

Five Middle English Alliterative Poems:  
Their Versification, Rhetoric and  
Authorship

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Christopher John Hughes

Cardiff University

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## Summary

*The Awntyrs off Arthure (Awntyrs)*, *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain (Gologras)*, *Rauf the Collier (Rauf)*, *The Pistel of Swete Susan (Susan)* and *The Buke of the Howlat (Howlat)*, five fourteenth and fifteenth-century alliterative poems in rhyming stanzas, are the subjects of a stylistic analysis using a novel methodology. The aims of the analysis are threefold: (i) to reappraise the structure of *Awntyrs* and provide more evidence than hitherto has been offered for the work originally to have been two poems by different authors; (ii) to provide more securely evidenced data to evaluate the various claims made in nineteenth and twentieth-century criticism for shared authorships between *Awntyrs*, *Gologras*, *Rauf* and *Susan*; (iii) to demonstrate how, and with what motives, Richard Holland composed his only known poem, *Howlat*. From the studies of the authorship claims, a proposal is developed that *Gologras* and specifically the second episode of *Awntyrs* are more closely related than hitherto described. The methodology considers such elements of literary style as attention to strophic paradigms, syntax, narrative technique and rhetoric. The study of rhetorical style in non-Chaucerian fourteenth and fifteenth-century poetry seems to have been neglected but proves to contribute significantly to an understanding of the stylistic characteristics of the poems that are the subjects this thesis. The rhetorical study of *Howlat* reveals the extent to which its author followed the teachings of a classical rhetorician when composing his fable and modelled its central panegyric on traditional praise poetry. The thesis demonstrates how the methodology exploits the complex versification of these poems to study the literary style and ability of their authors, and invites its future application to a study of all the extant alliterative thirteen-line stanza poems.

## Contents

	List of tables	iii
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
	I: The scope of this research	1
	II: The poems: their origins and critical histories	4
	III: Questions of authorship	23
<b>2</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>31</b>
	I: Questions	31
	II: Methodology	32
	III Editions	41
<b>3</b>	<b><i>The Awntyrs off Arthure</i></b>	<b>45</b>
	I: Introduction	45
	II: Strophic patterning	46
	III: Analytical outcomes	49
	IV: Rhetoric	57
	V: Syntax	65
	VI: Summary	69
	VII: Conclusions	71
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Gologras, Rauf and Awntyrs</i></b>	<b>75</b>
	I: An inclination examined	75
	II: Provenance	77
	III: Rhyming and alliteration in <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Rauf</i>	77
	IV: Syntax in <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Rauf</i>	80
	V: Rhetoric in <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Rauf</i>	82
	VI: Other rhetorical style markers	85
	VII: A partial conclusion	89
	VIII: The relationship of <i>Gologras</i> to <i>Awntyrs</i>	91
	IX: Provenance	93
	X: Rhyming and alliteration in <i>Awntyrs</i> (27 – 54) and <i>Gologras</i>	95
	XI: Syntax	99
	XII: Rhetoric	100
	XIII: Conclusions	100
<b>5</b>	<b><i>The Pistil of Swete Susan</i></b>	<b>104</b>
	I: <i>Susan</i> and <i>Awntyrs</i>	104
	II: Provenance	106
	III: Rhyming and alliteration in <i>Susan</i>	107
	IV: Syntax in <i>Susan</i>	110
	V: Rhetoric in <i>Susan</i>	112
	VI: Summary of the findings	117
	VII: Conclusion	119

*Contents cont.*

<b>6</b>	<b><i>The Buke of the Howlat</i></b>	<b>122</b>
	I: The poet	122
	II: Some comparisons	124
	III: The structure and rhetoric of <i>Howlat</i>	126
	IV: The rhetoric of the panegyric	133
	V: Other sources of inspiration	138
	. VI: A reading of the <i>Book of the Howlat</i>	142
<b>7</b>	<b>A summary of conclusions and a review of the methodology</b>	<b>147</b>
	I: Summary of the findings	147
	II: The methodology – a review	148
	III: Conclusion	155
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>157</b>

## List of Tables

Table number	Subject	Page
2.01	Composition dates and regional origins of the poems	38
2.02	Modified nouns in two passages of Caxton's prose	40
3.01	Stanza linking (concatenation) in <i>Awntyrs</i>	50
3.02	Lines 8 – 9 linking (conduplication) in <i>Awntyrs</i>	50
3.03	Other lines with continuing alliteration in <i>Awntyrs</i>	51
3.04	<i>Awntyrs</i> : Long line alliterative patterning retabulated from Amours	51
3.05	Variations of long line patterning in the two episodes of <i>Awntyrs</i>	52
3.06	Longline alliteration summarised	52
3.07	The occurrence of alliteration in short lines	53
3.08	Distribution of shared rhyme-sounds between the two episodes	54
3.09	Rhyme-sounds used most frequently in only one episode	55
3.10	Simile and metaphor in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 1 - 26	58
3.11	Simile and metaphor in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 27 - 55	58
3.12	Antanaclasis in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 1-26	60
3.13	Antanaclasis in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 27 - 55	60
3.14	Anastrophe in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 1 - 26	61
3.15	Anastrophe in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 27 - 55	62
3.16	Anastrophe to realise rhyme in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 1 - 26	63
3.17	Anastrophe to realise rhyme in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 27 - 55	64
3.18	Adjectival positioning comparison	66
3.19	Pleonastic use of pronouns in <i>Awntyrs</i>	67
3.20	Comparative summary of rhetorical constructions in <i>Awntyrs</i>	70
4.01	Words extracted from Amours' glossary in his editions	76
4.02	Incidence of alliterative features in <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Rauf</i>	79
4.03	Comparison of some syntactical features of <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Rauf</i>	80
4.04	Long lines in <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Rauf</i> with anastrophe in the a-verse only	82
4.05	Simile and metaphor in <i>Gologras</i>	83
4.06	Proverbs in <i>Gologras</i>	85
4.07	Proverbs in <i>Rauf</i>	85
4.08	Distribution of the most frequently used rhymes in <i>Gologras</i>	96
4.09	Distribution of the most used rhymes in <i>Gologras</i> (stanzas 1 – 28) and <i>Awntyrs</i> (stanzas 27 – 54)	97
4.10	Alliterative features of <i>Awntyrs</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> episode) and <i>Gologras</i>	98
4.11	Comparison of syntactical features of <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Awntyrs</i>	99
4.12	Comparative summary of the use of other rhetorical constructions in <i>Gologras</i> and <i>Awntyrs</i>	100
5.01	Distribution of rhyme sounds used ten or more times	108
5.02	The occurrence of alliteration in long lines	109
5.03	The occurrence of alliteration in short lines	109
5.04	The syntax of <i>Awntyrs</i> (first episode) and <i>Susan</i> compared	108
5.05	Noun-adjective constructions in <i>Susan</i>	109
5.06	Evidence of adjectives as pre-modifiers	112
5.07	Simile and metonymy in <i>Awntyrs</i> , stanzas 1 – 26 + 55	113
5.08	Simile and metonymy in <i>Susan</i>	113

*List of Tables cont.*

<b>Table number</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page</b>
6.01	Historical and strophic comparisons	125
6.02	Syntactical comparison	125

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Section I: The scope of this research

Within the wide range of alliterative works which have come down to us from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there is a group of poems which share an intricately rhyming, thirteen-line stanza form; the poems also share geographical origins in Northern England and Southern Scotland but, in most cases, these remarkable works are anonymous. Their composition called for considerable practice and skill so the argument that none of them could be the only poem of its author, and that comparable stylistic traits can be identified in other poems, has been used to ascribe several of them to one or more of the few known contemporary writers. The various attempts to assign authorship are reviewed in Section III of this chapter, 'Questions of Authorship'. For the purposes of this introduction, a general view of the criticism supporting the claims is that, although a wide variety of criteria has been used in the literature to compare the poems, only one or two stylistic features have been used to support any one hypothesis. Consequently, there has been little consensus and the various proposals made have been subsequently discredited by alternative arguments. A frequent cause of misleading couplings has been the assumption that similarities of vocabulary, especially the use of alliterating collocations describing similar scenes, indicated common authorship. J. P. Oakden, in his study of alliterative poetry of the period, warns that

Proofs [of common authorship] based solely upon a study of vocabulary, phraseology and style are obviously dangerous, since it is usually very difficult to distinguish between mere imitation and identical authorship.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. P. Oakden, *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English: the Dialectal and Metrical Survey, [and a survey of the traditions]* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1968 (First published as two volumes in 1930 and 1935)), p. 88.

Thorlac Turville-Petre provides an example of how 'verbal parallels are a very uncertain guide to establishing relationships between alliterative poems.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus a line such as 'With hard hattis on pere heddis hied to paire horsis' from *The Wars of Alexander* (2981) was taken to be a reminiscence of 'Hard hates þey hent and on hors lepes' in *Purity* (1209), which also seemed to echo 'Hard hates appon hedes and helmys with crestys' (*Wynnere and Wastoure*, 51).<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, the observations made in this respect by Hanna and Amours for certain poems cannot be ignored and they are evaluated in this study. The work of Oakden on alliterative phrases found in the poems of the period also has some relevance in the discussions on the authorship of certain of the poems which are the subjects of this thesis.

This thesis compares, in combination, the rhyming, scansion and alliteration of a selection of five of the poems and to a level of detail not found in criticism to date. Further stylistic comparisons are made using a novel approach: a systematic analysis of the use of rhetorical constructions. For certain of the poems some examination of syntactical features provides useful additional support for stylistic comparisons. Thus, by considering together a range of stylistic traits, a more balanced, broadly based opinion may be expressed of the likelihood, or otherwise, of poems sharing common authorship. The thesis goes on to illustrate that the methodology provides a much more complete picture of how a poem has been created and, therefore, a more comprehensive knowledge of the techniques used by the poet. Such an approach to the comparative study of these anonymous poems will provide a more valid assessment of the likelihood of common authorship.

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<sup>2</sup> T. Turville-Petre, *The Alliterative Revival* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1976), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Turville-Petre (1976), p. 28.



Turville-Petre has listed some eighteen English and Scottish alliterative (to varying degrees) poems with the rhyme scheme *ababababcdcdc*.<sup>4</sup> Another poem in this form has been identified by Ad Putter.<sup>5</sup> The five alliterative works with this thirteen-line stanza form which are the subject of the thesis are selected because there is a continued critical interest in, and speculation about, their provenance and authorship; evidence of this is discussed in Section III of this chapter. Availability in an edition using an alphabet matching the capabilities of the character set available on the database used also influenced the choices made. The resulting group also happens to be the corpus of five poems featured in the important anthology of F. J. Amours which is cited several times in this thesis.<sup>6</sup> An introduction to the chosen texts, their context and rationale for study follows.

Two Northern Arthurian romances are examined: *The Awntyrs off Arthure* (*Awntyrs*), the subject of much debate about its bipartite structure and authorship, and *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain* (*Gologras*), for which there has also been speculation about authorship.<sup>7</sup> The oldest known example of the thirteen-line rhyming stanza form is *The Pistel of Swete Susan* (*Susan*), though it differs slightly in stanza structure from the other four chosen texts.<sup>8</sup> It is a version of the biblical story of Susanna and the Elders from Daniel Chapter 13 in the Apocrypha. The

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<sup>4</sup> T. Turville-Petre, 'Summer Sunday, De Tribus Regibus Mortui, and The Awntyrs off Arthure: Three Poems in the Thirteen-Line Stanza', *Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol 25, No. 97 (1974), 1-14 (pp. 12-14).

