Formulaic Expressions in *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*

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0. It seems worthy of much attention to keep in mind that besides the great literature of Chaucer, Gower, Langland and the *Gawain*-poet, tail-rhyme romances were also at their best and very popular among common people in the Middle Ages. Especially in the northern parts of England, the composition of tail-rhyme romances of twelve -line stanzas was in much vogue from the end of the thirteenth century to the middle of the fifteenth century. The number of tail-rhyme romances extant in the manuscripts exceeds twenty[1].

There are two versions of this tail-rhyme romance. One was written in the late fifteenth century, the other in the mid-seventeenth century. The former 'exists in but one copy, in MS Porkington 10, presently in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. The later version is in the Bishop Percy Folio, now in the British Museum. Both were first printed by Sir Frederic Madden in his *Syr Gawayne* (London, Bannatyne Club, 1839) and the earlier version given the name *Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carelyle*, apparently by Madden himself, since no title for the poem appears in the manuscript.'[2] We can now make use of the two modern versions : 1) Robert W. Ackerman, *Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carelyle* (University of Michigan Press, 1947, No.8 in the University of Michigan Contributions in Modern Philology), and 2) Auvo Kurvinen, *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle in Two Versions* (Helsinki, 1951, Tom 71,2 in the Annales academiae scientiarum fennicae).

When one becomes familiar with the use of linguistic expressions in this romance, one may easily make out that the minstrel's artistic intent in story-telling is modest. 'The tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming *aabccbddbeeb* are no more and no less than adequate for the matter on hand. They are sometimes irregular and stanza breaks occa-sionally are disputable.'[3] The stanza numeration of Kurvinen is followed in this paper. 'The language, not the orthography, is more Northern than Midland, although it is not predominantly either one or the other.'[4] Kurvinen concludes that 'the poem was composed in Cumberland or Westmorland.'[5]

1. The objective of this paper is to make a comprehensive but concise survey of formulaic expressions or formulas occurring in a popular tail-rhyme romance. This romance is 660 lines long, which is much shorter than the length of an average tail-rhyme romance (1,814 lines). Generally, the writers of romances are very careful with their selection of rhymes. The writer of this romance is one such poet, though he seems to belong to 'minor' ones. At any rate, he seems to have been familiar with the language of tail-rhyme romances.

The present writer will discuss the paper by using the text edition included in *Middle English Verse Romances* by Donald B. Sands (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1966, pp. 351-371). The paper will be examined chiefly linguistically from beginning to end. As in the other tail-rhyme romances, popular formulaic expressions are frequent in our romance as well.

Usually, romances were intended for a mixed audience of no more than average intelligence, and sung with the accompaniment of various kinds of musical instruments[6], in a local market-place, a public house, courtyard or inn-yard of the manor of a local nobleman, of a small village.

Alliterative romances are primarily aristocratic and elegant in character, but tail-rhyme romances are more popular and informal. They are the works of art of professional traveling-minstrels, and 'the minstrel was therefore bound to hold up the progress of his story with what

seems to be mere padding, so as to give the important events time to sink in ; he was well advised to repeat the most vital points two or three times.'[7] 'Two features of the tail-rhyme romances which would be helpful both to minstrel and to audience are the standardization of vocabulary ... and the use of conventional groups of rhymes. This standardization would help the minstrel in the composition of the romances and above all in its recitation : the standard vocabulary would eliminate the necessity of memorizing rare epithets, and the occurrence of the first of a group of rhyme words would automatically remind the minstrel of the framework of the rest of the stanza. Similarly, the same features would help the audience to follow the story : the standardization of the vocabulary would mean that all the words used would be familiar, and the standard rhyme-groups would give the audience due warning what was to come.'[8] 'The minstrel can frequently remind his audience of details which might be forgotten — a name, a date, a circumstance, any feature which is vital to the understanding of the story.'[9]

In tail-rhyme romances, the so-called formulas are employed in large quantities. These linguistic devices help the audience to follow the narrative with much ease. The repetitive and copious use of popular formulas was a 'must' deed to professional traveling-minstrels. In particular, such formulaic devices are very conspicuous in tail-rhyme lines, that is, in b-lines. The b-lines have normally less substantial force, occasionally with barely any literal meaning. These characteristic lines serve frequently as a mere tag or embellishment in each stanza. It goes without saying that such formulas occur in non-tail-rhyme lines as well.

We will proceed our discussion and analysis in the order of 'paragraph'-, 'sentence'-, and 'phrase' -unit level, taking account of the length of formulas.

2. First, let us focus our attention on the formula of 'Invocation', or the act of calling upon a deity in prayer for protection. Usually, the Invocation often occurs at the very opening passage in most tail-rhyme romances, but it does not happen to occur in our romance. In its stead, the writer of this romance places the Invocation at the very end of the poem :

> (For the men that he had slayne, *iwis*.)
> **Iesu Cryste, brynge vs to thy *blis***
> **Aboue in heuyn, yn thy see. Amen.** 659
> -60

The poet asks Jesus Christ to bring us to His bliss, high in heaven in His 'see' (<OF *sē, sed* = 'the dwelling-place of a god'). The rhyme '*bliss* : *ywis*' is also recurrent in tail-rhyme romances at large.

After finishing the narrative, the tail-rhyme romance writers make it a rule, in general, to place a religious ending in the final passage or stanza. This seems also a popular and conventional literary device. The object toward which the Invocation is directed most often is Jesus Christ, and then the Virgin Mary. It seems that the audience would have been relieved to listen to such religious ending or withdrawal, which bears a very solemn and impressive tone or reverberation.

