



## Emare | Emaré

### Text Information

Author | Anonymous

Language | Middle English

Period | 14th-century

Genre | Verse narrative

Source | British Library MS Cotton Caligula Aii

Collection | Gender, Sex and Sensuality: Writings on Women, Men and Desire

URL | <https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/emare>

Introduction and translation by Antonia Murath.

### Introduction to the Text

*Emaré* is a 14th-century Middle English adaptation of a narrative type known as "maiden-without-hands" (AT 706), "Manekine-story," or "Constance-saga". It follows the misadventures of a female protagonist whom most versions characterize as royal, pious, educated, and beautiful. Refusing her father's incestuous advances, she flees or is exiled. In exile, the local ruler wishes to marry her; many versions emphasize her otherworldly beauty. A relative or courtier does not trust the beautiful stranger. When her husband is absent for the birth of their child, the mistrustful relative or courtier intercepts a letter (or series of letters) delivering the news and replaces them with slanderous content, resulting in a second exile. Ultimately, the family reunites, in most versions in Rome, where the protagonist's husband and father seek absolution for their sins and find the protagonist and her child (or children).

The oldest known versions of this narrative date to the 13th century (*Vitae Offarum Duorum*, insular Latin, 1250 or earlier; *Mai und Beaflo*, German, dated variously from 1220–80; *La Manekine*, French, dated variously from 1230–80), but it has been retold over centuries across languages, genre, and faith communities. Its origins and the connections between different versions cannot be established. In the (Latin) West, Maryvonne Hagby counts 41 distinct versions in medieval English, German, Latin and Romance languages (including Catalan, Spanish, French, and Italian), with manuscripts spanning from insular Britain across the European Continent to North Africa, as stand-alone romances, novellas, exempla, miracle tales, or plays, or as chronicle or romance subplots. The *Global Medieval Sourcebook* contains an Aragonese version of the story found in a 16th-century Aljamiado manuscript: [http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/damsel\\_carcayciona](http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/damsel_carcayciona). *Emaré* adapts the tale as a short, tail-rhymed narrative which identifies itself as a Breton Lay (see l. 1030). It thus associates itself with a "Celtic" or Breton story matter, to which it establishes further links by way of Arthurian character names.

A prevalent stylistic feature of this text is its use of repetition. Another noteworthy feature is its long ekphrasis (description) of a wondrous cloth which the Sicilian King Tergaunte brings to the protagonist's father, the Emperor Artyus. While Artyus is blinded by the rich, gem-encrusted textile, the description makes visible the embroidery and provides a biography of the object. The narrator tells us that it was worked with rare materials by the Emir of Babylon's daughter as a love-token for the Sultan of Babylon's son. Four panels in the cloth depict romance couples: Amadas and Ydoine, Tristan and Yseut, Floire and Blancheflor, and the Babylonian lovers themselves. It comes to Tergaunte as a spoil of war. After Tergaunte's departure, the Emperor desires his daughter and has a wedding dress shaped from the cloth; he exiles her while she is still wearing the dress. *Emaré* and her son Segramour are frequently referred to as being "worthy beneath their clothing." Narrative attention is directed to her dazzling robe at all major plot points.

Scholarly discussion to date has often focused on the ekphrasis of the wondrous cloth, including its connection with genre, incest, the narrative's relation to the organizing principles of Cotton Caligula Aii (the miscellany in which it was transmitted), its poetics, and its negotiation of interfaith relations. However, the text is barely acknowledged outside of English Studies and is usually aligned with more famous versions, such as Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale", Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, or *La Manekine*. Fruitful comparisons could be made with less acclaimed versions and, more generally, *Emaré* could be studied from the perspective of its position within a transcultural textual network transcending modern notions of separated national literatures.



## Introduction to the Source

The 15th-century miscellany British Library Cotton Caligula Aii contains the only extant copy of the text. While tentatively dated to the second half of the 14th century, *Emaré* is likely based on a lost 13th-century French text which Edith Rickert, a previous editor of the text, has linked to the crusading milieu. The miscellany includes one epic and seven romance texts alongside devotional and didactic material. While the other romances are grouped together, *Emaré* is inserted in the middle of a series of devotional texts. Opening with a prayer to "Jhesu that is kyng in trone" (l. 1), *Emaré*'s prologue appears to continue the frequent invocations of Jesus found in the prayer which precedes it ("Jesus for your Blood"). According to Rickert, *Emaré* contains the longest introductory prayer of any Middle English romance. This is an indication of the narrative's links to religious modes of writing and to the manuscript's didactic and devotional contents.

## About this Edition

This text is based on Ritson's 1885 edition. It reproduces Ritson's normalization of the MS's Thorn and Yogh to 'th' and 'gh' and his stanzaic typesetting. Changes to his text are italicized. It has been read carefully against Rickert's critical edition, Laskaya and Salisbury's more recent edition, and Denise C. White's diplomatic transcription, since Ritson does not reliably flag emendations. Gough's critical edition interferes with the manuscript's text much more aggressively than Rickert's and is thus considered only cursorily. Variance across editions concerns the extent of normalization, punctuation, and typesetting; and has been commented on where it affects meaning. It has not been possible to hold editorial variances against the manuscript itself.

*Emaré*, particularly the ekphrastic passage, is riddled with ambiguities, which are discussed in the notes. The punctuation of the translation punctuation differs from that of the edited Middle English text. I would like to thank Caitlin Flynn and Jan-Peer Hartmann for their advice on translation issues and Alina Karsten for her help in preparing the transcription.

## Published Editions of the Text

French, Walter Hoyt, and Charles B. Hale. *Middle English Metrical Romances*. Russel and Russel, 1964. 2 vols. Vol. I, 423–55.

Gough, Alfred Bradly. *Emare: Edited by A.B. Gough*. Winter, 1901. Old and Middle English Texts, II.

Laskaya, Anne and Eve Salisbury. *Middle English Breton Lays*. Medieval Inst. Publ., Western Michigan Univ, 1995. Middle English Texts Series. Available online via <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare>. Last accessed 22.12.2021.

Mahoux-Pauzin, Philippe. "Emaré." *Les lais bretons moyen-anglais*. Ed. Colette Stévanovitch and Anne Mathieu. Brepols, 2010. 241–302. Textes vernaculaires du moyen âge 9.

- Translation into Modern French based on Laskaya and Salisbury's text.

Mills, Maldwyn. *Six Middle English Romances*. Dent, 1973. 46–74.

Rickert, Edith. *The Romance of Emaré: Re-Edited from the Ms. / with Introd., Notes, and Glossary by Edith Rickert*. Early English Text Society, Extra Series. Oxford University Press, 1958.

Ritson, Joseph. *Ancient English Metrical Romances: Selected and Published by Joseph Ritson, and Revised by Edmund Goldsmid*. E & G Goldsmid, 1885. 3 vols. Vol. II, 183–215.

## Further Reading

Burge, Amy, and Lydia Kertz. "Fabricated Muslim Identity, Female Agency, and Cultural Complicity: The Imperial Project of Emaré." *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality*. Vol. 56, No. 1 (2020). 38–69.

- Informed by assemblage theory; the most recent article to discuss the cloth's connection to the narrative's interfaith relations and its bearers' complicity in empire-building.



Hagby, Maryvonne. *'Die Königstochter von Frankreich' des Hans von Büchel: Fünf kontextualisierende Studien. Mit einer Bibliographie raisonnée zum Manekine-Stoff*. Waxmann, 2023.

- Hagby's *'Bibliographie Raisonnée'* is the most extensive and accurate list of adaptations of the narrative tradition to date, providing manuscript and editorial information, further reading, summaries, and brief commentaries on themes of 41 versions from the Latin and Islamic West. (In German.)

Laskaya, Anne. "The Rhetoric of Incest in the Middle English Emaré." *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts*. Ed. Anna Roberts. University Press of Florida, 1998. 97–114.

- Discusses the connections of the incest theme with Tergaunte's gift; Laskaya's characterization of cloth establishing a "web of love and violence" (p. 110) is referred to frequently in subsequent discussions.

Scala, Elizabeth. "The Texture of Emaré." *Philological Quarterly*. Vol. 85, 3/4 (2006). 223–46.

- First extensive poetological discussion; considers the cloth as a figuration of both the text and the manuscript miscellany as consciously composed artworks with links to generic traditions and material culture.



## Emare | Emaré

Jhesu, that ys kyng in trone,  
As thou shoope bothe sonne and mone,  
And all that shall dele and dyghte,  
Now lene us grace such dedes to done,  
In thy blys that we may wone,  
Men calle hit heven lyghte;  
And thy moder, Mary, hevyn qwene,  
Bere our arunde so bytwene,  
That semely ys of syght,  
To thy sone that ys so fre,  
In heven with hym that we may be,  
That lord ys most of myght.

Menstrelles, that walken fer and wyde,  
Her and ther in every a syde,  
In mony a dyverse londe,  
Sholde, at her begynnyng,  
Speke of that ryhtwes kyng,  
That made both see and sonde.  
Whoso wyll a stounde dwelle,  
Of mykyl myrghyt y may you telle,  
And mornyng ther amonge,  
Of a lady fayr and fre,  
Her name was called Emare,  
As i here synge in songe.

Her fadyr was an emperour,  
Of castell, and of ryche towre,  
Syr Artyus was hys nome;  
He hadde bothe hallys and bowrys,  
Frythes fayr, forestes with flowrys,  
So gret a lord was none.  
Weddedde he had a lady,  
That was both fayr and semely,  
Whyte as whalës bone,  
Dame Erayne hette that emperes,  
She was full of love and goodnesse,  
So curtays lady was none.

Jesus, who is king on the throne,  
as You shaped both the sun and the moon  
and all that will judge and govern,  
bestow upon us grace to do such deeds  
5 that we may dwell in Your exultation.  
People call it the heavenly light.  
And Your mother, Mary, heavenly Queen,  
intercede on our behalf—  
[Mary], who is beautiful to look at—  
10 with Your Son, who is so noble,  
so that we may be with Him in Heaven.  
That Lord is the most powerful.

Entertainers who walk far and wide,  
here and there, everywhere,  
15 in many a different country,  
should [first], when they start,  
speak of that righteous King  
who made both the sea and the sand.  
Whoever would like to stop and linger:  
20 I will tell you of much joy,  
interspersed with sorrow,  
of a fair and noble lady.  
Her name was Emaré,  
as I am singing here in song.

25 Her father was an emperor  
overseeing castles and splendid strongholds,  
Sir Artyus was his name.  
He had halls as well as bowers,  
considerable hunting grounds, forests with flowers;  
30 there was no lord as noble as him.  
He had married a lady  
who was both fair and beautiful,  
white as whalebone:  
Dame Erayne that empress was called.  
35 She was full of love and virtue,  
no lady was as courteous.



Syr Artyus was the best manne  
In the worlde that lyvede thanne,  
Both hardy and therto wyght,  
He was curtays in all thyng,  
Bothe to olde and to yynge,  
And well kowth dele and dyght.  
He hadde but on chyld in hys lyve,  
Begeten on hys weddedde wyfe,  
And that was fayr and bryght;  
For sothe, as y may telle the,  
They called that chyld Emare,  
That semely was of syght.

When she was of her moder born,  
She was the fayrest creature borne,  
That yn the lond was thoo,  
The emperes, that fayr ladye,  
Fro her lord gan she dye,  
Or hyt kowthe speke or goo.  
The chyld, that was fayr and gent,  
To a lady was hyt sente,  
That men called Abro,  
She thawghth hit curtesye and thewe,  
Golde and sylke for to sewe,  
Amonge maydenes moo.

Abro tawghte thys mayden small,  
Nortour that men usedenn in sale,  
Whyle she was in her bowre;  
She was curtays in all thyng,  
Bothe to old and to yynge,  
And whythe as lylle flowre;  
Of her hondes she was slye,  
All he loved that her sye,  
Wyth menske and mychel honour.  
At the meydene leve we,  
And at the lady fayr and fre;

Of all men that were alive then  
Sir Artyus was the most excellent.  
[He was] both valiant and brave.  
40 He was courteous in every respect,  
both to the old and to the young,  
and he was able to judge and govern well.  
He had but one child in his life,  
conceived with his wedded wife,  
45 and [the child] was fair and radiant.  
Truthfully, I can tell you,  
they called that child Emaré  
who was beautiful to look at.

When she was delivered from her mother,  
50 she was the fairest creature born  
[and alive] in that country.  
Then the empress, that fair lady,  
was parted from her lord by death  
before she [Emaré] could walk or talk.  
55 The child, who was beautiful and noble,  
was sent to a lady  
who was called Abro.  
She taught her courtly manners and good conduct,  
how to embroider with golden and silken threads,  
60 alongside other young girls.

