Binomial Expressions in *Le Morte Arthur*

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0. 1 The word 'binomial' is originally a mathematical terminology, and in linguistics it refers to the pairings or connections of two words of similar types joined by coordinate conjunctions *and* or *or*. The *OED* defines as 'an expression consisting of two words of the same form-class.' *Linguistics* (May 1964 ; 69) defines as 'combinations of two synonymous words or words expressing nearly related——or, in some cases, opposite —— conceptions.'[1)]

Professor Inna Koskenniemi of Turku University, Finland, uses this terminology in the analysis of the dramas of early modern English. This is a linguistic expression which has been used until today from Anglo-Saxon period. Especially in Middle English verse or metrical romances this linguistic technique is remarkable. The romance in question abounds in this linguistic phenomenon.

Le Morte Arthur is the oldest extant English version of the story of Lancelot, Guinevere and Arthur, and is one of the two great fourteenth century English romances of the fall of Arthur and of Arthurian society. It is also a major source of the great masterpiece of late medieval Arthuriana, Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'arthur*. Incidentally, the *Mort Artu*, one of the great cycle of prose romances in French called the Vulgate cycle, is unquestionably the source of our romance we are to examine from now on.

0. 2 The objective of our present study is to make a comprehensive survey of the so-called binomial expressions seen in this romance.

The metrical romance *Le Morte Arthur*, so far as we know, survives only in a unique manuscript in the British Museum, Harley 2252, leaves 86 recto to 133 verso. The romance was written down by two scribes, the first copying up to 101 V and second from 102 R to the end.[2)] The stanzas are not separated in the manuscript nor in the earlier editions. Bruce's edition is the first to divide the stanzas, but such a division is clearly indicated by the rhyme scheme.[3)]

0. 3 *Le Morte Arthur* is written in large part in stanzas of eight lines with four stresses to each line. The prevalent rhythm is iambic. The usual rime pattern in full stanzas a-b-a-b-a-b-a-b. 473 stanzas are written down in this scheme or pattern, the figure being about ninety-five percent of all the stanzas. This form of stanza is very often found in lyrical poetry. In this romance, indeed, we can breathe the atmosphere of the ballad.

0. 4 It is considered that the dialect of the romance is North-west Midlands and the date of composition is around the end of the fourteenth century, judging from all the linguistic observations and facts including rime words.

The poet of *Le Morte Arthur* is, as poets of most of the Middle English romances are, anonymous. In conclusion, we may safely assume that a poem which is so completely in the usual romance style was the work of a professional minstrel.[4)]

1.0 Be the matter what it may, we have an overwhelming number of binomials or binomial expressions. Binomials consisting of two adjectives are the most frequent in number, and then continue those of two substantives. Furthermore, two-verb paired expressions or binomials are not infrequent. Though scarce in number, we cannot overlook the presence of binomials of two adverbs.

The profuse employment of such fixed or stereotypical expressions helps the audience to understand the contents of romances more quickly. We'd like to conclude that these paired expressions function as a rime phrase in the majority of cases. And moreover, as needs arise, we are to refer to the difference between the quality of romances and that of Geoffrey Chaucer, the great fourteenth poet.

The use of binomials, the recurrent word pairs, is a very familiar stylistic characteristic in the medieval verse and prose written in English as in other languages. Many years have passed since the rhetorical habit disappeared. This figure of speech is today regarded as 'redundant' and is not therefore favoured by the best men of letters. Incidentally, in Chaucer, this linguistic phenomenon is outstanding in *The Parson's Tale*. It is probably because this work of Chaucer is counted among sermon literature popular in medieval times. The term 'binomial expressions' can be also termed 'binomial collocations (combinations)' or 'double expressions' in other phraseology. Such kind of linguistic technique is not only popular 'rhetorical pattern', but also helps make the meaning of a certain word clearer in romance. We may aptly say that it is a major linguistic phenomenon in Middle English literature.[5)]

