

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 lylve 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 'loue newe' to Athulf's care, and then set sail out of Westerness. Where he landed, he found two king's princes, one called Athyld 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 Athyld 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.' Ermenyld, 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 Westerness, 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 Ermenyld. With the King's consent, he sent after the fighting men and then set sail for Westerness.

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 loathsome 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 protesting 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 Ermenyld 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.

*

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 / þat 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 feyore 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 þen he was, / bryht so euer eny glas,
 so whit so eny lylve 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 / þat he wiþ him ladde,
 alle richemenne sones, / *ant* alle suyþe feyre gomes,
 wyþ him forte pleye. / mest he louede tueye;
 Ðat on wes hoten Athulf chyld, / *ant* þat oþer Fykenyld.
 Athulf wes þe beste / ant fykenyld þe werste. 30
 Hyt was vpon a someres day, / also ich ou telle may,
 Allof þe gode kyng / rod vpon ys pleyzyng
 bi þe see side, / þer he was woned to ryde.
 wiþ him ne ryde bote tuo; / al to fewe hue were þo.
 he fond by þe stronde, / aryued on is londe, 40
 shipes fyftene, / of sarazynes kene.
 he askede whet hue sohten / oþer on his lond brohten.
 a payen hit yherde / *ant* sone him onsuerede,
 “þy lond folk we wollep slon / þat euer *cris*t leueþ on;
ant þe we wollep ryht anon; / shalt þou neuer henne gon.” 50
 þe kyng lyhte of his stede, / for þo 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, / þat hy somme yfelde.
 ¶ þe kyng hade to fewe / azeyn so monie schrewe. 60
 so fele myhten eþe / bringe þre to deþe.
 þe payns come to londe / *ant* nomen hit an honde.
 þe folk hy gonne quelle / *ant* sarazyns to felle.
 þer ne myhte libbe / þe fremede ne þe sibbe,
 bote he is lawe forsoke / *ant* to huere toke. 70
 of alle wymmanne / werst wes godyld þanne.
 for Allof hy wepeþ sore / *ant* for horn zet more.
 Godild hade so muche sore / þat hadde myhte hue na more.

hue wente out of halle, / from hire maidnes allē,
 vnder a roche of stone. / þer hue wonede al one. 80
 þer hue seruede gode, / aʒeyn þe payenes forbode.
 þer hue seruede *cris*t, / þat þe payenes hit must.
 ant euer hue bad for horn child, / þat *cris*t him wrþe myld.
 ¶ Horn wes in payenes hond, / mid is feren of þe lond.
 muche wes þe feyrhade / þat ihesu *cris*t him made. 90
 payenes him wolde slo / *ant* summe him wolde flo.
 ʒyf hornes feyrnesse nere / yslawe þis children were.
 þo spec on Admyroid, / of wordes he wes swyþe bold,
 “horn, þou art swyþe kene, / bryht of hewe *ant* shene;
 þou art fayr *ant* eke strong / *ant* eke eueneliche long. 100
 ʒef þou to lyue mote go, / ant þyne feren also,
 þat ymay byfalle / þat ʒe shule slen vs alle.
 þare fore þou shalt to streme go, / þou ant þy feren also. /f. 84/
 to shipe ʒe shule founde / *ant* sinke to þe grounde.
 þe see þe shal adrenche; / ne shal hit vs of þenche. 110
 for ʒef þou were alyue, / wip suerd oþer wip knyue
 we shulden alle deʒe, / þy fader deþ to beye.”
 þe children ede to þe stronde, / wryngynde huere honde,
 ant in to shipes borde / at þe furste worde.
 ofte hade horn be wo, / ah neuer wors þen him wes þo. 120
 ¶ þe see bygon to flowen / *ant* horn faste to rowen
 ant þat ship wel suyþe drof, / *ant* horn wes adred þer of,
 hue wenden mid ywisse / 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. 130
 “feren,” quod horn þe ʒynge, / “y telle ou tydyng.
 Ich here foules singe, / *ant* se þe grases *springe*.
 blyþe be ʒe alyue, / vr ship is come to ryue.”
 of shipe hy gonne founde / *ant* sette fot to grounde.
 by þe see syde / hure ship bigon to ryde. 140
 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.
 zef 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 zeue god tymyng,
 kyng of westnesse, / c[ri]st him myhte blesse.
 he spec to horn child / wordes suyþe myld,
 "whenne be ze gomen, / þat bueþ her a londe ycomen, 170
 alle þrettene / of bodye suyþe kene?
 by god þat me made, / so feyr a felaurade
 ne seh y neuer stonde / in westnesse Londe.
 say me whet ze seche." / horn spec huere speche.
 ¶ Horn spac for huem alle, / for so hit moste byfalle; 180
 he wes þe wyseste / *ant* of wytte þe beste.
 "we bueþ of sudenne, / ycome of gode kenne,
 of cristene blode, / of cunne swyþe 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 galey, / wiþ þe see to pleye. /f. 84, back/
 day is gon *ant* oþer / wiþ oute 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 zef 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," quop þe kyng, / "wel brouc þou þy nome zung.
 horn him goþ so stille / bi dales *ant* by hulles,
 horn haþ loude sounē / þurh out vch a toune.
 so shal þi nome springe / from kyngē to kyngē, 220
 ant þi feirnesse / aboute westnesse.
 horn þou art so suete, / ne shal y þe forlete."
 Hom rod Aylmer þe kyng, / *ant* horn wip him, his fundlyng,
ant alle his yfere, / þat him were so duere.
 þe kyng com in to halle / among his knyhtes alle. 230
 forþ he clepeþ Aþelbrus, / his stiward, *ant* him seide þus,
 "stiward, tac þou here / my fundlyng, forto lere
 of þine mestere, / of wode *ant* of ryuere,
 ant toggen o þe harpe / wip is nayles sharpe;
 ant tech him alle þe listes / þat þou euer wystem, 240
 byfore me to keruen / *ant* of my coupe to seruen.
 ant his feren deuyse / wip ous oþer seruise.
 horn child þou vnderstond, / tech him of harpe *ant* of song."
 ¶ Aþelbrus gon leren, / horn *ant* hyse feren.
 horn mid herte lahte / al þat mon him tahte. 250
 wip inne court *ant* wip oute / *ant* oueral aboute,
 Louede men horn child; / *ant* most him louede rymenyld,
 þe kynges oune dohter, / for he wes in hire þohte.
 hue louede him in hire mod, / for he wes feir *ant* eke god.
ant þah hue ne dorste at bord / mid him speke ner a word, 260
 ne in þe halle / among þe knyhtes alle,
 hyre sorewe ant hire pyne / nolde neuer fyne
 bi daye ne by nyhte, / for hue speke ne myhte
 wip horn þat wes so feir *ant* fre, / þo hue ne myhte wip him be.
 In herte hue hade care *ant* wo, / *ant* þus hue biþohte hire þo. 270
 Hue sende hyre sonde / Athelbrus to honde,
 þat he com hire to, / *ant* also shulde horn do
 in to hire boure, / for hue bigon to loure.
ant þe sonde sayde / þat seek wes þe mayde,
 ant bed him come suyþe, / for hue nis nout blyþe. 280