<sup>5</sup> Ad Putter, 'Adventures in the Bob-and-Wheel Tradition: Narratives and Manuscripts' in: Perkins, Nicholas ed. *Medieval Romance and Culture* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> F. J. Amours ed., *Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas* (London and Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1897).

<sup>7</sup> 'The Awntyrs off Arthure' in T. Hahn ed., *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institution Publications, 1995), pp. 178-201. 'The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain', *ibid.*, pp. 254-277. All subsequent references to these poems are to these editions unless otherwise stated and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>8</sup> 'The Pistel of Swete Susan', in Russel A. Peck ed., *Heroic Women from the Old Testament in Middle English Verse* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institution Publications), pp. 73-108. All subsequent references are to this edition unless otherwise stated and are given parenthetically in the text. (Structural details of the poems will be discussed in Chapter Two following).

fourth work is *Rauf Coilyear (Rauf)*, a comedic ‘peasant and king’ story set in Charlemagne’s France.<sup>9</sup> *Amours* posits that there are sufficient similarities between this work and *Gologras* to make common authorship a probability.<sup>10</sup> Fifthly, the author of *The Book of the Howlat (Howlat)* reveals himself as ‘Holland’ in the final stanza of the work.<sup>11</sup> The poem, from 1448, is a moralistic tale of vanity and pomposity within an avian community which digresses into a twenty-stanza eulogy of the House of Douglas before returning to the fate of a bombastic owl. The interest of this poem lies with its unusual structure and connotations, and the way in which this apparently unique work from Holland’s hand was set down.

The thesis is concerned with the stylistic, structural and strophic features of these poems which may throw some light on their authorship and the techniques employed in their composition. Thus the critical accounts of the poems which follow in this chapter concentrate on scholarship of this nature and, where appropriate, observations which indicate a poem’s history.

## **Section II: The Poems: their origins and critical histories**

### ***i) The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn (Awntyrs)***

#### **A synopsis of the poem**

This Arthurian romance features Gawain in two quite different episodes, dividing the poem approximately into two halves. The first describes Gawain and Guinevere enjoying a leisurely amble along a lakeside as Arthur with his retinue is hunting in the

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<sup>9</sup> A. Lupack ed., *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institution Publications, 1990). All subsequent references are to this edition unless otherwise stated and are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>10</sup> *Amours* (1897), p. xxxvi.

<sup>11</sup> R. Hanna ed., *The Buke of the Howlat* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Text Society, 2014). All subsequent references are to this edition unless otherwise stated and are given parenthetically in the text.

forest around them.<sup>12</sup> Arthur and his knights are engaged in the serious team work of selectively hunting female deer, a yearly seasonal task associated with the management of the deer population. Then the tormented ghost of Guinevere's mother appears to Gawain and Guinevere; the hunt is interrupted by a sudden darkness and wintry weather whilst the ghost delivers a homily advising Guinevere how she may save both their souls from purgatory. The ghost also reminds Gawain that Arthur's kingdom is subject to a greater turning force than the cycles of forest law:

That wonderfull wheelryght,  
Shall make lordes to light.

(ll. 271 - 2)

She goes on to predict Gawain's own death and the subsequent demise of Arthur and the Round Table. The atmospheric disturbances which accompany the ghost's manifestation cease when 'the goste away glides' (l. 325); the established courtly programme is resumed and everyone returns to the hall for the customary feast.

In the second episode, the feast is interrupted when a mysterious knight, in magnificent trappings, enters with his lady to challenge the Round Table for the return of territories over which Arthur has assumed control and which he has gifted to Gawain. A battle to settle the issue the following day is arranged in a seemly fashion. The two equally matched knights, Sir Gawain and Sir Galeron, fight almost to the death until the two principal ladies petition Arthur, when an honourable settlement is brokered. Sir Galeron is admitted to the Round Table and is married to his lady. The final stanza of the poem resumes the narrative of the first episode to

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<sup>12</sup> The poem is set significantly by the Tarn Wathelan (l. 1.02) in Inglewood Forest (l. 55.07), an area associated with surreal events in several poems of the period, such as 'The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle' and 'The Avowyng of Arthur', Hahn ed., pp. 47-70 and 119-150. For additional geographical placing in Cumberland see J. Eadie, 'Two Notes on the "Awntyrs off Arthure"', *English Language Notes*, 21.2 (1985), 3-5.

describe Guinevere fulfilling the wishes of her mother's ghost, 'With a mylion of Masses to make the mynnynge' (l. 706).

### **Manuscripts**

Four manuscripts, none of them autographs, of *Awntyrs*, all dating from the middle to late fifteenth century, are known to survive. Possibly the oldest is Chapter Library of Lincoln Cathedral MS. 91, known as the Thornton manuscript. Its scribe was a Robert Thornton (c.1397 – c.1465) who signed colophons at several points in the manuscript. The Thornton family are known to have held the manor of East Newton in the north Riding of Yorkshire during the fifteenth century and well into the seventeenth century. George Keiser has argued that the manuscript remained with the family at East Newton until Thomas Comber (1644 – 99) married into the family. He was a scholar and churchman who is known to have corresponded with Daniel Brevint, the Dean of Lincoln from 1682 to 1695. Keiser suggests that Comber was somewhat indebted to Brevint and passed the manuscript to him for the cathedral library which had been re-established after the Commonwealth by Brevint's predecessor.<sup>13</sup>

Lambeth Palace MS. 491 is the most recently re-discovered copy of the poem and its existence in the Lambeth Palace Library was first made generally known by J. E. Wells in 1916.<sup>14</sup> A. G. Hooper describes this manuscript and makes a detailed comparison with principally the Thornton, but also with the Ireland and Douce manuscripts (described below).<sup>15</sup> The dialectal evidence, reinforced by the scribe's evident unfamiliarity with Northern place names, supports an opinion that 'It is a

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<sup>13</sup> George R. Keiser, 'Thornton: Gentleman, Reader and Scribe', in *Robert Thornton and his Books*, eds., Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston (York: York Medieval Press 2014), pp. 67 – 108. Also, Keiser, 'A Note on the Descent of the Thornton Manuscript', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 6 (1976), 346 – 348.

<sup>14</sup> J. E. Wells, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916).

<sup>15</sup> A. G. Hooper, 'The Lambeth Palace MS. of the *Awntyrs Off Arthure*', *Leeds Studies in English*, (1934), 37- 43.

Southern copy ... of a text which must have been more like T [Thornton] than either of the other two'.<sup>16</sup> Hooper also adds that it dates from the first half of the fifteenth century but offers no specific evidence for this. Ralph Hanna notes that the portion of the manuscript containing *Awntyrs* is 'usually dated paleographically to the second quarter of the fifteenth century.'<sup>17</sup>

The Ireland Blackburn manuscript, which now resides in the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Geneva, is dated by Amours as 1413, citing an 1839 edition by Sir F. Madden.<sup>18</sup> But the dating of the manuscript has been reviewed by Bruce Dickens who in a careful re-examination of the manuscript, in the light of both previous and new palaeographic studies, concludes that the various folio gatherings were not a single unit from the outset, as had been assumed previously.<sup>19</sup> Whilst the date of 1413 is valid on the basis of historical evidence for some of the folios, those on which *Awntyrs* is written, along with *The Avowing of Arther* and *Sir Amadace*, can be dated confidently from palaeographical evidence as 1450-1460. The dialect is placed as West Midlands and Dickens suggests that these three romances may have been copied at Hale Manor for John de Ireland who held the estate from 1435 – 1462.<sup>20</sup>

The Bodleian manuscript 21898, known as MS. Douce 324, contains only the text of *Awntyrs* though it is believed to have been part of a large miscellany which had been dismantled.<sup>21</sup> Lacking only six lines, Douce is the most complete of the four manuscripts, and along with the Thornton manuscript is considered by editors of the text to be relatively free of scribal errors when compared to the Ireland and

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<sup>16</sup> Hooper, p. 38.

<sup>17</sup> Hanna (1974), p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Amours p. xlili. F. Madden ed., *Sir Gawayne: A Collection of Ancient Romances by Scottish and English Authors* (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1889). Madden finds it necessary to indicate how the rhyming occurs in the final five lines of each stanza of *Awntyrs*. See the appendix to this chapter for an example.

<sup>19</sup> B. Dickens, 'The Date of the Ireland Manuscript', *Leeds Studies In English*, (1933), 62-66.

<sup>20</sup> Dickens, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> K. L. Smith, 'A Fifteenth century Vernacular Manuscript Reconstructed', *Bodleian Library Record*, VII (1966), 234-241.

Lambeth copies. Thus, this copy, made in the latter half of the fifteenth century, has been the favoured source for several modern editors such as Gates, Hanna, Phillips and Hahn.<sup>22</sup>

### Dating and placing the original work

The dating of *Awntyrs*, like several aspects of the history of this poem, has been a contentious issue. Amours dates it around the middle of the fourteenth century by the presence of 'late' words that were not used in the early part of the century.<sup>23</sup>

George Neilson, dates *Awntyrs* as near contemporary with and a 'scarcely veiled narrative of the Anglo-Scottish political events of 1358-1359'.<sup>24</sup> The opinion of Gates on *Awntyrs* is that the dating cannot be made more precise than 'the latter half of the fourteenth century' and he puts the latest date as that of the Thornton manuscript (1430).<sup>25</sup> Ralph Hanna in a carefully reasoned argument states that the poem can be 'roughly ascribed' to a date between 1400 and 1430.<sup>26</sup>

The regional origin of *Awntyrs* has also been contentious. Amours examines the dialectal evidence for clues to both the regional origin of the romance and the copyists to state unequivocally:

The Thornton, in spite of its incompleteness, supplies the best text, being written on the whole in the same dialect of the original. That the poem was composed in the Northern dialect is obvious from the rimes throughout. (p. xlii)

This opinion is challenged by S. O. Andrew who proposes that *Awntyrs* was originally written by a Northwest Midland hand, that is to say in a West Midland dialect in which Northern characteristics are evident: the suggestion is that the

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<sup>22</sup> R. J. Gates, *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne: a Critical Edition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969). Hanna (1974). H. Phillips ed., *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne. A Modern Spelling Edition* (Lancaster: The University of Lancaster, 1988). Hahn (1995), pp. 178-201.

<sup>23</sup> Amours (1897) p. xi-xii.

<sup>24</sup> G. Neilson, *History in the Romance of Gologros and Gawayne* (Glasgow: The Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow, 1901), p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Gates p. 41.

<sup>26</sup> Hanna (1974), p. 5.

author lived near the border of the two dialectal areas.<sup>27</sup> A response to this new proposal came from A. G. Hooper, who reprises and extends Amours' orthographic and phonological arguments for a Northern origin. Hooper additionally concludes:

Finally, the intimate knowledge the author shows for the district around Carlisle where the scene of action is laid, and accurate reference to Southwest Scotland seem to at least confirm the theory of a Northern origin, even if they are not enough in themselves to establish it.<sup>28</sup>

(These disagreements were in the context of establishing a common authorship for the bipartite *Awntyrs*. The issues surrounding authorship of all five poems will be discussed comprehensively in Section III of this chapter.) Gates follows a similar argument and also points out that the southernmost copy (Lambeth) does not carry the same geographical detail and that the work's stanza form is almost exclusively found in poems written in the North of England and Scotland.<sup>29</sup>

For the purpose of this thesis the date and place of composition of *Awntyrs* is assumed to be the first quarter of the fifteenth century in Northwest England.