When medieval audience or readers heard one word, they could, it seems, remember the other pair word of the similar quality. It becomes clear that most of the binomials were very familiar. Well, one of the greatest pleasures or joys to medieval people was to listen to the literature, contemporary or preceding, above all, to the recitation of romance sung directly through the mouths of professional minstrels at a lord's hall or an open market. The intelligent level of the ordinary people was not considered so high. In those days education was not so prevalent among the ordinary people. Hence, it was the most important duty to the romance-writers and the minstrels or jongleurs whose job it was to convey the romance-writers' works orally directly to read and recite to the audience or hearers as easily and intelligibly as possible. On losing the story or plot of a certain tale, the hearers failed to retreat to the original again. So, it was most helpful to such people to have popular expressions repeated. Hence, it becomes characteristic of romance-writers to repeat such familiar formulae. The objective of romance-reciting was in instruction and recreation in those days. Above all, a major element was placed upon recreation. Therefore, in order to attract the interest of such ordinary people, it was quite essential to use frequently the intelligible and popular binomials, and furthermore, familiar words, phrases and sentences. This is the very point where the medieval poets or romance-writers are decidedly different from the modern poets who are interested in the use of elaborate style avoiding repetitions, a fugure of speech common in Middle English literature.[6)]

Now we are to enter into the discussion and analysis of the present study. Illustrations will be given as limitedly as possible.

1.1 First of all, our special attention will be paid to the remarkable presence of binomials of two adjectives:

Courteyse and hend, is not to hyde ; 166
As he that Ay *hend and fre* : 541 (of Gawain)
The mayden was bothe *hend & fre*, 596
For he was bothe *corteyse and hend*. 623
I wende thou haddiste be *stable and trewe* 1160
That Ay was *cortayse and hend* : 1529 (of king)
he was than so *corteise and fre* 2194
my lord is so *corteise and hende* 2594
Syr gawayne, that was *hende and free*, 2771
The knyght was both *hende and free*, 3454

As is understood from the illustrations, two words of mental quality are frequently paired or juxtaposed. Such popular phrases (termed 'popular idioms' as well) as 'hende and fre', 'corteyse and hende', etc., are especially favoured in metrical romances. Throughout the romances at large, such binomials as 'hend and fre', 'corteyse and fre', 'good and trewe', etc., are ubiquitous, and are essential to describe the mentally favourable qualities of knights and other warriors of high rank in a martial circle. They have, as it were, become 'set phrases' without hardly any substantial meaning. In addition, structurally speaking, in these binomial expressions *fre(e)* functions exclusively as a rime word. And, *hend(e)* also stands at rime in many cases, though it sometimes occurs internally under the necessity of rime. On the other hand, *corteyse* seldom stands at the end of a poetic line.

1. 2 A series of two adjectives expressing the bravery of a warrior —— knight or squire, king or baron or earl, etc. —— appear in the majority of cases in the form of binomials :

There alle are *stiffe & stronge* in stowre ? 236
he hath knightis *stiff and felle* :228
They Ar *bold and breme* as bare, 229
The knightis that were *bold and kene*. 795
The knightis þat were *kene & bold* : 803
Bors, that was *bolde and kene*, 1443
he was an *hardy* man *and snelle*, 884
launcelot is *hardy* knyght *and thro* ; 1697
And therto *hardy* knyght *and bolde*, 1705 (of Lancelot)
That was so *hardy* knyght *and bolde*, 1913
As knyght that *hardy* was *and kene* : 2287
mordred, that was bothe *kene And bolde*, 3248
As he that ay was *kene and thro* ; 2759 (of Gawain), 2823, 3328

Roughly speaking, we have a lot of alliterative paired expressions in metrical romances, but here in our romance, we have only two examples of that technique ('*st*iff and *st*rong', '*b*old and *b*reme'). We see that such binomials as 'kene and bold' (and vice versa), 'hardy and thro', 'hardy and bolde', 'hardy and kene', 'kene and thro', etc., are very popular. In almost all the cases *hardy* occurs

internally throughout verse romances, while, *thro* stands at rime without exceptions. King Arthur's knights (Gawain, Lancelot, Lionel, Bors, etc.) are all qualified by the epithets mentioned just above.

1.3 Furthermore, binomial expressions consisting of a word of bravery and that of mental quality are repeated very frequently:

The knight þat was *hardy and fre*, 90
As thou arte *hardy* knight *and fre*, 210
That was *hardy* knyght *and free*: 2405 (of Gawain)
Doughty and noble, trew and stable, 1051
Bot bethe of herte *good And bolde*, 1881
And made hys party *stiffe and goode*; 2037
That was of warre *wyse And bolde*: 2557 (of Lionel)
And many A *doughty* knyght *And free*: 3643

'Hardy and fre(e)' is a pivotal binomial, and we see that words of bravery occur internally on the whole and those of mental quality stand at rime in many cases. King Arthur's knights 'of prys' are all qualified by these kinds of binomial expressions.