¶ De stiward wes in huerte wo, / for he nuste whet he shulde do.
 what rymenild bysohte, / gret wonder him þohte,
 aboute horn þe zinge / to boure forte bringe.
 he þohte on is mode / hit nes for none gode.
 he tok wiþ him an oþer, / aþulf, hornes broþer. 290
 "Athulf," quoþ he, "ryht anon / þou shalt wiþ me to boure gon,
 to speke wiþ rymenild stille, / to wyte hyre wille.
 þou art hornes yliche, / þou shalt hire by suyke;
 sore me adrede / þat hue wole 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 wiþ 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* ryche,
 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 worpest þou me neuer lef.
 went out of my boure, / shame þe mote by shoure,
 ant euel hap to vnderfonge / *ant* euele rode on to honge.
 Ne speke y nout wiþ horne, / nis he nout so vnorne.
 ¶ Do Athelbrus astounde / fel aknen to grounde. 340
 "ha, leuedy, myn owe, / me lype a lutel þrowe,
 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.

3if horn þe were aboute, / sore ich myhte doute 350
 wiþ him þou woldest pleye / bituene ou seluen tueye.
 þenne shulde wiþ outen oþe / þe kyng vs make wroþe.
 Ah, forzef me þi teone, / my leuedy Ant my quene. /f. 85, back/
 Horn y shal þe fecche, / wham so hit yrecche.”
 rymenild, zef heo couþe, / con lyþe wiþ 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 wiþ 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 wiþ rymenild þe zynge, / dohter oure kynge,
 wordes suyþe 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* soþte, / rymenild, kinges dohter,
 ant þy maydnes here / þat sitteþ 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 wyþ oute *striue* / habbe me to wyue.
 horn, haue of me reuþe, / *ant* plyht me þi treuþe.”