## ii) *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain (Gologras)*<sup>30</sup>

### A synopsis of the poem

The longer of the two Arthurian romances examined in this thesis with 105 stanzas, *Gologras*, is also of a bipartite structure.<sup>31</sup> However, the narratives of the two

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<sup>27</sup> S. O. Andrew, 'Huchoun's works', *Review of English Studies*, V (1929), 12-21.

<sup>28</sup> A. G. Hooper, "'The Awntyrs off Arthure": Dialect and authorship', *Leeds Studies in English*, V (1935), 62-74 (p. 68).

<sup>29</sup> Gates, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> The spelling of these knights' names varies from edition to edition. Bibliographical details and direct quotations use the editorial spelling; elsewhere in the thesis spelling is standardised as in the subtitle to this section. 'Gologras' is the predominant spelling of five variants in the Chepman and Myllar print edition (see p. 13 below.)

<sup>31</sup> 'The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain' in T. Hahn ed., *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 234-277. All further references to the poem are from this edition unless otherwise stated and are given parenthetically in the text.

episodes are more contextually connected and stylistically homogenous than the episodes described in *Awntyrs*.<sup>32</sup>

The shorter first episode describes Arthur and his knights travelling through France on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The journey becomes arduous:

Sa wundir wait wes the way, wit ye but wene;  
And all thair vittalis war gone. (ll. 35 -36)

At this point they see a fortified city and Arthur sends Sir Kay to ask for food and shelter. However, he succeeds only in offending the lord of the place and being beaten for his rude behaviour. The more diplomatic Gawain then goes to the city on the same errand which results in Arthur and his company being extended the most generous hospitality. Rested and refreshed the knights continue their journey to encounter another, even more splendid and more heavily fortified, habitation. Arthur is advised by one of his knights, Sir Spynagros, who knows the occupant, that the lord of this these lands is a fearsome knight who is beholden to no-one and will never admit allegiance to any ruler. Arthur is appalled:

"Hevinly God!" said the heynd, "how happynis this thing?  
Herd thair ever ony sage sa selcouth ane saw!" (ll. 265 - 266)

He swears to return and force the knight to pay homage and show obeisance to him or die in the attempt.

In the second episode, the company, on its return journey from the Holy Land, revisits the lord's castle. Arthur despatches his three most impressive knights, Gawain, Lancelot and Ewan, to ask that the lord receives him honourably and, 'Be boune at [Arthur's] bidding in burgh and in bour' (l. 330). Spynagros advises the deputation that the best approach is to be polite to the knight and make no threats

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<sup>32</sup> The source of both the *Gologras* episodes has been shown by Paul Ketrick in an unpublished thesis to be the Old French *Perceval* material: *The Relationship of 'Gologras and Gawain' to the Old French 'Perceval'* (Introduction), The Catholic University, Washington DC (1931).



against him. The three knights are received with all due chivalric courtesy by Sir Gologras (now named by the poet) and, extolling the merits and conquests of Arthur, they politely ask that the lord submits to him as his king. Gologras replies that he would welcome Arthur as an ally and show him all the honour fitting for a crowned king. But his pride and his heritage dictated that:

Na for dreid of na dede, na for distance,  
I will nocht bow me ane bak for berne that is borne. (I. 448– 449)

The knights return to Arthur and preparations begin by both sides for the inevitable warring. Each preceded by ritualistic signalling from the castle, there follows a series of duels and battles. The violence is described in bloody detail by the poet:

Throu thair schene scheildis thair shuldiris war schent;  
Fra schalkis schot schire blude ovr scheildis so schene.  
Ryngis of rank steill rattillit and rent,  
Gomys grisly on the grund grams on the grene. (II. 689– 692)

The killing and maiming continues all day without there being a clear winner. The following day Gologras takes to the field himself, splendidly equipped, to duel with Arthur's champion, Sir Gawain, in what must be the deciding battle.

Following an initial skirmish between the impetuous Sir Kay, the easy victor, and an unnamed knight from the castle, Gawain and Gologras leave their supporters and go off to fight. After nine stanzas of beating, chopping and slicing by the two equally matched knights, Gologras slips and falls, thus allowing Gawain to gain the advantage. Grasping Gologras and drawing his dagger, Gawain, unwilling to kill such a worthy adversary, seeks a submission. But the defeated knight declares that it is more worshipful for him to die. But again

Schir Gawyne tretit the knight to turn his entent,  
For he was wondir wa to wirk hym mare wugh. (II. 1066 – 1067)

Yet again Gologras insists that his honour is more precious than his life and that Gawain must kill him. Moved by such nobility, Gawain asks if there is any way that he might spare the knight's life but not impair his honour. And Gologras has a plan.

The pair resume fighting for half an hour or so for Gawain to appear to submit to Gologras and be taken back to the city as captive; this turn of events is much to the distress and bewilderment of Arthur's camp. Once there, Gawain is treated as an honoured guest at a feast. After the banquet the lord admits to his people that he lost the fight and asks them if he should die honourably or remain their leader albeit as subservient to another. Their response is unequivocal:

Ye sal be our govenour,  
 Quhil your dais may endure (ll. 1190 – 1191)

At the head of a torchlight procession of his knights, Gologras rides to Arthur to surrender. But all ends in concord after a second banquet at which Arthur graciously releases Gologras from obeisance to him.

### Early editions

*Gologras* has come down to us from but a single source: a printed pamphlet by Chepman and Myllar of Edinburgh, one of eleven small books bound together and dated 1508.<sup>33</sup> The poem is included as one of nine Chepman and Myllar prints in a facsimile edition of poetical tracts printed in the early sixteenth century.<sup>34</sup> There is also evidence of a further lost copy of the work in the table of contents to 'The Asloan manuscript'.<sup>35</sup> However, the text of *The buke of schir gologruss & schir gawane* is missing. Hanna points out that other texts in John Asloan's manuscript 'strongly imply' that he copied the Chepman and Myllar prints and had no other independent sources.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library 19.1.16. For a detailed description see R. Hanna ed., *The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane* (Edinburgh: Scottish text Society, 2008), pp. xi–xiv.

<sup>34</sup> W. Beattie ed., *The Chepman and Myllar Prints: Nine Tracts from the First Scottish Press* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Bibliographical Society and Oxford University Press, 1950).

<sup>35</sup> National Library of Scotland, MS Acc. 4223.

<sup>36</sup> Hanna (2008), p. xii.

## Dating and placing the original work

Amours posits that 'About 1470 is a safe date to adopt'. The date is suggested after a well-balanced discussion on the antiquity of the vocabulary, the evidence of some deterioration of the original text as it passed through the hands of scribes, and from comparison with a stanza from Hary's *Wallace*, reliably dated as 1450-1460.

Amours' considerations were dismissed by Neilson who sees allusions to historical events in his study, cited above in the review of attempts to date *Awntyrs*: his theory is that *Gologras* and *Awntyrs* are contemporary works:

From my standpoint the case is clear that *Gologras* is of, or about, the same date as *Awntyrs*, that it belongs to the time in captivity in England of John of France ... [1356 – 1360].<sup>37</sup>

The most recent dating of the poem comes from the work of Hanna, at the behest of the Scottish Text Society, on material collected by Professor W. R. J. Barron.<sup>38</sup>

In a detailed argument based principally on the changes occurring to the Middle Scots dialect during the fifteenth century, Hanna proposes that the poem is the work of a poet born in the third quarter of that century. For the purposes of this study a composition date of 1475 to 1500 is adopted.<sup>39</sup> The poem's Scottish origins have not been disputed.

### **iii) *The Pistill of Swete Susan (Susan)*<sup>40</sup>**

#### **A synopsis of the poem**

Essentially, the poem is a reworking of the story from Daniel Chapter 13 of the biblical Apocrypha. The poem is set in Babylon and Susan is the beautiful young wife of a wealthy Jew, Joachim. She has been brought up to be virtuous and follow the

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<sup>37</sup> Neilson (1901).

<sup>38</sup> Hanna (2008).

<sup>39</sup> Hanna, (2008), p. xxx.

<sup>40</sup> 'The Pistel of Swete Susan' in R. A. Peck ed., *Heroic Women from the Old Testament in Middle English Verse* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), pp. 73-108. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

Laws of Moses and, 'To God stod hire grete awe,' (l. 25). Susan spends time with her handmaidens in a walled garden to which two corrupt judges also have privileged access. When they encounter Susan, 'Thei weor so set vppon hire, micht thei not sese' (l. 45). They make a habit of spying on her and begin to wonder how they might satisfy their lustful desires. At this point the poet departs from the biblical account to describe the luxuriant beauty of the garden planting and its birdlife. These are the surroundings in which Susan feels secure enough to undress to wash in its stream; but the foliage also hides the voyeurs. The biblical account resumes: the two make their move to proposition her with the threat to falsely accuse her of an adulterous liaison witnessed by them if she will not, '... undur this lorere ben vr lemmone' (l. 136).

Susan ponders the dilemma in which she finds herself and resolves that it would be better for her to die falsely accused but content in the knowledge that she had not sinned, rather than suffering the consequences of angering God, 'Betere is wemles weende of this world wyde' (l. 151). And, indeed, that is set to be her fate as the poet relates the elaborate fabrication of events presented to the court by the 'witnesses' to Susan's alleged adulterous tryst. Here the poet inserts an additional scene in which Susan spends a final night with Joachim to assure him of her innocence and for them to bid each other farewell ' "In other world schul we mete" ' (l. 259).

Susan's prayer to God protesting her innocence, answered by the intervention of the young Daniel, returns the text to the biblical account. The trial is resumed and by asking the two judges separately under which tree they witnessed Susan sinning, Daniel exposes their allegation as a lie.<sup>41</sup> The poem ends with preparations for the

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<sup>41</sup> The two trees named by the judges in response to Daniel's interrogation have ben contentious since the third century A.D. No two versions of the story agree on the names of the trees and it was argued by Sextus

punishment of the two corrupt judges and a general rejoicing, 'That thus his seruaunt saued that schold ha be schent' (l. 359).

### **Manuscripts and provenance**

*Susan* is known in five manuscripts. The two earliest, from the late fourteenth century, are the large anthologies of religious texts, the Vernon manuscript and the Simeon manuscript.<sup>42</sup> The remaining three, all copied in the fifteenth century, are the Huntington (formerly Phillipps), the Ingilby and the Cotton Caligula manuscripts.<sup>43</sup> The Vernon and Simeon manuscripts are, of course, two of the most remarkable books of Middle English literature ever made, each of them containing a vast collection of poems, prayers, homilies, and other spiritual works. They share a common West Midlands scribe, though *Susan* does manifest, besides its stanza form, dialectal evidence of a more northern origin.<sup>44</sup> The Huntington manuscript was copied in the second quarter of the fifteenth century by an Essex scribe and the Ingilby is listed in LALME as copied in Lincolnshire.<sup>45</sup> The Cotton Caligula text, in which the first one hundred and four lines are missing, dates from the mid-fifteenth century. It is written in a single hand; indications of a South Midlands scribal dialect and a Northern poet are listed by Oakden in his dialectal survey of Middle English alliterative poems.<sup>46</sup>

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Julius Africanus (c.160 – c. 240) that the translation of the original text links the tree names by wordplay with the punishments prescribed by Daniel. For a fuller account see A. Miskimin ed., *Susannah An Alliterative Poem of the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 178-179. For a full history and context of the third-century controversy about the original language and translation of *Daniel* see Chisholm, Hugh, ed., 'Africanus, Sextus Julius' in *Encyclopædia Britannica* I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911).