1.4 The binomial expressions meaning the physical beauty of heroines in romance are also observed very frequently:

To the lady *fayre and bright*; 250
For the lady *fayre and bryght*; 2047
As lady that is *feyre and shene* 2384(: *quene*)

The binomial 'fayre and bryght' is ubiquitous in romances at large, and the collocation 'feyre and shene' is not infrequent as well. Anyway, these binomials stand quite often at the end of a line.

1.5 The binomials expressing the physical beauty and the mental quality of heroines are recurrent in our romance as well:

To the lady *fayre and hend*; 330
So was the mayden *feyre and fre* 454
The ladyes, that were *feyre and free*, 3502

The binomial 'fayre and fre (e)' is more frequent throughout romances. These two binomials stand exclusively at rime position.

1.6 A feeling of joy or pleasure is described in the following paired expressions or binomials:

Ful myche there was of *gam and gle*. 96

And syr Arthur make the *game And glee* 3164
Myche there was of *game & play* ; 258, 430, 611
he yeffe yow to-gedyr *Ioye And blysse*, 3671
They sayd with hym was *Ioye and wele* 2964
He resseyuyd hym with *wele and wynne* 3788

As is understood from the example cited above, the binomials of joy also occur at rime position without exceptions. The three binomials ('game and glee', 'game and play', 'joy and bliss') are repetitive throughout romances at large. Especially the alliterative binomial '*g*ame and *g*lee' is favoured by romance-writers.

Chaucer also uses this binomial in *Sir Thopas* :

His myrie men comanded he
To make hym bothe *game and glee*, 839-40

We see that Chaucer uses this stereotypical expression clearly consciously. Chaucer himself uses the word *game* singly many times, because the word itself does not appear platitudinous at all. By the way, Chaucer uses the binomial 'game and play' twice in *The Canterbury Tales* (: *The Cook's Tale* and *The Parson's Tale*).

Speaking of the expression of joy or pleasure, the two-verb binomials are also favourably employed :

he *kissed and clypped* that swete wyght ; 1802
The dede body to *clyppe And Kysse*, 3927

Among the lovers this behaviour of affection is very often exchanged. The verb *clip* seems somewhat archaic, and is used very often with 'to kiss', and thus constitutes an alliterative popular binomial.

Chaucer also uses this binomial expression in *The Merchant's Tale* :

This Januarie, who is glad but he ?
He *kisseth* hire, *and clippeth* hire ful ofte, 2412-3

This is the closing part of the *Tale*, and we find how glad and enraptured the old January is to embrace his young and fair wife May. Probably Chaucer may have borrowed this binomial 'clip and kiss' from tail-rime romances included in the Auchinleck Manuscript he read.

1. 7 When people are happy, they are almost invariably 'glad and blithe'[7] :

There I was made *glad & blithe*,646
To make hym bothe *glad and blythe*. 1647, 1789
To make them bothe *blyth and glad*. 463
To make hym bothe *blithe and glad* ; 718

And forthe rydis *glad and gay* ; 302, 2891, 3100

Sometimes this popular binomial ('glad and blithe') changes its form slightly under the necessity of riming as seen in 463 and 718. A similar binomial 'glad and gay' is favoured by romance-writers aiming at an alliterative effect on a poetic line. Both binomials stand at the end of a line without exceptions.

1. 8 On the other hand, a feeling of sorrow, trouble, pain, distress, etc., is also expressed in many and varied binomials :

The mayden wepte for *sorow & Care*. 555
So mekylle she is in *sorow and care*; 683, 692, 806, 1089, 1127, 3118, 3601, 3758
her hertes was full of *sorow and woughe*[8], 1333, 1365
And in Arthurs tyme but *sorow and woo*; 2965
There was *duell and wepynge* sare, 2244

The binomial 'sorow and care' is overwhelming in frequency, and, interestingly enough, its inverted word order 'care and sorow' is not observed at least in our romance. Under the necessity of riming *care* is very often changed into another word of sorrow or its relevant or near meaning.

Similar types of binomial expressions will be illustrated here :

The knyghtis answerd with *wo and wrake*[9], 1451
"Syr, god yow saue from *wo And wrake* 2654
And suffre for god *sorow and stryffe*[10] ; 3701

The applied or extended binomials are favoured now and then aiming at an alliterative effect, as well as for the selection of rime.