¶ Horn þo him bypohte / whet he speken ohte.
 "crist," quoþ horn, "þe wisse, / *ant* zeue þe heuene blisse 420
 of þine hosebonde, / who he be a londe.
 ich am ybore þral, / þy fader fundlyng wiþ al.
 of kunde me ne felde / þe to spouse welde.
 Hit nere no fair weddyng / bituene a þral *ant* þe kyng."
 þo gon rymenild mis lyken, / *ant* sore bigon to syken. 430
 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 wisse.
 "rymenild," quoþ he, "duere, / help me þat ych were
 Ydobbed to be knyhte, / suete, bi al þi myhte /f. 86/ 440
 to mi louerd þe kyng, / þat he me zeue dobbyng.
 þenne is my þralhede / al wend in to knyhtede.
 y shal waxe more / *ant* do, rymenild, þi lore."
 Do rymenild þe zynge / a-ros of hire swowenyng.
 "Nou, horn, to soþe, / y leue þe by þyn oþe, 450
 þou shalt be maked knyht / er þen þis fourteniht.
 ber þou her þes coppe, / *ant* þes ringes þer vppe,
 to Athelbrus þe styward, / *ant* say him he holde foreward.
 Sey ich him biseche, / wiþ loueliche speche,
 þat he for þe falle / to þe kynges fet in halle, 460
 þat he wiþ is worde / þe knyghty wiþ sworde.
 wiþ seluer *ant* wiþ golde / hit worþ him wel yzolde.
 nou crist him lene spede / þin erndyng do bede."
 ¶ Horn tok is leue, / for hit wes neh eue.
 Athelbrus he sohte / *ant* tok him þat he brohte, 470
 ant tolde him þare / hou he hede yfare.
 he seide him is nede, / *ant* him bihet is mede.
 Athelbrus so blyþe / eode in to halle swyþe,
 ant seide, "kyng, nou leste / o tale mid þe beste.
 þou shalt bere coroune / to marewe in þis toune. 480
 to marewe is þi feste; / þe bihoueþ geste.
 Ich þe rede mid al my myht / þat þou make horn knyht,

þin armes do him welde; / god knyht he shal þe zelde."
 þe kyng seide wel sone, / "hit is wel to done.
 Horn me wel quemep; / knyht him wel bysemep. 490
 He shal haue mi dobbyng / *ant* be myn oþer derlyng.
ant hise feren tuelue / he shal dobbe him selue.
 alle y shal hem knyhte / byfore me to fyhte."
 al þat þe lyhte day sprong / aylmere þohte long.
 þe day bigon to springe; / horn com byfore þe kyng, 500
 wiþ his tuelf fere; / alle þer ywere.
 Horn knyht made he / wiþ ful gret solempnite,
 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 þer / *ant* þonkede kyng Aylmer. 510
 ¶ "Nou is knyht sire horn / þat in Sudenne wes yborn.
 Lord he is of londe / *ant* of vs þat by him stonde.
 þin armes he haueþ *ant* þy sheld, / forte fyhte in þe feld.
 Let him vs alle knyhte, / so hit is his ryhte."
 Aylmer seide ful ywis, / "nou do þat þi wille ys." 520
 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 þohte seue zere.
 efter horn hue sende; / horn in to boure wende.
 He nolde gon is one; / Athulf wes hys ymone. 530
 ¶ rymenild welcomeþ sire horn, / *ant* apulf 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 pyne."
 "rymenild, nou be stille, / ichulle don al þy wille. 540
 ah her hit so bitide, / mid spere ichulle ryde
 ant my knyhtod proue, / er þen ich þe wowe.
 we bueþ nou knyhtes zonge, / alle to day yspronge,
 ant of þe mestere / hit is þe manere,
 wiþ sum oþer knyhte / for his lemmon to fyþte, 550
 er ne he eny wyf take / oþer wyþ wymmon forewart make.