<sup>42</sup> Vernon, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a. 1: Simeon, BL. Add 22283.

<sup>43</sup> Respectively, MS. 8252 Huntington Library; MS., Pierpoint Morgan M 818; BL MS. Cotton Caligula A ii.

<sup>44</sup> Miskimin usefully lists the Northern and North Midlands words found in *Susan* which will be cited in Chapter Five, p. 107.

<sup>45</sup> A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English: eLALME, available at [http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme\\_frames.html](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme_frames.html). Accessed 21 Sept. 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Oakden (1968), Vol. I p. 70.

So, there is general agreement that all five versions are copied in a dialect which is south of the poem's origin in the North of England, possibly Yorkshire. Amours is alone in claiming the poem to be Scottish.<sup>47</sup> The poem's inclusion in the Vernon manuscript is indicative of its antiquity and so it is likely to have been composed before the early 1400s. The most recent study of the Vernon manuscript by Wendy Scase concludes that, 'The processes of making the volume must have extended beyond the 1380s and could have continued into the early 1400s or beyond.'<sup>48</sup>

#### **iv) *Rauf Coilyear (Rauf)*<sup>49</sup>**

##### **A synopsis of the poem**

This somewhat comedic story is set in Charlemagne's France though the landscape descriptions are more Scottish than French. The king and his knights are journeying to Paris for the Christmas festivities when they encounter a violent wintery storm. The court become scattered, separated from each other and the king finds himself lost with no sign of shelter as night approaches. As he begins to despair, a working man with a horse carrying creels arrives on the scene; he tells the king that he is Rauf, a seller of charcoal. Recognising that the lost stranger is of high rank, Rauf advises the king that the only shelter in the forest is his own home to which he would be welcome but with the condition, 'With-thy thow wald be payit of sic as thow fand,' and brushes aside the king's subsequent thanks brusquely with the pragmatic counsel 'Pryse at the parting, how that thow dois' (ll. 70 and 89). This initial

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<sup>47</sup> Amours (1897), p. lv.

<sup>48</sup> Wendy Scase, ed., DVD-Rom, *A Facsimile Edition of the Vernon Manuscript*. Bodleian Digital Texts (Oxford: The Bodleian Library 2011), Sect. 2.2.

<sup>49</sup> 'The Tale of Ralph the Collier' in A. Lupack ed., *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990), pp. 161 – 204. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

exchange between the unrecognized king and his subject sets the tone for their relationship and they continue the seven miles to the collier's house.

Once there, the collier's wife is ordered to light the fire and prepare a meal. As they enter the house:

The Coilyear, gudlie in feir, tuke him by the hand,  
And put befoir him, as ressoun had bene. (ll. 118 – 119)

The king, however, wishes to be the magnanimous one and indicates that Rauf should go before him. Rauf perceives this as an affront to his authority in his own home and grips the king by the neck to lecture him on obedience and courtesy. Observing that they were beginning to quarrel they sit by the now blazing fire to amicably exchange stories whilst supper is prepared. But, yet again, the king fussily refuses Rauf's authority as host when invited to sit at the head of the table for their meal. Rauf strikes the king with such a blow that he staggers and falls to the ground. Astonished at such treatment, the king decides to make nothing more of it; the collier on his part sits happily by the king as if nothing had happened. They enjoy a meal of the best food (including venison from the forest) and wine during which Rauf tells the king that the foresters are angered because he kills the fattest deer in the woods, and each year they threaten to take him before the king, 'in dule to be drest,' (l. 199).

They continue their happy discourse after the meal when, in response to Rauf's questioning, the king claims to be 'Wymond of the Wardrobe', an attendant to the Queen. In return for the collier's hospitality, he offers to use his influence at court for Rauf to sell fuel there. The pledge is repeated in the morning when Rauf refuses any payment from the king in return for his hospitality. The following day, Christmas Day, Rauf hastens to take advantage of the offer and sets off to the court in Paris, despite the misgivings of his wife who suspects that there may be repercussions from his treatment of an important personage:

For thy, hald yow fra the Court, for ocht that may be:  
 Yone man that thow outrayd  
 Is not sa simpill as he said. (ll.371 - 372)

On his way there, Rauf is intercepted by the king's most trusted knight, Sir Roland, somewhat mystified by the king's command that he should leave his Christmas Day devotions to bring to him whatever unspecified stranger he should see that day who may be travelling across the moor.

Disregarding his wife's wise words and still failing to realise the true identity of his guest, Rauf refuses the knight's instruction to accompany him to the king and a furious stand-off develops as Rauf insists that he has no business with the king but is committed to delivering charcoals to Wymond of the Wardrobe. Eventually, the humble workman threatens to fight this magnificently equipped knight in full armour with nothing

Bot ane auld Buklair,  
 And ane roustie brand. (ll.517 – 518)

Sir Roland decides that the situation is becoming ridiculous and takes his leave with a challenge ringing in his ears from the collier to meet him on the moor the following day to settle what Rauf has taken as 'ane foull scorne' (l. 558). By their separate ways, the knight returns to the king and Rauf continues on his errand to the court.

First back at court, Sir Roland is berated by the king for not bringing the collier with him, guessing that Rauf's belligerent obstinacy has defeated the knight. On leaving the angry king, Sir Roland meets a gatekeeper who informs him that there is a man with a horse and creels at the gate demanding to be admitted and asking for one Wymond. Quickly admitted, Rauf leaves his horse and creels with the gateman and goes to seek out 'Wymond'. In the hall he recognises his erstwhile guest for who he is, realises that he has been tricked and fears the worst. On hearing the king's explanation for the presence of the collier and the robust treatment he received at his



hands, the knights demand that Rauf be hanged. But the king points out that his life was saved by this strong and stalwart man and, 'Befoir mony worthie he dubbit him Knicht' (l. 752).

Newly endowed with all the privileges and trappings of a knight and determined to prove his valour to the court, Sir Rauf rides out to honour the challenge to Sir Roland. Whilst he waits on the moor a large knight riding a camel (which Rauf takes to be an ill-proportioned horse) approaches at speed. After their mounts are killed in the initial lance charge, they immediately begin a long, fierce hand-to-hand fight. A third knight appears on the scene and Rauf, convinced that he is fighting Sir Roland, accuses his opponent of treachery by not fighting him single-handedly. The ensuing exchange of words reveals Sir Rauf's opponent to be a Saracen and, as a consequence, Rauf is determined to turn the encounter into a fight to the death. As knives are drawn, Sir Roland (the third knight) intervenes to broker a reconciliation by persuading the Saracen to become Christian. The three return to court where the Saracen Magog becomes Christian Sir Gawteir and marries a beautiful duchess. Sir Rauf is promoted to Marshall of France and, with his wife, establishes a place of refuge for travellers at the place where he met the king.

### **Early editions and dating the original**

There is no known surviving manuscript of *Rauf*. The poem has come down to us in a print edition of 1572 by Robert Lekpreuik; a single copy exists, owned by the National Library of Scotland, and a facsimile of this text, edited by William Beattie, has been published.<sup>50</sup> In his bibliographical notes, Beattie suggests that *Rauf* may also have been printed by Chepman and Myllar and states that the poem was widely

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<sup>50</sup> W. Beattie ed., *The Tail of Rauf Coilyear: Printed by Robert Lekpreuik at St. Andrews in 1572: A Facsimile of the Only Known Copy*. (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 1966).

read, especially by the subjects of James IV and James V.<sup>51</sup> Ralph Hanna draws attention to records from 1503 and 1507 of transactions by Myllar with James IV.<sup>52</sup>

### v) *The Buke of the Howlat (Howlat)*

#### A synopsis of the poem

*Howlat* is, perhaps, in its main storyline, a fable. However, the moral instruction is not obvious and is capable of several interpretations: the consequences of jealousy, hubris and the questioning of the established natural order. Also, uncharacteristically of a fable, the moral is carried in a long and convoluted narrative and interrupted by an irrelevant, not entirely historically accurate account of the loyalty of Lord James Douglas and his descendants to Robert the First (and his remains) in the war of Scottish Independence. But despite the work's apparent lack of focus on its intentions, and as is described below in the account of *Howlat's* early editions, its distribution in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was noteworthy. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century criticism is somewhat dismissive of the poem, but later scholars express a better understanding of Holland's work which will be explored and further developed in this thesis in a chapter devoted to *The Buke of the Howlat*.<sup>53</sup>

The poem's opening three stanzas describe a pastoral scene as the narrator journeys along a river bank. He encounters an owl looking at his reflection in the stream, weeping and howling:

'Quhy is my fax', quod the fyle, 'Fassonit so foule,  
My forme and my fetherem vnfrely but feir?'

(ll. 55 – 56)

<sup>51</sup> Chepman and Myllar were also the printers of the source of *Gologras* as described in p.13 above.

<sup>52</sup> Hanna (2008), p. xiii.

<sup>53</sup> Chapter Six.

The bird continues in this vein before resolving to appeal to the pope (a peacock) to pray for his transformation.<sup>54</sup> The pope is sympathetic but, nervous of complaining about the works of Nature, he feels he must consult his cardinals and council, other patriarchs and prophets. Accordingly, messages are sent far and wide to summon the delegates to a huge convocation. An ensuing seven stanzas describe the birds assembling in their roles as religious and legal personages, from the highest to the lowest estate, and even, 'With grene almous on hed, Schire Gawane the drak' (l. 210). The pope blesses the assembly and invites the owl to make his appeal for help. After a debate, the ecclesiastical delegates agree that, since the problem concerns Nature, 'Thai couth not trete but entent of the temporale' (l. 277).

Messages are once again despatched around the world to summon an assembly of emperors, kings, princes, dukes and earls whose presence, and in particular their armorial emblems, are described. This excursion into heraldry enables the narrator to introduce the Douglas arms and the deeds of those who bore them at the time of Robert the Bruce, particularly the efforts to take their dead king's heart to the Holy Land for burial. After this twenty-one-stanza digression, the poet returns to the avian assembly to continue the narrative.

The new assembly precedes its deliberations with a splendid feast and entertainment by minstrels. (Not content with such a generic convenience, the poet, apologising for being too brief, indulges in diaeresis to list the singers and instruments.) Various other entertainments follow, including a rather violent slapstick routine by a lapwing and a cuckoo, and then the council business proper begins. The council is moved by the owl's distress and they pray to Nature that she might intervene:

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<sup>54</sup> These are the first two of 64 bird species given roles from human society. The assignments given by the poet are clever and humorous, sometimes satirically so.

Quharthrow Dame Natur the trast discendit that tyde  
At thar haile instance. (ll. 867 – 868)

Dame Nature asks that every bird gives one of his feathers to the owl. With her help the feathers take root and grow:

Than was he schand of his schape and his schroude schane  
Of alkyn colour most cleir, beldit abone,  
The farest foule of the firth and hendest of hewes. (ll. 891 – 893)

Instead of being grateful, however, the owl becomes arrogant and scornful of the other birds. He becomes so abusive that the birds ask Mother Nature to put an end to his insufferable behaviour. Quietly confident that her original creation could not have been improved upon, Nature lectures the owl on the folly of his behaviour and orders that each bird should reclaim its feather. The narrator is then left alone with the once-again ugly bird, full of self-pity to reflect

That pride never yet left  
His companion without a fall. (ll. 961 – 962)

The poet concludes by revealing for whom he composed the work and his identity.