Abro taught this small maiden  
the correct manners to be used in the dining hall,  
while she was staying in her quarters.  
She was courteous in every respect,  
65 both to the old and to the young,  
and [she was] as white as a lily-flower.  
She was skillful with her hands.  
All who saw her loved her  
with honor and much respect.  
70 Here we shall leave the maiden  
and the fair and noble lady,



And speke we of the emperour.

The emperour of gentyll blode,  
Was a curteys lorde and a gode,  
In all maner of thyng,  
Aftur when his wyf was dede,  
And ledde his lyf yn weddewede,  
And myche loved playnge.  
Sone aftur yn a whyle,  
The ryche kyng of Cesyle  
To the emperour gann wende,  
A ryche present wyth hym he browght,  
A cloth that was wordylye wroght,  
He wellcomed hym as the hende.

Syr Tergaunte, that nobyll knyght hyghte.  
He presented the emperour ryght,  
And sette hym on hys kne,  
Wyth that cloth rychly dyght,  
Full of stones ther hit was pyght,  
As thykke as hit myght be,  
Off topaze and rubyes,  
And other stones of myche prys,  
That semely wer to se,  
Of crapowtes and nakette,  
As thykke ar they sette,  
For sothe as y say the.

The cloth was displayed sone,  
The emperour lokede therupone,  
And myght hyt not se,  
For glysteryng of the ryche ston  
Redy syght had he non,  
And sayde, How may thys be?  
The emperour sayde on hygh,  
Sertes, thys ys a fayry,  
Or ellys a vanytè.  
The kyng of Cysyle answered than,

and speak of the emperor.

The high-born emperor  
was a courteous and just lord  
75 in every respect.  
Later, when his wife had died,  
and he led his life as a widower,  
he much liked to keep himself amused.  
Some time later,  
80 the powerful king of Sicily  
made his way to the emperor.  
He brought a costly gift with him,  
a fabric that was made skillfully.  
He [the emperor] received him in a courtly manner.

85 Sir Tergaunte was the name of that noble knight.  
He offered a gift to the emperor in a courtly manner,  
having bent down on his knee:  
a cloth that was richly ornamented.  
It was bejeweled over and over with stones,  
90 as densely as possible,  
with topazes and rubies  
and other stones of great worth  
that were beautiful to look at,  
with toadstones and nakettes.  
95 They are set so thickly,  
truthfully, as I am telling you.

The fabric was displayed quickly.  
The emperor gazed upon it  
and was not able to identify anything on it  
100 –because of the glistening of the precious stones–  
he did not have ready sight of it,  
and [he] said, "How is this possible?"  
The emperor hastily said,  
"Certainly, this is fairywork,  
105 Or else an illusion!"  
Then the King of Sicily answered,



So ryche a jwell ys ther non  
In all Crystyante.

The amerayle dowghter of hethennes  
Made this cloth withouten lees,  
And wrowghte hit all with pride,  
And purtreied hyt with gret honour,  
Wyth ryche golde and asowr,  
And stones on ylke a syde;  
And, as the story telles in honde,  
The stones that yn this cloth stonde  
Sowghte they wer full wyde,  
Seven wynter hit was yn makynge,  
Or hit was browght to endynge,  
In herte ys not to hyde.

In that on korner made was  
Idoyne and Amadas,  
With love that was so trewe,  
For they loveden hem wit honour,  
Portrayed they wer with trewe-love flour,  
Of stones bryght of hewe,  
Wyth carbunkull and safere,  
Kassydonys and onyx so clere,  
Sette in golde newe,  
Deamondes and rubyes,  
And other stones of mychyll pryse,  
And menstrellys with her gle.

In that other corner was dyght,  
Trystram and Isowde so bryght,  
That semely wer to se,  
And for they loved hem ryght,  
As full of stones ar they dyght,  
As thykke as they may be,  
Of topase and of rubyes,  
And other stones of myche pryse,  
That semely wer to se,

"There is no [other] jewel as precious  
in all of Christendom."

The daughter of the Muslim emir  
110 made this cloth, certainly,  
and wrought it entirely and honorably  
and fashioned it with great virtues,  
with precious gold and azure,  
and [with] stones on every side.  
115 And, as the story at hand tells,  
the stones that are positioned in this cloth  
were sought from very far away.  
It was in the making for seven years  
before it was completed,  
120 that is the truth of it.

In that one corner  
Ydoine and Amadas were made  
with love that was so steadfast;  
because they loved each other honorably  
125 they were portrayed with the true-love-flower  
[made] of stones of radiant hues:  
with carbuncle and sapphire,  
chalcedony and onyx, gleaming so,  
set in new gold;  
130 diamonds and rubies  
and other stones of great worth  
and entertainers with their song.

In that other corner were assembled  
Tristan and Iseult, so radiant—  
135 they were beautiful to look at;  
and because they loved each other sincerely,  
they are composed of so many stones,  
[set] as thickly as possible,  
[composed] of topazes and rubies,  
140 and other stones of great worth,  
that were beautiful to look at.



Wyth crapawtes and nakette,  
Thykke of stones ar they sette,  
For sothe as y say the.

In the thrydde korner, with gret honour,  
Was Florys and dam Blawncheflour,  
As love was hem betwene,  
For they loved wyth honour,  
Purtrayed they wer with trewe-love-flower,  
Wyth stones bryght and shene.  
Ther wer knyghtes and senatowres,  
Emerawdes of gret vertues,  
To wyte withouten wene,  
Deamondes and koralle,  
Perydotes and crystall,  
And gode garnettes bytwene.

In the fowrthe korner was oon  
Of Babylone the sowdan sonne,  
The amerayles dowghtyr hym by,  
For his sake the cloth was wrowght,  
She loved hym in hert and thowght,  
As testymoyeth this storye.  
The fayr mayden her byforn  
Was portrayed an unykorn,  
With hys horn so hye,  
Flowres and bryddes on ylke a syde,  
With stones that wer sowght wyde,  
Stuffed wyth ymagerye.

When the cloth to ende was wrowght,  
To the sowdan sone hit was browght,  
That semely was of syghte:  
"My fadyr was a nobyll man,  
Of the sowdan he hit wan,  
Wyth maystrye and wyth myghth;  
For gret love he yaf hyt me,  
I brynge hit in the specyaltè,

With toadstone and nakettes  
they [Tristan and Iseult] are set thickly with stones,  
truthfully, as I am telling you.

145 In the third corner, with great splendor,  
was Floris and Dame Blanchefleur,  
because love was between them.  
As they loved honorably  
they were depicted with the true-love-flower,  
150 with stones that were bright and luminous.  
There were knights and senators,  
emeralds of great virtues,  
truthfully, no doubt,  
diamonds and coral,  
155 chrysolites and crystal,  
and good garnets in between.

In the fourth corner was  
the Sultan of Babylon's son,  
the emir's daughter by his side.  
160 For his sake the cloth had been made.  
She loved him in her heart and mind,  
as this story testifies.  
In front of the fair maiden  
a unicorn was depicted  
165 with his horn held up so high,  
flowers and birds on each side,  
with stones that were sought from far away,  
endowed with [figural] decorations.

When the making of the cloth was finished,  
170 it was brought to the sultan's son,  
so beautiful to look at.  
"My father was a noble man;  
he gained [the cloth] from the sultan  
with violence and force.  
175 Because of his love, he gave it to me.  
I bring it to you on account of special affection;





Thys cloth ys rychely dyght."  
He yaf hit the emperour,  
He receyved hit with gret honour,  
And thonkede hym fayr and ryght.

The kyng of Cesyle dwelled ther  
As long as his wyll wer,  
Wyth the emperour for to play,  
And when he wolde wende,  
He toke his leve at the hende,  
And wente forth on hys way.  
Now remeveth this nobyll kyng,  
The emperour after his dowghter hadde longyng,  
To speke with that may,  
Messengeres forth he sent,  
Aftyr the mayde fayre and gent,  
That was bryght as someres day.

Messengeres dyghte hem in hye,  
With myche myrthe and melodye,  
Forth gon they fare,  
Both by stretes and by styte,  
After that fayr lady,  
Was godely unther gare.  
Her norysse, that hyghte Abro,  
With her she goth forth also,  
And wer sette in a chare,  
To the emperour gan the go,  
He come ayeyn hem a myle or two,  
A fayr metyng was there.

The mayden, whyte as lylle flour.  
Lyghte ayeyn her fadyr, the emperour,  
Two knyghtes gan her lede.  
Her fadyr, that was of gret renowne,  
That of golde wered the crowne,  
Lyghte of hys stede;  
When they wer bothe on her fete,

this cloth is put together magnificently."  
He gave it to the emperor.  
He received it with great honor  
180 and thanked him eloquently and appropriately.

The King of Sicily stayed there  
as long as he wished  
to amuse himself with the emperor;  
and when he wanted to return home,  
185 he took his leave immediately,  
and went on his way.  
Now this noble king had departed.  
The emperor had a longing for his daughter,  
[he desired] to speak with that maiden.  
190 He sent messengers  
to the beautiful and noble maiden  
who was as radiant as a summer's day.

Messengers hurriedly prepared themselves.  
With much merriment and music,  
195 they went forth,  
by street and by path,  
to that fair lady,  
[who] was virtuous underneath her garments.  
Her nurse, who was called Abro,  
200 also went with her,  
and they were seated in a carriage.  
Then they went to the emperor,  
who went a mile or two in their direction to meet them.  
A pleasant meeting was held there.

205 The maiden, white as a lily-flower,  
alighted facing her father, the emperor;  
two knights led her.  
Her father, who was of great fame,  
who wore the golden crown,  
210 alighted from his steed.  
When they were both on their feet,



He klypped her ond kyssed her swete,  
And bothe on fote they yede,  
They wer glad and made good chere,  
To the palys they yede in fere.  
In romans as we rede.

Then the lordes that wer grete,  
They wesh and seten doun to mete,  
And folk hem served swyde,  
The mayden, that was of sembelant swete,  
Byfore her owene fadur sete,  
The fayrest wommon on lyfe.  
That all his hert and all his thowghth,  
Her to love was yn browght,  
He byhelde her ofte sythe,  
So he was anamored hys thowghter tyll,  
With her he thowghth to worche his wyll,  
And wedde her to hys wyfe.

And when the mete-whyle was doun,  
Into hys chamber he wente soun,  
And called his counseyle nere,  
He bad they shulde sone go and come,  
And gete leve of the pope of Rome,  
To wedde that mayden clere.  
Messengeres forth they wente,  
They durst not breke his commandement,  
And erles with hem yn sere,  
They wente to the courte of Rome,  
And browghte the popus bullus sone,  
To wedde hys dowghter dere.

Then was the emperour gladde and blythe,  
And lette shape a robe swythe,  
Of that cloth of golde,  
And when hit was don her upon,  
She semed non erthely wommon,  
That marked was of molde.

he embraced her and sweetly kissed her,  
and they both walked on foot.  
They were joyous and made good cheer  
215 and walked to the palace together,  
as we read in romance.

Then the lords, who were distinguished,  
washed [their hands] and sat down to eat,  
and people served them swiftly.  
220 The young woman, who was of a delightful shape,  
sat down in front of her own father.  
[She was] the most beautiful woman alive.  
[So] all his heart and all his mind  
was fixated on loving her.  
225 He gazed at her often.  
He was so enamored by his daughter  
that he schemed how to have his way  
and wed her as his wife.

And when dinner was over  
230 he soon went into his chamber  
and called his council in.  
He bade them to go and return quickly,  
and get leave from the Pope of Rome  
to wed that beautiful maiden.  
235 The messengers went forth.  
They did not dare to break his command;  
and earls went with them, too.  
They went to the court in Rome  
and soon brought (back) the Pope's dispensation  
240 [for Artyus] to wed his dear daughter.

Then the emperor was joyous and happy,  
and swiftly had a robe shaped  
from the gold cloth.  
And when it was put upon her  
245 she did not seem like an earthly woman  
who was created by God.



Then seyde the emperour so fre,  
Dowghtyr, y woll wedde the,  
Thow art so fresh to beholde.  
Then sayde that wordy unther wede,  
Nay, syr, god of heven hit forbede,  
That ever do so we shulde!

Yyf hit so betydde that ye me wedde,  
And we shulde play togedere in bedde,  
Bothe we were forlorne;  
The worde shulde sprynge fer and wyde  
In all the worlde on every syde,  
The worde shulde be borne.  
Ye ben a lorde of gret pryce,  
Lorde, lette never suche sorow aryce,  
Take god you beforne;  
That my fader shulde wedde me,  
God forbede that i hyt so se,  
That wered the crowne of thorne!