Furthermore, an expression of sorrow or mental suffering is seen by the use of verbs as well :

The quene *wepte and sighed* sore, 1340
Loude gon she *wepe and grede*[11] 1390
Than she *wepte and gaffe* hyr *ille* 1356, 1419
All nyght gan he *wepe And wrynge* 3746
wepyd sore *and* handys *wrange*. 3505
Syr bors bothe *wepte And songe*, 3914
We may *syghe and monynge make* 1384
The kynge than *sighed and gaffe* hym *yelle* 1324

In this kind of binomials, the verb *weep* functions as a pivotal word, and the popular collocation or idiom 'wring one's hands' appears in the latter or closing parts of each romance.

Similar types of binomial expressions will be shown below :

I may wofully *wepe and wake* 750, 3032, 3222, 3571

All nyght gan he *wake And wepe*, 3192.

This alliterative binomial is also favoured in romances, and stands at rime without exceptions. This popular Middle English phrase appears now and then with the word order inverted.

In addition, the binomial 'allas and well-a-way!' and its variants also occur very often in our romance as well as in other romances:

And sayd: "*allas and well-a!way*[12]! 360
"*Allas*!" she sayd, "*and well-a-wo*! 652
he sayd "*allas and wellaway* "820
He sayd "*Allas and weilawaye*! 2116
he sayd: "*Allas And wele A-way*! 3872
And sayd: "*Allas and wele-A-woo*! 1409

Lovers make such a sorroful cry or exclamation very frequently in romances at large. Needless to say, this is a conventional pattern of the expression of sorrow or mental pain. In Chaucer as well, we can see a lot of these kinds of binomials of sorrow or mental pain.

In the context of sorrow, the following prepositional phrases are observed in our romance as well as in other romances:

With sory hert and drery mode; 2031
With drery hert And sorowfull stevyn, 3193
With drery herte and sorowful stevyn; 3411
With sorowful herte And drery stevyn; 3821

This kind of an explanatory binomial phrase is exquisitely appropriate in romance, it seems. In these contexts, all the three adjectives (*sory*, *sorowful* and *drery*) are identical in meaning. In these kinds of phrases as well, we can see such binomials as 'sory and drery', 'drery and sorowful', etc.

1. 9 The popular binomial 'hole and fere' expressing bodily health is also recurrent in our romance:

Allas! that he nere *hole and fere*! 411
By that was launcelot *hole and fere*, 552
cf. For I shalle be bothe *hole and quite*[13] 499

A similar binomial 'hole and sond (e)' is still more frequent throughout romances, and this kind of binomial also stands at rime without exceptions. It goes without saying that *hole* is a pivotal word.

1. 10 The binomial expressing muchness of number 'mani and fale' also occurs not infrequently in romances:

Festys made he, *many and fele*, 2962
cf. By-felle Aunturs ferly *fele*, 6

This binomial is very popular in medieval literature, occurring almost always at rime, even when it is used singly as seen in line 6.

1. 11 We encounter very often a popular binomial which has to do with time, when we read medieval literary texts. Our romance is no exception at all:

That waites you bothe *day and nyght*; 1779
That thay ne shulde lette for *day ne nyght*, 2089
Nor neuer yit dyd by *day nor nyght*. 2929
Than euyr she was by *day or nyght*." 2317

he Awaytes both *nyght and day*. 64
nyght and day hys herte was sore; 2501
That *nyght And day* hathe bene oure foo, 1821

D. S. Brewer says that 'the collocation *day-night*, for example, is the most frequently repeated in all the romances.[14] His remarks are attested here and there in our romance as well. The binomial 'day and night' occupies the position of rime without fail at least in our romance. Sometimes its inverted word order 'night and day' occurs at rime under the necessity of riming, but rather than otherwise, 'day and night' is more frequent, at least in tail-rime romances. The binomial 'night and day' occurs everywhere within a poetic line: at head position, internally and, of course, at rime. This popular idiom is certainly extremely commom, as in *nuit et jor* in French. Chaucer also uses this binomial very frequently.