3. As one of the conspicuous characteristics of formulaic expressions in tail-rhyme romances, there is the frequent appearance of direct addresses to the audience. The occurrence of this figure of speech is normally at the very beginning of each tail-rhyme romance. Our romance begins :

> **Lystonnyth**, *l*ordyngus, a *l*yttyll stonde
> Of on that was *sekor and sounde*
> And *doughty in* his *d*ede. 1-3

The poet must, first of all, address the audience and urge them to listen to him. And he begins to narrate a story in which a hero or heroine makes an appearance without fail. In this brief passage concerned, two popular alliterative formulas appear : '*s*icker and *s*ound' and '*d*oughty in

*d*eed'. The former one refers to the mental attribute of a main character, meaning 'sure and sound (of judgment, for example)'. The latter one (= 'brave in martial behavior') is innumerably recurrent at tail-rhyme line in the tail-rhyme romances. Probably this formula is one of the most favored in this genre of literature. The opening line seems to be aimed at a light alliteration of '*l-*'.

A kind of direct address occurs in the stanza 10 :

> A lyon of golde was his creste ;
> He spake reyson out of reste ;
> **Lystynn and ye may her.**
> Whereuer he went, be *est or weste*,
> He nold forsake *man nor best*
> To fight *fer or ner*. 97-102

The formula 'Listen and ye may hear' is recurrent halfway through in many tail-rhyme romances, requiring again the attention of the audience who are prone to be often inattentive or desultory. It was essential for the minstrel to put such formulas in at proper intervals. In the passage above, there are three word pairs which we may call 'inclusive' phrases : '(by) east and west', 'man nor beast' and 'far and near', of which the last one is ubiquitous in almost all the tail-rhyme romances.

There is a simple address to the audience :

> The dere ys passyde out of our syght ;
> We mete no mor wytt hym to-nyght,
> **Hende herkon to me.** 130-32

As 30 lines have developed since the previous line addressing to the audience, the poet may feel it necessary to insert a line to call their attention ('Hearken to me, courteous ones!'). The initial term 'Hend' functions here as an absolute usage with the sense of 'Courteous ones', 'applied conventionally, chiefly to ladies or persons of noble rank'.[10] The term itself is 'a conventional epithet of praise, very frequent in Middle English poetry'.[11]

There are only three instances of this type of formula here, because it seems unnecessary to often insert this figure of speech owing due to the brief romance (660 lines in all).

4. Next, we will discuss formulaic expressions at sentence unit level recurrent in tail-rhyme romances. In this genre of literature appear many types of formulas at sentence unit level such as 'In romance as we read', 'The sooth is not to lain', 'This dare I safely say', 'I understand (/ween / trow)', 'I say (/pray /plight) you', 'So moot I thrive (/ So God me speed)', 'It was joy (/dole) to hear (/see)', etc.

The above-mentioned types of figure of speech also serve as an important factor for the romance writer to continue his narrative. All of them are conventional and stereotyped, occurring much more often than those consisting of paragraph unit level discussed so far. We will analyze and discuss the occurrences of this figure of speech from the point of the structure as well.

The type 'In romance as we read', first of all, attracts our attention. It immediately appears at the closing line of the first stanza :

> *Sertaynly, wyttoutyn fabull* [12],
> He was wytt Artter at the Rounde Tabull,
> **In romans as we rede.** 10-12

The point to be kept in mind is that this type of figure, or reference to the original, occurs at b-line, that is, at tail-rhyme line as a rule. It is doubtful whether the poet really read the original text or not. It might be that he did read the original, but customarily the poet brings it forth as a mere convention modeled after the tradition of oral delivery. There are two ways of interpretation. The classical way of interpretation is expressed by Ruth Crosby, which runs as : 'Originality was the last claim of the medieval poet. He often vouched for the truth of his story by referring to the source which was his authority'.[13] In accordance with this manner of interpretation, the reference to the original is to play a very

important role, because this figure of speech comes with the intent to make the audience believe the plausibility of the narrative. This formulaic expression is not always an empty line filler, but bears a certain important function when viewed in its context. It bears an appropriate stylistic effect in terms of the development of the plot. Its effect can occasionally be so subtle that its existence may seem questionable.

Ruth Crosby's way of interpretation is now less appreciated by modern critics of Middle English literature, because it has become a little out-dated and slightly off the point.

The similar type of formula follows only six lines after :

> His name was Syr Gawene ;
> Moche worschepe in Bretten he wan,
>   And *hardy* he was *and wyghte*.
> The yle of Brettayn icleppyde ys
> Betwyn Skotlond and Ynglonde iwys,
>   **In storry iwryte aryghte.** 13-18

The above passage seems a typical description of the opening of a romance. First, a concise description of a hero is brought about. The hero is, as might be expected, 'hardy and wight'. Even such a simple truth is to depend upon the original, upon which a story succeeds henceforth. The type 'In romance as men read' makes its appearance 33 lines thereafter :

> The kyngus vncull Syr Mordrete
> Nobull knyghtus wytt hym gan lede,
>   **In romans as men rede.** 49-51

One may notice that the personal pronoun has changed from 'we' to 'men'. The insertion of this reference to the original does not seem so significant from the context. Rather, here it seems a mere line filler or tag. One may naturally expect that it occurs at tail-rhyme line here in this romance.