The emperour was ryght wrothe,  
And swore many a gret othe,  
That deed shulde she be;  
He lette make a nobull boot,  
And dede her theryn god wote,  
In the robe of nobull ble.  
She moste have with her no spendyng,  
Nother mete ne drynke,  
Bot shote her yn to the se;  
Now the lady dwelled thore,  
Wythowte anker or ore,  
And that was gret pytè.

Ther come a wynd, y untherstonde,  
And blewe the boot fro the londe,  
Of her they lost the syght,  
The emperour hym bethowght,  
That he hadde all mysrowght,

Then the very noble emperor said,  
"Daughter, I want to wed you,  
you are so bright to behold."  
250 Then that worthy one underneath the clothing said,  
"No, Sir, God of Heaven forbids  
that we should ever do so!

"If it so happened that you married me  
and we were to amuse ourselves in bed  
255 we would both be lost!  
The word would spread far and wide;  
the news would be carried  
into every corner of the world.  
You are a lord of outstanding praise,  
260 [so] Lord, never let such sorrow arise:  
pay heed to God!  
That my father should wed me,  
God forbid that I should witness that,  
(God) who was adorned with a crown of thorns!"

265 The emperor was consumed with rage,  
and swore many a great oath  
that she must die.  
He had a magnificent boat made  
and put her inside, God knows,  
270 in that robe of magnificent brightness.  
She was not permitted to have any spendable wealth with her,  
nor food, nor drink,  
and he cast her into the sea.  
Now the lady remained there for a long time  
275 without anker or [steering] oar  
and that was a great misery!

There came a wind, I understand,  
and [it] blew her boat away from the shore.  
They lost sight of her.  
280 The emperor thought to himself  
that he had done a great wrong



And was a sory knyghte.  
And as he stode yn studyȳnge,  
He fell down in sowenyngne,  
To the yrthe was he dyght ;  
Gret lordes stode therby,  
And toke yn the emperour hastily,  
And comforted hym fayr and ryght.

When he of sownyng kovered was,  
Sore he wepte and sayde, Alas,  
For my dowhter dere!  
Alas, that y was made man,  
Wrecched kaytyf that i hit am! †  
The teres ronne by his lere.  
I wrawght ayeyn goddes lay,  
To her that was so trewe of fay:  
Alas, why ner she here!  
The teres lashed out of his yyen,  
The grete lordes that hyt syyen,  
Wepte and made yll chere.

Ther was nother olde ny yynge,  
That kowthe stynte of wepyngne,  
For that comely unther kelle,  
Into shypys faste gan they thrynge,  
For to seke that mayden yynge,  
That was so fayr of flesh and fell;  
They her sowght over all yn the see,  
And myghte not fynde that lady fre,  
Ayeyn they come full snell.  
At the emperour now leve we,  
And of the lady yn the see,  
I shall begynne to tell.

The ladye fleted forth alone,  
To god of heven she made her mone,  
And to hys modyr also;  
She was dryven with wynde and rayn,

and he was a sorry knight.  
And as he stood in contemplation,  
he fell down into a swoon,  
285 he fell down onto the ground.  
Great lords stood nearby  
and hastily helped up the emperor  
and comforted him kindly and well.

When he had regained consciousness  
290 he wept sorely and said, "Alas,  
for my dear daughter!  
Alas, that I was born,  
miserable wretch that I am!"  
The tears ran down his face.  
295 "I acted against God's law  
towards her, who was so true of faith,  
alas, why is she not here!"  
The tears flooded out of his eyes;  
the high-ranked lords who witnessed this  
300 wept and displayed their grief.

Nobody, neither old nor young  
could abstain from weeping  
for that beautiful one under the cloak.  
They quickly rushed onto ships  
305 in order to seek the young maiden  
who was so fair of flesh and skin.  
They searched for her all over the sea  
and could not find that noble lady.  
Quickly they came back.  
310 We now leave the emperor,  
and I shall begin to speak  
of the lady at sea.

The lady drifted forth alone;  
to God in Heaven she made her complaint  
315 and also to His mother.  
She was propelled by the wind and the rain



With strong stormes her agayn,  
Of the water so blo.

As y have herd menstrelles syng yn sawe,  
Hows ny lond myghth she non knawe,  
Aferd she was to go,  
She was so dryven fro wawe to wawe,  
She hyd her hede and laye full lawe,  
For watyr she was full woo.

Now this lady dwelled thore  
A good seven nyghth and more,  
As hit was goddys wylle,  
With carefull herte, and sykyng sore,  
Such sorow was here yarked yore,  
And ever lay she styll.  
She was dryven ynto a lond,  
Thorow the grace of goddes sond,  
That all thyng may fulfyllle,  
She was on the see so harde bestadde,  
For hunger and thurst almost madde,  
Woo worth wederus yll!

She was dryven into a lond,  
That hyghth Galys, y untherstond,  
That was a fayr cuntre,  
The kynges steward dwelled ther bysyde,  
In a kastell of mykyll pryde,  
Syr Kadore hyght he.  
Every day wolde he go,  
And take with hym a sqwyer or two,  
And play hym by the see;  
On a tyme he toke the eyr,  
With two knyghtes gode and fayr,  
The wedur was lythe of le.

A boot he fond by the brym,  
And a glysteryng thyng theryn,  
Therof they had ferly,

and opposed by the dark water's  
fierce storms.

As I have heard storytellers sing and tell  
320 she could neither see settlements nor land;  
she was afraid to move.  
She was tossed from wave to wave.  
She hid her head and lay low.  
The water tormented her.

325 Now this lady remained there  
for a good seven nights and longer  
—as it was God's will—  
with a heavy heart and sighing loudly;  
this misfortune was her destiny  
330 and she always lay still.  
She was driven to a land  
through the grace of God's mercy  
which encompasses all things.  
She had been harassed so severely at sea  
335 that she was almost crazed from hunger and thirst.  
Cursed be ill weather!

She was driven into a land  
that was called "Galys," as I understand,  
which was a pleasant country.  
340 The king's steward dwelled there beside [the sea]  
in a castle of great worth;  
he was called Sir Kadore.  
Every day he would go  
and take a squire or two with him  
345 and they would amuse themselves on the beach.  
On one of these occasions he went outside for a walk  
with two good and fair knights;  
the weather was pleasant and calm.

He found a boat by the sea  
350 and a glistening thing inside it  
which made them marvel.



They went forth on the sond,  
To the boot i untherstond,  
And fond thereyn that lady.  
She hadde so longe meteles be,  
That hym thowht dele to se,  
She was in poynt to dye.  
They askede her what was her name,  
She chaunged hit ther anone,  
And sayde she hette Egare.

Syr Kadore hadde gret pytè,  
He toke up the lady of the see,  
And hom gan he lede;  
She hadde so longe meteles be,  
She was wax lene as a tre,  
That wordy unther wede.  
Into hys castell when she came,  
Into a chawmbyr they her namm,  
And fayr they gann her fede,  
Wyth all delycyus mete and drynke,  
That they myghth hem on thynke,  
That was yn all that stede.

When that lady, fayr of face,  
With mete and drynke kevered was,  
And had colour agayne,  
She tawghte hem to sewe and marke  
All maner of sylkyn werke,  
Of her they wer full fayne.  
She was curteys yn all thyng,  
Bothe to olde and to yynge,  
I say yow for certeyne;  
She kowthe werke all maner thyng,  
That fell to emperour or to kyng,  
Erle, barown, or swayne.

Syr Kadore lette make a feste,  
That was fayr and honeste,

They went across the sand  
to the boat, as I understand,  
and found that lady inside.  
355 She had been without food for so long  
that it grieved them greatly to see  
[that] she was on the point of dying.  
They asked her what her name was:  
she changed it there on the spot  
360 and said she was called Egaré.

Sir Kadore felt great compassion:  
he picked up the lady of the sea  
and led her home.  
She had been without food for so long  
365 that she had grown as lean as a tree,  
that worthy one underneath the dress.  
When she came into his castle,  
they took her into a chamber  
and fed her well  
370 with all the delicious food and drink  
they could think of  
that was in the castle.

When that fair-faced lady  
was restored with food and drink  
375 and had regained her [healthy] complexion,  
she taught them how to sew and embroider  
all kinds of silk work;  
they were very pleased with her.  
She was courteous in every respect,  
380 both to the old and the young,  
I tell you, truthfully.  
She was able to fashion all sorts of things  
that would befit an emperor or a king,  
earl, baron, or retainer.

385 Sir Kadore arranged for a feast  
that was proper and appropriate



Wyth hys lorde the kyng,  
Ther was myche menstralsè,  
Trompus, tabors, and sawtrè,  
Bothe harpe and fydyllyng.  
The lady, that was gentyll and small,  
In kurtull alone served yn hall,  
Byfore that nobull kyng,  
The cloth upon her shone so bryghth,  
When she was theryn ydyghth,  
She semed non erdly thyng.

The kyng loked her upon,  
So fayr a lady he sygh nevr non,  
His herte she hadde yn wolde,  
He was so anamered of that syghth,  
Of the mete non he myghth,  
But faste gan her beholde ;  
She was so fayr and gent,  
The kynges love on her was lent,  
In tale as hyt ys tolde;  
And when the mete-whyle was doun,  
In to the chamber he wente soun,  
And called his barouns bolde.

Fyrst he called syr Kadore,  
And other knyghtes that ther wore,  
Hastely come hym tyll,  
Dukes and erles, wyse of lore,  
Hastely come the kyng before,  
And askede what was his wyll.  
Then spakke the ryche yn ray,  
To syr Kadore gan he say,  
Wordes fayr and styll:  
Syr, whenns ys that lovely may,  
That yn the halle served this day?  
Tell me yyf hyt be thy wyll.

Then sayde syr Kadore, Y untherstonde,

for his lord, the king.  
There was much entertainment,  
trumpets, tambourines, and zithers,  
390 harps, as well as fiddle-playing.  
The lady who was noble and [yet] lowly,  
served in the hall in just her frock  
before that noble king.  
The cloth upon her shone so intensely  
395 when she was in dressed in it  
that she did not seem to be an earthly thing.

The king gazed at her.  
He had never seen such a beautiful lady before.  
She held his heart in her grasp.  
400 He was so enamored of that sight  
that he was unable to eat  
but quickly fixed his gaze upon her.  
She was so beautiful and noble  
that the king's love was bestowed on her  
405 as it is told in the tale.  
And when the dinner was over  
he went quickly into his chamber  
and confidently called his barons.

First he called Sir Kadore,  
410 and other knights that were present,  
to come to him quickly.  
Well-educated dukes and earls  
hastily came before the king  
and asked him what he required.  
415 Then the powerful sovereign spoke.  
He started uttering  
affectionate and secret words to Sir Kadore:  
"Sir, where is that lovely maiden from,  
who was serving in the hall today?  
420 Tell me if you may."

Then Sir Kadore said, as I understand,



Hyt ys an erles thowghter of ferre londe,  
That semely ys to sene,  
I sente after her, certeynlye,  
To teche my chylderen curtesye,  
In chambur wyth hem to bene.  
She ys the konnyngest wommon,  
I trowe that be yn Crystendom,  
Of werk that y have sene.  
Then sayde that ryche raye,  
I wyll have that fayr may,  
And wedde her to my quene.

The nobull kyng, verament,  
After hys modyr he sent,  
To wyte what she wolde say.  
They browght forth hastely  
That fayr mayde Egarye,  
She was bryghth as someres day,  
The cloth on her shon so bryght,  
When she was theryn dyght,  
And her self a gentell may.  
The olde qwene sayde anon,  
I sawe never wommon  
Halvendell so gay!

The olde quene spakke wordes unhende,  
And sayde, Sone, thys ys a fende,  
In this wordy wede,  
As thou lovest my blessynge,  
Make thou never this weddynge,  
Cryst hit de forbede!  
Then spakke the ryche ray,  
Modyr, y wyll have this may,  
And forth gan her lede.  
The olde quene, for certayne,  
Turnede with ire hom agayne,  
And wolde not be at that dede.

"She is an earl's daughter from a faraway land  
who is beautiful to look at.  
Truthfully I sent for her  
425 to nurture my children,  
and to keep them company in their chamber.  
She is the most erudite woman,  
for sure, in all of Christendom,  
[judging by] the works I have seen."  
430 Then the powerful sovereign said,  
"I will possess that fair maiden  
and wed her as my queen."

The noble king, truthfully,  
sent for his mother  
435 to find out what she would say.  
They hastily brought forth  
that fair young woman Egaré;  
she was as bright as a summer's day.  
The fabric on her gleamed so brightly  
440 when she was dressed in it,  
and [she was] herself a noble maiden.  
The old queen immediately said,  
"I have never seen a woman  
even half as magnificent!"