### **Manuscripts, early editions and dating the original poem**

Ralph Hanna has recently provided a comprehensive account of the early sources of the text of *Howlat*, on which the following is based.<sup>55</sup> The earliest known evidence of the poem is a remnant of a pamphlet published by Chepman and Myllar of Edinburgh in 1508 on which appears lines 537 to 599.<sup>56</sup> There are also two later manuscript copies of the complete poem. The Asloan manuscript, the largest early Scots anthology, is on paper leaves datable to 1509 x 1524.<sup>57</sup> Comparison with the Chepman Myllar printed remnant suggests that the scribe John Asloan (c.1470 – c.1530) made his copy from the printed version. The second is the Bannatyne manuscript, dated 1568 by its scribe, George Bannatyne (1545 – 1606) ‘conteyning

<sup>55</sup> Hanna (2014). pp. 1-9.

<sup>56</sup> cf. *Gologras* Early Editions, this chapter p. 12.

<sup>57</sup> Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS I 6500, The Asloan Manuscript.

the Fabillis of Esop, with diuers vþer fabillis and poetical works'.<sup>58</sup> The manuscript reproduces the prologue and ten items from Henryson's *Moral Fables* interspersed with other material such as *Howlat*.

Of the five poems examined in this thesis, *Howlat* is the one which can be most precisely dated. Besides the moderate amount of biographical information available for the author, Richard Holland (Archibald Douglas's clerical assistant), there is datable evidence within his poem.<sup>59</sup> The various interpretations of this evidence are critically reviewed by Felicity Riddy whose conclusion is that:

Possibly, then, the poem was written sometime in the summer of 1448, around or just before the time of Eleanor's marriage with Sigismund, when relations between the Douglasses and the King [James II] were still good.<sup>60</sup>

*Howlat*, then, provides both a reliably named author and date of composition.

### **Section III: Questions of authorship**

In the introductory remarks to this thesis, there was brief mention of the quarrelsome history of theories of common authorship of fourteenth and fifteenth-century alliterative poetry; in this section, the principal contributions to the debate are reviewed. From a twenty-first century perspective, some of the theories proposed seem outrageously extreme and the responses couched in somewhat derogatory terms. Whilst these claims are largely discredited now, it is useful to understand how they arose and which of the controversies are still worthy of debate.

#### **A review of authorship theories**

The beginning of the attempts to assign an author to the poems which are the subjects of this thesis, and other alliterative poetry of the period, stems from lines in

<sup>58</sup> Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates' 1.16, The Bannatyne Manuscript.

<sup>59</sup> See *Amours* (1897), pp. xxiii-vi and M. Stewart 'Holland of the Howlat' in *The Innes Review*, Vol. 23 (1972), 3-15.

<sup>60</sup> F. Riddy, 'Dating the *Howlat*', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 37 (1986), 1-10 (p. 9).

the *Cronykil* of Andrew of Wyntoun. This history, written in rhymed couplets, is believed because of its references to various historical events and personages to have been set down mostly in the opening decade of the fifteenth century.

And Huchon of þe Aule Royale  
 Intil his Gest Historyalle  
 [ ... ]  
 And men of gud discrecion  
 Sulde excuse and loyff Hucheon  
 Pat cunnande was in littratur,  
 He made a gret Gest of Arthure;  
 And þe Awntyre of Gawayne,  
 þe Pistil als of Suet Susane.<sup>61</sup>

These lines might seem to contain some significant literary history but for the several problems that they also present. Firstly, it has never been established just who Huchon, or Huchown, was or anything about him; secondly, the identity of three of the titles named by Andrew, *Gest Historyalle*, *Gest of Arthure* and *Awntyre of Gawayne*, can only be conjectured. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholars, proposed these titles to be the poems known to us now as the *Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy*, *Morte Arthure* and *Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight* – amongst various other speculative suggestions. The chronicle could have been initiated as early as 1393 and it continued to be revised or added to until 1420, but not beyond 1424 (because it does not record the return of James I).<sup>62</sup> Thus copies of *Susan* and the other titles named by Andrew must have been in circulation possibly before

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<sup>61</sup> F. J. Amours ed., *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1904-05), II. 4280-4331. This volume, which was produced posthumously from the extensive notes of Amours, documents what is known of Andrew and the writing of his chronicle (pp. xxx-xlii). Andrew of Wyntoun (c. 1350 -c. 1425) was a chronicler, poet and an Augustinian prior of St Serf's Inch Priory, Loch Leven. An alternative source of biographical information is available at <http://digital.nls.uk/biographical-dictionary-of-eminent-scotsmen/pageturner.cfm?id=74514690> [accessed 17/04/2016].

<sup>62</sup> Amours (1904-05).

1393, and certainly by the opening decade of the fifteenth century, for Huchown to be the author of all the poems.<sup>63</sup>

Amours, in his review of the nineteenth-century theories, also draws attention to a further two confusing pieces of evidence in the lines of *The Lament for the Makeris* by the East Lothian poet William Dunbar:

The gude Syr Hew of Eglyntoun  
 Et eik Heryot et Wyntoun  
 He (death) hes tane out of this cuntre;  
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.  
 ...  
 Clerk of Tranent eik he has tane,  
 That maid the anteris of Gawane.<sup>64</sup>

From these lines came yet more theories and Amour's own conclusion, argued over twenty-seven pages, that:

(1) the Huchown of Wyntoun and Dunbar's "gude Syr Hew" are the same person, (2) that the three works mentioned by the chronicler are the alliterative poems 'Morte Arthure,' 'The Awntyrs off Arthure' and 'Susan,' (3) that they were written in Scotland, and (4) that the author was an ecclesiastic and not the Lord of Eglinton. (Amours (1897), p. lv)

However, by the early twentieth century the scholarship, much of which originated in Scotland, had resulted in little agreement and the unlikely prospect of a large volume of alliterative poetry the work of a single mysterious poet called Huchown. In an extensive study, Henry MacCracken pauses during his review of such theories to remark:

We have here 40,000 lines of the very meat of Middle English Literature identified as the work of a Scotchman. Obviously, it was time for English scholars to assert their rights.<sup>65</sup>

And it was his re-examination of all the evidence put forward to date that, for some years to come, silenced the arguments. In summary, he agreed that *The pistel of*

<sup>63</sup> Andrew's reference to Huchown is in Book V of IX and so it may have been set down in the first decade of the fifteenth century. Book V covers the period from the birth of Christ to 716 CE.

<sup>64</sup> William Dunbar, *Lament for the Makeris*, (1505), ll. 53-66. Cited in Amours (1897) p. lii. Dunbar (1456 - 1513) was a poet (*maker*) at the court of King James IV. He was a popular Scottish poet in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries whose work was published by Chepman and Myllar.

<sup>65</sup> H. N. MacCracken, 'Concerning Huchown', *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America*, XXV (1910), 507-534.

*suete Susan*, uniquely named, is the poem referred to in Andrew's *Cronkyl*, as the work of Huchown; the various attempts to recognise the other poems named by Andrew and assign common authorship with *Susan* he describes as a 'maze of guesswork'. As for the attempts to identify Huchown as Sir Hew of Eglintoun his verdict is '*Not proven*'.<sup>66</sup> It is nineteen years before MacCracken is seriously challenged by S. O. Andrew.<sup>67</sup> His position, based on dialect, vocabulary and verse form is that, along with *Susan*, *Morte Arthure* and *Awntyrs off Arthure* were by Huchown. But his work merely re-interprets the same evidence that is questioned by MacCracken. Thus, the futility of trying to demonstrate conclusively that the composer of *Susan* also wrote any other extant medieval alliterative poem eventually was recognised.

A related problem of authorship, recognised towards the end of the nineteenth century, and discussed spasmodically during the twentieth, concerns *Awntyrs*. The bipartite structure of the poem's narrative is also host to differences in alliterative patterning, stanza linking (concatenation), line-linking within the stanza and end-rhyming. Hermann Lübke, in 1883, proposed that there was originally only a single poem, the first story of the encounter with the ghost of Guinevere's mother; sometime later, a second poet wrote a second adventure, of Gawain and Galeron in the same stanza form but without the same attention to strophic technique; still later, a third person spliced the two poems into the form that has come down to us.<sup>68</sup> Subsequent criticism either ignores this difficulty or challenges the suggestion, or develops the argument further.

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<sup>66</sup> MacCracken (1910), p. 534.

<sup>67</sup> S. O. Andrew, 'Huchoun's works', *Review of English Studies*, V (1929), 12-21.

<sup>68</sup> H. Lübke, *The Auntyrs of Arthure at the Tern-Wathelan, Teil I: Handschriften, Metrik, Verfasser* (Berlin 1883).



Amours comments simply that *Awntyrs* consists of two episodes linked only by time and place (pp. xliii- xliv). Some recognition that the two parts of this poem are more closely related begins with S. O. Andrew:

In the first part the ghost has warned Gawayne of the consequences of Arthur's bellicose covetousness and in the second the strange knight appears to fight for his possessions which Arthur has won in war and awarded to Gawayne.<sup>69</sup>

J. P. Oakden, whilst acknowledging that Andrew had established more connectivity than had been previously supposed, maintains the argument that the two main episodes 'could not be a complete artistic unit' and that only in the last stanza is there any reference to the principal event in the first part.<sup>70</sup> Ralph Hanna's critical edition emphasizes the bipartite structure by dividing the poem after stanza twenty-six and titling the two parts *The Awntyrs A* and *The Awntyrs B* with the concluding stanza sequestered onto a final page.<sup>71</sup> Robert Gates recognises that the first part of the poem describes two moral dilemmas of Arthurian conduct which are resolved, at least temporarily, in the second.<sup>72</sup> An initially balanced exploration of the poem's two-part structure is offered by A. C. Spearing.<sup>73</sup> He examines the reasoning of Hanna and others who argue for the work having originally been two works stitched together by a third hand but, almost apologetically, supports a view that the poem is most likely to have been planned as a diptych by a single author. However, by 1983 Spearing becomes more strident in his opposition to the views of Lübke and Hanna:

Certain differences of style between the two episodes appear to support this disintegration of the work, though it must be said, I think, that these are of so minute a kind that no reader would notice them who was not in search of evidence in favour of disintegration.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Andrew (1929), p. 29.

<sup>70</sup> Oakden (1968), Vol. 2, p. 47.

<sup>71</sup> Hanna (1974).

<sup>72</sup> R. J. Gates, *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne: a Critical Edition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), p5.

<sup>73</sup> A. C. Spearing 'The Awntyrs off Arthure', in Bernard S Levy and Paul E Szarmach eds., *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University, 1981), pp. 183-202.

<sup>74</sup> A. C. Spearing, 'Central and Misplaced Sovereignty in Three Medieval Poems', *Review of English Studies*, 33 (1982), 247-261.

Helen Phillips also is persuaded of unity of structure and a single hand, frequently citing Hanna with whom she disagrees.<sup>75</sup> But she makes the important point that:

none of the manuscripts simply divides the work into two halves to produce the binary structure that has become a standard assumption for modern critics.

As Phillips demonstrates, any argument based on individual readings and interpretations of the narrative can remain opinion only without some recourse to the earliest available versions of what the poet actually wrote down. However, the available evidence for unity in this case, four manuscripts each presenting the poem as a single entity (though not uniformly structured) is not conclusive. The evidence for disunity offered by Lübke and Hanna from their studies of the composition of the narratives, though more compelling by its very nature, has not been sufficiently convincing to quieten curiosity about the work. Stephen Shepherd, however, adopts Hanna's postfix notations 'A' and 'B' to distinguish the two episodes in an exploration of a possible source for the second episode.<sup>76</sup> 'Inclining towards Hanna's view', he admits that,

the seeming conventionality of Awntyrs B, as well as its comparative dearth of higher moral discourse, remains a challenge to attempts at recuperative readings.<sup>77</sup>

Thus, despite a century and more of argument, there remain questions about the authorship of these poems (and others) which are worthy of attention. The analyses for this thesis use a much wider range of criteria, combined, to compare the writing in the chosen group of poems. The methodology developed in the course of the study, described in Chapter II following, enables a clear position to be reached on the structure of *Awntyrs*, and a more firmly based opinion on which of the poems

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<sup>75</sup> H. Phillips, "'The Awntyrs off Arthure': Structure and Meaning. A reassessment", *Arthurian Literature*, XII (1993), 63-69 (p. 65).