The type 'This dare I safely say' also makes its appearance :

> Whos stoud a stroke of his honde,
> He was not wecke, I vndurstond,
>   **That dar I safly swer.** 268-70

One sees here as well that asserting the truth of a statement was a 'must' duty to the writers of romances. In this figure of speech is included the adverb 'safely' in the majority of cases, of which *OED* defines 'without risk or error'[14], in other words, 'surely, truly'. *MED* defines 'certainly, confidently'[15]. In romances with different rhyme schemes and in Gower as well is often observed this figure of speech. The verbs included in this formula are 'say', 'swear', 'deem', 'tell', 'avow', etc. In accordance with the corresponding rhyme word, one verb of them is fittingly chosen, though the use of the verb 'say' is sweepingly frequent.

The milder types of formula belonging to this category are more repetitive. The formula '(as) I ween' is most salient :

> And Lanfalle, **I wene.** 39 (**b**)
> VC and moo, **I wene.** 105 (**b**)
> That dorst do hit, **I wene.** 207 (**b**)
> He was all wett, **I wene.** 345 (**b**)
> Manny sythis, **I wene.** 354 (**b**)
> A clothe of golde, **I wene.** 561 (**b**)
> The harpe was of maser fyne ;
> The pynnys wer of golde, **I wene,** 433-4

The meaning amounts to 'I think, I suppose ; I believe'. In ME writings this formula is often collocated with the adverb 'well', thus constituting an alliterative phrase 'ween well', though this romance has no examples of this alliterative collocation. The verb 'ween' is 'used parenthetically (esp. in *I ween*) rather than as governing the sentence. In verse often as a mere tag'.[16] This statement is quite true of the tail-rhyme romance in question. What is worthy of attention is that this formula occurs mostly at tail-rhyme line.

Meanwhile, merely for the adjustment of the length of each poetic line, there are cases where the conjunctive 'as (/so)' precedes the formula :

Irounsyde, **as I wene,**
Gat the knyght of armus grene 67-8
Ironsyde, **as I wene,**
I-armyd he wolde ryde full clene, 73-4
Thow iappyst, **as I wene.** 201 **(b)**
Homwarde, **as I wenne.** 498 **(b)**
Al yn blode, **as I wene.** 534 **(b)**

This second type of formula does not occur at tail
-rhyme line. At any rate, this brief formula, either
with the conjunctive 'as (/so)' or without, chiefly
serves as a rhyme phrase, with hardly any appre-
ciable force.

The formula '(as) I understand' appears in most
tail-rhyme romances. Our romance includes :

On a lady bryght,
Sertenly, **as I wnderstonde,** 69-70
The Karl of Carllyll ys his nam,
He may vs herborow, be Sent Iame,
　As I vndurstonde. 142-4 **(b)**
As I vndirstonde." 621 **(b)**
He was not wecke, **I vndurstond,** 269

Of the verb 'understand', *OED* says : 'In paren-
thetic use (chiefly *I understand*) : To believe or
assume, on account of information received or by
inference.'[17] This is typically true of ME poetical
works. As in the previous formula ('(as) I ween'),
the conjunctive 'as' sometimes precedes the for-
mula 'I understand' under the requirement of
meter and rhythm. This formula occurs both at b
-line and at non-b-line at the similar ratio.

The formula 'I undertake', often added to a
statement, roughly means 'I promise, I affirm' :

Glad was Launccelet de Lacke,
So was Syr Percivall, **I vndortake,** 37-8
And for alle these sowlys, **I vndirtake,**
A chauntery here wul I lete make, 547-8

This formula seems to be placed at rhyme posi-
tion in order to rhyme with its more substantial
corresponding rhyme word (e.g. L*acke* : vndort*a-
ke*, m*ake* : vndirt*ake*). Consequently, this formula

itself seems to serve secondarily in each sentence.
The formula 'I say you' basically accompanies
the conjunctive 'as'.

Then Syr Gawen and Syr Key
And Beschope Bavdewyn, **as I yow say,** 115
-6 (also in 119, 172)
For sothe, **as I you say.** 639 **(b)**
A glad man was Syr Gawen
Sertenly, **as I yowe sayne,** 487-8
For sothe, **as I the say** 540 **(b)**

This formula seems to be used to introduce a
word, phrase or statement repeated from the
preceding sentence (usually in order to place it in
a new connection). Noticeable is that the formula
preceded by the adverbial phrase 'for sooth' never
fails to occur at tail-rhyme line. It is solely
because this full line formula belongs to 'old'
information. The word order 'as I *you say*' is
absolute. Under the exigency of rhyming, the verb
form 'sain' sometimes occur (e.g. G*awen* : s*ayne*).
The verb form 'sayne' never occurs within a
poetic line.

The type 'so have I bliss (/so moot I thrive)'
also attracts our attention.

Syr Gawen sayd, "**So hav I blyse,**
I woll not geystyn ther magrê ys, 163-4
I say, **so haue I helle.** 171 **(b)** (= 'so have I
health')
The porter sayde, "**So mot I thryfe,**
Ther be not thre knyghttus alyve 205-6
I swer, **so mott I trye."** 315 **(b)** (: *I* :
wytterl*y* : l*yghe*)
Also mot I well far ; 153 **(b)** (= 'as I may
fare well')
For her no corttessy thou schalt have,
But carllus cortessy, **so God me save,** 277-
8
"Therfor a buffet thou schalt have,
I swer, **so God me sawe,** 310-11

In all the tail-rhyme romances occur such for-
mulaic expressions of adjuration or asseveration

as 'so God me speed', 'so have I bliss', 'so moot I thrive', etc. These formulas are also often used, intended for oral delivery. They occur at proper intervals. The aim of inserting such formulas here and there within a single poem seems to provide a short rest both for minstrel and audience. The meaning of these formulas is roughly 'indeed', though sometimes they literally mean 'as I may prosper or flourish'. The worth of the existence of these formulas is equal to almost nothing. Seemingly, their effect is to make the flow of the story smoother. At least, it does not serve as a hindrance to the smooth flow of the narrative. These formulas basically occur at the second half of a poetic line, but sometimes occupy a whole poetic line. The unfamiliar verb form 'try' at line 315 may be considered as a scribal error for 'thrive', because this verb never bears the meaning of 'to prosper, thrive'. These types of formulas are occasionally preceded by the formula 'I swear', another popular formula solely added for the intensification of the statement.