445 The old queen spoke unkind words  
and said, "Son, this is a fiend  
in this costly dress!  
Since you have asked for my blessing,  
do not ever go through with this wedding.  
450 Christ forbids you to do it!"  
Then the powerful sovereign said,  
"Mother, I will possess this maiden!"  
And he led her away.  
The old queen, truthfully,  
455 furiously went back home  
and would not attend the wedding.





The kyng wedded that lady bryght,  
Grete purvyance ther was dyghth,  
In that semely sale,  
Grete lordes wer served aryght,  
Duke, erle, baron and knyghth,  
Both of grete and smale.  
Myche folke for sothe ther was,  
And thereto an huge prese,  
As hit ys tolde in tale,  
Ther was all maner thyng,  
That fell to a kyngus weddyng,  
And mony a ryche menstrall.

When the mangery was done,  
Grete lordes departed sone,  
That semely were to see,  
The kyng be laste with the qwene,  
Moch love was hem betwene,  
And also game and gle;  
She was curteys and swete,  
Such a lady herde y never of yete ;  
They loved both with herte fre.  
The lady that was both meke and mylde,  
Conceyved and wente with chylde,  
As god wolde hit sholde be.

The kyng of France, yn that tyme,  
Was besette with many a Sarezyne,  
And cumbered all in tene;  
And sente after the kyng of Galys,  
And other lordys of myche prys,  
That semely were to sene.  
The kyng of Galys, in that tyde,  
Gedered men on every syde,  
In armour bryght and shene;  
Then sayde the kyng to Syr Kadore,  
And other lordes that ther wore,  
Take good hede to my qwene.

The king wed that radiant lady,  
and great hospitality was arranged for there  
in that beautiful hall.

460 Distinguished lords were served according to courtly protocol:  
dukes, earls, barons, and knights  
of high and low rank.  
Many common folk, truthfully, were there  
and a large crowd it was,  
465 as is told in the tale.  
There was all manner of things  
befitting a royal wedding,  
and many a famous entertainer.

When the eating was done,  
470 the great lords,  
who were beautiful to look at, soon departed.  
The king departed with the queen.  
Much love was between them,  
and also joy and happiness.  
475 She was well-mannered and delightful  
—I have never heard of such a lady before—  
and they loved each other from their noble hearts.  
The lady who was both humble and compassionate  
conceived and soon was pregnant  
480 as God willed it to be.

At that time, the King of France  
was assailed by many "Saracens"  
and [thus] encumbered with distress;  
he sent for the King of *Galys*  
485 and other lords of great worth  
who were beautiful to look at.  
The King of *Galys*, at that time,  
gathered men around him  
in radiant and bright armor.  
490 Then the king said to Sir Kadore  
and other lords that were present,  
"Take good care of my queen."



The kyng of Fraunce spared none,  
But sent for hem everychone,  
Both kyng, knyghth and clerke;  
The stiward, \* bylaft at home,  
To kepe the qwene whyte as fome,  
He com not at that werke.  
She wente with chylde, yn place,  
As longe as goddes wyll was,  
That semely unther serke;  
Thyll ther was of her body  
A fayre chyld borne, and a godele,  
Hadde a dowbyll kynges marke.

They hit crystened wyth grete honour,  
And called hym Segramour,  
Frely was that fode;  
Then the steward syr Kadore,  
A nobull letter made he thore,  
And wrowghte hit all with gode.  
He wrowghte hit yn hyghynge,  
And sente hit to his lorde the kynge,  
That gentyll was of blode;  
The messenger forth gan wende,  
And with the kynges moder gan lende,  
And yn to the castell he yode.

He was resseyved rychely,  
And she hym askede hastyly,  
How the qwene hadde spedde;  
"Madame, ther ys of her yborne  
A fayr man chylde, y tell you beforne,  
And she lyth in her bedde."  
She yaf hym, for that tydynge,  
A robe and fowrty shylynge,  
And rychely hym cladde:  
She made hym dronken of ale and wyne;  
And when she sawe that hit was tyme,

The King of France spared nobody,  
but sent for all of them:  
495 kings, knights, and clergy.  
The steward who was left at home  
to look after the queen [who was as] white as foam  
did not join that mission.  
She was pregnant [...],  
500 for as long as it was God's will,  
that beautiful one under her shift,  
until from her body  
a beautiful and handsome child was delivered  
[who] had a double king's mark.

505 They christened him with great honor,  
and called him Segramour;  
that baby was of noble lineage.  
Then the steward, Sir Kadore,  
wrote a noble letter right away  
510 and crafted it well.  
He crafted it in haste,  
and sent it to his lord, the king,  
who was of noble lineage.  
The messenger then went on his way.  
515 He came by the king's mother[']s place]  
and went into the castle.

He was received splendidly  
and she eagerly asked him  
how the queen had been faring.  
520 "My Lady, she has given birth to  
a beautiful male child, I am telling you truthfully,  
and she is lying in [child]bed."  
For this news, she gave him  
a robe and forty shillings  
525 and had him richly clothed.  
She got him drunk on ale and wine  
and when she saw that it was time,



Tho chambur she wold hym lede.

And when he þ was on slepe browght,  
The qwene that was of wykked thowght,

Tho chambur gan she wende ;  
Hys letter she toke hym fro,  
In a fyre she brente hit do,  
Of werkes she was unhende.  
Another letter she made with evyll,  
And sayde the qwene had born a devyll,  
Durst no mon come her hende.  
Thre heddes hadde he there  
A lyon, a dragon, and a beere,  
A fowll feltred fende.

On the morn, when hit was day,  
The messenger wente on his way,  
Bothe by stye and strete,  
In trwe story as y say,  
Tyll he come ther as the kyng laye,  
And speke wordes swete.  
He toke the kyng the lettur yn honde,  
And he hit redde, y untherstonde,  
The teres down gan he lete.  
And as he stode yn redyng,  
Downe he fell yn sowenyng,  
For sorow his herte gan blede.

Grete lordes that stonde hym by,  
Toke up the kyng hastely,  
In herte he was full woo;  
Sore he grette and sayde, Alas !  
That y ever man born was,  
That hit ever so shulde be;  
Alas! that y was made a kyng,  
And sygh wedded the fayrest thyng  
That on erthe myght go;  
That evur Jhesu hymself wolde sende,

she led him to his bedroom.

And when he had fallen asleep,  
530 the queen, who had an evil mind,  
went to the chamber.  
She took his letter from him  
and then burnt it in a fire;  
her machinations were unkind.  
535 Maliciously, she made another letter  
and said that the queen had given birth to a devil  
[and that] nobody dared to come close to her.  
[That her son] had three heads:  
a lion's, a dragon's, and a bear's,  
540 and was a foul, hairy fiend.

In the morning, when it was day,  
the messenger went on his way,  
both on the roads and the paths,  
truthfully, as the story goes,  
545 until he came to where the king was encamped,  
and he spoke sweet words.  
He delivered the letter to the king;  
and as he read it, I understand,  
[the king] let the tears stream down his face.  
550 And as he stood reading,  
he fell down, swooning;  
his heart was bleeding from sorrow.

Noble lords that stood beside him  
hastily helped the king up;  
555 in his heart, he was filled with sorrow.  
He wept bitterly and said, "Alas,  
that I was ever born!  
That it should ever be like this.  
Alas, that I was made a king  
560 and then wedded the fairest thing  
that may walk on earth.  
That Jesus himself would ever send



Such a fowle lothly fende,  
To come bytwene us too!

When he sawe hit myght no better be,  
Another letter then made he,  
And seled hit with his sele ;  
He commanded yn al thyng,  
To kepe well that lady yynge,  
Tyll she hadde her hele;  
Bothe gode men and ylle,  
To serve her at her wyll,  
Bothe yn wo and wele:  
He toke this letter of his honde,  
And rode thorow the same londe,  
By the kynges modur castell.

And then he dwelled ther all nyght,  
He was resseyved and rychely dyght,  
And wyst of no treson,  
He made hym well at ese and fyne,  
Bothe of brede, ale, and wyne,  
And that berafte hym his reson.  
When he was on slepe browht,  
The false qwere his letter sowghte,  
In to the fyre she kaste hit downe;  
Another letter she lette make,  
That men sholde the lady take,  
And lede her out of towne.

And putte her ynto the see,  
In that robe of ryche ble,  
The lytyll chylde her wyth;  
And lette her have no spendyng,  
For no mete ny for drynke,  
But lede her out of that kyth. †  
Upon payn of chylde and wyfe  
And also upon your owene lyfe  
Lette her have no gryth;

such a foul, loathly fiend,  
to come between the two of us."

565 When he saw it could not be helped,  
he made another letter,  
and sealed it with his seal.  
He commanded that above all,  
the young lady was to be kept safe  
570 until she had recovered [from the birth];  
everybody, righteous or evil,  
was to serve her as she commanded  
for better or worse.  
[The messenger] took the letter from his hands,  
575 and rode back along the same route  
via the king's mother's castle.

And then he stayed there all night;  
he was received well and outfitted richly  
and he was not aware of any treason.  
580 He made himself comfortable, perfectly at ease,  
with bread, ale, and wine,  
and that robbed him of his senses.  
When he fell asleep  
the false queen looked for his letter,  
585 she cast it into the fire  
and made another letter,  
[saying] that men should seize the lady  
and lead her out of town

and cast her into the sea  
590 in that robe of radiant hues,  
along with her little child,  
and let her have no allowance  
for food or drink  
but drive her out of that country.  
595 "Show her no mercy,  
or you will be punished by death  
along with your own children and your wife!"



The messenger knew no gyle,  
But rode hom mony a myle,  
By forest and by fryth.

And when the messenger come home,  
The steward toke the letter sone,  
And bygan to rede ;  
Sore he syght and sayde, alas !  
Sertes this ys a fowle case,  
And a defull dede.  
And as he stode yn redyng,  
He fell downe yn swounynge,  
For sorow his hert gan blede;  
Ther was nother olde ny yynge,  
That myghte forbere of wepynge,  
For that worthy unther wede.

The lady herde gret dele yn halle,  
On the steward gan she calle,  
And sayde, What may this be  
Yyf any thyng be amys,  
Tell me what that hit ys,  
And lette not for me.  
Then sayde the steward verament,  
Lo her a letter my lorde hath sente,  
And therfore woos ys me:  
She toke the letter and bygan to rede,  
Then fonde she wryten all the dede,  
How she moste ynto the see.

Be style, syr, sayde the qwene,  
Lette syche morynge bene,  
For me have thou no kare;  
Loke thou be not shente,  
But do my lordes commaundement,  
God forbede thou spare;  
For he weddede so porely,  
On me a sympull lady,

The messenger was completely unaware [of this]  
and he rode home for many a mile  
600 through forests and estates.

And when the messenger came home  
the steward quickly took the letter  
and started to read.  
He sighed heavily and said, "Alas,  
605 certainly this is a foul case,  
and a doleful deed!"  
And as he stood reading,  
he fell down swooning;  
his heart was bleeding from sorrow.  
610 There was nobody, neither old nor young,  
who would not weep  
for that worthy one underneath her dress.

The lady heard the great clamour in the hall.  
She called the steward  
615 and said, "What can this be about?  
If anything is amiss,  
tell me what it is  
and conceal nothing from me."  
Then the steward said, truthfully,  
620 "Lo, my lord has sent a letter,  
and that is why I am distressed!"  
She took the letter and began to read.  
There she found the entire command written down:  
how she must [be thrown] into the sea.

625 "Be quiet, Sir," said the queen,  
"Refrain from such mourning  
for my sake.  
Make sure that you will not be disgraced  
but do my lord's bidding.  
630 God forbid you spare [me].  
Because he made such a poor marriage,  
with me, a plain lady,



He ys ashamed sore;  
Grete well my lord fro me,  
So gentyll of blode yn Cristyante,  
Gete he never more.

Then was ther sorow and myche woo,  
When the lady to shype shulde go,  
They wepte and wronge her honde; †  
The lady that was meke and mylde,  
In her arme she bar her chylde  
And toke leve of the londe.  
When she wente ynto the see,  
In that robe of ryche ble,  
Men sowened on the sonde;  
Sore they wepte, and sayde, Alas!  
Certes this ys a wykked kase,  
Wo worth dedes wronge!

The lady and the lytyll chylde,  
Fleted forth on the water wylde,  
With full harde happes;  
Her surkote that was large and wyde,  
Therwith her vysage she gan hyde,  
With the hynther lappes.  
She was aferde of the see,  
And layde her gruf upon a tre,  
The chylde to her pappes;  
The wawes that were grete and strong,  
On the bote faste they thronge, †  
With mony unsemely rappes.