to day, so *crist* me blesse, / y shal do pruesse,
 for þi loue mid shelde / amiddewart þe felde.
 zef ich come to lyue / ychul þe take to wyue."
 "knyht, y may yleue þe, / why aut þou trewe be. 560
 ¶ Haue her þis goldring; / hit is ful god to þi doobbyng.
 ygraued is on þe ryng, / 'rymenild þy luef þe zynge.'
 nis non betere vnder sonne / þat enymon of conne.
 For mi loue þou hit were, / *ant* on þy fynger þou hit bere.
 þe ston haueþ suche *grace*, / ne shalt þou in none place 570
 deþ vnderfonge, / ne buen yslaye wiþ wronge,
 zef þou lokest þeran / *ant* þenchest o þi lemman.
 ant sire apulf, þi broþer, / he shal han en oþer.
 Horn, *crist* y þe byteche, / myd mourninde speche.
crist þe zeue god endyng, / *ant* sound azeyn þe brynge." 580
 þe 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,
 þer he toc his gode fole, / blac so euer eny cole.
 wiþ armes he him srede, / *ant* is fole he fedde. 590
 þe fole bigon to springe / *ant* horn murie to synge.
 Horn rod one whyle / wel more þen a myle.
 he seh a shyp at grounde, / wiþ heþene hounde.
 He askede wet hue hadden, / oþer to londe ladden.
 an hound him gan biholde, / *ant* spek wordes bolde. 600
 "þis land we wolleþ wynne, / *ant* sle þat þer bueþ inne."
 Horn gan is swerd gripe, / ant on is arm hit wype.
 þe sarazyn he hitte so, / þat is hed fel to ys to.
 þo gonne þe houndes gone / azeynes horn ys one.
 He Lokede on is ryng, / ant þohte o rymenild þe zynge. 610
 he sloh þer of þe beste / an houndred at þe leste.
 ne mihte no mon telle / alle þat he gon quelle.
 of þat þer were o ryue / he lafte lut a lyue.
 ¶ Horn tok þe maister heued, / þat he him hade byreued,
 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 dobbyng,
 y fond a ship rowen, / in þe sound byflowen,
 Mid vnlondisshe menne, / of sarazynes kenne, 630
 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 springe, / þe kyng rod on hontynge
 to þe wode wyde, / *ant* Fykenyld bi is syde,
 þat fals wes *ant* vntrewe, / whose him wel yknewe.
 ¶ Horn ne þohte nout him on, / *ant* to boure wes ygon.
 he fond rymenild sittynde / *ant* wel sore wepynde, 650
 so whyt so þe sonne, / mid terres al byronne.
 Horn seide, "luef, þyn ore, / why wepest þou so sore?"
 Hue seide, "ich nout ne wepe, / ah y shal er y slepe.
 me þohte o my metyng, / þat ich rod ofysshyng.
 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 cheose."
 ¶ "Crist *ant* seinte steuene," quop horn, "areche þy sweuene.
 no shal y þe byswyke, / ne do þat þe mis lyke. 670
 ich take þe myn owe, / to holde *ant* eke to knowe,
 for eueruch oþer wyhte; / þerto my troupe y plyhte."
 wel muche was þe reupe / þat wes at þilke treupe.
 rymenild wep wel ylle, / *ant* horn let terres stille.
 "Lemmon," quop he, "dere, / þou shalt more yhere. 680
 þy sweuen 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 þeose folye: - 690
 "Aylmer, ich þe werne, / horn þe wole forberne.
 Ich herde wher he seyde, / ant his suerd he leyde,
 to brynge þe of lyue / ant take rymenyld to wyue.
 He Lyht nou in Boure, / vnder couertoure, /f. 87, back/
 by rymenyld, þy dohter; / ant so he doþ wel ofte. 700
 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," quoþ aylmer, þe kyng, / "Horn, þou foule fundlyng.
 forþ out of boures flore, / for rymenild, þin hore. 710
 wend out of londe sone; / her nast þou nout to done.
 wel sone bote þou flette, / myd suert y shal þe sette."
 Horn eode to stable, / wel modi for þat fable.
 he sette sadel on stede, / wiþ armes he gon him shrede.
 his brunie he con lace, / so he schulde, in to place. 720
 his suerd he gon fonge; / ne stod he nout to longe.
 to is suerd he gon teon; / ne durste non wel him seon.
 He seide, "lemmon, derlyng, / nou þou hauest þy sweuenyng.
 þe fyss^h þat þyn net rende, / from þe me he sende.
 þe kyng wiþ me gynneþ striue; / a wey he wole me dryue. 730
 þare fore haue nou godneday. / nou y mot founde *ant* fare away
 In to vncouþe londe, / wel more forte fonde.
 y shal wonie þere / fulle seue zere.
 at þe seuezeres ende, / 3yf y ne come ne sende,
 tac þou hosebonde, / for me þat þou no wonde. 740
 In armes þou me fonge, / ant cus me swyþe longe."
 hy custen hem a stounde, / *ant* rymenyld fel to grounde.
 ¶ Horn toc his leue; / he myhte nout byleue.
 He toc Aþulf, is fere, / aboute þe swere,
 ant seide, "knyht so trewe, / kep wel loue newe. 750
 þou neuer ne forsoke / rymenild to kepe ant loke."
 his stede he bigan stryde, / ant forþ he con hym ryde.
 Aþulf wep wiþ eyzen, / ant alle þat hit yseyzen.

Horn forþ him ferde; / a god ship he him herde,
 Ðat him shulde passe / out of westnesse. 760
 Ðe wynd bigon to stonde, / ant drof hem vp o londe,
 to londe þat hy fletten; / fot out of ship hy setten.
 he fond bi þe weye, / kynges sonnes tueye;
 Ðat on wes hoten Aþyld, / ant þat oþer beryld.
 beryld hym con preye / þat he shulde seye 770
 what he wolde þere, / ant what ys nome were.
 ¶ "Godmod," he seiþ, "ich hote, / ycomen out of þis bote,
 wel fer from by weste, / to seche myne beste."
 beryld con ner him ryde, / ant toc him bi þe bridel.
 "wel be þou, knyht, yfounde; / wiþ 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/
 Ðo saide beryld wel sone, / "kyng, wiþ him þou ast done. 790
 Ði lond tac him to werie; / ne shal þe nomon derye,
 for he is þe feyreste man / þat euer in þis londe cam."
 ¶ Ðo seide þe kyng wel dere, / "welcome be þou here.
 go, beryld, wel swyþe, / ant make hym wel blyþe,
 ant when þou farest to wowen, / tac him þine glouen. 800
 Ðer þou hast munt to wyue, / a wey he shal þe dryue;
 for godmodes feyrhede / shalt þou no wer spede."
 hit wes at cristesmasse, / nouþer more ne lasse.
 þe kyng made feste, / of his knyhtes beste.
 Ðer com in at none, / a geaunt suyþe sone, 810
 y-armed of paynyme, / ant seide þise ryme:—
 "Site, kyng, bi kynge, / 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 zeynes þre knyhtes. 820
 zef oure þre sleh oure on, / we shulen of ore londe gon;
 zef vre on sleh oure þre, / al þis lond shal vre be.