5. Joy and sorrow are two inevitable human feelings in the romances. Characters feel happy when an incident comes to a happy ending, and unhappy when it comes to an unhappy ending. In particular, the expression at headline is generally placed at the final line of a stanza :

> Ther hinge many a blody serke,
> And eche of heme a dyuers marke ;
> **Grete doole hit was to sene**. 535-7

The gist or plot of a story is described within the previous lines. As a summary, the formula 'It was great dole (/dolour /pity /joy /...) to see (/hear)' is placed at the closing line of a stanza. This figure of speech makes its appearance in most tail-rhyme romances.

6. In tail-rhyme romances as well in many other genres of ME literature are identified such word pairs as 'hardy and wight (/keen /bold)', 'stern and stout', 'wild and felon', 'bright and sheen (/clear)', 'fair and good (/bright)', 'glorious and gay', 'ware and wise', 'glad and blithe', 'lord or lad', 'book and bell', 'limb and lithe', 'drink and eat (/play)', 'sing and read', 'war and peace', 'more and less', etc. These formulaic word pairs are naturally much more outstanding in frequency than those at sentence unit level. Word pairs normally consist of terms of similar character, and are many and varied in kind. Word pairs are also termed as 'merisms' (by L.L.Besserman), 'binomials', and 'doublets'. Among these four appellations, 'word pairs' seems to have been used most often by the researchers of the study of Middle English language.

The above-mentioned word pairs are ever present throughout all the tail-rhyme romances, and consequently they have already become one major linguistic trait of this genre of ME literature. It goes without saying that these word pairs occur in prose works in the same period as well.

One of the reasons why such a linguistic phenomenon occurs frequently in the romances is that the juxtaposition of the two simple (in general) word pairs was already fixed and familiar among people in the medieval times, and the listeners of romances, in particular, might well have anticipated the frequent and copious use of those popular word pairs. Furthermore, by the frequent use of these familiar word pairs the romance writers or minstrels seem to have prompted their stories forth more easily. In addition, the listeners to romances were quite relieved to find the frequent use of those familiar word pairs they already knew well. When the listeners of romances heard one familiar word, they were probably able to predict which word would come next. The frequent use of these familiar word pairs helped smooth the flow of the narrative.

Most words which make up these familiar word pairs are of Anglo-Saxon origin. A small quantity of words originates from other languages (e.g. Old French, Old Norse), though the lay people who listened to the romances seem to have been fully intimate even with words of foreign origin. Those word pairs are sometimes alliterative, and some-

times effective with assonance as the feature. Some of them occur at rhyme position, some tend to appear at head position, and some tend to occur at internal position within a poetic line. The order of some word pairs is occasionally changed as rhyming necessitates. In general, longer romances include many and varied instances, shorter ones do not. Accordingly, our romance in question includes fewer instances. But there occur typical ones we might naturally expect.

Word pairs expressive of the bravery in battle attract our attention, first of all. In particular, the term 'hardy', of French origin *hardi*, often serves as a core term :

> His name was Syr Gawene ;
> Moche worschepe in Bretten he wan,
> > And **hardy** he was **and wyghte**. 13-15 **(b)**
> Wytt **hardy** lordys **and wyghte**. 24 **(b)**

The hero Gawain won much worship in Britain and was 'hardy and wight', very appropriate epithets for a noble knight. The latter epithet ('wight') is of Old Norse origin, and basically becomes the latter constituent of these word pairs. Sir Gawain's retainers are also 'hardy and wight'. The term 'hardy' serves basically as a non-rhyme word, mainly because there are hardly any corresponding rhyme words ending with '-*y*'.

> And Syr Lot of Laudyan,
> > That **hardy** was **and kene**,
> Syr Gaytefer and Syr Galerowne,
> Syr Constantyn and Syr Raynbrown, 41-44

All the renowned knights surrounding Sir Gawain : Sir Lothian, Sir Gadiffer, Sir Galeran, Sir Constantin, Sir Reinbrun are all 'hardy and keen'. The names of Sir Lancelot of the Lake, Sir Percival and Sir Launfal are mentioned in the preceding lines in the same stanza. One may find that how significant the predicative ('was') is. The original sense of the term 'keen' is rather obscure, but the chief sense in OE ('bold, brave') continues

to exist in the romances where this adjective is used 'as an alliterative epithets of kings or other rulers ; hence, Mighty, powerful, strong.'18 In the romances this adjective is used mainly for the description of such warriors as knights, earls, barons, etc., besides kings and emperors, and is used of weapons, cutting instruments, words, cold, sound, light, scent, etc. When used of wild beasts, the meaning is 'fierce, savage'. This usage is recurrent in the romances. Thus, the width of the meanings of this word of Anglo-Saxon origin (OE *cene*) is extensive.

