godild, mi moder.
ant sey þene heþene kyng, / ihesu cristes wytherlyng,
þat ich hol ant fere, / in londe aryuede here.
ant say þat he shall fonde / þen deþ of myne honde.”
¶ þe ship bigon to fleoten / ant horn child to weopen. 160
by dales ant by dounes / þe children eoden to tounes.
metten hue Eylmer, þe kyng, / crist him ȝeue god tymyng,
kyng of westnesse, / c[r]ist him myhte blesse.
he spec to horn child / wordes suyþe myld,
“whenne be ȝe gomen, / þat bueþ her a londe ycomen, 170
alle pretene / of bodye suyþe kene? 
by god þat me made, / so feyr a felaurade
ne seh y neuer stonde / in westnesse Londe.
say me whet ȝe seche.” / horn spec huere speche.
¶ Horn spac for huen alle, / for so hit moste byfalle;
he wes þe wyseste / ant of wytte þe beste.
“we bueþ of sudenne, / ycome of gode kenne,
of cristene blode, / of cunne suyþe gode.
payenes þer connen aryue / ant cristine brohten of lyue,
slowen ant to drowe / cristinemen ynowe. 190
so crist me mote rede, / ous hy duden lede
In to a galeye, / wip þe see to pleye. /f. 84, back/
day is gon ant oþer / wip ȝoute seyl ant roþer.
vre ship flet forþ ylome, / ant her to londe hit ys ycome.
Nou þou myht vs slen, ant bynde / oure honde vs bihynde. 200
ah ȝef hit is þi wille, / help vs þat we ne spille.”
¶ Do spac þe gode kyng, / he nes neuer nyþyng,
“sey, child, whet is þy name, / shal þe tide bote game.”
þe child him onsuerede, / so sone he hit yherde,
“Horn ycham yhote, / ycome out of þis bote, 210
from þe see side, / kyng, wel þe bitide.”
“horn child,” quod pe kyng, / “wel brouc pou py nome zyng.
horn him gop so stille / bi dales ant by hulles,
horn hap loude soune / pour out vch a toune.
so shal pi nome springe / from kynge to kynge,
ant pi feirnesse / aboute westnesse.
horn pou art so suete, / ne shal y pe forlete.”
Hom rod Aylmer pe kyng, / ant horn wip him, his fundlyng,
ant alle his yfere, / pat him were so duere.
pe kyng com in to halle / among his knyhtes alle.
forp he clepep Apelbrus, / his stiward, ant him seide pus,
“stiward, tac pou here / my fundlyng, forto lere
of pine mestere, / of wode ant of ryuere,
ant toggen o pe harpe / wip is nayles sharpe;
ant tech him alle pe listes / pat pou euer wystest,
byfore me to keruen / ant of my coupe to seruen.
ant his feren deuyse / wip ous oper seruisse.
horn child pou vnderstond, / tech him of harpe ant of song.”
¶ Apelbrus gon leren, / horn ant hyse feren.
horn mid herte lahte / al pat mon him tahte.
wip inne court ant wip oute / ant oueral aboute,
Louede men horn child; / ant most him louede rymenyld,
pe kynges oune dothert, / for he wes in hire pohte.
hue louede him in hire mod, / for he wes feir ant eke god.
ant pah hue ne dorste at bord / mid him speke ner a word,
ne in pe halle / among pe knyhtes alle,
hyre sorewe ant hire pyne / nolde neuer fyne
bi daye ne by nyhte, / for hue speke ne myyte
wip horn pat wes so feir ant fre, / po hue ne myhte wip him be.
In herte hue hade care ant wo, / ant pus hue bipohte hire po.
Hue sende hyre sonde / Athelbrus to honde,
pat he com hire to, / ant also shulde horn do
in to hire boure, / for hue bigon to loure.
ant pe sonde sayde / pat seek wes pe mayde,
ant bed him come suype, / for hue nis nout blype.
De stiward wes in huerte wo, / for he nuste whet he shulde do.
what rymenild bysohte, / gret wonder him pohte,
aboute horn pe zinge / to boure forte bringe.
he pohte on is mode / hit nes for none gode.
he tok wip him an oþer, / apulf, hornes broþer. 290
“Athulf,” quoþ he, “ryht anon / þou shalt wip me to boure gon,
to speke wip rymenild stille, / to wyte hyre wille.
þou art hornes yliche, / þou shalt hire by suyke;
sore me adrede / þat hue wolde horn mys rede.”
Athelbrus ant Athulf bo / to hire boure beþ ygo. 300
vpon Athulf childe / rymenild con waxe wilde.
hue wende horn it were / þat hue hade þere.
hue seten adoun stille / ant seyden hure wille.
In hire armes tueye / Athulf he con leye.
“horn,” quoþ heo, “wel longe / y haue loued þe stronge; 310
þou shalt þy treuþe plyhte / in myn hond wip ryhte,
me to spouse welde, / ant ich þe louerd to helde.”
so stille so hit were / athulf seyde in hire eere,
“ne tel þou no more speche, / may, y þe by seche.
þi tale gyn þou lynne, / for horn nis nout her ynne. 320
ne be we nout yliche, / for horn is fayr ant riche,
fayrore by one ribbe / þen ani mon þat libbe.
þah horn were vnder molde, / ant oþer elle wher he sholde,
hennes a þousent milen, / y nulle him bigilen.”
rymenild hire by wente, / ant Athelbrus þus heo shende, 330
“Athelbrus, þou foule þef, / ne worþest þou me neuer lef.
gent out of my boure, / shame þe mote by shoure,
ant euel hap to vnderfonge / ant euele rode on to honge.
Ne speke y nout wip horne, / nis he nout so vnorne.
Þo Athelbrus astounde / fel aknen to grounde. 340
“ha, leuedy, myn owe, / me lyþe a luteþ prowre,
ant list were fore ych wonde / to bringen horn to honde.
for horn is fayr ant riche, / nis non his ylyche.
Aylmer þe gode kyng / dude him me in lokyng.