1. 12 In the battlefield warriors are naturally required to fight or do some duty with all their might and main. As we should expect, there appears the binomial 'myght and mayne' (and vice versa) many times in our romance as well as in other romances:

And I with alle my *myght and mayne* 606
Than wylle I prove with *myght and mayne*, 2831
Whyle me lastethe *myght or mayne*, 2682, 2856, 2870, 3134

There he loste both *mayne and might* 854, 902, 1375, 1658, etc.
cf For sorow he loste bothe *strenghth & myght* 474

The modern binomial '(with) might and main' occasionally changes its form into 'main and might' under the necessity of rime. We have no examples of the binomial 'mayne *or* myght'. Of all the 'with ～'phrases (e. g. line 2831), this binomial ('myght and mayne') is the most frequent, and always functions as a rime phrase throughout romances at large. This popular alliterative binomial has been used until the present day from Anglo-Saxon period.

1. 13 A very popular binomial 'hors and man' (and vice versa) occurs everywhere within a poetic line:

Bothe *hors and man* there yede adowne; 288
hors and man he bare to grounde, 2161, 2752
Downe he bare bothe *hors and man*, 2760

We happen to have no examples of the binomial 'man and hors' in our romance, but both binomials are ubiquitous throughout romances at large. Roughly speaking, this popular binomial occurs at non-rime position of a poetic line.

1. 14 The binomial expression 'go and (/ne/or) ride' meaning traffic in battlefield is abundant in number:

heraudis he dyd *go and Ride* 341, 431, 828, 2088, 2502
So All that ouer *gone And Ryde* 3128
Or euer gawayne myght *Ryde or go* 2940
cf. Thay *Ryden and ronne* than for hys sake, 1628

To the utmost degree, 'go and Ryde' is a pivotal binomial, but once in a while its inverted word order 'Ryde or go' (though a conjunction is also changed) occurs under the necessity of riming. Anyhow, this binomial invariably stands at the position of rime in our romance.

Incidentally, Chaucer also uses this binomial in *Sir Thopas*:

Til he go longe hath *riden and goon* 800
That to hir durste *ride or goon*, 805

It is undoubtedly clear that Chaucer borrowed this binomial from tail-rime romances in the Auchinleck Manuscript he himself read.

1. 15 The binomial expression 'lasse & mare' always functions as a rime phrase in our romance as well as in other romances:

And alle the courte both *lasse & mare*. 687
to All hys barons, *lesse and mare*, 1125, 1606, 3837

This inclusive phrase or binomial with the meaning of 'without distinction of social standing' is also used by Chaucer very frequently.

1. 16 The binomial expression meaning eating and drinking is also characteristic of romances:

Off *mete and drinke* rychely dight. 254
Onne the morow gonne they *dyne & fare*, 255

Ete and drynke and make you blythe?" 1563

Among these kinds of binomials 'mete and drinke' is the most frequent, and generally speaking, it stands at rime, though we happen to have no examples which stand at rime.

1. 17 Another inclusive phrase or popular binomial 'far and near' also makes its appearances in our romance:

And sought hym bothe *ferre and nere*, 439
In all landis *ferre and nere* : 829

cf. That wonnyd bothe *ferre and hend*,[15] 332

This binomial stands without fail at rime, and occurs in almost all the other metrical or tail-rime romances.

Chaucer also uses this binomial once in *The Knight's Tale*:

Frely, withouten raunson or daunger ;
And this day fifty wykes, *fer ne ner*, 1849-50

1. 18 Words with regard to a battle occur also very often in the form of binomials in our romance as well as in other romances:

With *sheldis* brode *and helymys* shene 51
Swerd and sheld were good at nede 85, 2915
he rode with *helme and swerde* browne ; 284
A day he toke with *spere and sheld* 922, 2135
Rayses *spere and gounfanoune*, 2104, 2153, 2464, 2527, 2886
with *Alblasters and bowes* bente. 2729
Helme, hawberke and All of stele 2788, 3283
With *gleyves* grete *And gonfanowne* 3096
In-to the hede throw the *helme And creste*, 3398

With *helme And shelde and hauberke* shene ; 1515, 2106, 2748
With *helme, shelde And hauberke* browne[16] 2884, 3092, 3338
With *helme, swerd And hauberke* bryght : 3299

Weapons seldom appear singly, but almost invariably occur with a similar kind of weapon. 'Gonfanoun', even if it is collocated with any other word or weapon, always stands at rime. These weapons are mostly qualified by such adjectives as 'bryght', 'shene', 'browne', etc. It is not rare that binomials change into tripartite expressions. 'Spere' as well doesn't stand at rime, even though it is collocated with any other kind of weapon. Main weapons in romances are 'helm', 'spere', 'sheld', 'hauberke', 'swerde' and 'gonfanoun'.