> Byge barrons he hade ibonde,
> A hardyer knyght myght not be fonde,
> > Full **herdy** he was **and bolde**. 91-3
> The porter went into the hall,
> Wytt his lord he mett wyttall,
> > That **hardy** was **and bolde**. 211-3

The adjective 'bold' basically serves as a rhyme word, and in a few cases it occurs at non-rhyme position under the exigency of rhyming.

Words expressive of bravery are occasionally used of the human visage :

> The Carle the knyghttus can beholde,
> Wytt a **stout** vesage **and** a **bolde** ;
> > He semyd a dredfull man : 247-9

In this case, the meaning of these two words may be 'fearless', the opposite of 'timid' or 'fearful', often with admiration emphasized, almost equal to 'brave'.

The alliterative word pair '*st*ern and *st*out' is used of an inanimate thing :

> Of golde, asure, and byse,
> Wyth tabernacles the halle was brought,
> Wyth pynnacles of golde ***st*erne and *st*oute** ; 609-11

Generally, this word pair is used of the expression of the fearlessness or strong-nerved mind of the warriors such as knights, earls, barons, etc.

The following passage may be worthy of atten-
tion :

>   A **wyld** *b*ole **and a fellon** *b*oor,
>   A lyon that wold byte sor ---
>   Therof they had grete ferly. 226-8

In the romances, wild beasts such as 'boar' and
'bull' often appear, and they are qualified by such
epithets as 'wild', 'felon', 'egir', 'breme', 'thro',
'proud', 'moody', 'unride', etc. The term 'felon', of
Old French origin, when used of persons and
animals, basically means 'cruel, fierce ; savage,
wild', but also means 'brave, courageous, sturdy'
in the romances. The alliterative word pair '*b*ull
and *b*oar' can be identified. The substantive
'ferly', of OE origin, meaning 'marvel, wonder',
occurs very often in the romance-group.

The word pair 'fair and bright' is used of the
weaker sex in the romances :

>   Syr Gawen was aschemmyde in his thowgh-
>   t ;
>   The Carllus dovghtter forthewas brovght,
>   That was so **feyr and bryght**. 415-7

This word pair is also used of clothes ('... clothe of
golde... / That was so feyr and bryght'. 446-7).

The word pair 'bright and sheen' is also nor-
mally used of the weaker sex, but is used of the
inanimate thing (i.e. 'chamber') as well :

>   They toke Syr Gawen wyttout lessynge
>   To the Carlus chamber thei gan hym bryn-
>   ge,
>   That was so **bryght and schene**. 442-4

The word pair 'bright and clear' is used of the
weaker sex :

>   Syr Gawen arose and went thertyll
>   And kyst that lady **bryght and cler**. 506
>   -7

The word pair 'fair and bright' is used of a horse

('palfrey') in our romance :

>   Then thei rode syngynge away
>   Wyth this yonge lady on here palfray,
>   That was so **fayr and bryghte**. 577-9

One may find that word pairs with the term
'bright' as a core term are not only used of human
females, but also of various kinds of inanimate
things.

The alliterative word pair '*g*lorious and *g*ay' is
used of the weaker sex :

>   Sche was so **glorious and** so **gay**
>   I kowde not rekyn here aray,
>   So bryghte was alle here molde. 568-70

The daughter concerned is very 'shining, lustrous'
and 'brilliant, showy'. The latter adjective ('gay')
is, when applied to women, used as a conventional
epithet for praise in ME poetry. Both adjectives
are of (O)F origin.

The word pair 'glad and blithe', expressive of
the happy mental state of the dramatis personae
in the romances, is also highly recurrent :

>   Than the Carle was **glade and blithe**
>   And thonkyd the Kynge fele sythe,
>   For sothe, as I you say. 637-9

The word order 'glad and blithe' is a norm, and
becomes reversed under the exigency of rhyming.
When this formula occurs at rhyme, the term
'blithe' rhymes frequently with 'sythe' (= 'times').
When this word pair occurs at internal position,
its reversed word order 'blithe and glad' is a
norm.

Another alliterative word pair '*w*are and *w*ise'
is often used of words :

>   The Carle knelyd downe on his kne
>   And *w*elcomyd the kynge *w*urthyly
>   Wyth *w*ordis **ware and wyse**. 601-3

This word pair is a typical phraseology referring

to the sagacity of a character. Its typical exam-
ple is identified in Chaucer as well :

> A Sergeant of the Lawe, **war and wys**,
>   *General Prologue* 309

We will enumerate the instances of word pairs
consisting of substantives alone :

> I woll pray the good lorde, as I yow saye,
> Of herborow tyll to-morrow daye
>   And of **met and melle**." 172-4

This is an alliterative word pair of synonyms (=
'food and meals').

> Ye be so fayr, **lyme and lythe**,
> And therto comly, glad therwytt,
>   That *cemmely* hyt ys *to see*. 190-92

The term 'lith', of OE origin, has two kinds of
meanings : 1) a limb, and 2) a joint. Thus '*l*imb
and *l*ith' means literally 'limb and joint'. This
alliterative word pair is normally employed to
refer to the magnitude of a human body ('large of
limb and lith'). This word pair basically serves as
a rhyme phrase, and its inverted word order quite
rarely occurs under the exigency of rhyming. The
triplet cited just above includes such epithets as
'fair', 'comely', 'glad' and 'seemly to see'. The line
192 is appropriate to occur at tail-rhyme line,
because it belongs to 'old' information.

The alliterative word pair '*b*ook and *b*ell' fre-
quently serves as asseveration in the Middle
Ages, and stands exclusively at rhyme position :

> Hett reynnyd and blewe stormus felle
> That well was hym, *be* **bocke and belle**,
>   That herborow had cavght. 340-2

This asseveration was often 'used in the service of
the mass in the church'[19].