to morewe shal be þe fytynge, / at þe sonne vpspringe."
 ¶ Þo seyde þe kyng þurston, / "godmod shal be þat on;
 beryld shal be þat oper; / þe þridde, Aþyld, is broþer. 830
 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 kyng, nis no ryhte, / on wiþ þre fyhte,
 azeynes one hounde, / þre *cristene* to founde. 840
 ah, kyng, y shal alone, / wiþ oute more ymone,
 wiþ my suerd ful eþe / bringen hem alle to deþe."
 þe kyng aros amorewe; / he hade muche sorewe.
 godmod ros of bedde; / wiþ armes he him shredde.
 his brunye he on caste, / ant knutte hit wel faste, 850
 ant com him to þe kyng, / at his vp rysynge.
 "kyng," quoþ he, "com to felde, / me forte byhelde,
 hou we shule flyten / ant to gedere smiten."
 ¶ riht at *prime* tide, / hy gonnen out to ryde.
 hy fonnden in a grene, / a geaunt swyþe kene, 860
 his feren him biside, / þat day forto abyde.
 Godmod hem gon asaylen; / nolde he nout faylen.
 he ʒef dundes ynowe; / þe payen fel yswowe. /f. 88, back/
 ys feren gonnen hem wiþ drawe, / for huere maister wes neh
 slawe.
 he seide, "knyht, þou reste / a whyle, ʒef þe leste. 870
 y ne heuede ner of monnes hond / so harde dundes in non lond,
 bote of þe kyng Murry, / þat wes swiþe sturdy.
 he wes of hornes kenne; / y sloh him in sudenne."
 ¶ Godmod him gon agryse, / ant his blod aryse.
 byforen him he seh stonde / þat drof him out of londe, 880
 ant fader his a-quelde; / he smot him vnder shelde.
 he lokede on is ryng, / ant þohte o rymenild þe ʒynge.
 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 erne; / godmod hem con werne. 890

þe kynges sonas tweyne / þe paiens slowe beyne.
 þo wes Godmod swyþe wo, / ant þe payens he smot so,
 þat in a lutel stounde / þe paiens hy felle to grounde.
 godmod ant is men / slowe þe payenes eueruchen.
 his fader deþ *ant* ys lond / awrek godmod wiþ his hond. 900
 þe kyng wiþ reuþful chere / lette leggen is sonas on bere,
 ant bringen hom to halle; / muche sorewe hue maden alle.
 in a chirche of lym *ant* ston / me buriede hem wiþ ryche won.
 ¶ De kyng lette forþ calle / hise knyhtes alle,
 ant seide, "godmod, zef þou nere, / alle ded we were, 910
 þou art boþe god *ant* feyr; / her y make þe myn heyr;
 for my sonas bueþ yslawe, / ant ybroht of lyfdawe.
 dohter ich hadde one; / nys non so feyr of blod ant bone.
 (Ermenild, þat feyre may, / bryht so eny someres day,)*
 hire wolle ich zeue þe, / ant her kyng shalt þou be." 920
 he seyde, "more ichul þe serue, / kyng, er þen þou sterue.
 when y þy dohter zerne, / heo ne shal me noþyng werne."
 ¶ godmod wonede þere / fulle six zere;
 ant þe seueþe zer bygon; / to rymynyld, sonde ne sende he non.
 rymenyld wes in westnesse, / wiþ muchel sorewenesse. 930
 a kyng þer wes aryue, / ant wolde hyre han to wyue.
 at one were þe kynges, / of þat weddyng.
 þe dayes were so sherte, / ant rymenild ne derste
 latten on none wyse. / a wryt hue dude deuyse;
 Apulf hit dude wryte, / þat horn ne louede nout lyte. 940
 hue sende hire sonde / in to eueruche londe,
 to sechen horn knyhte, / whe so er me myhte.
 Horn þer of nout herde, / til, o day þat he ferde
 to wode forte shete, / a page he gan mete.
 Horn seide, "leue fere, / whet dest þou nou here?" 950
 "Sire, in lutel spelle / y may þe sone telle. /f. 89/
 Ich seche from westnesse, / horn, knyht, of eþnesse,

* Inserted on the margin in the MS.