And when the chylde gan to wepe,  
With sory hert she songe hit aslepe,  
And put the pappe yn his mowth,  
And sayde, Myghth y ones gete lond,  
Of the water that ys so stronge,  
By northe or by sowthe!  
Wele owth y to warye the see,

he is profoundly ashamed.  
Send my greetings to my lord.  
635 Nevermore will he obtain  
[one] of such noble lineage in all Christendom."

Then there was misery and much sorrow  
when the lady had to go to the ship.  
They wept and wrought their hands.  
640 The lady who was humble and compassionate  
bore the child in her arms  
and took leave of the land.  
When she went into the sea  
in the robe of radiant hues,  
645 people swooned on the beach.  
They wept bitterly and said, "Alas,  
this is certainly a cruel case.  
Cursed be malicious deeds!"

The lady and the little child  
650 drifted away on the raging water  
in a stroke of bad luck.  
Her surcoat was large and wide:  
she sheltered her face  
in its outer folds;  
655 she was afraid of the sea,  
and lay face downward on a plank  
with the child at her breast.  
The waves were huge and forceful;  
they violently flogged the boat  
660 with many harsh thuds.

And when the child began to weep  
she sang it to sleep with a heavy heart  
and put her nipple into his mouth  
and said, "If only I could get to land  
665 from this sea which is so fierce,  
whether in the North or South!  
I ought to curse you, Sea,



I have myche shame yn the,  
And ever she lay and growht;  
Then she made her prayer,  
To Jhesu and his moder dere,  
In all that she kowthe.

Now this lady dwelled thore  
A full sevene nyght and more,  
As hit was goddys wylle ;  
With karefull herte and sykyng sore,  
Such sorow was her yarked yore,  
And she lay full style.  
She was dryven toward Rome,  
Thorow the grace of god yn trone,  
That all thyng may fulylle:  
On the see she was so harde bestadde  
For hunger and thurste allmoste madde,  
Wo worth chawnses ylle!

A marchaunte dwelled yn that cytè,  
A ryche mon of golde and fee,  
Jurdan was hys name;  
Eevery day wolde he,  
Go to playe hym by the see,  
The eyer for to tane.  
He wente forth yn that tyde,  
Walkynge by the see sythe,  
Alle hym selfe alone:  
A bote he fonde by the brymme,  
And a fayr lady therynne,  
That was ryght wo-bygone.

The cloth on her shon so bryth  
He was aferde of that syght,  
For glysteryng of that wede;  
And yn his herte he thowghth ryght,  
That she was non erdyly wyght;  
He sawe never non shuch yn leede.

you are causing me such disgrace!"  
And she lay there the whole time and grieved,  
670 then she prayed  
to Jesus and His dear Mother  
in all the ways that she knew.

Now this lady remained there  
for a full seven nights and longer,  
675 as was God's will.  
With a frightened heart and sighing heavily,  
she had been destined for such misfortune long ago,  
and she lay very still.  
She was driven towards Rome  
680 through the grace of God on His throne  
who pervades all things.  
While at sea she was harassed so badly  
[that she was] almost crazed from hunger and thirst.  
Cursed be ill chance!

685 A merchant lived in that city,  
a rich man who owned gold and bonds;  
Jurdan was his name.  
Every day he would  
go and amuse himself on the beach  
690 and go outside for a walk.  
While he was out,  
walking by the seaside  
by himself, all alone,  
he found a boat by the shore,  
695 and a beautiful lady inside  
who was very wretched.

The fabric on her gleamed so radiantly  
that he was terrified by the sight  
because of the glistening that came from the dress.  
700 And in his heart he was convinced  
that she was not an earthly being.  
Never had he seen such folk.



He sayde, What hette ye, fayr ladye?  
Lord, she sayde, y hette Egarye,  
That lye here yn drede:  
Up he toke that fayre ladye,  
And the yonge chylde her by,  
And hom he gan hem lede.

When he come to his byggyng,  
He welcomed fayr that lady yynge,  
That was fayr and bryght;  
And badde his wyf yn all thyng,  
Mete and drynke for to brynge  
To the lady ryght.  
What that she wyll crave,  
And her mowth wyll hit have,  
Loke hit be redy dyght:  
She hath so longe meteles be,  
That me thynketh great pytè,  
Conforte her yyf thou myght.

Now the lady dwelles ther,  
With alle mete that gode were  
She hedde at her wylle:  
She was curteys yn all thyng,  
Bothe to olde and to yynge,  
Her loved bothe gode and ylle.  
The chylde bygan for to thryfe,  
He wax the fayrest chyld on lyfe  
Whyte as flour on hylle;  
And she sewed\* sylke werk yn bour,  
And tawghte her sone nortowre,  
But evyr she mornede styлле.

When the chylde was seven yer olde,  
He was bothe wyse and bolde,  
And wele made of flesh and bone;  
He was worthy unther wede,  
And ryght well kowthe prike a stede,

He said, "What are you called, fair lady?"  
"Lord," she said, "I am called Egaré,  
705 who lies here in terror."  
He helped the beautiful lady up  
and the young child that was with her  
and he led them home.

When he came to his residence,  
710 he appropriately received that young lady  
who was beautiful and radiant,  
and he asked his wife  
to bring all kinds of food and drink  
to that lady right away.  
715 "Whatever she craves  
and her mouth wants to have,  
see that it is readily prepared for her.  
She has been without food for so long  
that I think it is a great pity.  
720 Comfort her if you can."

Now the lady lived there.  
She had all good foods  
at her beck and call.  
She was courteous in every respect  
725 to both the old and the young.  
Both the righteous and the evil adored her.  
The child began to thrive.  
He grew into the fairest child alive,  
white as a flower on the hill.  
730 And she sewed silkwork in her bower  
and taught her son good manners,  
but she always mourned quietly.

When the child was seven years old,  
he was both discerning and courageous,  
735 and well formed in flesh and bone.  
He was worthy under his clothing.  
And he knew very well how to handle a steed.





So curtays a chylde was none.  
All men loved Segramowre,  
Bothe yn halle and yn bowre,  
Whersoever he gan gone.  
Leve we at the lady clere of vyce,  
And speke of the kyng of Galys,  
Fro the sege when he come home.

Now the sege broken ys,  
The kyng come home to Galys,  
With mykyll myrthe and pride;  
Dukes and erles of ryche asyce,  
Barones and knyghtes of mykyll pryse,  
Come rydynge be hys syde.  
Syr Kodore his steward thanne,  
Ayeyn hym rode with mony a man,  
As faste as he myght ryde;  
He tolde the kyng aventowres.  
Of his halles and his bowres,  
And of his londys wyde.

The kyng sayde, By goddys name,  
Syr Kadore, thou art to blame  
For thy fyrst tellynge;  
Thou sholdest fyrst have tolde me  
Of my lady Egare,  
I love most of all thyng,  
Then was the stewardes herte wo,  
And sayde, Lorde, why sayst thou so?  
Art not thou a trewe kynge?  
Lo her the letter ye sente me,  
Yowr owene self the sothe may se,  
I have don your byddyng.

The kyng toke the letter to rede,  
And when he sawe that ylke dede,  
He wax all pale and wanne;  
Sore he grette and sayde, Alas!

There was no other child as courteous.  
Everbody loved Segramour,  
740 in the hall and in the bower,  
wherever he went.  
Now we shall leave our tale of the lady who is unspoiled by vice  
and speak instead of the King of "Galys"  
when he comes home from the siege.

745 Now that the siege is over,  
the king comes home to "Galys"  
with great joy and pride.  
Dukes and earls of prosperous estates,  
barons and knights who were of great worth  
750 come riding by his side.  
Sir Kadore, who had been his steward,  
rode towards him with many a man  
as fast as he could.  
He told the king the fortunes  
755 of his halls and his bowers  
and of his wide lands.

The king said, "For God's sake,  
Sir Kadore, you are to blame  
for what you have told me first!  
760 You should have told me first  
of my lady Egaré  
whom I love above all things!"  
Then the steward's heart sank  
and [he] said, "Lord, why do you say so?  
765 Are you not a steadfast king?  
Look here at the letter you sent me.  
You may see it for yourself:  
I have done your bidding."

The king took the letter to read it  
770 and when he saw the aforementioned document [the letter]  
he went very pale and wan.  
He cried out deeply and said, "Alas,



That ever born y was,  
Or ever was made manne!  
Syr Kadore, so mot y the,  
Thys letter come never fro me,  
I telle the her anone.  
Bothe they wepte and yaf hem ylle;  
Alas ! he sayde, saf goddys wylle,  
And both they\* sowened than.

Grete lordes stode by,  
And toke up the kyng hastily,  
Of hem was grete pytè;  
And when they both kevered were,  
The kyng toke hym the letter ther,  
Of the heddys thre.  
A lord, he sayde, be goddes grace,  
I sawe never this letter in place,  
Alas! how may this be?  
After the messenger ther they sente,  
The kyng askede what way he wente;  
"Lord, t̃ be your moder fre."

Alas! then sayde the kynge,  
Whether my moder was so unhende,  
To make thys treson;  
By my krowne she shall be brent,  
Withowten any other jugement,  
That thenketh me best reson.  
Grete lordes toke hem betwene,  
That they wolde exyle the qwene,  
And berefe her hyr renowne;  
Thus they exiled the false qwene,  
And byrafte her hyr lyflothe clene,  
Castell, towre, and towne.

When she was fled over the see fome,  
The nobull kyng dwelled at hom,  
With full hevychere;

that I was ever born,  
or was ever made a man!  
775 Sir Kadore, by my life,  
this letter never originated with me,  
I am telling you here and now."  
They both wept and berated themselves.  
"Alas!" they said, "May God's will be done!"  
780 And then they both swooned.

Distinguished lords stood nearby  
and they hastily helped up the king;  
he was a wretched sight.  
And when they had both recovered  
785 the king examined the letter  
about the three heads:  
"Oh Lord," he said, "by God's grace,  
I have never seen this letter before!  
Alas, how can this be?"  
790 They sent for the messenger.  
The king asked which way he had gone:  
"Lord, past your noble mother's."

"Alas!" the king then said.  
"Could my mother be so discourteous  
795 as to commit this treason?  
By my crown, she shall be burned  
without a trial.  
That seems to me the most just course of action!"  
Between them, the distinguished lords decided  
800 that they would exile the queen  
and deprive her of her rank.  
Thus they exiled the malicious queen  
and stripped her of all her privileges,  
castles, towers, and towns.

805 When she was cast out upon the sea foam,  
the noble king remained at home  
in a miserable state.



With karefull hert and drury mone,  
Sykynges made he many on,

For Egarye the clere:

And when he sawe chylderen play,  
He wepte and sayde, Well away !

For my sone so dere.

Such lyf he lyved mony a day,  
That no mon hym stynte may,  
Fully seven yere.

Tyll a thowght yn hys herte come,  
How his lady whyte as fome,  
Was drowned for his sake:  
"Thorow the grace of gode yn trone,  
I woll to the pope of Rome,  
My penans for to take."  
He lette ordeyne shypus fele,  
And fylled hem full of wordes wele,  
Hys men mery with to make;  
Dolys he lette dyghth and dele,  
For to wynnen hym sowles hele,  
To the shyp he toke the gate.

Shypmen, that wer so mykyll of price,  
Dyght her takull on ryche acyse,  
That was fayr and fre;  
They drowgh up sayl, and leyd out ore,  
The wynde stode as her lust wore  
The wether was lythe on le.  
They sayled over the salt fome,  
Thorow the grace of god in trone,  
That most ys of powstè;  
To the cyté when they come,  
At the burgeys hous his yn he nome,  
Ther as woned Emarye.

Emare called her sone,  
Hastely to here come,

With a heavy heart and a mournful mind  
he sighed a lot

810 for the beautiful Egaré.

And when he saw children playing,  
he wept and said, "Oh, woe, woe,  
for my son who is so dear to me!"

That was his life for many days,

815 [and] nobody could put an end to [his suffering]  
for a full seven years—

until [one day] a thought came into his heart:  
how his lady who was white as foam  
had been drowned for his sake.

820 "Through the grace of God on His throne,  
I want to see the Pope in Rome,  
to receive my penance!"

He had many ships prepared  
and loaded them with worldly wealth

825 with which to make his men merry.  
He had alms distributed  
in order to gain salvation for his soul,  
[then] he made his way to the ship.

Sailors who were very skilled  
830 prepared the rigging,  
which was beautiful and precious, in a splendid manner.  
They hoisted the sails and positioned the rudder;  
the wind was as they had desired,  
the weather was pleasant and calm.

835 They sailed over the salty foam,  
by the grace of God on His throne  
who is most powerful of all.  
When they came to that city,  
[the king] took his lodgings at the burgher's house  
840 where Emaré lived.