Word pairs consisting of antonyms often occur
in the romances :

> Dedus of armus wyttout lese
> Seche he wolde in **war and pees**
>   In mony a stronge lede. 7-9

The hero ('he'), still unmentioned on this stage, is
to search 'deeds of arms' without doubt in 'war
and peace' in many a strange country. This word
pair may be counted among 'inclusive' phrases :
every time.

There are word pairs expressive of such daily
life as drinking, eating, playing, etc. :

> Brynge vs a gretter bolle of wynn ;
> Let vs **drenke and play** sethyn
>   Tyll we to sopper goun." 289-91
> So moche his love was on her light
> Of all the soper he ne myght
>   Nodyr **drynke nor ette**. 406-8

These deeds are indispensable to our daily lives,
and so occur everywhere.

The following two passages may be worthy of
attention :

> A ryche abbey the Carle gan make
> To **synge and rede** for Goddis sake
>   In wurschip of our Lady. 649-51
> And theryn monkys gray
> To **rede and synge** tille domysday,
>   As men tolde hit me,
> For the men that he had slayne, iwis. 655-
> 8

One may conclude that this simple word pair
implicitly accompanies the two objects 'hymn'
and 'holy writ' of the verbs 'sing' and 'read'
respectively.

In the tail-rhyme romances, the so-called
'inclusive' phrases or word pairs expressive of
'*every* person, *every*where, *every* time, *every* cir-
cumstance, etc.', recur all throughout the
romances within poetic lines, especially at rhyme.

A few instances of this type of word pair occur
in our romance as well :

> Wondor glad was Syr Mewreke,
> So was the knyght Sir Key Caratocke,
>   And other **mor and lase**. 34-6
> Syr Lebys Dyskoniis was thare
> Wytt proude men **les and mare**
>   To make the donne der blede ; 55-7
> Whereuer he went, *be* **est or weste**,
> He nold forsake *man nor best*
>   To fight **fer or ner**. 100-2

Among the above-illustrated 'inclusive' phrases, 'more and less (/ less and more)' is predominantly recurrent. The word pair 'far and near' also recurs in almost all the tail-rhyme romances.

7. In ME tail-rhyme romances there are many and varied types of set phrases which had become very popular in those days. These set phrases or formulas are scattered at all points within a poetic line. In particular, they occur at the lines which make up so-called 'old' information, though also not infrequently appearing in the lines of 'new' information. Throughout all the tail-rhyme romances these kinds of formulas occupy a greater part of the phrases and words in poetic lines. Seen from another viewpoint, poetic lines in tail-rhyme romances are not made up without the use of these rich linguistic tools. As can be expected, a greater part of these set phrases feature alliteration or assonance, and furthermore, they occur at rhyme position in many cases. It seems that the listeners expected these familiar phrases to come forth in succession from the mouth of the professional story-teller or traveling-minstrel. In most stanzas or, to be more accurate, in almost every triplet (consisting of three lines) one or two such popular phrases occur. From this point of view these linguistic phenomena will be analyzed and discussed.

The set phrases or formulas expressive of bravery in battlefield attract our attention, first of all :

> Lystonnyth, lordyngus, a lyttyll stonde

> Of on that was sekor and sounde
>   And **doughty in** his **d**ede. 1-3 (also in 6)

The alliterative formula '*d*oughty in *d*eed' has fully fixed as a conventional phrase, occurring at tail-rhyme line without hardly any exception.

> Syr Petty Pas of Wynchylse,
> A nobull knyght of cheualté,
>   And **st**out was **on** a **st**ede. 58-60

The 'st-' alliterative formula '*st*out on *st*eed' is also one of the most familiar in the romance group. One may depict in mind a gallant young warrior riding a fleet steed. Belonging to old information, this formula naturally occurs at tail-rhyme line.

The alliterative formula '*s*eemly to *s*ee' and the like also occur :

> Ye be so fayr, lyme and lythe,
> And therto comly, glad theywytt,
>   That **c**emmely hyt **to** **s**ee. 190-92
> On the morne when hit was daylight
> Syr Gawen weddyid that lady bryght,
>   That **s**emely was **to** **s**e. 634-6

This conventional formula basically expresses the physical or facial beauty of female members in the romances, but is occasionally used of male members. Naturally enough, it occurs at tail-rhyme lines.

> Then seyde the Carle to that **bryght of**
>   **bl**e, 427

The alliterative formula '*br*ight of *bl*ee' is exclusively used of such female members as a lady, maiden or daughter in the romances. The term 'blee' (<OE *blêo*), a purely poetical word in ME poetry, especially in ballads or metrical romances, expresses 'color of the face'.

> They bade Syr Gawen go to bede,
> Uytt clothe of golde so feyr sprede,

That **loufesom** was **of syghte**. 448-50

The formula 'lovesome of sight', meaning 'lovely, beautiful of sight', refers to the physical beauty of female members in the romances, especially of young ones. The alliterative formula '*l*ovesome under *l*ine' is more popular, though not occurring in our romance at all.