1. 19 Speaking of a battle, various kinds or ranks of warriors also constitute binomial expressions in our romance as well:

Glad of hym was *kyng and knight*, 622, 1581, 1662
The kinge hym kissyd and *knight & swayne*[17] 711
he toke his leue at *erle and knight* 612
Kynge and duke, erle and knyght, 2554
An hundrethe *knyghtis and squyers* mo. 1895
Kynge And All hys *knyghtis* kene, 1921
Sente hym *barons or knyghtis* : 2041
To *erlys And barons* on Iche A syde, 2504
To *erlys And* to *barons* on ylk A syde 3044
Erlys fele *And barons b*old ; 3583
His *erlys And* hys *barons b*olde, 2541

To *erle, baroun and* to *knyght*, 2091

Here also we have a tripartite expression in addition to lots of binomials. From an alliterative point of view, the binomial '*k*ing and *k*night' is especially favoured. The word *baron* very often collocates with *earl*. So, the binomial 'erle and baron' is also recurrent in romance. Additionally, the word *baron* is, as we should expect, combined with the adjective *bold* of bravery to give an alliterative effect on a poetic line with the atmosphere of battle.

1. 20 It goes without saying that the binomials consisting of two female characters also appear not infrequently in our romance:

That *ladyes and maydens* might se 46
To *ladyes and* to *maydens* bryght, 1440, 2315
To *quenys and countesses* fele he sende 2032, 2038
The *Abbes*[18] *and* the other *nonnys* I-wysse, 3635

In this type of binomials, 'ladyes and maydens' is the most frequent. Its inverted word order 'maydens and ladyes' is not observed at least in our romance. Sometimes an alliterative effect is aimed at. Sometimes a character of religious circle is collocated with that of the same circle.

It goes without saying that the two-substantive binomials consisting of male and female characters also occur very often (e. g. 'doughter and knight' 458, 'kynge and quene' 2289, 'lordys and ladyes' 3208, etc.). We have more various combinations of this pattern.

1. 21 The two-word expression referring to our physical body also consititues a binomial very frequently:

Rede and fayer of *flesshe and blode*, 3888, 1352
There is no lady of *flesshe ne bone* 588

And steryd knyghtis bothe *blode and bone*. 3109
That euyr steryd with *blode or bone* 3381
Bold barons of *bone and blode*, 3418
Whan thou arte hole in *herte and hond*, 2838, 3564
To do batayle with *herte and hande*, 2943
And feelyn hym to *fote and hande*; 2480
And sythe he kyste hym *cheke and chynne* 3792
So lytell they wexe of *lyn And lerys*[19], 3832

Such binomials as 'flesshe and blode', 'flesshe ne bone', 'blode and (/ne/or) bone' (and vice versa), 'herte and hond','cheke and chynne', etc., are in especial favoured. In the majority of cases an alliterative effect seems to be aimed at. Interesting enough is that these kinds of binomials stand at rime position without exceptions. The binomial 'bone and blode' is very often used in a heavy alliterative line as seen in line 3418.

1. 22 The binomials expressing the unhealthy state of mind and body are also recurrent in our romance:

Fore he was *seke and* sore *vnsound*, 1599
For he was *seke and* sore *vn-sounde*. 2165
Full passynge *seke and vn-sonde* 2859
he was *seke And* sore *vnsond*; 3068
That he was *seke And* full *vn-sownde*. 3343
Was sely[20] *seke and* sore *vnsounde*. 3387
cf. There he stode, sore and *vnsownde*, 3511

As is understood from the illustrations, the binomial 'seke and vnsound' has become a fixed expression, and *sore* is added to heighten an alliterative effect. The negative adjective *vnsound* stands without exceptions at rime position. The word *vnsound* in line 2165 is recorded as the fourth citation with the meaning of 'unhealthy, diseased' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

1. 23 Respecting the binomials with reference to a battle, we have further examples like these:

Take his *Armure and* his *stede*; 174
stede and armure All was blake; 1472, 1556
And they to *hors and Armes* swythe 1948
Withe *hors* stronge *And Armure* bright, 2093
In *turnamente and* eke in *fight*, 885
Shall *trewes sette and pees make*, 2012
And holde yngland in *Reste and pes*. 2261
To saue the Reme in *trews and pees*. 2520
There had he nouther *Roo*[21] *ne Reste*, 3614

But *warre And stryffe And batayle* sore." 3721

Such binomials as 'armure and stede', 'hors and armure', such tautological binomials or triplets as 'turnamente and fight', 'rest and pees', 'roo ne pees' or 'warre and stryffe and batayle' or such phrases as 'to set truce and make peace' also make their appearances in our romance just as well as in other metrical romances.