Emaré called her son  
to come to her quickly



Wythoute ony lettyng;  
And sayde, My dere sone so fre,  
Do a lytull aftur me,  
And thou shalt have my blessyng.  
To-morowe thou shall serve yn halle,  
In a kurtyll of ryche palle,  
Byfore this nobull kyng :  
Loke sone so curtays thou be,  
That no mon fynde chalange to the,  
In no manere thyng.

When the kyng ys served of spycerye,  
Knele thou downe hastylye,  
And take iys hond yn thyn ;  
And when thou hast so done,  
Take the kuppe of golde sone,  
And serve hym of the wyne :  
And what that he speketh to the,  
Cum anon and tell me,  
On goddes blessyng and myne.  
The chylde wente ynto the hall,  
Amonge the lordes grete and small,  
That lufsume were unther lyne.

Then the lordes that wer grete,  
Wysh and wente to her mete,  
Menstrelles\* browght yn the kowrs.  
The chylde hem served so curteysly,  
All hym loved that hym sy,  
And spake hym gret honowres.  
Then sayde all that loked hym upon,  
So curteys a chylde sawe they never non,  
In halle ny yn bowres.  
The kyng sayde to hym yn game,  
Swete sone, what ys thy name?  
Lord, he seyde, y hyghth Segrāmowres.

Then that nobull kyng

without any delay  
and said, "My dear noble son,  
845 do as I tell you,  
and you shall have my blessing.  
Tomorrow you shall serve in the hall  
in a gown of splendid silk  
in front of this noble king.  
850 Look, son, you are so well-mannered  
that no one could find your match  
in any manner of things!

"When the king is served dessert,  
kneel down hastily  
855 and take his hand in yours.  
And when you have done so,  
quickly take the golden chalice  
and serve him wine.  
And then come quickly  
860 and tell me what he says to you,  
by God's and my grace!"  
The child went into the hall,  
among the greater and lesser nobles,  
who was lovely underneath the linen.

865 Then the lords, who were distinguished,  
washed [their hands] and proceeded to eat;  
servants brought in the courses.  
The child served them so gracefully  
that everyone who saw him loved him  
870 and gave him much praise.  
Then all who looked at him said  
that they had never seen such a courteous child,  
either in halls or in bowers.  
The king said to him, in jest,  
875 "Sweet son, what is your name?"  
"Lord," he said, "I am called Segrāmour."

Then that noble king



Toke up a grete sykyng,  
For hys sone hyght so,  
Certys, withowten lesyng,  
The teres out of his yën gan wryng,  
In herte he was full woo.  
Neverthelese he lette be,  
And loked on the chylde so fre,  
And mykell he lovede hym thoo.  
The kyng sayde to the burgeys anone,  
Swete syr, ys this thy sone ?  
The burgeys sayde, Yoo.

Then the lordes, that were grete,  
Whesshen ayeyn aftyr mete,  
And then come spycerye,  
The chylde, that was of ehere swete,  
On his kne downe he sete,  
And served hym curteyslye.  
The kyng called the burgeys hym tyll  
And sayde, Syr, yf hit be thy wyll,  
Yyf me this lytyll body;  
I shall hym make lorde of town and towr,  
Of hye halles and of bowre.  
I love hym speeyally.

When he had served the kyng at wylle,  
Fayr he wente his modyr tyll,  
And tellys her how hyt ys.  
"Soone, when he shall to chambur wende,  
Take his hond at the grete ende,  
For he ys thy fadur, y wysse,  
And byd hym come speke with Emare,  
That changed her name to Egare,  
In the lond of Galys."  
The chylde wente ayeyn to halle,  
Amonge the grete lordes alle,  
And served on ryche asyse.

started to sigh heavily,  
because his son was also called that.  
880 The truth is—I am not lying—  
the tears were filling his eyes;  
in his heart he was very sorrowful.  
Nevertheless, he did not inquire further,  
but looked upon the child who was so noble  
885 and felt much love for him in that instant.  
The king then said to the burgher:  
"Sweet Sir, is this your son?"  
The burgher said: "Yes."

Then the distinguished lords  
890 cleaned [their hands] after the meal  
and in came the sweet course.  
The child, who was of a pleasant disposition,  
knelt down on his knee  
and served [the king] courteously.  
895 The king called the burgher to tell him,  
saying: "Sir, if you are willing,  
give me this little body!  
I shall make him a lord over towns and fortresses,  
over high halls and bowers.  
900 I feel a particular affection for him."

When he had served the king for a while  
[the child] went to his mother  
to tell her how things stood.  
"Son, when he turns to go to his chamber,  
905 take his hand [...]  
because he is your father, no doubt;  
and bid him to come and speak with Emaré  
who changed her name to Egare  
in the land of 'Galys.'"  
910 The child went again to the hall  
among all the distinguished lords  
and served them splendidly.



When they wer well at ese afyne,  
Bothe of brede, ale, and wyne,  
They rose up more and myn;  
When the kyng shulde to chambur wende,  
He toke his hond at the grete ende,  
And fayre he helpe hym yn ;  
And sayde, Syr, if your wyll be,  
Take me your honde, and go with me,  
For y am of yowr kynne.  
Ye shull come speke with Emare,  
That changed her nome to Egare,  
That berys the whyte chynne.

The kyng yn herte was full woo,  
When he herd mynge tho  
Of her that was his qwene;  
And sayde, Sone, why sayest thou so?  
Wherto umbraydest thou me of my wo?  
That may never bene.  
Nevertheles with hym he wente,  
Ayeyn hem come the lady gent,  
In the robe bryght and shene,  
He toke her yn his armes two,  
For joy they sowened both to,  
Such love was hem bytwene.

A joyfull metyng was ther thore,  
Of that lady goodly unther-gore,  
Frely in armes to folde;  
Lorde! gladde was syr Kadore,  
And other lordes that ther wore,  
Semely to beholde.  
Of the lady that \* was put yn the see,  
Thorow grace of god in trinite,  
Thar was kevered of cares colde.  
Leve we at the lady whyte as flour,  
And speke we of her fadur the emperour,  
That fyrste the tale of ytolde,

When they were finally satisfied  
with bread, ale, and wine,  
915 they rose up, more or less.  
When the king was to go to his chamber,  
[Segramour] took his hand [...]  
and helped him inside;  
he said: "Sir, if you may,  
920 take me by your hand and go with me,  
because I am of your kin!  
You shall come speak with Emaré  
who changed her name to Egare  
and who bears a white chin.

925 In his heart, the king was miserable  
when he heard the [child's] speech  
about the one who had been his queen  
and [he] said, "Son, why do you say so?  
Why do you reproach me with my misery?  
930 That may never be!"  
Nevertheless, he went with him.  
The noble lady came towards them  
in the bright and glistening robe.  
[The king] took her into his two arms;  
935 they both swooned from joy,  
such was the love between them.

That was a joyful meeting there, [the king] freely folding that lady,  
so virtuous under her garment,  
into his arms.  
940 Lord! Sir Kadore was glad,  
as were the other lords who were present there  
—beautiful to behold—  
to see that the lady who had been put to sea,  
through the grace of God in Trinity,  
945 had been restored from cold care.  
We shall now leave the lady who was as white as a flower,  
and speak of her father, the emperor,  
of whom this tale first told.



The emperour her fadyr then  
Was † woxen an olde man,  
And thought on hys synne;  
Of hys thowghtyr Emare,  
That was putte ynto the see,  
That was so bryght of skynne.  
He thought that he wolde go,  
For his penance to the pope tho,  
And heven for to wynne ;  
Messengeres he sente forth sone,  
And they come to the kowrt of Rome,  
To take her lordes inne.

Emare prayde her lorde the kyng,  
Syr, abyde that lordys komyng,  
That ys so fayr and fre;  
And, swete syr, yn all thyng,  
Aqweynte you with that lordyng,  
Hit ys worshyp to the.  
The kyng of Galys seyde than,  
So grete a lord ys ther nan\*  
In all crystyantè.  
"Now, swete syr, whatever betyde,  
Ayayn that grete lord ye ryde,  
And all thy knyghtys with the."

Emare thawghte her sone yynge,  
Ayeyn the emperour komyng,  
How that he sholde done:  
Swete sone, yn all thyng,  
Be redy with my lord the kyng,  
And be my swete sone.  
When the emperour kysseth thy fadyr so fre,  
Loke yyf he wyll kysse the,  
Abowe the to hym sone;  
Add bydde hym come speke with Emare,  
That was putte ynto the see,

By then, her father the emperor  
950 had become an old man,  
and [he] thought of his sin,  
[and] of his daughter Emaré,  
who had been put to sea,  
and who had had such luminous skin.  
955 He thought that he would go  
to the Pope to receive his penance there,  
and gain [entry to] Heaven.  
He soon sent messengers ahead  
and they came to the Roman court  
960 to take lodgings for their lord.

Emaré implored her lord, the king,  
"Sir, wait for that lord who is coming,  
who is so handsome and noble,  
and, sweet Sir, above all,  
965 acquaint yourself with that lord;  
it is an honor for you."  
The King of *Galys* then said,  
"There is no lord so great  
in all Christendom."  
970 "Now, sweet Sir, whatever happens,  
ride towards that lord,  
and all your knights with you."

Emaré, anticipating the emperor's arrival,  
instructed her young son  
975 on how it should be done:  
"Sweet son, above all,  
be ready with my lord, the king,  
and be my sweet son!  
When the emperor kisses your noble father,  
980 see if he will return the kiss,  
then bow down before him  
and ask him to come speak with Emaré  
who was put to sea.



Hymself yaf the dome.

Now kometh the emperour of pryse,  
Ayeyn hym rode the kyng of Galys,  
With full mykull pryde ;  
The chylde was worthy unther-wede,  
A satte upon a nobyll stede,  
By his fadyr syde :  
And, when he mette the emperour,  
He valed his hode with gret honour,  
And kyssed hym yn that tyde ;  
And other lordys of gret valowre,  
They also kessed Segramowre ;  
In herte ys not to hyde.

The emperours hert anameret gretlye  
Of the chylde that rode hym by,  
With so lovely chere.  
Segramowre he sayde his stede,  
Hys owene fadyr toke good hede,  
And other lordys that ther were.  
The chylde spake to the emperour,  
And sayde, Lord, for thyn honour,  
My worde that thou wyll here;  
Ye shull come speke with Emaré,  
That changede her name to Egare.  
That was thy thowghthur dere.

The emperour wax all pale,  
And sayde, Sone, why umbraydest me of bale,  
And thou may se no bote?  
"Syr, and ye wyll go with me,  
I shall the brynge with that lady fre,  
That ys lovesom on to loke."  
Neverthelesse, with hym he wente,  
Ayeyn hym come that lady gent,  
Walkynge on her fote;  
And the emperour alyghte tho.

He himself gave the command."

985 Now the worthy emperor arrived;  
the King of "Galys" rode to meet him  
with much honor.  
The child was worthy under his dress  
and sat upon a noble steed  
990 by his father's side;  
and when he met the emperor  
he lowered his hood with great honor,  
and kissed him that time,  
and other lords of great courage  
995 also kissed Segramour,  
that is the truth of it.

The Emperor's heart was greatly enamored  
by the child who rode by his side  
with such a lovely disposition.  
1000 Segramour reined in his steed,  
his own father listened carefully,  
and so did the other lords who were present.  
The child spoke to the emperor  
and said, "Lord, for the sake of your honor  
1005 mark my words:  
you shall come and speak with Emaré  
who changed her name to Egare  
who was your dear daughter."

The emperor grew very pale  
1010 and said, "Son, why do you reproach me with grief  
when you cannot see any remedy?"  
"Sir, if you come with me now  
I shall bring forth that noble lady  
who is lovely to look at."  
1015 Nevertheless, he [the emperor] went with him.  
The noble lady came towards him,  
walking on foot.  
And the emperor dismounted





And toke her yn his armes two,  
And clypte and kyssed her fote.

Ther was a joyfull metynge  
Of the emperour and of the kynge,  
And also of Emare;  
And so ther was of syr Segramour,  
That aftyr was emperour,  
A full gode man was he.  
A grette feste ther was holde,  
Of erles and barones bolde,  
As testimonyeth thys story.  
Thys ys on of Brytayne layes,  
That was used by olde dayes,  
Men callys playn the garye.  
Jhesu, that settes yn thy trone,  
So graunte us with the to wone  
In thy perpetuall glorye ! Amen

*Explicit Emare.*

and took her into his two arms;  
1020 he embraced her and kissed her sweetly.