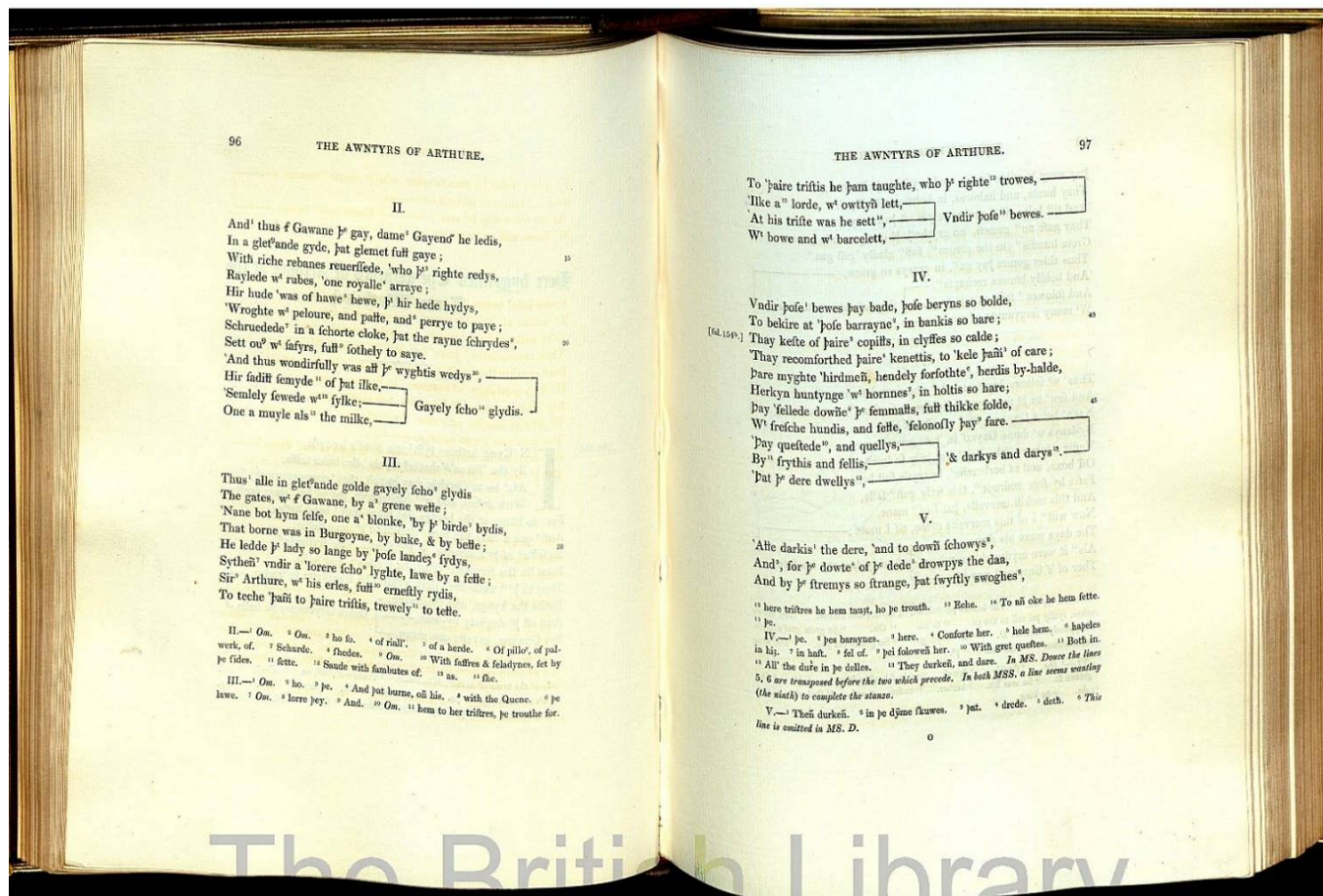
<sup>76</sup> S. Shepherd, "'Heathenic' Catechis and the source of Awntyrs B", *Medium Ævum*, LXXXI(1) (2012), 1-17.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

may share common authorship or which certainly could not. The use of multiple markers of writing style also helps to develop an understanding of how the writers of these works set about composing them. Perhaps most importantly, the study will have successfully tested a methodology for a future, much larger study of the alliterative poetry written in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

## Appendix to Chapter One

The presentation of *Awntyrs* by Sir F. Madden in his collection of Middle English romances by Scottish and English authors.<sup>78</sup>



<sup>78</sup> Madden (1890), pp. 96-97. (With acknowledgement of the assistance of the British Library.)

## CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

### Section I: Questions

In the review of the various authorship claims which concludes the previous chapter of this thesis, there are a number of issues identified which might usefully be revisited. Two assertions by Amours recorded there fall into that category: (i) that *Awntyrs* and *Susan* are contemporary and were composed by the same poet: (ii) that the author of *Gologras* also wrote *Rauf*. A third vexed, unresolved argument, discussed there at some length must be that concerning the structure of *Awntyrs*: can the theory of Lübke, further pursued by Hanna, that the poem is in fact two poems by different authors conjoined, be substantiated? This latter possibility also has repercussions for the study of the first of Amours' assertions: which one, if either, of the two parts of the poem possibly shares authorship with *Susan*? The remaining work, *Howlat*, is unique among the chosen group in having a known author and a reliably estimated date of composition. But can further study reveal that it is unusual in other ways?

This study will therefore address the following questions in the order shown.

1. The structure of *Awntyrs*: is it a single entity or two different poems conjoined?
2. Is there evidence that *Gologras* and *Rauf* were written by the same hand?
3. Is there evidence of shared authorship of *Susan* with either or both episodes of *Awntyrs*?
4. What stylistic similarities to or differences from the other poems in this study characterize *Howlat*? In what ways might it be unique?

## Section II: Methodology

### Style

This study is essentially an exercise comparing poetic styles and skills. Marie Borroff, in a study of style in alliterative verse approaches style as ‘the way language is used, the “how” of expressing anything in words as opposed to the “what.”’<sup>1</sup> However, the prescribed stanza form and rhyme scheme of the thirteen-line poems, together with the formulaic collocations of alliterative poetry will suppress the individuality of ‘how’ to some extent. But the rules governing the Old English alliterative line were not the ones followed in Middle English alliterative writing, and differences in the attention paid to the fourteenth-century rhyme scheme and alliterative patterning can be detected – as will be demonstrated in the chapters following. These strophic differences are quantified for each poem to assess the attention paid, or skills applied, by the poet to rhyming and alliteration.

Style can also be characterized by the tendency to use, or not, rhetorical expressions and the characteristics of the rhetoric. The treatise of Ernst Robert Curtius describes the concept of the *Artes* in the Latin Middle Ages and the foundations of the study of rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> James Murphy has provided a major work on the survival of the classical traditions into the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup> In a chapter of interest to this study, *Ars poetriae*, Murphy describes the works of six European teachers of grammar which were produced from between 1175 and before 1280 and which continued to be important instruction to scholars throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Borroff, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. A Stylistic and Metrical Study* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1953). Particularly Chapter 3, ‘Literature and Education’, pp. 36 -61.

<sup>3</sup> J. J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Murphy, pp. 136 – 193.

Included in the review is Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova* (1208 – 3) which will be shown in Chapter Six of this thesis as relevant to the writing of Richard Holland in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Geoffrey Chaucer's references to, and uses of, rhetoric have been examined in some detail, notably by Stephen Knight, J. M. Manly and J.J. Murphy.<sup>6</sup> Paul Baum has explored word play in Chaucer's poetry to provide two extensive lists of words used ambiguously or humorously.<sup>7</sup> For works of the form and period considered in this thesis, rhetorical 'Descriptio' has been examined by Derek Pearsall and John Finlayson, but only specifically in relation to, respectively, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the alliterative *Morte Arthure*.<sup>8</sup> Rita Copeland has considered the relationship between rhetoric and style as it was understood in the Middle Ages and more specifically by Chaucer.<sup>9</sup>

A number of essays on Chaucer's rhetoric are brought together in a casebook edited by Scott D. Troyan.<sup>10</sup> Of particular relevance to a topic within this thesis is Troyan's own more general contribution on rhetorical usage in medieval writing in which he proposes that

Audiences must refocus attention when interpreting medieval literature. That is, rather than resolving textual inconsistencies (especially at the plot or macro-level), audiences need pay closer attention to what meaning those inconsistencies might suggest. For example, what do the two clearly separate stories combined in the *Awntyrs of Arthure* share in common that makes them necessary in the mind of the author or compiler to be so conjoined?<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Margaret, F. Nims trans., *Poetria Nova of Geoffrey of Vinsauf* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> S. Knight 'The Figures of Style', in *Rymyng Craftily Meaning in Chaucer's Poetry* (Sydney: Angus and Roberts Ltd., 1973), pp. 236-242. J. M. Manly, 'Chaucer and the the Rhetoricians', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XI I (1926), 95-113. J. J. Murphy, 'A New Look at Chaucer and the Rhetoricians', *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 15 (Feb. 1964), 1 – 20.

<sup>7</sup> Paul F. Baum, 'Chaucer's Puns', *PMLA*, 71.1 (1956), 225 – 246 and 'Chaucer's Puns: A Supplementary List' *PMLA*, 73.1 (1958), 167 – 170.

<sup>8</sup> D. A. Pearsall, 'Rhetorical "Descriptio" in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"', *The Modern Language Review*, 50(2) (1955), 129-134. J. Finlayson, 'Rhetorical "Descriptio" of Place in the Alliterative "Morte Arthure"', *Modern Philology*, 61(No. 1) (1963), 1-11.

<sup>9</sup> Rita Copeland, 'Chaucer and Rhetoric' in *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 122 – 143.

<sup>10</sup> Scott D. Troyan, ed., *Medieval Rhetoric: A Casebook* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Scott D. Troyan, 'Unwritten between the lines', *ibid.*, pp. 233.

Directly referring to the same poem, Ralph Hanna comments on antanaclasis in the first episode of *Awntyrs*.<sup>12</sup> The rhetoric of Gaelic panegyric by Pia Coira provides some useful information and is referenced in a later chapter on *Howlat*.<sup>13</sup> Whilst it is not the intention of this study to evaluate the influence of medieval teachers of classical rhetoric, such as Geoffrey of Vinsauf and Mathew of Verdôme, on the selected poems generally (*Howlat* being the exception), the highly developed analytical protocol of the discipline provides a useful tool for stylistic comparisons.<sup>14</sup>

Observations on syntax are useful in some cases, especially where there is notable use in the writing of anastrophe, pleonastic pronouns or absolute adjectives. Thus the various elements of a writing style are quantified to enable comparisons to be made and, as an initial approach, the presentation of the questions identified above invites a pairs comparison as follows.

The first and second episodes of *Awntyrs*

*Awntyrs*' first episode with *Susan*

*Awntyrs*' second episode with *Susan*.

*Gologras* with *Rauf*.