1. 24 In our romance the binomial '(the) king and (the) court' is remarkable. '(The) court' here means' the body of courtiers collectively ; the retinue (councillors, attendants, etc.) of a sovereign or high dignitary.' 'The court' should be construed as plural :

The *kinge and* alle *the courte* was blithe, 702, 1513, 1631
kynge and courte hade ofte bene slayne, 1697
The *kynge and courte* was All full blythe, 2333

It is quite obvious that an alliterative effect is aimed at. This binomial never stands at rime position. In relation to the meter and rhythm the two small words *all* and *the* are added very often.

1. 25 The binomials expressing 'to be prepared, ready' are also repeated in our romance as well :

Bad them *buske and make* them *yare* 349, 2505
Launcelot *buskyd And made* hym *bowne*[22], 2882, 2151, 2462, 2525
They *buskyd* theyme *And made yare*[23] ; 3579
Tylle he were *armyed and redy dyght*. 1442, 1884, 1896

The verbal binomials 'busk and make yare' and 'busk and make bowne' are very popular in Middle English verse and prose texts, especially in romances. The popular binomial 'armed and ready dight' is also recurrent in metrical or tail-rime romances. This latter binomial is, it seems, very appropriate in a martial context.

1. 26 The binomials which express favourable meanings are also observed very frequently in our romance as well :

But lyve in *honour and* in *pride"*. 38, 52
Off *biaute and* of *bounte*, 125, 1739
Whan knightis wynne *worship and pride*, 361
Ferly mekelle of *strengthe and pryde* ; 2581

It was essential for knights or other warriors to be fully equipped with such mental qualities as 'honour', 'pride', 'bounty', 'worship', '(intellectual or moral) beauty', 'strength', and so forth.

1. 27 Furthermore, we can identify the copious presence of fixed and conventional binomials or

formulae in our romance as well as in other metrical or tail-rime romances. In the majority of cases, they form alliterative binomials: '*h*ele and *h*yde', '*R*yve and *R*ente', '*c*rye and *c*alle', '*b*owyd and *b*ente', '*b*ette and *b*ound', '*l*enge and *l*ende', '*R*offe and *r*ente', '*w*o and *w*ele', '*R*ede and *R*yght', '*w*erre and *w*rake', '*t*eldys[24] and *t*ente', '*t*owre and *t*owne', '*w*atres and *w*awes', '*h*yllys and *h*oltys', '*h*yde and *h*ewe', '*w*ynd and *w*edyr', '*f*oster and *fede*', '*w*anne and *w*ete', '*R*yhche and *R*ownde', '*w*rothe and *w*ode', '*w*ykke and *w*yde', '*w*hare-fore and *w*hy', '*d*roupe and *d*are', '*l*y and *l*evyd', '*h*auyn and *h*old, '*h*ighe and *h*ore', etc. Sometimes they constitute tautological binomials, and sometimes antithetical binomials, and sometimes parallelisms of collocations of simple or plain words.

Moreover, the following fixed or conventional binomials are observed in our romance: 'hele and layne', 'see and here' (and vice versa), 'see and lythe', 'wepte and loughe', 'sheuer and quake', 'saue and hede', 'saue and 3eme[25]', 'felle and swounyd', 'woundyd and slayne', 'wondyd and forbled', 'torne and chaunge', 'brenne and sle' (& its past form 'brente and slow'), 'stynt or Renne', 'dwelle and lede', 'Rede and synge' (and vice versa), 'fals and treytour', 'hungre and colde', 'leff and dere', 'brode and wyde', 'brode and depe', 'brode and longe', 'good or ylle', 'yvell nor gode', 'bold and hye' (in a heavy alliterative line), 'loude and stille', 'loude and shrylle', 'couthe and myght', 'whyte and blake', 'Rede and white', 'yelow or bloo', 'crosse and Rode', 'ende and by-gynnynge', 'lawe and Ryght', 'vois and hornys', 'boure and (/or) halle', 'maste and ore', 'sonne and mone', 'northe and southe', and so forth.