That was a joyful meeting  
of the emperor and the king,  
and also of Emaré,  
and Sir Segramour was also there,  
1025 who later became emperor—  
he was a very good man.  
They held a great feast  
with valiant earls and barons,  
as the story tells.  
1030 This is one of the Breton lays  
that has been told since the olden days.  
Men call it *Playn d'Egarye*.  
Jesus on Your throne,  
grant us to live with You  
1035 in perpetual glory! Amen.

Here ends *Emaré*.



## Critical Notes

- Line 7** The Middle English grammar shifts between addressing Mary in the second person (imperative, *bere* in l. 8, 10) and talking about her in the third person (l. 9).
- Line 8** Literally: "Bear our message/prayer in between." Mary and the Saints are intercessors between a human and God. It is easier to appeal to the saints or to Mary than to God directly.
- Line 9** Variations of this line ("That semely ys of sight") are reiterated throughout the poem and in most cases "that" (who or what is beautiful to look at) has multiple referents. Here, an alternative referent is *arunde*: "Mary, heavenly queen, bear our message in between [heaven and earth] so that it is of gracious appearance." As this grammatical ambiguity might be precisely the point, some instances of this line will retain their ambiguity in translation.
- Line 13** Middle English *minstral* is a term for professional entertainers, self-employed or working as court functionaries, who would perform as storytellers, musicians, singers, actors, jugglers, and occasionally as servants.
- Line 85** All editions but Rickert omit *hyȝte* and all editions end the line with a comma. White's diplomatic transcription reads "Syr Tergaunte þt nobyll knyȝt hyȝte", p. 327. Rickert puts *hyȝte* in brackets and adds, "The omission of *hyȝte* improves the metre; but although the *yȝ* is blotted, the word is not unmistakingly crossed out by the scribe. Kölbing, however, considers it erased (Eng. Stud., xv, 248)", p. 3 note 5. Laskaya and Salisbury omit *hyȝhte* in the main text, but add in their apparatus, note 85: "The MS includes the word *hyȝt* at the end of the line. The word is blotted and, since it disrupts the meter, Kö[lb]ing and G[ough] considered it erased. Ru[m]ble], M[jills], and F[rench] & H[ale] all leave the word out; R[ickert] leaves it in." <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#85>. I agree with Rickert's interpretation of the text, as blots are common throughout the manuscript and as *hyȝten* takes on the grammatical function of a predicate. The next line has a full SPO structure; introducing Tergaunte in a full rather than elliptic sentence makes sense from a grammatical point of view, even if it irregularizes the metre.
- Line 86** Two senses of *ryȝhte*, adv., would fit in this context: "Suitably for the purpose, well, thoroughly, properly; [...]," i.e., as one should present gifts to an emperor, bending the knee, etc.; "sincerely," i.e., like the emir's daughter in l. 110, with no false intentions. See [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED37511/track?counter=4&search\\_id=11749846](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED37511/track?counter=4&search_id=11749846).
- Line 89** Rickert notes that *was dye* (crossed out) precedes *pyȝht* in the MS; this is neither rendered in White's transcription nor commented on by Laskaya and Salisbury.
- Line 94** *nakette*: the MED's only quotations for *nakette* as *agate* are from *Emaré*. See [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED29047/track?counter=1&search\\_id=11382432](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED29047/track?counter=1&search_id=11382432). Laskaya and Salisbury consider "agate," as explained in note 94: "*Nakette* is 'agate,' with the *n* from the definite article allided to the initial vowel." See <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#94>. Gough agrees (p. 35). Rickert, however, proposes „perhaps (n)achate" (p. 35, note 4/95) but adds, "[t]he text shows a tendency to write *e* for *a*, as: *cl dedde*, *wesh*, *wes*; but 'Destruction of Troy' has *achatas*, *Wars of Alexander*, *acats*. Or, the word may be some derivative (perhaps corrupted) from *nacre* = mother-of-pearl. There is also a rare stone *echite*, but this is more remote phonetically. Cf. also Godefroi under *nace* = cloth of gold." Line 244 refers to the robe shaped from Tergaunte's gift as "cloth of golde." Historical variations of "pearl" appear closer to *nakettes* than *nacre*: the OED lists occurrences of "post-classical *naccara*, *nacara* mother-of-pearl" in 1295 and 1347, and points to the Italian loan word *naqqāra* from Arabic for kettledrum, which in turn likely relates back to "the technical language of pearlers in the Gulf region." See <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124778?redirectedFrom=nacre&>. Compare with the *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* vol. 19 col. 137b–138a, which provides a similar etymology for Old French (*a*)*nacaire*, It. (*g*)*naccera*, Cat. *nacra*, Sp. *nàcara*. The term entered the lexicon in the time of the crusades. <https://lecteur-few.atilf.fr/lire/190/137>.
- Lines 98–101** "The emperor could not establish visual power over the cloth and was unable to hold his gaze and penetrate the cloth with it." This is due to the stones. Stones, in medieval scientific discourse, were believed to possess powers (which may be reflected in the repeated use of *myche prise* to qualify the stones and is referenced directly by the virtues of emeralds, l. 152). Encyclopedias or stone books, called lapidaries, would present virtues which manifest in color, hue, and radiance, and in medicinal, talismanic, and spiritual uses. Laskaya and Salisbury, notes 91, 94, 127–130, 139, 152–156 provide some of the cloth's individual stones' virtues as accounted for in select lapidaries. More important for the meaning of ll. 99–101 is that a frequent lithic power across various gemstones is their capacity to reflect or even to emit endogenic light. By reflecting the emperor's gaze back and dazzling



him with blinding light, the stones "refuse" to be discerned and prevent him from reading the lithic mosaic text of lovers recounted in the following lines. Thus, they in turn establish power over the emperor. Grammatically, l. 100, "For glysteryng of the ryche ston," could either explain the preceding or the subsequent line: "The emperor was not able to discern anything on the cloth because of the light emitted/reflected by the stones" or "Because of the light emitted/reflected by the stones, he could not establish visual access." In any case, *Emaré* emphasizes the emperor's temporary blindness and attributes it to the stones.

- Line 108** As medieval manuscripts do not use punctuation, it is unclear whether the following description of the cloth is in the voice of an omniscient narrator or in the voice of Tergaunte, who has brought the gift. Laskaya and Salisbury and Rickert indicate that Tergaunte ends his speech here (l. 108) and speaks again in ll. 172–177, which would leave the description to the heterodiegetic narrator. French and Hale extend his speech to l. 113. Perkins cautions against "the absolute boundary that modern punctuation creates here, and the point of view that it creates." See "Ekphrasis and Narrative in Emaré and Sir Eglamour of Artois." *Medieval Romance, Medieval Contexts*, edited by Rhiannon Purdie, Brewer, 2011. *Studies in Medieval Romance*, pp. 47–68 (p. 58).
- Line 109** *hethenes* means "non-Christian people". From the subsequent ranks (emir, sultan), the place-name Babylon, which could refer to present-day Cairo, and the fact that Muslim-held territories produced, along with Byzantium, the most coveted fabrics and silks to a higher technical and material standard than available in the Latin West, the meaning "Muslim" can be inferred. Sicily in turn remained multi-ethnic and multi-religious for centuries after the Muslim (Byzantine) conquest in the ninth century and the Norman (Latin Christian) conquest in the twelfth century. Note that the poem uses two different terms, *hethen* for the princess but *Saracen* for an enemy that is a religious Other (l. 481, note 71).
- Line 110** *wythouten lees*, as a fixed phrase and rhyme tag, asserts truth. In a more literal sense, the emir's daughter's intentions may have been honest, i.e. *wythouten lees*. See [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34602/track?counter=3&search\\_id=11382432](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34602/track?counter=3&search_id=11382432).
- Line 111** *wyth pryde* is ambiguous: both negative and positive senses of pride—honorable, vainglorious—would fit. By way of such ambiguous descriptors, the cloth becomes multivalent, which reflects in the multivalency of Emaré later on, who, when she wears the fabric, is perceived by different characters as a fairy or demon, as a noble woman, and as an object or a treasure trove. See [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34602/track?counter=3&search\\_id=11382432](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34602/track?counter=3&search_id=11382432).
- Line 123** The referent of this line is unclear: it could either be Amadas and Ydoine (i.e. as a faithful couple), or the mode of embroidering (i.e. being one of faithful love).
- Line 125** *Line 125* Rickert, p. 36, note 5/125, identifies this flower with the "Herb Paris (Paris Quadrifolia), similar to trillium" whose leaves are set "to resemble a true-love knot"; she cites its use in *Sir Degrauent* (ll. 1032, 1039, 1484), *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* (ll. 354, 510), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (l. 612), and *The Tale of Ralph Collier* (l. 473); she assumes the actual herb was worked into the cloth as a magical charm. Medieval silk embroidery, however, would often include scattered vegetal or figural ornaments.
- Line 142** *nakettes*, see note for l. 94.
- Line 149** See note for l. 151.
- Line 151** Rickert, p. 36, note 5/151, remarks: "Possibly here as in l. 131 the pattern suddenly intrudes upon the materials; but the names of stones are expected. If the poem was at any time taken down from hearing, the line might have been corrupted by 'Ther wer onyx and centaureus,' which would rhyme correctly with *vertues*. My authority for *centaureus* is Heinrich von Neustadt (quoted by Smith, *Shakespeare's Pericles and Apollonius of Tyre*, Philadelphia, 1898, pp. 75–76); the nearest that Pannier [*Les Lapidaires Français*, Paris, 1882, index] gives is *ceraunus*. The plant, *centaurus*, was well known." Laskaya and Salisbury also note that "knyghtus and senatowres [...] seem out of place in a list of gems." <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#151>. Gough concurs, p. 35.
- Line 158** Based on dreams and visions in Books 2 and 7 of Daniel, medieval Christian historiography developed the theory of four kingdoms, or ages, to follow each other before the end of days: the first kingdom would be the Babylonian Empire, the second the Persian Empire, the third the Greek Empire (Alexander the Great), the final earthly kingdom the Roman Empire. Rulership, knowledge, and literature would be "translated" from one empire to the next (*translatio imperii*). Babylon could simultaneously refer to the historical empire and to contemporary Cairo. In the context of the "translated" cloth, both associations come together.



- Line 172** See note for l. 108 on speech marks.
- Line 174** Ritson omits the MS's *wyth*; it is included by Rickert and Laskaya and Salisbury.
- Line 187** Ritson, without commentary, changes to *Remeneth*.
- Line 216** Romances are a narrative genre. Frequent subject matters are Arthurian tales (such as *Tristan and Iseut*) or stories of the repeated union and separation of lovers (such as *Floire and Blanchefleur* and *Amadas and Ydoine*). *romans*, as it spelled in l. 216, can also simply mean "French" and thus implicate a French source. Many romances were in fact copied or adapted from French into English.
- Line 234** As marriage was considered a sacrament, any commitments outside of clerical law would have to be sanctioned by a clerical authority, which is represented here by the Pope. Historically, noble families might appeal to the Pope if a marriage was not in line with clerical regulations regarding consanguinity, either to go ahead with a planned alliance or to dissolve an existing one. After the Fourth Lateran council of 1215, which relaxed regulations, any relations within the fourth degree were considered consanguineous. Certain spiritual relations were also prohibited, such as adoptive and baptismal relations (godparents), as well as immediate relatives of deceased partners—as partners were believed to become one flesh by the sacrament of marriage (*una caro* doctrine). This would greatly limit the choice of eligible partners for feudal families who sought to enhance their power through marriage alliances, but it also gave leeway to rid themselves of partners who had become undesirable. A famous example of the application and contestation of incest laws is Henry VIII's (failed) attempt to receive a papal bull allowing him to dissolve his marriage to Catherine of Aragon on the grounds of incest, as she had previously been wedded to his brother. There are no historical cases of father-daughter marriages sanctioned by any Pope, but nuclear family incest, especially a daughter's flight from her incestuous father, is a recurring theme in medieval literature, as is the unsavory role of the Pope in the "maiden without hands" tradition.
- Line 246** Literally "who was made of clay." Adam, the first human, was believed to have been created by God from dust.
- Line 272** Ritson adds "[giving]" to the line, explaining: "It is very singular that these lines should nearly occur again in V. 593: 'And lette her have no spending, / For no mete, ny for drynke.' Thus in the original; but as the word *drynke* by no means answers in rhyme to *spendyng*; and either line is too short for the metre [...] the editor has taken the liberty to insert, after *drynke*, in the first passage, (giving), and to alter it, in the other, to *drynkyng* [...]" (p. 194). No other edition follows this conjecture.
- Line 275** The protagonist's exposure in a rudderless vessel is a defining motif of the "maiden without hands" tradition.
- Line 287** Ritson replaces the MS's *toke yn* with *toke up*, p. 194.
- Line 288** Ritson reads "consorted", Laskaya and Salisbury "comforted", Rickert "conforted", White transcribes "cōforted."
- Line 293** Ritson suggests emending to "that I am!", p. 194.
- Line 310** The MS inserts "now" in the margin with a caret: "At þe empor ^ leve we ^now." Compare White, p. 329 (f. 72vb).
- Line 331** This line, in the MS, is followed by "That hyght Galys y unprstond." Compare White, p. 329 (f. 72vb). This crossed out line is repeated in l. 338.
- Line 338** Galys is identified by some as Wales. See, most recently, Corinne Saunders, "Ch. 11: The Romance Genre," in *A Companion to British literature*, ed. by Heesok Chang, Samantha Zacher, and Robert DeMaria, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, pp. 161–79, (p. 167). Others have identified it as Galicia in Spain, most recently Amy Burge and Lydia Kertz. "Fabricated Muslim Identity, Female Agency, and Cultural Complicity: The Imperial Project of *Emaré*," *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality*, 56.1 (2020), pp. 38–69 (p. 29). There are no conclusive arguments for either. The majority of adaptations of the story-type of *Emaré* provide a Mediterranean setting; at the same time, *Emaré*'s association with the Breton lays and certain names such as Artyus, Segramour, or Erayne, make an Arthurian setting and thus Wales likely. To prevent forcing a certain interpretation of the poem upon readers, I leave this place name untranslated.
- Line 345** *Line 345* Andrew M. Richmond draws attention to Sir Kadore's and later Jurdan's (ll. 688–690) play as a form of beachcombing. "The broken schippus he ther fonde: Shipwrecks and the Human Costs of Investment Capital in Middle English Romance." *Neophilologus*, 99.2 (2015), pp. 315–33, (pp. 326–27). This resonates with the sense of ME play as "gamble". [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33654/track?counter=2&search\\_id=11382432](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33654/track?counter=2&search_id=11382432).