— 60 —
3if horn þe were aboute, / sore ich myhte doute 350
wip him þou woldest pleye / bituene ou seluen tueye.
þenne shulde wip outen Œpe / þe kyng vs make wroþe.
Ah, forþef me þi teone, / my leuedy Ant my quene. /f. 85, back/
Horn y shal þe fecche, / wham so hit yrecche.”
rymenild, þef heo couþe, / con lyþe wip hyre mouþe. 360
heo loh ant made hire blyþe, / for wel wes hyre olyue.
“go þou,” quoþ heo, “sone, / ant send him after none,
a skuyeres wyse, / when þe king aryse.
he shal myd me bileue / þat hit be ner eue.
haue ich of him mi wille, / ne recchi whet men telle.” 370
¶ Athelbrus goþ wip alle; / horn he fond in halle,
bifore þe kyng o benche, / wyn forte shenche.
“Horn,” quoþ he, “þou hende, / to boure gyn þou wende,
to speke wip rymenild þe þynge, / dohter oure kynges,
wordes suþpe bolde; / þin horte gyn þou holde. 380
Horn, be þou me trewe, / shal þe nout arewe.”
He eode forþ to ryhte / to rymenild þe bryhte.
a knewes he him sette / ant suetliche hire grette.
of is fayre syhte / al þat bour gan lyhte.
he spac faire is speche; / ne durþ non him teche. 390
“wel þou sitte ant sopþe, / rymenild, kinges dohter,
ant þy maydnes here / þat sitþþ þyne yfere.
Kynges styward oure / sende me to boure,
forte y here, leuedy myn, / whet be wille þyn.”
rymenild vp gon stonde / ant tok him by þe honde. 400
heo made feyre chere / ant tok him bi þe suere.
ofte heo him custe, / so wel hyre luste.
“Wel come, horn,” þus sayde / rymenild, þat mayde,
“an euen ant a morewe / for þe ich habbe sorewe,
þat y haue no reste, / ne slepe me ne lyste. 410
Horn, þou shalt wel swyþe / mi longe serewe lyþe;
þou shalt wyp oute striaþe / habbe me to wyue.
horn, haue of me reþe, / ant plyht me þi treþe.”

— 61 —
Horn tho him bypohhte / whet he speken ohte.

"crist," quoph horn, "pe wisse, / ant ȝewe pe heuene blisse of pine hosebondes, / who he be a londe.
ich am ybore þral, / þy fader fundlyng wip al.
of kunde me ne felde / þe to spouse welde.
Hit nere no fair weddyng / bituene a þral ant þe kynge.
þo gon rymenild mis lyken, / ant sore bigon to syken.
armes bigon vnbowe, / ant doun heo fel y swowe.
Horn hire vp hente / ant in is armes trente.
he gon hire to cusse, / ant feyre forte wise.
"rymenild," quoph he, "dueere, / help me þat ych were Ydobbed to be knyhte, / suete, bi al þi myhte /f. 86/ to mi louerd þe kynge, / þat he me ȝeue dobbeyng.
þenne is my þralhede / al wend in to knyhthede.
y shal waxe more / ant do, rymenild, þi lore."
Po rymenild þe ȝynge / a-ros of hire swowenynge.

"Nou, horn, to sope, / y leue þe by þyn oue,
þou shalt be maked knyht / er þen þis fourteniht.
ber þou her þes coppe, / ant þes ringes þer yppe,
to Athelbrus þe styward, / ant say him he holde foreward.
Sey ich him biseche, / wip loueliche speche,
þat he for þe falle / to þe kyngeþ fet in halle,
þat he wip is worde / þe knyghty wip sworde.
wip seluer ant wip golde / hit worþ him wel yþolde.
nou crist him lene spede / þin erndyng do bede."

Horn tok is leue, / for hit wes neh eue.
Athalbrus he sohte / ant tok him þat he brohte,
ant tolde him þare / hou he hede yfare.
he seide him is nede, / ant him bihet is mede.
Athalbrus so blyþe / eode in to halle swype,
ant seide, "kyng, nou leste / o tale mid þe beste.
þou shalt bere coroune / to marewe in þis toune.
to marewe is þi feste; / þe bihoueþ geste.
Ich þe rede mid al my myht / þat þou make horn knyht,
pin armes do him welde; / god knyht he shal pe zelde."
pe kyng seide wel sone, / "hit is wel to done.
Horn me wel quemeþ; / knyht him wel bysemeþ.
He shal haue mi dobbynge / ant be myn œper derlyng.
ant hise feren tuelue / he shal dobbe him selue.
alle y shal hem knyhte / byfore me to fyhte."
al pat pe lyhte day sprong / aylmere pohte long.
pe day bigon to springe; / horn com byfore pe kynge,
wip his tuelf fere; / alle þer ywere.
Horn knyht made he / wip ful grete solempnité,
Sette him on a stede / red so eny glede,
Smot him a lute wiht, / ant bed him buen a god knyht.
Athulf vel a kne ðer / ant þonkedæ kyng Aylmer.
¶ "Nou is knyht sire horn / þat in Sudenne wes yborn.
Lord he is of londe / ant of vs þat by him stonde.
pin armes he haueþ ant þy sheld, / forte fyhte in þe feld.
Let him vs alle knyhtæ, / so hit is his ryhte."
Aylmer seide ful ywis, / "nou do þat þi wille ys."
Horn adoun con lyhte / ant made hem alle to knyhte,
for muchel wes þe geste / ant more wes þe feste. /f. 86, back/
þat rymenild nes nout þere / hire pohte seue þere.
efter horn hue sende; / horn in to bouré wende.
He nolde gon is one; / Athulf wes hys ymone.
¶ rymenild welcomeþ sire horn, / ant æulf knyht him biforn.
"knyht, nou is tyme / forto sitte byme.
do nou þat we spake; / to þi wyf þou me take.
Nou þou hast wille þyne, / vnbynd me of þis þyne."
"rymenild, nou be stille, / ichulle don al þy wille.
ah her hit so bitide, / mid spere ichulle ryde
ant my knythhod proue, / er þen ich þe wowe.
we bueþ nou knyhtes zonge, / alle to day yspronge,
ant of þe mestere / hit is þe manere,
wip sum œper knyhte / for his lemom to fypte,
er ne he eny wyf take / œper wip wymmon forewart make,
to day, so crist me blesse,  /  y shal do pruesse,
for pi loue mid sheld  /  amiddewart pe felde.
3ef ich come to lyue  /  ychul pe take to wyue.”