For rymenild, þæt feyre may, / soreweþ for him nyht *ant* day.
 A kyng hire shal wedde, / a sonneday to bedde,
 Kyng Mody of reynis, / þæt is hornes enimis. 960
 ich habbe walked wyde / by þe see side.
 ne mihte ich him neuer cleche, / wiþ nones kunnes speche,
 ne may ich of him here / in londe fer no nere.
 weylawey þe while, / him may hente gyle.”
 ¶ Horn hit herde wiþ earen, / ant spec wiþ wete tearen, 970
 “So wel, grom, þe bitide, / horn stond by þi syde,
 azeyn to rymenild turne, / *ant* sey þæt hue ne murne.
 y shal be þer bi time, / a sonneday er *prime*.”
 þe page wes wel blyþe / *ant* shipeþe wel suyþe.
 þe see him gon adrynke; / þæt rymenil may of þinke. 980
 þe [see] him con ded þrowe / vnder hire chambre wowe.
 rymenild lokede wide / by þe see syde,
 3ef heo seze horn come, / oþer tidynge of eny gome.
 þo fond hue hire sonde / adronque by þe stronde,
 þæt shulde horn brynge; / hire hondes gon hue wrynge. 990
 ¶ Horn com to þurston þe kyng, / ant tolde him þes tidynge.
 ant þo he was biknowe, / þæt rymenild wes ys owe,
 ant of his gode kenne, / þe kyng of sudenne,
 ant hou he sloh afelde / him þæt is fader aquelde,
 ant seide, “kyng so wyse, / zeld me my seruice. 1000
 rymenild, help me to wynne, / swyþe þæt þou ne blynnne,
 ant y shal do to house / þy dohter wel to spouse,
 for hue shal to spouse haue / Aþulf, my gode felawe.
 he is knyht mid þe beste, / *ant* on of þe treweste.”
 þe kyng seide so stille, / “horn, do al þi wille.” 1010
 he sende þo by sonde, / zend al is londe,
 after knyhtes to fyhte, / þæt were men so lyhte.
 to him come ynowe, / þæt in to shipe drowe.
 ¶ Horn dude him in þe weye, / in a gret galeye.
 þe wynd bigon to blowe / in a lutel þrowe. 1020
 þe see bi gan wiþ 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 rymentild þe zynge / ant of Mody þe kynge,
ant horn wes in watere; / ne mihte he com no latere. 1030
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.

/f. 89, back/

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 croune, / 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 dreze / þat hue ne wep wiþ eze.
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.”
quod horn, “so crist me rede, / we wolleþ chaunge wede. 1060
tac þou robe myne, / ant ze sclauelyn þyne.
to day y shal þer drynke, / þat summe hit shal of-þynke.”
sclauelyn 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 zateward, / 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 collede snoute.
 þer seh he rymenild sitte / ase hue were out of wytte, 1090
 wepinde sore; / ah he seh nower þore
 Aþulf is gode felawe, / þat trewe wes in vch plawe.
 ¶ Aþulf wes o tour ful heh, / to loke fer *ant* eke neh
 after hornes comynge, / ʒef water him wolde brynge.
 þe see he seh flowe, / ah horn nower rowe. 1100
 he seyde on is songe, / “horn, þou art to longe.
 rymenild þou me bitoke, / þat ich hire shulde loke.
 Ich haue yloked euere, / *ant* þou ne comest neuere.”
 Rymenild ros of benche, / þe beer al forte shenche,
 after mete in sale, / boþe wyn *ant* ale. 1110
 an horn hue ber an honde, / for þat wes lawe of londe.
 hue dronc of þe beere, / to knyht *ant* skyere.
 horn set at grounde; / him þohte he wes y-bounde.
 ¶ he seide, “quene so hende, / to me hydeward þou wende.
 þou shenh vs wiþ þe vurste; / þe beggares bueþ afurste.”
 /f. 90/ 1120
 hyre horn hue leyde a doune, / ant fulde him of þe broune,
 a bolle of a galoun; / hue wende he were a gloutoun.
 hue seide, “tac þe coppe, / ant drync þis ber al vppe.
 ne seh y neuer, y wene, / beggare so kene.”
 horn toc hit hise yfere, / *ant* seide, “quene so dere, 1130
 no beer nullich i bite, / bote of coppe white.
 þou wenest ich be a beggere; / ywis icham a fysshere,
 wel fer come by weste, / to seche mine bestee.
 Min net lyht her wel hende, / wiþ inne a wel feyr pende.
 Ich haue leye þere, / nou is þis þe seueþe zere. 1140
 Icham icome to loke / ʒef eny fyss^h hit toke.
 ʒef eny fyss^h is þer inne, / þer of þou shalt wynne.
 For icham come to fyss^h, / drynke nully of dyss^h.
 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 fysshing, / ne him selue noþyng.