Similes are often repetitive in tail-rhyme romances :

> He was as **meke as mayde** in bour 4
> Then the lyon began to lour
> > And **glowyd as a glede**. 236-7
> The wallys **glemyd as any glasse**,
> Wyth dyapir colour wroughte hit was
> > Of golde, assur, and byse, 607-9
> His moghth moche, his berd graye,
> Ouer his brest his lockus lay
> > As **brod as** anny **fane** ; 253-5

A warrior is conventionally described as '*m*eek as a *m*aid in bower' in peacetime. The prepositional phrase 'in bower' does not bear a special meaning but serves as a mere tag to round up the meter and rhythm. A lion rushing about in a frenzy is conventionally described as '*gl*ow as a *gl*eed'. Walls are basically described as '*gl*eam as *gl*ass'. Locks of a warrior are generally 'broad as fane[20]'. One may find that many similes are used in alliterative phrases.

Such types of asseverations or formulas as 'by Saint Michael (/James /John)' are also repetitive in tail-rhyme romances :

> The Karl of Carllyll ys his nam,
> He may vs herborow, **be Sent Iame**,
> > As I vndurstonde. 142-4
> Then sayd the Carle, "**Be Sent Myghell**,
> That tythingus lykyth me ryght well,
> > Seyth thei this way wolde." 220-2
> The Kynge swore, "**By Seynte Myghelle**,
> This dyner lykythe me as welle
> > As any that euyr Y fonde." 625-7
> "Lett be thy knellynge, gentyll knyght ;

> Thow logost wytt a Carll to-nyght,
> > I swer, **by Sennt Iohnn**. 274-6

The romance writers invariably bring this type of formula at rhyme position. This ornamental asseveration seems a kind of figure of speech charged with subtle overtones. Under the exigency of rhyming, some other saints occur at rhyme position, besides Michael, John and James. The formulas 'without ~' are also repetitive all throughout the romances. These formulas mean doubly : 1) 'assuredly, indeed', and 2) 'at once, immediately'. The romance writers needed these kinds of formulas in order to make their audience believe that the narrative they are telling is both true and reliable. The occurrence of the countless numbers of these formulas is one of the linguistically salient characteristics of the literature of this genre. The substantives included in these formulas are many and varied, because their corresponding rhyme words are rich in quantity. Our romance includes :

> Dedus of armus **wyttout lese**
> Seche he wolde in *war and pees* 7-8
> His armus wer gret **wyttoutyn lese**,
> His fyngeris also, iwys, 265-6
> *Sertaynly*, **wyttoutyn fabull**,
> He was wytt Artter at the Rounde *Tabull*,
> > 10-11
> They toke Syr Gawen **wyttout lessynge**
> To the Carlus chamber thei gan hym *brynge*, 442-3
> *Serten* **wyttout lett** 435 (**b**) (: forgetter :
> > sett : mett)
> *Serteyne* **wythoutyn lette** ; 597 (**b**) (: fett)
> And was iseruyde **wythoute lette**. 615 (**b**)
> > (: sette)

There are three types of this formula : 'without lease (/leasing)', 'without let' and 'without fable' in our corpus. The first and third ones invariably mean 'indeed', but the second one means doubly : 1) 'indeed' (597), and 2) 'immediately' (435 and 615). These formulas themselves do not always occur

at tail-rhyme line, but when such word or word cluster as 'certain', 'for sooth', etc., precede them, they basically tend to occur at that particular line. The whole line 'Sertain without lett', identified in many romances, tend to occur at tail-rhyme line with hardly any exception, chiefly because there is no new information. Noticeable is that the rhyme word 'lease' rhymes with 'peace' most often, which is one component of the popular word pair 'war and peace' in the romances. On the other hand, the rhyme word 'leasing' tends to rhyme with 'king', '*bring*', 'ring', 'thing', 'wring', etc. It naturally often rhymes with verbal substantives under the exigency of rhyming. The formula 'without *fable*' tends to rhyme with 'the Round *Table*' in many cases in the romances.

Meanwhile, the formula 'without let (/letting)' generally expresses the agility of motion (= 'at once, immediately'). The dramatis personae do their deed 'quickly' in everything. Words or word group meaning 'slowly ; with leisure' are hardly identified throughout the romances. The formula at 597 is quite a rare case bearing the meaning of 'indeed'.[21]

The formulas meaning 'in truth, really, indeed' are also repetitive :

> Of asur **for sothe** he bare
> A gryffyn of golde full feyr 82-3
> **For sothe**, as I the say 540 (**b**)
> **For sothe**, as I you say. 639 (**b**)
> **For certen** trowe hit me. 129 (**b**)
> **For serttus** I can non." 279 (**b**)
> *Serten*, **sothely for to say**,
> So, I hope, was that feyr maye
>   Of that genttyll knyght. 490-2
> He yaf Syr Gawen, **sothe to say**, 565

These formulas, used as a linguistic tool, were one of the surest ways of reminding the listeners of the veracity of a narrative. These popular phrases or formulas were used expletively with diminished force, or else parenthetically, in order to mildly emphasize a statement. The shorter formula 'for sooth', spelt as two words, is much more recurrent in the romances, and is 'Now only used parenthetically with an ironical or derisive statement.'[22] This formula occurs most often at head position, and what is worthy of notice is that the majority of cases occur at tail-rhyme line, because hardly any substantial meaning is included in such a line. Such sentences as 'as I say you', 'I shall tell you', etc., are typical ones. This shorter formula occurs now and then at internal position within a poetic line, but never occurs at rhyme position. This is also true of such similar types of formula as 'for certain' and 'for certes'. On the other hand, such longer formulas as 'soothly for to say' and 'sooth to say' basically occur at rhyme position. In relation to the meter and rhythm, the preposition 'for' is inserted at one time, and without at another.