“knyht, y may yleue pe,  /  why aut pou trewe be.
¶ Haue her pis goldring ;  /  hit is ful god to pi dobbnyng.
ygraued is on pe rynge,  /  ‘rymenild py luef pe 3ynge.’
nis non betere vnder sonne  /  pat enymon of conne.
For mi loue pou hit were,  /  ant on py fynger pou hit bere.
pe ston hauep suche grace,  /  ne shalt pou in none place 570
dep vnderfonge,  /  ne buen yslaye wiþ wronge,
3ef pou lokest peran  /  ant penchest o pi lemmam.
ant sire apulf, pi broper,  /  he shal han en oþer.
Horn, crist y pe byteche,  /  myd mourinide speche.
crist pe 3eue god endyng,  /  ant sound aþeyn pe brynge.”
580
pe knyht hire gan to cusse,  /  ant rymenild him to blesse.
leue at hyre he nom,  /  ant in to halle he com.
knyhtes eode to table,  /  ant horn eode to stable,
per he toc his gode fole,  /  blac so euer eny cole.
wiþ armes he him sredde,  /  ant is fole he fedde.
590
pe fole bigon to springe  /  ant horn murie to synge.
Horn rod one whyle  /  wel more peþ a myle.
he seh a shyp at grounde,  /  wiþ heþene hounde.
He askede wet hue hadden,  /  oþer to londe ladden.
an hound gan biholde,  /  ant spek wordes bolde.
600
“pis land we wollep wynne,  /  ant sle þat þer bueþ inne.”
Horn gan is swerd gripe,  /  ant on is arm hit wype.
pe sarazyn he hitte so,  /  þat is hed fel to ys to.
þo gonne pe houndes gone  /  aþeynys horn ys one.
He Lokede on is rynge,  /  ant pohte o rymenild pe 3ynge. 610
he sloh per of pe beste  /  an houndred at pe lesthe.
ne mihte no mon telle  /  alle þat he gon quelle.
of þat per were o ryue  /  he lafte lut a lyue.
¶ Horn tok pe maister heued,  /  þat he him hade byreuþed,
ant sette on is suerde,  /  abouen o þen orde. 620
he ferde hom to halle, / among þe knyhtes alle,
"Kyng," quop he, "wel þou sitte, / ant þine knyhtes mitte.
to day ich rod o my pleyng, / after my dobbynge,
y fond a ship rowen, / in þe sound byflower,
Mid vnlondishe menne, / of sarazynes kenne,
to deþe forte pyne / þe ant alle þyne.
hy gonne me asayly. / swerd me nolde fayly;
y smot hem alle to grounde / in a lutel stounde.
þe heued ich þe bringe / of þe maister kyng.
nou haue ich þe zolde / þat þou me knyhten woldest."  640
þe day bigon to spryngge, / þe kyng rod on hontynge
to þe wode wyde, / ant Fykenylb bi is syde,
þat fals wes ant vntrew, / whose him wel yknewe.
¶ Horn ne pohte nout him on, / ant to boure wes ygon.
he fond rymenild sittynde / ant wel sore wepynde,
so whyt so þe sonne, / mid terres al byronne.
Horn seide, "luef, þyn ore, / why wepeste þou so sore?"
Hue seide, "ich nout ne wepe, / ah y shal er y slepe.
me pohte o my metyng, / þat ich rod ofysshynge.
to see my net ycaste, / ant wel fer hit laste.  660
a gret fyssh at þe ferste / my net made berste.
þat fyssh me so bycahte, / þat y nout ne lahte.
y wene y shal forleose / þe fyssh þat y wolde choese."
¶ "Crist ant seinte steuene," quop horn, "areche þy sweuene.
no shal y þe byswyke, / ne do þat þe mis lyke.
ich take þe myn owe, / to holde ant eke to knowe,
for eueruch oper wyhte; / perto my trouþe y plyhte."
wel muche was þe reuþe / þat wes at pilke treuþe.
rymenild wep wel ylle, / ant horn let terres stille.
"Lemmon," quop he, "dere, / þou shalt more yhere. 
þy sweuuen shal wende; / summon vs wole shende.
þat fyssh þat brac þy net, / ywis it is sumwet
þat wol vs do sum teone; / ywys hit worþ ysene."
¶ Aylmer rod by stoure, / ant horn wes yne boure,
Fykenild hade enuye / ant seyde peose folye:—
“Aylmer, ich pe werne, / horn pe wole forberne.
Ich herde wher he seyde, / ant his suerd he leyde,
to brynge pe of lyue / ant take rymenyld to wyue.
He Lyht nou in Boure, / vnder couertoure, / f. 87, back/
by rymenyld, py dohter; / ant so he dop wel ofte.
do him out of londe, / er he do more shonde.”
¶ Aylmer gan hom turne, / wel mody ant wel sturne.
he fond horn vnder arme, / in rymenyldes barme.
“go out,” quop aylmer, pe kying, / “Horn, pou foule fundlyng.
forp out of bourses flore, / for rymenild, pin hore.
wend out of londe sone; / her nast pou nout to done.
wel sone bote pou flette, / myd suert y shal pe sette.”
Horn eode to stable, / wel modi for pat fable.
he sette sadel on stede, / wip armes he gon him shrede.
his brunie he con lace, / so he shulde, in to place.
his suerd he gon fonge; / ne stod he nout to longe.
to is suerd he gon teon; / ne durste no wel him seon.
He seide, “lemonn, derlyng, / nou pou hauest py sweuenyng.
pe fyssH pat dyn net rende, / from pe me he sende.
pe kying wip me gynnep striue; / a wey he wole me dryue. 730
pare fore haue nou godneday. / nou y mot founde ant fare away
In to vncoype londe, / wel more forte fonde.
y shal wonie peere / fulle seue 3ere.
at pe seuezeres ende, / zyf y ne come ne sende,
tac pou hosebonde, / for me pat pou no wonde. 740
In armes pou me fonge, / ant cus me swype longe.”
hy custen hem a stounde, / ant rymenyld fel to grounde.
¶ Horn toc his leue; / he myhte nout byleue.
He toc Apulf, is fere, / aboute pe swere,
ant seide, “knyht so trewe, / kep wel loue newe.
pou neuer ne forsoke / rymenyld to kepe ant loke.”
his stede he bigan stryde, / ant forp he con hym ryde.
Apulf wip wip eyzen, / ant alle pat hit yseyzen.