ah wonder hyre gan þynke, / why for horn he bed drynke.
 hue fulde þe horn of wyne, / ant dronke to þat pelryne.
 hue seide, "drync þi felle, / *ant* seþþen þou me telle
 zef þou horn euer seze / vnder wode leze." 1160
 ¶ Horn dronc of horn a stounde, / ant þreu is ryng to grounde,
 ant seide, "quene, þou þench / what y þreu in þe drench."
 þe quene eode to boure, / mid hire maidnes foure.
 hue fond þæt hue wolde, / þe ryng ygraued of golde,
 þat horn of hyre hedde. / fol sore hyre adredde 1170
 þat horn ded were, / for his ryng was þere.
 þo sende hue a damoisele / after þilke palmere.
 "palmere," quop hue, "so trewe, / þe ryng þat þou yn þrewe,
 þou sey wer þou hit nome, / ant hyder hou þou come."
 he seyde, "by seint gyle, / ich eode mony a myle, 1180
 wel fer zent by weste, / to seche myne beste,
 Mi mete forte bydde, / for so me þo bitidde.
 ich fonð horn knyht stonde, / to shipeward at stronde.
 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* deze, / *ant* for his loue me preze
 to gon wiþ þe ryng, / to rymenild þe zynge.
 wel ofte he hyne keste, / *crist* zeue is soule reste."
 ¶ Rymenild seide at þe firste, / "herte, nou to berste.
 horn worþ þe no more, / þat haueþ þe pyned sore." 1200
 Hue fel adoun a bedde, / ant after knyues gredde, /f. 90, back/
 to slein mide hire kyng loþe, / *ant* hire selue boþe.
 wiþ inne þilke nyhte, / come zef 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
 Ðat wes opon his suere, / ant seide, "luef 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," quoþ he, "ich wende / doun to þe wodes ende, 1220
 for þer bueþ myne knyhte, / worþi men *ant* lyhte,
 armed vnder cloþe; / hue shule make wroþe
 þe kyng *ant* hise gestes / þat bueþ at þise festes.
 to day ychulle huem cacche, / nou ichulle huem vacche."
 ¶ Horn sprong out of halle, / ys brunie he let falle. 1230
 rymenild eode of boure; / aþulf hue fond loure.
 "aþulf, be wel blyþe, / *ant* to horn go swyþe.
 he is vnder wode bowe, / wiþ felawes ynowe."
 Aþulf gon froþ springe, / for þat ilke tydyng.
 efter horn he ernde; / him þohte is herte bernde. 1240
 he oftok him ywisse, / ant custe him wiþ blysse.
 horn tok is preye / ant dude him in þe weye.
 hue comen in wel sone, / þe zates weren vndone;
 y-armed suiþe picke / from fote to þe nycke.
 alle þat þer euere weren, / wiþ oute is *trewe* feren 1250
 ant þe kyng aylmare, / ywis he hade muche care.
 monie þat þer sete, / hure lyf hy gonne lete.
 Horn vnderstondyng ne hede / of Fykeles falssede.
 Hue suoren alle, ant seyde, / þat hure non him wreyede
 ant suore oþes holde / þat huere non ne sholde 1260
 Horn neuer bytreye, / þah he on deþe leye.
 þer hy ronge þe belle, / þat wedlake to fulfulle.
 hue wenden hom wiþ eyse, / to þe kynges paleyse.
 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 hadde y proue.
 þou dryue me out of þi lond, / *ant* seydest ich wes *traytour*
 strong. 1280
 þou wendest þat ich wrohte / þat y ner ne þohte,

by rymenild forte lygge; / ywys ich hit wipsugge.
 Ne shal ich hit ner agynne, / er ich sudenne wynne. /f. 91/
 pou kep hyre me a stounde, / þe while þat ich founde
 In to myn heritage, / wiþ þis yrisshe page. 1290
 þat lond ichulle þorhreche, / *ant* do mi fader wreche.
 ychul be kyng of toune, / *ant* lerne kynges rounne.
 þenne shal rymenild þe zynge / ligge by horn þe kynges.”
 ¶ Horn gan to shipe drawe, / wiþ hyse yrisshe felawe.
 Apulf wiþ *him*, his broþer, / he nolde hadde non oþer. 1300
 þe ship by gan to croude; / þe wynd bleu wel loude.
 wyþ inne dawes fyue / þe ship began aryue.
 vnder sudennes side / huere ship by gon to ryde,
 aboute þe midnyhte. / horn eode wel rihte;
 he nom apulf by honde, / *ant* ede vp to londe. 1310
 hue fonden vnder shelde, / a knyht liggynde on felde.
 o þe shelde wes ydrawe / a *croyz* of ihesu *cristes* lawe.
 þe knyht *him* lay on slape, / in armes wel yshape.
 ¶ Horn *him* gan ytake, / *ant* seide, “knyht, awake.
 pou sei me whet pou kepest, / *ant* here whi þou slepest! 1320
 me þuncheþ, by crois liste, / þat þou leuest on *criste*;
 bote þou hit wolle shewe, / my suerd shal þe to-hewe.”
 þe gode knyht vp aros; / of hornes wordes *him* agros.
 he seide, “ich seruy ille / paynes, tozeynes mi wille.
 Ich was *cristene* sum while; / y come in to þis yle. 1330
 Sarazyns loþe *ant* blake / me made ihesu forsake,
 to loke þis passage / for horn þat is of age,
 þat woneþ her by weste, / god knyht mid þe beste.
 hue slowe mid huere honde, / þe kyng of þisse londe,
 ant wiþ *him* mony honder. / þer fore me þuncheþ wonder 1340
 þat he ne comeþ to fyhte; / god zeue *him* þe myhte,
 þat wynd *him* hider dryue, / to don hem alle of lyue.
 ant slowen kyng mury / hornes cunesmon hardy.
 Horn, of londe hue senten; / tuelf children wiþ *him* wenten.
 wiþ hem wes apulf þe gode, / mi child, myn oune fode. 1350