*Howlat* with the others in the group, and independently.

### **Amours' hypotheses**

Amours' opinions on joint authorship are based on lexical similarities to be found in the poems which he noticed as he prepared the glossary for his edition. However, he does not present any evidence to support his hypotheses. The glossary lists for each word the line references for every use of that word which enabled a reconstruction of the process that Amours followed to arrive at his conclusions. The findings are

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<sup>12</sup> Hanna, 1974, pp. 21-22.

<sup>13</sup> Chapter Six, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> Chapter Six of this thesis will show the extent to which Richard Holland systematically follows the advice of a rhetorician in his writing of *Howlat*.



presented in the relevant chapters of the thesis along with some consideration of their significance.

### **Strophic comparisons**

#### **Stanza structure**

Four of the five poems have an identical thirteen-line stanza structure and rhyme scheme consisting of nine long lines end-rhyming *ababababc* and four short lines rhyming *dddc*. The four short lines (the wheel) are tied into the nine long lines by the *c*-rhyme, and each stanza normally has four different end-rhyme sounds. However, there are occasional departures from this paradigm which are quantified in the succeeding chapters of this thesis. The one exception to this stanza structure is *Susan* which has a two-word ninth line (the bob) before the four short lines, though the rhyme scheme still follows that of the four other poems to realise the *ababababcddc* pattern.

#### **Line structure**

There is more variation in line structure both between and within the poems which is detailed more appropriately in the respective chapters about them that follow. But as a general rule, the long lines, which have a marked caesura, have four stresses and the short lines two stresses; the last word of each line has a stressed syllable. The number of unstressed syllables is very variable.

Alliteration occurs on three or four long-line stressed syllables and sometimes additionally on unstressed syllables. Short-line alliteration is more variable but the occurrence is generally with alliterating syllables on two stresses.

## Rhyming

Lack of attention to the rhyming scheme is one differentiator of style, or perhaps skill, but more telling is the variety and distribution of rhyme sounds in a poem. The various rhyme-word endings are listed and their distribution throughout the poems is considered.

## Rhetoric

The figures of literary style evident in the poems are identified using the nomenclature adopted by Richard Lanham.<sup>15</sup> Lanham's terminology is based on classical and medieval authorities but does not necessarily represent exactly the terminology that the Middle English poets may have used. As noted above, this thesis, except in the case of Holland's *Howlat*, is not arguing for the influence of medieval rhetoric on these poets, but rather using rhetorical terminology as an analytical tool (in the way that other modern discourses might be used in analyses of medieval texts, e.g. modern linguistics). However, Lanham's Greek terms are not usually the ones that would have been familiar to medieval poets, who, if they were familiar with classical rhetorical figures, would generally have known Latin terms. Therefore, the Latin equivalents are also shown with the Greek terms at appropriate points in the thesis. The account of influence of a medieval rhetorician on the composition of *Howlat* (Chapter Six) uses that teacher's terminology.

The rhetorical figures predominantly to be found in the poems are simile (*similitudo*) and metaphor (*translatio*), antithesis (*oppositio*), digression (*digressio*), anastrophe (*reversio*) and antanaclasis (*traductio*). Although, with the exception of anastrophe, their use is not frequent, the statistical information gathered adds weight to that collected on strophic differences

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<sup>15</sup> R. A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* 2nd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

### **Anastrophe (reversio) and adjectival positioning**

Some judgement of the frequency with which anastrophe constructions are used by a poet can also be an indicator of style. Lanham defines anastrophe as 'an unusual arrangement of words or clauses within a sentence, often for metrical convenience or poetic effect'.<sup>16</sup> But 'unusual' is not an easy qualification to ascribe to writing of the period. In carrying out an analysis of word or clause order in the lines of the poem one is presented with the problem of evaluating the normality of sentences written in a language with no national standards, and in a narrative which *is* poetry. 'Poetic effect' is, nevertheless, a prime reason for adopting a chosen word order, and the search for examples where word order seems to have been manipulated to this end gives reason to consider syntactical style differences. It will be shown that the principal function of anastrophe in some of the poems is to achieve rhyming. (The influence of syntax on metre is considered when comparing the occurrence of pleonastic pronouns in the two episodes of *Awntyrs*, when their use will be explained with reference to the metrical conventions or rules of the Middle English alliterative long line.)<sup>17</sup>

To provide a comparator by which to judge if the syntax of the poetic lines with respect to noun modification was 'unusual' for the time, the writings of William Caxton in his earlier major publications could be a guide. These were mainly translations for which Caxton provided prologues and epilogues. It was in the former that Caxton sometimes revealed his interest in the changes that were occurring in the English language, his awareness of regional differences and his wish to adopt contemporary or widely understood usage. An example, much quoted in this context, is provided in Caxton's prologue to *Eneydos* (c.1490), a translation from the French

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<sup>16</sup> Lanham, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> See pages 67 - 69.

of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In a concluding statement to a discussion of some sixty lines Caxton expresses his intent to be understood by a range of readers as literacy became more common:

And for as moche as this present booke is not for a rude, uplondyissh man to laboure therin ne rede it, but onely for a clerke and a noble gentyman that feleth and understandeth in faytes of armes, in love and in noble chyvalrye, therefor in a meane bytwene bothe I have reduced and translated this sayd booke into our Enlysshe not over-rude ne curious, but in suche termes as shall be understanden by Goddes grace accordynge to my copye.<sup>18</sup>

Whilst Caxton's prose may provide a standard by which to recognise anastrophe in the poetry which is the subject of this study, the geographical and, for *Susan* at least, the chronological distances set out in Table 2.01 below should be noted.

**Table 2.01: Composition dates and regional origins of the poems**

Writing	Composition date	Dialect
<i>Awntyrs 1</i>	1400-1430	N. England/ S. Scotland
<i>Awntyrs 2</i>	Post <i>Awntyrs 1</i>	
<i>Golagros</i>	1450-1507	N. England/ S. Scotland
<i>Rauf</i>	1450-1500	Scotland
<i>Susan</i>	Late 14 <sup>th</sup> century	Northern England
Howlat	1448	Scotland
<b>Caxton's printed prose</b>	<b>1474 - 1490</b>	<b>London</b>

Accordingly, the prologues and epilogues of two early Caxton editions were scrutinised for similar constructions for those considered as anastrophe in the poems. The texts consulted for this purpose were the translations of

- (i) *The History of Troy* (c. 1473): Prologue; Conclusion of Book II; Epilogue to Book II; Epilogue. (Blake, pp. 97 – 101)
- (ii) *Game of Chess* (First Edition) (1474): Prologue; Book III ch. 3; Book IV ch.1; Epilogue. (Blake, pp. 85 – 87)

F. N. Blake, in his discussion of Caxton's syntax observes that

<sup>18</sup> William Caxton, 'Eneydos' (Prologue), in *Caxton's Own Prose*, F. N. Blake (London: André Deutsch, 1975), p. 80, ll. 68 – 75. This edition is also the source of subsequent references to Caxton's writing which are given parenthetically in the body of the thesis.

From his own writings we learn that Caxton was unable to compose a sentence with a clear and harmonious structure. But from the works which he revised or translated, we learn that he was not insensitive to the development of word order in English.<sup>19</sup>

Blake goes on to give examples from Caxton's translations, though he does

summarise the discussion with a note of caution:

We may conclude that he was aware of some of the tendencies in the development of English word order but did not always use this knowledge to modernize his books. It was only when he was translating or completely revising a book, that he bothered to introduce a word order which reflected the state of the language in the fifteenth century, and even then he was influenced by what appeared in the copytext.<sup>20</sup>

Blake's use of the terms *development* and *modernize* indicate that Caxton's own writings used a syntax in the fifteenth century which was moving towards that of Present-Day English. A frequent marker of what might be described as anastrophe which occurs in the poetry studied for this thesis is the postmodification of a noun to achieve rhyming. Accordingly, the passages listed above were examined for clauses in which nouns are accompanied by an adjective. The results are shown for the first two passages only as the remainder yield the same consistent use of the adjective – noun construction of Modern English.

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<sup>19</sup> F. N Blake, *Caxton and his World* (London: André Deutsch, 1969), p. 191.

<sup>20</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 192.

Table 2.02: Modified nouns in two passages of Caxton's prose

Title	Lines	Text	Syntax
Troy II Conc.	1 - 2	out of Frensche into this symple and rude Englissh	adj - noun
	3 - 4	my soverayn lord the Kynge of Englund	adj - noun
	5 - 6	that she wole resseyve my rude labour	adj - noun
Troy II Epil	1	Thus endeth the seconde book	adj - noun
	3	by the labour of the venerable person Raoul Lefevre	adj - noun
	5	translated into this rude Englissh	adj - noun
	8 - 9	I had the better will to accomplishe this	adj - noun
	10 - 11	in the tyme of the troubloue world and of the grete devysions	adj - noun
	16	As for the thirde book	adj - noun
	18 - 19	that worshi[p]full and religyous man Dan John Lidgate	adj - noun
	23	my sayd ladyes good grace	adj - noun
	27	dyverce men of dyverce desyres	adj - noun
	28 - 29	I have now good leyzer	adj - noun
36	her faithful, trewe and moste humble servant	adj - noun	

But Caxton does occasionally employ a less prosaic word order, as shown in the italicised clauses in the following sentences.

And afterward whan I rememberyd myself of my symplenes and unperfightnes that I had in bothe langages, that is to wete in Frensche and in Englishe, *for in France was I never*, and was born and lerned myn Englissh in Kente in the Weeld where I doubte not is spoken as brode and rude Englissh as is in ony place of Englund. (p. 98, ll. 21 – 27).

Alas, and in Engeland what hurte doon the advocats, men of lawe and attorneyes of court to the comyn peple of the royame as well in the spirituall lawe as in the temporal: *how torne they the lawe and statutes at their pleure; how ete they the peple; how enpovere they the comynte*. (p. 86, *Book III ch.3*, ll. 1 – 5).

But the syntax here is clearly used rhetorically for emphasis.

The guidance which is suggested by this exercise is that any 'unusual arrangement of words or clauses within a sentence' (Lanham) compared with Modern English may have a rhetorical significance. However additional evidence of a contemporary usage is also sought, for example where the post-modification of nouns by words with a French origin occurs.

## Data Collection

To aid a line by line analysis of the poems, they were entered into four Microsoft ACCESS databases. From there, the various query results were exported to Microsoft XCEL spreadsheets for statistical calculations to be made and for tables of evidence suitable for inclusion in the text of this thesis to be prepared.

## Section III: Editions

All the poems selected for this study are available in several editions; therefore, a choice of edition for entry into the database had to be made. The texts chosen are the latest critical editions with a glossary and textual notes, and, where possible a modern character set with a modernised orthography. Whilst Middle English alphabet characters can be pasted into the database, the process is awkward and a potential cause of database query difficulties. The conversion to *u/v/w* and *ij* according to modern usage allows a consistent spelling to facilitate accurate query and search results when using the database. The chosen editions are as follows.