— 66 —
Horn forp him ferde; / a god ship he him herde,
Dat him shulde passe / out of westnesse. 760
De wynd bigon to stonde, / ant drof hem vp o londe,
to londe pat hy fletten; / fot out of ship hy setten.
he fond bi pe weye, / kynges sones tueye;
Dat on wes hoten Apyld, / ant pat opér beryld.
beryld hym con preye / pat he shulde seye 770
what he wolde pere, / ant what ys nome were.
¶ “Godmod,” he seip, “ich hote, / ycomen out of pis bote,
wel fer from by weste, / to seche myne beste.”
beryld con ner him ryde, / ant toc him bi pe bridel.
“wel be þou, knyht, yfounde; / wip me þou lef a stounde. 780
also ich mote sterue, / þe kyng þou shalt serue.
ne seh y neuer a lyue / so feir knyht her aryue.”
godmod he ladde to halle, / ant he adoun gan falle,
Ant sette him a knelyng, / ant grette þene gode kyng. /f. 88/
þo saiþe beryld wel sone, / “kyng, wip him þou ast done. 790
þi lond tac him to werie; / ne shal þe nomon derye,
for he is þe feyreste man / þat euer in þis londe cam.”
¶ þo seide þe kyng wel dere, / “welcome be þou here.
go, beryld, wel swyþe, / ant make hym wel blyþe,
ant when þou fairest to wowen, / tac him þine glouen. 800
þer þou hast munt to wyue, / a wey he shal þe dryue;
for godmodes feyrhede / shalt þou no wer spede.”
ht wes at cristesmasse, / nouþer more ne lasse.
þe kyng made feste, / of his knyhtes beste.
þer com in at none, / a geaunt suþe sone, 810
y-armed of paynyme, / ant seide þise ryme:–
“Site, kyng, bi kyng, / ant herkne my tidynge.
her bueþ paynes aryue, / wel more þen fyue.
her beþ vpon honde, / kyng, in þine londe.
on þer of wol fyhte / to þeynes þre knyhtes.
þef ooure þre sleþ ooure on, / we shulen of ore londe gon;
þef vre on sleþ ooure þre, / al þis lond shal vre be.
to morewe shal be þe fyhtynge, / at þe sonne vpstringe.

¶ Þe seyde þe kynge þurston, / "godmod shal be þat on;
beryld shal be þat oþer; / þe þridde, Åþylþ, is broþer.
for hue bueþ strongeste, / ant in armes þe beste.
ah, wat shal vs to rede? / y wene we bueþ dede."

Godmod set at borde, / ant seide þeose wordes:—
"sire kynge, nis no ryhte, / on wiþ þre fyhten,
aþeynes one hounde, / þre cristene to founde.
ah, kynge, y shal alone, / wiþ oute more ymonne,
wiþ my suerd ful eþe / bringen hem alle to deþe."
þe kynge aros amorewe; / he hade muche sorewe.
godmod ros of bedde; / wiþ armes he him shredde.
his brunye he on caste, / ant knute hit wel faste,
ant com him to þe kynge, / at his vp rysynge.
"kynge," quoth he, "com to felde, / me forte byhelde,
hou we shuie flyten / ant to gedere smiten."
¶ riht at prime tide, / hy gonnen out to ryde.
hy fonnden in a grene, / a geaunt swype kene,
his feren him biseide, / þat day forto abyde.

Godmod hem gon asaylen; / nolde he nout faylen.
he ȝef dunes ynowe; / þe payen fel ysnowe. /f. 88, back/
y þe feren gonnen hem wiþ drawe, / for huere maister wes ne þe slawe.

he seide, "knyht, þou reste / a whyle, ȝef þe leste.
y ne heuede ner of monnes hond / so harde dunes in non lond,
bote of þe kynge Murry, / þat wes swipe sturdy.
he wes of hornes kenne; / y sloh him in sudenne."
¶ Godmod him gon agryse, / ant his blod aryse.
byforen him he seþ stonde / þat drof him out of londe,
ant fader his a-quelde; / he smot him vnder shelde.
he lokede on is ryng, / ant þohte o rymenild þe synge.
mid god suerd at þe furste, / he smot him þourh þe huerte.
þe payns bigonne to fleon, / ant to huere shype teon.
to ship hue wolden ene; / godmod hem con werne.
De kynges sones twayne / De paiens slowe beyne.

Po wes Godmod swype wo, / ant pe payens he smot so,

Pat in a lutel stounde / Pe paiens hy felle to grounde.

Godmod ant is men / Slowe pe payenes euerruchen.

His fader de ant ys lond / Awrek godmod wip his hond. 900

De kyng wip repful chere / Lette leggen is sones on bere,

Ant bringen hom to halle; / Muche sorewe hue-maden alle.

In a chirche of lym ant ston / Me buriede hem wip ryche won.

¶ De kyng lette forp calle / Hise knyhtes alle,

Ant seide, "godmod, zef poou nere, / Alle ded we were,

Poou art hope god ant feyr; / Her y make pe myn heyr;

For my sones buep yslawe, / Ant ybroht of lyfdaywe.

Dohter ich habbe one; / Nys non so feyr of blod ant bone.

(Ermenild, Pat feyre may, / Bryht so eny someres day,)*

Hire wolle ich 3eue pe, / Ant her kyng shalt poou be.” 920

He seyde, "more ichul pe serue, / Kyng, er peuou sterue.

When y po dohter 3erne, / Heo ne shal me npung werne.”