The existence of repetitions of such binomials of synonyms, antonyms or parallelisms are without doubt characteristic of metrical or tail-rime romances. It seems that these binomials are very helpful both to the minstrels, jongleurs or story-tellers and to the audience. The repetition of binomials consisting of simple or plain words is ubiquitous throughout our romance as well as in other metrical or tail-rime romances.

2. As is elucidated from the above observations, there are various binomials or fixed popular expressions in the language of *Le Morte Arthur*. Especially, the majority of binomials occur at the second half of a poetic line, and serve in many cases as line fillers. We finally understand that these popular binomial expressions are one of the most important linguistic tools in metrical or tail-rime romances. Without these figure of speech, the romance-composers could not have versified, nor could the professional minstrels, jongleurs or story-tellers have recited or chanted. The existence of these binomials helps so much in order to make the flow of a romance smooth. To the minstrels or story-tellers, these 'fixed' binomials would have been essential in reciting or chanting verse romances fluently.

We also find that Chaucer read the riming romance group. This great poet did not, however, use so platitudinous an expression very often. It was when some special intention or aim was implied that Chaucer drastically employed stereotypical binomial expressions.

Notes

1) *OED*—binomial 3. *Philol.* see the citation of 1964
2) P. F. Hissiger, *Le Morte Arthur* (A Critical Edition), Mouton, The Hague, 1975, p. 2
3) P. F. Hissiger, *op. cit.*, p. 6
4) J. D. Bruce, *Le Morte Arthur* (EETS, ES 88), OUP. 1959 (reprint), xxviii

5) T. Shimogasa, "Binomial Expressions in *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*" (Bulletin of the Faculty of Literature, Yamaguchi Women's University, No. 2, 1993, p. 84
6) T. Shimogasa, *op. cit.*, p. 85
7) Ruth Crosby, "Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages" in *Speculum* 11, U. S. A., 1936, p. 104
8) *OED* —+wough sb.[2] : wrong, evil ; injury, harm/Bruce : trouble, evil, wo
9) *OED*—+wrake sb.[1] : coupled with cognate terms 3. distress of body or mind ; pain, suffering, misery/Bruce : trouble, suffering
10) *OED*—strife 1. +e. *occas.* (for rime) trouble, toil, pain, distress
MED—5. d. suffering, affliction, hardship, trouble
11) *OED*—+grede : to cry, cry out, shout ; wail
MED—greden : 2, to weep, lament, mourn/Bruce : cry
12) *OED*—wellaway : A. *int.* An exclamation of sorrow or lamentation B. +2. sorrow, distress, misery, woe
13) *OED*—+quite *adj.* free, clear/*MED*—exempt, free, freed
14) D. S. Brewer, *Chaucer and Chaucerians* (Critical Studies in Middle English Literature), Nelson, London, 1966, p 14
15) *OED*—+hend *adv.* near, at hand. When used after 'to be',. . ., this may be considered a predicative adjective.
MED—hend (e) *adj.* near, close by ; *fer and hend* : far and near
16) *OED*—brown +4. in reference to the sword, steel, etc. : burnished, glistening/*MED*—of steel, weapons, armor, etc. : shining, polished, bright
17) *OED*—+a young man attending on a knight ; often coupled with *knight*
18) *OED*—abbess : the female superior of a nunnery or convent of women
MED—a woman superior of a convent of nuns
19) *OED*—+leer 2. the face, countenance ; hence, look or appearance
Often in alliterative phrases/*MED*—ler : complexion
20) *MED*—selli *adv.* (c) as intensifier : very, very much, extremely
21) *OED*—+ro : rest, repose, peace/*MED* : peace, quiet, repose, rest
22) *OED*—+boun 1. to prepare, make ready 1. b. *refl.* to prepare oneself, get ready (Often in connection with *busk*)/*MED*—*adj.* ready, prepared
23) *OED*—*adj.* ready, prepared
24) *OED*—+a tent, pavilion, covering/*MED*—a temporary dwelling, tent
25) '3eme'—Bruce : take care of /*OED*—+yeme : to take care of, keep

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