- Line 357** Laskaya and Salisbury note that the MS spells *poyn*, which is "universally emended to poynt." See <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#357>.
- Line 360** An audience knowing French would recognize her alias' similarity to the Old French/Anglo Norman *esgaré(e)*: outcast, lost, stray.
- Line 377** Ritson does not indicate having emended *sylkyn* and White, p. 330 (f. 73rb), transcribes *sylkyn*, but Laskaya and Salisbury note "MS: *sylkly* is partially erased; I have emended to *sylkyn* following M[ills, ed.]; F[rench]&H[ale, ed.], and Ru[mble, ed.]." <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#377>. Rickert, also reads the MS as *sylkly* and adds that "a letter has evidently been erased after it," p. 12, note 3.
- Line 391** While audiences are aware of her nobility, Emaré/Egaré presents as a "nobody" in Galys. The phrase plays on this tension and taps into medieval literary representations of saints, whose ordeal is a "low" life despite their high birth.
- Line 409** Ritson does not indicate having emended *called* and White, p. 330 (f. 73rb), transcribes *called*, but Laskaya and Salisbury indicate that the MS spells *calle*. <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#409>.
- Line 411** Laskaya and Salisbury and Rickert note, as White's transcription indicates, that this line was added in the margin of the MS.
- Line 415** Laskaya and Salisbury gloss *ryche yn ray* as "array" but point to Mills' emendation to *ryche ray* in accordance with l. 430. Gough, p. 37, notes that "all three lines [containing *ray*, 415, 430, 451] are metrically defective. *Ray* is a kind of striped cloth, O. Fr. *drap de ray* [...]. [There is a]nother word *ray* = prince [...]. The scribe may have been misled by one of these words." Rickert, p. 40, note 14/430, lists quotations for *ryche ray* in the sense of "powerful sovereign" as an interpretation to ll. 415, 430, and 451. It is unclear whether to translate as "the powerful sovereign" or "the powerful one in array/striped cloth."
- Line 441** In medieval literature, nobility often manifests in a radiant body and in noble behavior, such as the mastery of certain courtly activities (chess and board games, dance and music, certain athletic skills in men, silk-working skills in women); often, other characters recognize the nobility of impoverished protagonists through such manifestations. In *Emaré*, there are no clear-cut signs, rather, there is only the multivalent robe which her mother-in-law suspects to be of demonic or otherwise unsavory origin.
- Line 444** *gay* operates on a spectrum of positive to negative senses that each fit the context, from "handsomely attired, shining, beautiful, noble," to "lewd, lascivious." [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED18063/track?counter=3&search\\_id=11382432](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED18063/track?counter=3&search_id=11382432).
- Line 482** "Saracen" is a (Roman) Christian term for a non-(Roman)-Christian or otherwise Orientalized Other. In the tradition of crusading literature especially, it is frequently but not exclusively mapped onto Muslim Arabs. It conflates categories such as faith, ethnicity, and race. The "Saracens" of the literary crusading tradition, which encompasses epic, romance, saint's lives, and chronicles, are written from a Latin (Roman Catholic) perspective which associates them with a range of negative attributes such as idolatry, ignorance, monstrosity, and physical deformity. This is why, in Shokoofeh Rajazabdeh's words, the term is "not a depoliticized substitute for Muslim." "The Depoliticized Saracen and Muslim Erasure." *Literature Compass*, vol. 16, 9-10, 2019, p. 3/8. To avoid erasing or reproducing the discursive violence attached to the term, I have not translated it, but signaled its constructedness typographically. Emaré uses this term when tapping into a narrative mode of crusading, but employs a more general term for the non-Christian Other when describing the origin of the textile with the *hethenes*, in l. 109.
- Line 496** Ritson emends the MS's *stward* to *stiward*, p. 200.
- Line 496** **Line 499** The meaning of "yn place" is obscure. Laskaya and Salisbury note that it has been variously interpreted: "R[ickert, ed.] suggests that the line be emended to 'yn thylke place' meaning 'as it was her place to do.' Ru[mble, ed.] interpolates place so that it becomes palace: 'She wente wyth chylde yn palace.' F[rench]&H[ale, ed.] gloss 'place' as 'there.'" <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#499>.
- Line 504** Some literary noble children who are abandoned, banished or born in exile bear a physical mark of nobility, such as Lion's birthmark of the cross in *Lion de Bourges* or an intense light beam emitted from the mouth of the





sleeping Havelok in *Havelok the Dane*. This child's mark is left obscure, but the line plays on the fact that despite Emaré/Egaré's exile and apparent lowliness, her son inherits two noble bloodlines, one through his father and one through his mother.

- Line 529* Ritson emends the MS's *she* to *he*, p. 200.
- Line 571* *gode men and ylle* is repeatedly used to emphasize that everybody participates in certain actions.
- Line 584* Rickert notes, "After t in MS., a small round blot, which does not seem to be intended for an e," p. 19, note 2.
- Line 593* Ritson emends the MS's *drynke* to *drynking*, p. 202.
- Line 594* See note to l. 360.
- Line 632* As long as Emaré's true status is not revealed or reinstated, the choice made by the King of *Galys* to marry her appears poor.
- Line 634* Ritson emends the MS's *blolde* to *blode*, p. 203.
- Line 639* Ritson emends the MS's *hond* to *honde*, p. 203.
- Line 659* Ritson emends the MS's *thenge* to *thronge*, p. 204.
- Line 684* Laskaya and Salisbury gloss "Accursed be such bad luck" and note "chawnses ylle. M[ills, ed.] glosses as 'tribulations,' which is perhaps best." <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#684>.
- Line 685* Laskaya and Salisbury note "MS: dw led. A blemish in the MS obliterates the 'el.'" <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#685>. The blemish is not rendered in White's transcription.
- Line 730* Ritson emends the MS's *shewed* to *sewed*, p. 206.
- Line 730* Silkwork is fine needlework using the most precious materials, such as silken fabrics and threads, gold threads, pearls, gold and silver plates, and gemstones. It denotes the process and the product of sewing and embroidery using these materials.
- Line 779* *he sayde* translates as "he" or "they"; "they" is inferred from the context.
- Line 780* Ritson emends the MS's *the* to *they*, p. 207.
- Line 792* Ritson emends the MS's *Lor* to *Lord*, p. 207.
- Line 804* Rickert notes that the MS has *town* between *Castelle* and *towre*, "with a dotted line beneath them to signify erasure," p. 25, note 4; White's transcription reads "Castell town et towre et towne", p. 335 (f. 75va).
- Line 810* *cler* denotes beauty, but also light-reflecting qualities (radiance, shine, hue), magnificence, and excellence/praiseworthiness, all of which would also fit. See [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED7975/track?counter=3&search\\_id=20439830](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED7975/track?counter=3&search_id=20439830).
- Line 838* The MS repeats l. 837, "That most ys of powste," following l. 839, crossed out. See White, p. 335 (f. 75vb) and Laskaya and Salisbury, note 839. <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#839>. Rickert adds that it is also underlined, p. 26, note 5.
- Line 845* Laskaya and Salisbury note that the MS reads *shat*. <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#846>. White's transcription reads *shalt*, p. 335 (f. 75vb).
- Line 847* The Middle English *palle* could also indicate a purple or deep red silk, a dye reserved for emperors and significant liturgical vestments.
- Line 866* Ritson emends the MS's *Mentrelles* to *Menstrelles*, p. 209.
- Line 896* The MS reads *Yf me þs lytyll chylde body*, crossing out *chylde* between *lytyll* and *body*. See White, p. 336 (f. 76rb), Rickert, p. 28, note 2, and Laskaya and Salisbury, note 897. <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#897>.



- Line 904** Laskaya and Salisbury note: "*grete ende*. The meaning of the phrase is obscure. R[ickert] notes: 'The 'great end' of the hand would naturally be the thumb (see also Italian *dito grosso*, Catalan *dit gros*, English *great toe*)' (p. 46). G[ough, ed.], F[rench] & H[ale, ed.], and M[ills, ed.] read *grece ende*. G[ough, ed.] glosses *grece* as stairs (from OF *gres*), thus, according to R[ickert, ed.], 'top of the stairs.' F[rench] & H[ale, ed.] gloss as 'foot of the (dais) steps,' and M[ills, ed.] as 'foot of the steps.' Ru[mble] reads *grete end* and observes: 'possibly what is intended is the hall or stairway, leading from the central part of the building to the sleeping chambers, the 'great end' being that end nearest the central rooms' (p. 128)." See <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#905> and <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#917>.
- Line 916** See note to l. 904.
- Line 923** Whiteness is often equated with beauty and luminosity. This might be an expression to convey that Emaré's face is white.
- Line 942** Ritson emends the MS's *wat* to *that*, p. 211.
- Line 944** White's diplomatic transcription indicates that the page ends after this line, beneath which *Explicit Emare* is inserted, p. 336 (f. 76rb). Ritson does not print the explicit here or at the end of the poem. No other editions note that the explicit is in the place indicated by White.
- Line 949** Ritson emends the MS's *Wax* to *waxen*, p. 211.
- Line 967** Ritson emends the MS's *non* to *nan*, p. 212.
- Line 988** The MS reads *A*. Ritson does not indicate his emendation. Laskaya and Salisbury gloss "he" and note that "R[itson, ed.] and G[ough, ed.] both emend *A* to *And*. R[ickert, ed.], Ru[mble, ed.] and M[ills, ed.] gloss the *A* as 'he.'" <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#989>.
- Line 999** Laskaya and Salisbury gloss "reined in". They note that Rickert emends the MS's *sayde* to *stayde* and "G[ough, ed.] emends to *say[s]sde* (seized)." <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#1000>.
- Line 1023** Ritson reads the MS as *Egramour* and emends to *Segramour*, p. 213; Rickert as well as Laskaya and Salisbury read the MS as *egramour* which they emend to *Segramour*. White's transcription reads *segramour*, p. 337 (f. 76vb).
- Line 1031** "Complaint of Egaré." *Emaré* thus inserts itself into two generic traditions: the complaint/plaint is a type of first-person elegiac poetry lamenting misfortune and injustice; the (Middle English) Breton lay (l. 1030) is a novelistic type of poetry relating short tales of love and adventure of "Breton" (insular Celtic) heritage or subject matter, e.g. elements of the fairy world, or the Arthurian marvellous. In fact, *Emaré* belongs to a large group of transculturally circulating tales that share the same basic plot structure. Their origin cannot be pinpointed (see Introduction). The reasons for its self-insertion into two other generic traditions are up for interpretation.
- Line 1032** White's transcription reads *Jhu*, p. 337 (f. 76vb). On variant spelling across editions, see Laskaya and Salisbury's note on l. 1033. <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#1033>.
- Line 1035** Ritson omits the MS's *Amen*, Gough, Salisbury and Laskaya and Rickert do not.
- Line 1036** See note for l. 944 regarding the position of the explicit in the MS.