¶ Godmod wonedde peere / Fulle six zere;

Ant pe seupe 3er bygon; / To rymynyld, sonde ne sende he non.

Rymynyld wes in westnesse, / Wip muchel sorewenesse. 930

A kyng peu wes aryue, / Ant wolde hyre han to wyue.

At one were pe kynges, / Of pat weddyngne.

Pe dayes were so sherte, / Ant rymenild ne derste

Latten on none wyse. / A wryt hue dude deuyse;

Apulf hit dude wryte, / Pat horn ne louede nout lyte. 940

Hue sende hire sonde / In to euerruche londe,

To sechen horn knyhte, / Whe so er me myhte.

Horn peu of nout herde, / Til, o day pat he ferde

To wode forte shete, / A page he gan mete.

Horn seide, "leue fere, / Whet dest poou nou here?” 950

“Sire, in lutel spelle / Y may pe sone telle. /f. 89/

Ich seche from westnesse, / Horn, knyht, of estnesse,
For rymenild, $pat$ feyre may, / sorewe$\overline{p}$ for him nyht ant day.  
A kyng hire shal wedde, / a sonneday to bedde,  
Kyng Mody of reynis, / $pat$ is hornes enimis.  
ich habbe walked wyde / by pe see side.  
ne mihte ich him neuer cleche, / wip nones kunnes speche,  
ne may ich of him here / in londe fer no nere.  
weylawey pe while, / him may hente gyile.”  
¶ Horn hit herde wip earen, / ant spec wip wete tearen,  
“So wel, grom, pe bitide, / horn stond by pi syde,  
a$\overline{3}$eyn to rymenild tornye, / ant sey $pat$ hue ne murne.  
y shal be $\overline{p}er$ bi time, / a sonneday er prime.”  
pe page wes wel blype / ant shipede wel suy$\overline{p}$e.  
pe see him gon adrynke; / $\overline{p}at$ rymenil may of $\overline{p}$inke.  
¶ $\overline{p}$e [ see ] him con ded prow$\overline{e}$ / vnder hire chambre wowe.  
rymenild lokede wide / by pe see syde,  
$\overline{3}$ef heo se$\overline{3}$e horn come, / o$\overline{p}$er tidynge of eny gome.  
po fond hue hire sonde / adronque by pe stronde,  
$\overline{p}at$ shulde horn brynge; / hire hondes gon hue wrynge.  
¶ Horn com to $\overline{p}$urston pe kynge, / ant tolde him $\overline{p}$es tidynge.  
ant $\overline{p}$o he was biknowe, / $\overline{p}at$ rymenil wed ys owe,  
ant of his gode kenne, / pe kyng of sudenne,  
ant hou he sloh afelde / him $\overline{p}at$ is fader aquelde,  
ant seide, “kyng so wyse, / $\overline{3}$eld me my servyce.  
rymenild, help me to wynne, / suy$\overline{p}$e $\overline{p}at$ pou ne blynne,  
ant y shal do to house / py dohter wel to spou$\overline{e}$,  
for hue shal to spou$\overline{e}$ haue / A$p$ulf, my gode felawe.  
he is knyht mid pe beste, / ant on of pe treweste.”  
pe kyng seide so stille, / “horn, do al pi wille.”  
he sende po by sonde, / $\overline{3}$end al is londe,  
after knyhtes to fyhte, / $\overline{p}at$ were men so lyhte.  
to him come ynowe, / $\overline{p}at$ in to shipe drowe.  
¶ Horn dude him in pe weye, / in a gret galey$\overline{e}$.  
pe wynd bigon to blowe / in a lutel prow$\overline{e}$.  
pe see bi gan wip ship to gon, / to westnesse hem brohte anon.
hue striken seyl of maste, / ant ancre gonnen casté.
matynes were yronge / ant þe masse ysonge,
of rymenilp þe 3ynge / ant of Mody þe kyng, 1030
ant horn wes in watere; / ne mihte he com no latere.
He let is ship stonde, / ant com him vp to londe.
His folk he made abyde / vnder a wode syde.
¶ Horn eode forh al one, / so he sprong of þe stone.
/on palmere he y-mette, / ant wiþ wordes hyne grette,
“palmere, þou shalt me telle,” / he seyde, “of þine spelle, 1040
so brouke þou þi crowne, / why comest þou from toune?”
ant he seide on is tale, / “y come from a brudale,
from brudale wylde / of maide remenylde.
ne mihte hue nout dreþe / þat hue ne wep wiþ eþe.
hue seide, ‘þat hue nolde / be spoused wiþ golde; 1050
hue hade hosebonde / þah he were out of londe.’
ich wes in þe halle, / wiþ inne þe castel walle.
a wey y gon glide; / þe dole y nolde abyde.
Þer worþ a dole reuly; / þe brude wepeþ bitterly.”
quouþ horn, “so crist me rede, / we wolþeþ chaunge wede. 1060
tac þou robe myne, / ant þe sclaueyn þyne.
to day y shal þer drynke, / þat summe hit shal ofþynke.”
sclaueyn he gon doun legge, / ant horn hit dude on rugge,
ant toc hornes cloþes, / þat nout him were loþe.
¶ Horn toc bordoun ant scrippe, / ant gan to wrynge is lippe. 1070
he made foule chere, / ant bicollede is swere.
he com to þe 3ateward, / þat him onsuerede froward.
horn bed vn-do wel softe, / moni tyme ant ofte.
ne myhte he ywynne / forto com þer ynne.
horn þe wyket puste, / þat hit open fluste. 1080
þe porter shulde abugge; / he þrew him a-doun þe brugge,
þat þre ribbes crakede. / horn to halle rakede,
ant sette him doun wel lowe, / in þe beggeres rowe.
he lokede aboute, / myd is colde snoute.
per seh he rymenild sitte / ase hue were out of wytte, 1090
wepinde sore; / ah he seh nower ßore
Aßulf is gode felawe, / ßat trewe wes in vch plawe.
¶ Aßulf wes o tour ful heh, / to loke fer ant eke neh
after hornes comyng, / 3ef water him wolde brynge.
ße see he seh flowe, / ah horn nower rowe. 1100
he seyde on is songe, / "horn, ßou art to longe.
rymenild ßou me bitoke, / ßat ich hire shulde loke.
Ich haue ylokèd euere, / ant ßou ne comest neuere."
Rymenild ros of benche, / ße beer al forte shenche,
after mete in sale, / bope wyn ant ale. 1110
an horn hue ber an honde, / for ßat wes lawe of londe.
hue dronc of ße beere, / to knyht ant skyere.
horn set at grounde; / him ßohte he wes y-bounde.
¶ he seide, "quene so hende, / to me hydeward ßou wende.
ßou shenß vs wip ße vurste; / ße beggares bußp afurste."
/f. 90/ 1120
hyre horn hue leyde a doune, / ant fulde him of ße broune,
a bolle of a galoud; / hue wende he were a glotoun.
hue seide, "tac ße coppe, / ant drync Þis ber al vppe.
ne seh y neuer, y wene, / beggare so kene."
horn tocc hit hise yference, / ant seide, "quene so dere, 1130
no beer nullich i bite, / bote of coppe white.
ßou wenest ich be a beggere; / ywis icham a fyssshere,
wel fer come by weste, / to seche mine bestee.
Min net lyht her wel hende, / wip inne a wel feyr pende.
Ich haue leye ßere, / nou is Þis ße seueße ßere. 1140
Icham icome to loke / 3ef eny fyssh hit toke.
3ef eny fyssh is Þer inne, / Þer of Þou shalt wynne.
For icham come to fyssh, / drynke nully of dyss.
drynke to horn of horne; / wel fer ich haue y-orne."
¶ Rymenild him gan bihelde; / hire herte fel to kelde. 1150
ne kneu hue noht is fysshyng, / ne him selue nßyng.
ah wonder hyre gan ðynke, / why for horn he bed drynkē.
hue fulde ðe horn of wyne, / ant dronke to ðat pelryne.
hue seide, “drync ði felle, / ant seþen ðou me telle
ζeþ ðou horn euer seþe / vnder wode leþe.” 1160
¶ Horn dronc of horn a stounde, / ant ðreu is ryng to grounde,
ant seide, “quene, ðou þenche / what y ðreu in ðe drench.”
Þe quene eode to boure, / mid hire maidnes foure.
hue fond þæt hue wolde, / ðe ryng ygrauned of golde,
Þat horn of hyre hedde. / fol sore hyre adredde 1170
Þat horn ded were, / for his ryng was ðere.
Þo sende hue a damoisele / after þilke palmer.
“palmer,” quôþ hue, “so trewe, / ðe ryng ðat ðou yn ðrewer,
Þou sey wer ðou hit nome, / ant hyder hou ðou come.”
he seyde, “by seint gyle, / ich eode mony a myle,
wel fer ʒent by weste, / to seche myne beste,
Mi mete forte bydde, / for so me þo bitidde.
ich fond horn knyht stonde, / to shipeward at stonde.
he seide he wolde gesse / to aryue at westnesse.
Þe ship nom in to flode, / wiþ me ant horn þe gode. 1190
Horn by gan be sek ant ðez, / ant for his loute me þeþe
to gon wiþ ðe rynte, / to rymenild ðe ʒynge.
wel ofte he hyne keste, / crist ʒeue is soule reste.”