There is one outstanding linguistic characteristic in terms of the sentence structure in tail-rhyme romances as in ME verse of other genres. The normal word order 'preposition + dative case of a personal pronoun' often changes into its reversed word order 'dative case of a personal pronoun + preposition' under the exigency of rhyming. This linguistic phenomenon is ubiquitous throughout all the tail-rhyme romances. Our romance includes :

> A lyttyll folle stod **hem bye** 302
> The foll fond he **hym by**. 321 (**b**)
> Myche myrhte was **theme bytwene**. 555 (**b**)

All the prepositions are placed at rhyme position with a sole exception of 'betwix (/betwixe / betwixen)' in tail-rhyme romances. 'In ME *betwix* seems to have been more northern, *betwixen*, *betwixe*, more southern'.[23]

Furthermore, there are several linguistically characteristic phenomena which are often identified in the romances. Our romance includes :

> Folke followyd wytt fedyrt flonus,
> Nobull archarrus **for the nons** 106-7
> Be that tyme her dyner was **redy dyghte**,

550

Be that tyme her soper was **redy dyght**,

The tabullus wer havfe vpe **an hyght** ; 355

-6

Icowert they were *full* **tyte**. 357 **(b)**

Homward *al* **yn fere**." 516 **(b)**

"Here I make the **yn this stownde**

A knyght of the Table *Rownde*, 631-2

The familiar expression 'for the nonce' is one of the typical line fillers in ME verse, occurring not only in tail-rhyme romances, but also in the major poetical works of Gower and Chaucer. The collocation 'ready dight', meaning 'ready, prepared', never fails to occur at rhyme position. The prepositional phrase 'on height' means 'on high, aloft (of position)'.[24] There are several particular adverbs expressive of the agility of motion in the romances, 'tite'[25] being one of them. This term, of Scandinavian origin, seldom occurs singly, but accompanies the adverbs of intensification 'as (/ als /also)' in most cases. Thus the collocation 'as (/als /also) tite' has already been a fixed and conventional phrase. The prepositional phrase 'in fere' (= 'together') normally accompanies the adverb of intensification 'all'. Another prepositional phrase 'in this (/that) stound', meaning 'on that spot ; immediately' makes its frequent appearance in the romances. These 'minor' linguistic phenomena never fail to serve as a rhyme phrase in the romances.

The formulas analyzed and discussed so far are not all occurring in the romances, but we believe readers can presumably understand the overview of the formulas characteristic of tail-rhyme romances to which *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle* belongs.

The formulas occurring in b-lines or tail-rhyme lines are in general very common and stereotyped, and tend to be inserted as '(part of) old information'. Those popular expressions were what common people or listeners rightly expected. New information appears in non-b-lines and old ones occur as a rule in b-lines in tail-rhyme romances. New information is not always novel,

however. There are many and varied familiar expressions even in the passages of new information. And yet, our special attention may well be paid to the technique of expressions in b-lines in tail-rhyme romances.

Notes

1. There are twenty three tail-rhyme romances : *Guy of Warwick, Reinbrun, Amis and Amiloun, Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild, The King of Tars, Sir Isumbras, Octavian, Lybeaus Desconus, Sir Launfal, Sir Eglamour of Artois, Ipomadon, Athelston, Sir Amadace, The Sege of Melayne, Duke Rowlande and Sir Ottuell of of Spayne, Torrent of Portyngale, Emaré, Sir Cleges, Le Bone Florence of Rome, Sir Gowther, The Earl of Toulouse, Sir Triamour, Sir Gawain and the Carle of Carlisle.*

2. Sands, Donald B., *Middle English Verse Romances*, Hold Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1966, 348.

3. Sands, Donald B., *ibid.*, 350.

4. Sands, Donald B., *ibid.*, 350.

5. Sands, Donald B., *ibid.*, 350.

6. They include : harp, lute, lyre, fiddle, gittern, horn, citole, clarion, tabor, trump, rote, pipe, † crowd (for violin), psaltery, etc.

7. Bliss, A.J., *Sir Launfal*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1960, 32.

8. Bliss, A.J., *ibid.*, 32.

9. Bliss, A.J., *ibid.*, 32.

10. *OED* q.v. †hend(e), 6. *absol.* or as *sb.*

11. *OED* q.v. †hend(e) *adj.* 4.

12. *OED* q.v. fable *sb.* 1.d. falsehood. †Phrase, *without (but, sans) fable.*

13. Crosby, Ruth. "Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages", *Speculum* 11, 1936, 107.

14. *OED* q.v. safely *adv.* 2.b.

15. *MED* q.v. saufli adv. 3. (a) .... ; **I dar ~seien (sweren, demen, etc.)**

16. *OED* q.v. ween *v.* 1.h.

17. *OED* q.v. understand *v.* 12.a.

18. *OED* q.v. keen *adj.* †2.†b.

19. *OED* q.v. bell *sb.*[1] 8. *by bell and book, book and bell*

20. *OED* q.v. †fane *sb* .[1] 2. A weathercock. See VANE. Donald B. Sands paraphrases this term as 'winnowing basket'. (*ibid.*, 359)
21. Maldwyn Mills paraphrases this phrase ('Still ho stode, *withoutun lette,'* *Amadace* 745) as 'indeed'. (*Six Middle English Romances*, Dent, London, 1973, 189.)
22. *OED* q.v. forsooth *adv.* 1.†a. In truth, truly. b.
23. *OED* q.v. †betwixen, -twixe *prep*. *Obs*. betwixt *prep*. and *adv* .
24. *OED* q.v. height *sb*. †18.
25. *OED* q.v. tite *adv*. Quickly, soon. †b . *as, als, also tit, als tid*, etc. : as soon, as quickly, immediately

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