zef horn is hol ant sounde, / aþulf tit no wounde.
 he louede horn wiþ mihte, / *ant* he him wiþ ryhte.
 zef y myhte se hem tueye, / þenne ne rohti forte deye.”
 ¶ “knyht, be þenne blyþe, / mest of alle syþe.
 Aþulf, *ant* horn is fere, / boþe we beþ here.” 1360
 þe knyht to horn gan skippe, / *ant* in his armes clippe.
 Muche ioye hue maden yfere, / þo hue to gedere y-come were.
 He saide wiþ steuene þare, / “zungemen, hou hadde ze zore
 yfare? /f. 91, back/
 wolle ze þis lond wynne, / *ant* wonie þer ynne?”
 he seide, “sute horn child, / zet lyueþ þy moder godyld. 1370
 of ioie hue ne miste, / o lyue zef hue þe wiste.”
 Horn seide on is ryme, / “yblessed be þe time
 Icham icome in to sudenne, / wiþ fele yrisshemenne.
 we shule þe houndes kecche, / *ant* to þe deze vecche.
 ant so we shulen hem teche / to speken oure speche.” 1380
 ¶ Horn gon is horn blowe; / is folc hit con yknowe.
 hue comen out of hurne, / to horn swyþe zurne.
 hue smiten *ant* hue fyhten, / þe niht *ant* eke þe ohtoun.
 þe sarazyns hue slowe, / ant summe quike to drowe.
 mid speres ord hue stonge / þe olde *ant* eke þe zonge. 1390
 ¶ Horn lette sone wurche / boþe chapel *ant* chyrche.
 He made belle rynges, / ant prestes masse synge.
 He sohte is moder halle, / in þe roche walle.
 He custe hire ant grette, / ant in to þe castel fette.
 Croune he gan werie, / ant make feste merye. 1400
 Murie he þer wrohte, / ah rymenild hit abohte.
 ¶ De whiles horn wes oute, / Fikenild ferde aboute.
 þe betere forte spede, / þe riche he zef mede,
 boþe zonge ant olde, / wiþ him forte holde.
 Ston he dude lade, / ant lym þerto he made. 1410
 Castel he made sette, / wiþ water by flette.
 þat þer yn come ne myhte / bote foul wiþ flyhte;
 bote when þe see wiþ drowe, / þer mihte come ynowe,

þus 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 ouerblenche; / is lemmon shulde adrenche. 1430
 ¶ Rymenild mid hire honde, / swymme wolde to londe.
 Fykenild a3eyn hire pylte, / mid his suerdes hylte.
 Horn awak in is bed; / of his lemmon he wes adred.
 "Apulf," he seide, "felawe, / to shipe nou we drawe.
 Fykenild me haþ 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 haþ sire Fykenild / yweddeþ þi wif, rymenild. 1470
 white þe nou þis while; / he haueþ do þe gyle.
 þis tour he dude make / al for rymenildes sake.
 ne may þer comen ynne / no mon wiþ no gynne.
 ¶ Horn, nou crist þe wisse, / rymenild þat þou ne misse."
 Horn coupe 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 gleyng, 1490
 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 weylawey. 1500
 ¶ Rymenild fel y swowe; / þo nes þer non þat lowe.
 hit smot horn to herte; / sore con *him* smerte.
 he lokede on is ryng, / ant o rymenild þe 3yng.
 he eode vp to borde, / mid his gode suorde.
 Fykenildes croune / he fel þer adoune; 1510
 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 / 3euen *him* *truage*.
 ¶ Horn toc rymenild by honde, / ant ladde hire to stronde, 1520
 Ant toc wiþ *him* Aþelbrus, / 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 streme.
 kyng Mody wes kyng in þat lond; / þat horn sloh wiþ is hond.
 Aþelbrus he made þer kyng, / for his gode techyng; 1530
 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 couþe er fonde.
 He made þer Aþulf chyld / wedde mayden ermenyld,
 ant horn com to sudenne, / to is oune kenne. 1540
 Rymenild he made þer is quene, / so hit myhte bene.
 In trewe loue hue lyueden 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. \ddot{y} to \ddot{e} 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: *hesse* (l. 1216) besides *cusse* rhyming with *blesse* (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 *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, 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

wes '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 *fecche* (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 *sredde* '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. \check{y} (\check{y}) to \check{i} (\check{i}) 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); *wið 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.