¶ Rymenild seide at þe þirste, / “herte, nou to berste.
horn worþ þe no more, / þat haueþ þe pyned sore.” 1200
Hue fel adoun a bedde, / ant after knyues greddede, /f. 90, back/
to slein mide hire kyng lope, / ant hire selue bope.
wiþ inne þilke nyhte, / come ʒeþ horn ne myhte.
to herte knyf hue sette, / horn in is armes hire kepte.
his shurte lappe he gan take, / ant wypede a wey þe foule blake
1210
Þat wes opon his suere, / ant seide, “luuef so dere,
ne const þou me yknowe? / ne am ich horn þyn owe?
Ich, horn of westnesse; / in armes þou me kesse.”
yclupten ant kyste / so longe so hem lyste.
"Rymenild," quod he, "ich wende / doun to pe wodes ende, 1220
for þer bueþ myne knyhte, / worþi men ant lyhte, 
armed vnder clope; / hue shule make wroþe
þe kying ant hise gestes / þat bueþ at þise festes.
to day ychulle huem cacche, / nou ichulle huem vacche."
¶ Horn sprung out of halle, / ys brunie he let falle. 1230
rymenild eode of boure; / apulf hue fond loure.
"apulf, be wel blyþe, / ant to horn go swyþe.
he is vnder wode bowe, / wip felawes ynowe."
Àpulf gon froþ springe, / for þat ilke tydyngse.
efter horn he ernde; / him þohhte is herte bernde. 1240
he oftok him ywisse, / ant custe him wip blisse.
horn tok is preye ./ ant duke him in þe weye.
hue comen in wel sone, / þe þates waren vndone;
y-armed suiþe þicke / from fote to þe nycke.
alle þat þer euere weren, / wip oute is trewe feren 1250
ant þe kying aylmare, / ywis he hade muche care.
monie þat þer sete, / hure lyf hy gonne lete.
Horn vnderstondyne þe ne hede / of Fykeles falssede.
Hue suoren alle, ant seyde, / þat hure non him wreyede
ant suore opes holde / þat huere non ne sholde 1260
Horn neuer bytreye, / þah he on deþe leye.
þer hy ronge þe belle, / þat wendake to fulfule.
hue wenden hom wip eyse, / to þe kynge paleysse.
þer wes þe brudale suete, / for richemen þer ete.
telle ne mihte no tonge / þe gle þat þer was songe. 1270
¶ Horn set in chayere, / ant bed hem alle yhere.
he seyde, "kyng of londe, / mi tale þou vnderstonde.
Ich wes ybore in sudenne; / kyng wes mi fader of kenne.
þou me to knyhte houe; / of knythod habbe y proue.
þou dryue me out of þi lond, / ant seydest ich wes traytou
strong. 1280
þou wendest þat ich wrohte / þat y ner ne þohhte,
by rymenild forte lygge; / ywys ich hit wip sugge.
Neshal ich hit ner agynne, / er ich sudenne wynne. /f. 91/
pou kep hyre me a stounde, / pe while pat ich founde
In to myn heritage, / wip pis yrissh page.
pat lond ichulle porhreche, / ant do mi fader wreche.
ychul be kynge of toune, / ant lerne kynes roune.
penne shal rymenild pe synge / ligge by horn pe kynge."
¶ Horn gan to shipe drawe, / wip hyse yrissh felawele.
Apulf wip him, his broper, / he nolde habbe non oper.
pe ship by gan to croude; / pe wynd bleu wel loude.
wyp inne dawes fyue / pe ship began aryue.
vnder sudennes side / huere ship by gon to ryde,
aboute pe midnyhte. / horn eode wel rihte;
he nom apulf by honde, / ant ede yp to londe.
hue fonden vnder shelde, / a knyht liggynde on felde.
o pe shelde wes ydrawe / a croiz of ihesu cristes lawe.
pe knyht him lay on slapec, / in armes wel yshape.
¶ Horn him gan ytake, / ant seide, "knyht, awake.
pou sei me whet pou kepest, / ant here whi pou slepest!
me punccheb, by crois liste, / pat pou leuest on criste;
bote pou hit wolde shewe, / my suerd shal pe to-hewe."
ppe gode knyht vp aros; / of horns wordes him agros.
he seide, "ich seruy ille / paynes, togyeynes mi wille.
Ich was cristene sum while; / y come in to pis yle.
Sarazyns lope ant blake / me made ihesu forsake,
to loke pis passage / for horn pat is of age,
pat wonep her by weste, / god knyht mid pe beste.
hue slowe mid huere honde, / pe kynge of pisse londe,
ant wip him mony honder. / per fore me punccheb wonder
pat he ne come to fyhte; / god zeue him pe myhte,
pat wynd him hider dryue, / to don hem alle of lyue.
ant slowen kynge mury / horns cunesmon hardy.
Horn, of londe hue senten; / tuelf children wip him wenten.
wip hem wes apulf pe gode, / mi child, myn oune fode.
3ef horn is hol ant sounde, / apulf tit no wounde.
he louede horn wip mihte, / ant he him wip ryhte.
3ef y myhte se hem tueye, / penne ne rohty forte deye."
 ¶ "knyht, be penne blype, / mest of alle sype.
Apufl, ant horn is fere, / bope we bep here." 1360
pe knyht to horn gan skippe, / ant in his armes cippe.
Muche ioye hue maden yfere, / po hue to gedere y-come were.
He saide wip steuene pare, / "3ungemen, hou habbe 3e 3ore
yfare? /f. 91, back/
wolle 3e pis lond wynne, / ant wonie per ynne?"
he seide, "suete horn child, / 3et lyuep by moder godyld. 1370
of ioie hue ne miste, / o lyue 3ef hue pe wiste."
Horn seide on is ryme, / "yblesed be pe time
Icham icome in to sudenne, / wip fele yrisshemenne.
we shule pe houndes keche, / ant to pe dese vecche.
ant so we shulen hem teche / to speken oure specche." 1380
 ¶ Horn gon is horn blowe; / is folc hit con yknowe.
hue comen out of hurne, / to horn swype 3urne.
hue smiten ant hue fyhten, / pe nihit ant eke pe ohtoun.
pe sarazyns hue slowe, / ant summe quike to drowe.
mid speres ord hue stonge / pe olde ant eke pe 3onge. 1390
 ¶ Horn lette sone wurche / bope chapel ant chyrche.
He made belle rynge, / ant prestes masse syng.
He sohte is moder halle, / in pe roche walle.
He custe hire ant grette, / ant in to pe castel fette.
Croone he gan werie, / ant make feste merye. 1400
Murie he per wrohte, / ah rymenild hit abohte.
 ¶ Pe whiles horn wes oute, / Fikenild ferde aboute.
pe betere forte spede, / pe riche he 3ef mede,
bope 3onge ant olde, / wip him forte holde.
Ston he dude lade, / ant lym perto he made. 1410
Castel he made sette, / wip water by flette.
pat per yn come ne myhte / bote foul wip flyhte;
bote when pe see wip drowe, / per mihte come ynowe,
πus fykenild gon by wende / Rymenild forte shende.
to wyue he gan hire 3erne; / þe kyng ne durst him werne. 1420
ant habbeþ set þe day, / Fykenild to wedde þe may.
wo was rymenild of mode; / terres hue wepte of blode.
þilke nyht horn suete / con wel harde mete
of rymenild his make, / þat in to shipe wes take.
þe ship gon ouerblench; / is lemmun shulde adrenche. 1430
¶ Rymenild mid hire honde, / swymme wolde to londe.
Fykenild aȝeyn hire pyle, / mid his suerdes hylte.
Horn awek in is bed; / of his lemmen he wes adred.
“Apulf,” he seide, “felawe, / to shipe nou we drawe.
Fykenild me hap gon vnder, / ant do rymenild sum wonder. 1440
Crist, for his wondes fyue, / to nyht þider vs dryue!”
¶ Horn gon to shipe ride, / his knyhtes bi his side. /f. 92/
þe ship bigon to sture, / wiþ wynd god of cure.
ant fykenild her þe day springe, / ferde to þe kyng,
After rymenild þe bryhte, / ant spousede hyre by nyhte. 1450
he ladde hire by derke, / in to is newe werke.
þe feste hue bigonne, / er þen aryse þe sonne.
Hornes ship atstod in stoure, / vnder fykenildes boure.
Nuste horn a-lyue / wher he wes aryue.
þene castel hue ne knewe, / for he was so newe 1460
þe see bigon to wiþ drawe; / þo seh horn his felawe,
þe feyre knyht arnoldyn, / þat wes apulfes cosyn,
þat þer set in þat tyde, / kyng horn to abide.
he seide, “kyng horn, kyngessone, / hider þou art welcome.
to day hap sire Fykenild / yweddeþ þi wif, rymenild. 1470
white þe nou þis while; / he haueþ do þe gyle.
this tour he dude make / al for rymenildes sake.
ne may þer komen ynne / no mon wiþ no gynne.
¶ Horn, nou crist þe wisse, / rymenild þat þou ne misse.”
Horn couþe alle þe listes / þat eni mon of wiste. 1480
harpe he gon shewe, / ant toc* him to felawe,

*) McKnight’s reading. The MS. has: tot.
knyhtes of þe beste / þat he euer hede of weste.
ouen o þe sherte / hue gurden huem wiþ suerde.
hue eoden on þe grauele, / towart þe castele.
hue gonne murie singe, / ant makeden huere gleynge,
þat fykenild mihte y-here; / he axede who hit were.
men seide hit were harpeirs, / iogelers ant fyþelers.
hem me dude in lete; / at halle dore hue sete.
horn sette him a benche; / is harpe he gan clenche.
he made rymenild a lay, / ant hue seide weylaweys.
¶ Rymenild fel y swowe; / þo nes þer non þat lowe.
hit smot horn to herte; / sore con him smerte.
he lokede on is rynge, / ant o rymenild þe 3ynge.
he eode vp to borde, / mid his gode suorde.
FYkenildes croune / he fel þer adoune;
ant alle is men arowe / he dude adoun þrowe.
ant made arnoldyn kyng þere, / after kyng aylmere,
to be kyng of westnesse, / for his mildenesse.
þe kyng ant is baronage / þeuen him truage.
¶ Horn toc rymeniil by honde, / ant ladde hire to stronge,
Ant toc wiþ him Apelbrus, / þe gode stiward of hire fader hous.
þe see bigan to flowen, / ant hy faste to rowen. /f. 92, back/
hue aryueden vnder reme, / in a wel feyr strene.
kyng Mody wes kyng in þat lond; / þat horn sloh wiþ is hond.
Apelbrus he made þer kyng, / for his gode techyng;
for sire hornes lore / he wes mad kyng þore.
¶ Horn eode to ryue; / þe wynd him con wel dryue.
he aryuede in yrlonde, / þer horn wo coupe er fonde.
He made þer Apulf chyld / wedde mayden ermenylid,
ant horn com to sudenne, / to is oune kenne.
1540 Rymenild he made þer is quene, / so hit myhte bene.
In trewe loue hue lyuened ay, / ant wel hue loueden godes lay.
Nou hue beoþ boþe dede, / crist to heouene vs lede. AmeN!

*
An Additional Note on the Dialectal Features of
King Horn, Harley 2253

In my earlier article (1968) on the language of King Horn, Harley 2253, I took occasion to mention the presence in the manuscript of a few Southern (South-Eastern) dialectal features besides the unmistakable evidence for the West Midland dialect. Some of them are of sporadic occurrence and others shared in common with other neighbouring dialects. They may, to a certain degree, bespeak the South-Eastern substratum of the original dialect of our story. Here I will bring up a few further details that may show the extent to which the South-Eastern elements contributed to the composition of the language of the text. A few common features are known to have prevailed in South-Eastern Middle English in its early stage (cf. G. L. Brook, English Dialects, London, 1963, pp. 69–71).

The unrounding and lowering of OE. ð to ē is common in South-Eastern. *Ferste-berste* (‘first’—‘burst’) occur in ll. 661–62. We also have *kenne* in ll. 150, 182, 995, 1276 and 1540, besides *cunesmon* (l. 1346). Other examples are: *kesse* (l. 1216) besides *cusse* rhyming with *biesse* (ll. 581–82, McKnight 617–18); *leste* ‘listen’ rhyming with *beste* (ll. 477–78, McKnight 505–6), cf. *lyste* (l. 1218), *luste* (l. 404); *sherte* ‘shirt’ (l. 1485) rhyming with *suerde* (l. 1486); *werste* (l. 30), *werst* (l. 72) ‘worst’. In ll. 1065–66 *legge* ‘lay’ (OE. *lecgan*) and *rugge* ‘back’ (West Midland form) are made to rhyme together, which seems to prove the pronunciation of the latter word with /e/. Strattmann quotes *pane reg* from Aynbite of Inwyte, 116.

The raising of OE. æ to e is another familiar feature. Our examples here are: *eny* ‘any’ (ll. 14, 15, 130, 987, etc.); *kecche* ‘catch’ rhyming with *vecche* ‘fetch’ (ll. 1376–75); *keste* (l. 1115) besides *kyste* ‘cast’ (l. 1217); *pen* ‘then’ (l. 13); and frequently
was ‘was’ (ll. 16, 27, 72, 96, 181, 256, 267, 648, 1094, 1095, 1428, etc.). The voicing of the initial /f/ has already been mentioned. We may adduce a set of varied forms found in the text: vacche for *facche ‘fetch’ (l. 1228) besides vecche (l. 1378) and feche (l. 357). The peculiar form vurste may be of West Midland origin, cf. ferste ‘first’ (l. 661).

Outside the phonological domain, it will be noted that the only participial form found in the manuscript is early Southern, including South-Eastern, –inde: sittynde-wepynde (ll. 649–50), liggynde (l. 1312).

To complete our statement, we must perhaps mention the Northern features in our text, though they are few. The sporadic form sredd ´clothe´ (l. 589) occurs besides shrede (l. 718) and shredde (l. 848), an imported form from Northern or North-Eastern Midland English.

The unrounding of OE. ŭ (û) to Ī (Ī) characterizes certain forms in the text which are spelt with ‘u’ but made to rhyme with other forms which contain ‘i’ or ‘y’: cusse ‘kiss’ (l. 435) rhyming with wisse (l. 436); hulles ‘hills’ (l. 216) rhyming with stille ‘still’ (l. 215); wip sugge ‘gainsay’ (l. 1280) rhyming with lygge ‘lie’, a variant of lie; and wurche ‘work, build’ (l. 1391) rhyming with chyrche ‘church’ (l. 1392). We may see in these correspondences a certain Northern or East-Midland influence.

*

Our text is based on the facsimile edition of King Horn issued by the Early English Text Society in 1965, with the permission of the Society, and printed here with the permission of the British Museum, for which we are very grateful.