**'The Awntyrs off Arthure'** in Thomas Hahn, ed., *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 178-201.

This edition is based on the Oxford manuscript Douce 324 (Bodleian MS 21898), the favoured basis of several modern editions as the most complete early version and relatively free of scribal errors.<sup>21</sup> In his introduction to the poem, Hahn gives his aim for the edition as a text of *Awntyrs* that accurately reflects what has survived from the Middle Ages. He gives the poem as it reads in Douce 324, though where it is defective because lines are missing or repeated - 'or because the passage

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 6-8 for details of the four extant manuscripts of *Awntyrs*.

makes no sense to me' - he emends by reference to the other manuscripts, generally the Ireland manuscript.<sup>22</sup>

**'The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain'** in Thomas Hahn, ed., *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 234-277. Hahn works from a facsimile of the only copy of the earliest edition of Gologras, that of Chepman and Myllar printed in 1508.<sup>23</sup> He also acknowledges the help of The Scottish Text Society edition by F. J. Amours.<sup>24</sup>

**'The Pistel of Swete Susan'** in R. A. Peck, ed., *Heroic Women from the Old Testament in Middle English Verse* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991) pp. 73-108. Peck follows the Vernon manuscript in this edition, 'partly because its version of *Susan* is the best and earliest ... and partly because of the significance of the great book itself.'<sup>25</sup>

**'Ralph the Collier'** in Alan Lupack, ed., *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances* (Kalamazoo: 1990), pp. 166 – 197. Lupack bases his edition on the facsimile edition published by the National Library of Scotland.<sup>26</sup> Despite the anomalous modernisation of the title's spelling, the editing of the main body of the text is restricted to adopting a modernized character set.

**'The Buke of the Howlat'** Ralph Hanna ed., *The Buke of the Howlat* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2014). Hanna's very recent edition is based on the Asloan manuscript version, though acknowledgement is made of its dependance on the presentations of F. J. Amours and Felicity Riddy.<sup>27</sup> The book uses the þ character

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<sup>22</sup> Hahn (1995), pp. 174-175.

<sup>23</sup> W. Beattie ed., *The Chepman and Myllar Prints: Nine Tracts from the First Scottish Press* (Oxford: Edinburgh Bibliographical Society and Oxford University Press, 1950). See Chapter One, p. 13 for details of the Chepman and Myllar print edition.

<sup>24</sup> Amours (1897).

<sup>25</sup> Peck, p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> Beattie (see Chapt. One, p.20 of this thesis for details of the original print copy.)

<sup>27</sup> Amours (1897). P. Bawcutt and F. Riddy eds. *Longer Scottish Poems Volume One 1375 - 1650* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987).



which is replaced by *th* in the data base and in quotations from the text in this thesis. The orthography in this case has not been otherwise emmended thus *v*, *u* and *y* appear as in Hanna's edition.

The study additionally made use of alternative editions, particularly where lines occur that have been subject to editorial emmendation to correct scribal or printing errors. Whilst these editions are referenced in the text as appropriate, especially useful was the Amours 1897 collection with its alternative versions of *Awntyrs* and *Susan* sourced from their divergent early manuscript copies, his fullsome notes and comprehensive glossary. (Amours' occasionally more fallacious opinions also provided the stimuli to propose better arguments for ascribing authorship, or not, to poems in this study.) The value of the scholarship to be found in Ralph Hanna's editions of *Awntyrs* (1974), *Gologras* (2008) and *Howlat* (2014) likewise must be acknowledged. Facsimile editions of the Thornton and Vernon (CD edition) manuscripts, the Chepman and Myllar print editions and the 1572 Robert Lepreuk edition of *Rauf* were also consulted to understand the rationale for editorial interventions.<sup>28</sup>

The questions raised at the opening of this chapter have their responses in the ensuing chapters. The controversy surrounding the bi-partite structure of *Awntyrs*, the subject of Chapter Three immediately following, provides an ideal initial test for the validity of the methodology. Hanna seems alone in offering any amount of quantitative data to compare the rhyming and alliteration in the two episodes.<sup>29</sup> The practice adopted by this study will corroborate his findings and provide additional evidence on which to base an opinion about its authorship. Chapter Four will examine Amours' assertion that *Gologras* and *Rauf* share authorship and propose

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<sup>28</sup> Referenced when they are cited.

<sup>29</sup> Hanna (1974), pp. 11-24.

that a much closer relationship can be shown between *Rauf* and the second episode of *Awntyrs*. Chapter Five similarly, examines and refines an early theory of a pairing of *Susan* with *Awntyrs*. Although some significant similarities are revealed, the final conclusion is much influenced by differences in rhetorical style. A single poem, *Howlat*, is the subject of Chapter Six. Much is understood already about its history, structure and meaning, but the methodology used in this thesis to scrutinise the poem offers an attractive theory of how its author, not known to have written any other poetic work, set about its composition. Once again, it is an examination of the poem's rhetoric which contributes to a new understanding of the poem.

The concluding chapter reviews and further refines the findings of the study and examines the usefulness of the methodology for future studies in the light of those findings.

## CHAPTER THREE: *THE AWNTYRS OFF ARTHURE*

### Section I: Introduction

The setting of the poem's first episode 'By the Turne Wathelan', in Inglewood Forest in the Carlisle area, and the survival of the entire work in four extant copies originating from Yorkshire, the Midlands and the South of England point to a work with a wide audience during the fifteenth century. The importance of *Awntyrs* may also be judged by the comprehensive bibliography of critical material concerning the poem that has accumulated since the early nineteenth century. The controversy which has been a feature of the critical history of *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and its bipartite structure is reviewed earlier in this thesis.<sup>30</sup> With its two episodes, only tenuously related by time and place, it is the only form in which it has come down to us. But in reading through the poem, an awareness that the second episode is written in a different way becomes apparent. These differences have long been undisputed, with the controversy being more about their significance, as some critics sought to rationalise them as a consequence of the poem's structure whilst others have argued that the work of two different poets is demonstrable.

In this chapter, these differences are quantified in a newly comprehensive manner which allows the two episodes of the poem to be compared. Other differences, not previously explored in the available literature about the poem, are similarly presented. The old data and the new for both parts of the poem are then combined to enable a more secure conclusion about the structure of the work than has been hitherto possible.

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<sup>30</sup> Chapter One, pp. 26-28.

## Section II: Strophic patterning (rhyming, scansion and alliteration)

### in *Awntyrs*: the previously established facts

The structure, rhyming and alliterative patterns of *Awntyrs* have been subject to commentary by a succession of the poem's editors, the scholarship of Hanna and Amours being good, though limited, examples of the statistical approach to the study of the poem's structure adopted in this thesis.<sup>31</sup> In this section the strophic characteristics are described without any claim to originality for the observations. There then follows in Section III the detailed statistical observations carried out in the course of this present research.

### Stanza and line structures

The romance is in the form of a poem describing two apparently related episodes. In modern editions the first story is told in stanzas one to twenty-six, the second in the following twenty-nine to give a complete poem of fifty-five stanzas – hence its description by A. C. Spearing as a 'literary structure comparable with a favourite pictorial form in the Middle ages, the diptych'.<sup>32</sup>

A feature of the poem is the linking of each stanza with the one immediately following by the repetition of a word or phrase from that stanza's last line in the first line of the one succeeding it. This stanza linking, also known as concatenation, is rigorously observed for stanzas 2 to 26, and the very last line of the poem repeats words from the first line. However, in the second episode (stanzas 27 to 55), only nineteen first lines follow the pattern. Such is the numerical difference in the incidence of concatenation between the two episodes that a closer examination of

<sup>31</sup> Amours (1897), pp. lxxxii-lxxxv; Hanna (1974), pp. 11-24.

<sup>32</sup> Spearing (1981), p. 186. But as will be discussed later in this chapter, no two manuscripts divide the poem up in an identical way.

the various linking devices is not recorded in this thesis.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in the first part of the poem there is at least a one-word link between lines 8 and 9 in nineteen of the twenty-six stanzas, with this internal linking or consecutive line linking occurring in sixteen consecutive verses. In the second part of the poem the practice is abandoned except in the forty-ninth and last stanzas. It is these observations, allied with the questionable coupling of the two narratives which prompted the theory, first suggested by Lübke and developed by Hanna, that the first twenty-six stanzas, together with the last one, were written separately from the rest, and possibly by a different poet.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout the poem, each stanza is made up of nine long lines or verses, and four short lines (the 'wheel'). The long lines usually have ten or eleven syllables, sometimes twelve and occasionally nine or thirteen syllables and these verses can usually be read with a caesura. The short lines are usually of five or six syllables and occasionally four or seven syllables. The poetry is essentially not syllabically structured, though rhythmic structure is achieved by a fixed number of stressed syllables. The long lines almost always have four stresses and the short lines two or three stresses. For both long and short lines, the last word has a stressed syllable, even if not alliterating, as in 'Thus Sir Gawayn the gay Gaynour he ledes' (l. 14).

### **Alliteration**

Dense alliteration on stressed syllables is a feature of the verse form which is of particular interest in this thesis; and for the first episode of this poem in particular, the alliteration is sometimes maintained across several successive lines:

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<sup>33</sup> Margaret Medary has made a study of stanza linking in several Middle English poems including *Awntyrs*. The various means by which linking is achieved are described and the four manuscripts of the poem are statistically compared with five other Middle English stanzaic works. In a summary of her conclusions on linking by word repetition she notes that 'In English, stanza-linking occurs chiefly in Northern Poetry'. Margaret P. Medary, 'Stanza-Linking in Middle English Verse', *The Romantic Review*, (1916), 3, 243 – 270 (p. 245).

<sup>34</sup> Lübke (1883); Hanna (1974).

Set over with saffres sothely to say,  
 With saffres and seldynes set by the sides;  
 Here sadel sette of that ilke,  
 Saude with sambutes of silke. (ll. 21 - 24)

This example demonstrates what will be shown to be the commonest alliterative pattern of the long lines, *aa/aa*, and two typical short line patterns, *aa* and *aaa* (see Sect. III, Table 3.5 below). Here the alliteration is within the stanza, but the convention by which the first line of a stanza repeats alliterating words from the last line of the previous one, concatenation, also serves to enhance the effect:

All the dure in the delles,  
 They durken and dare.  
  
 Then durken the dere in the dymme skuwes,  
 That for drede of the deth droupes the do. (ll. 51 - 54)

The reduced incidence of consecutive alliteration and concatenation in the second episode inevitably lessens the aural effect, as will be shown later.

## Rhyming

A second feature of the poem is the intricate rhyme scheme, *ababababcdddc*, also used in other late medieval romances. Thus the wheel of four short lines is bound by the rhyme sound of its last line, the thirteenth of the stanza, to the last long line of the stanza, the ninth line; therefore, each stanza has four different rhymes. This discipline is followed in all but four stanzas of the *Awntyrs'* first episode; but with a significantly increased frequency, thirteen stanzas of the second episode have only three rhymes.<sup>35</sup> However, in every variant case the first eight lines follow the alternating *ab* sequence with a reduction in the number of rhyming sounds to three, occasioned by repetition of either *a* or *b* in line nine (and consequently in line thirteen), or in lines ten to twelve.

<sup>35</sup> The aberrant stanzas are those at lines beginning: 118, 222, 261, 326, 339, 352, 365, 443, 508, 521, 534, 547, 560, 599, 612, 638 and 677. The first four are in the first episode.

Previous critical analysis of a statistical nature (notably that of Hanna) has also identified a reduced number of different end rhymes used in total in the second part of the work.<sup>36</sup> Thus there is even more repetition of rhyme sounds throughout that episode than that caused by simply the reduction of different rhymes within stanzas. The impact of this on the aural character of the romance is also discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

### **Section III: Analytical outcomes**

#### **The statistical basis for analysis**

As was stated in Chapter One of this thesis, none of the the existing four source manuscripts sets the poem poem out in the structure adopted by the modern editions consulted for this research. Hahn (the primary text) presents the poem as a single entity whilst Hanna presents the bipartite structure by dividing the poem after stanza twenty-six and titling the two parts *The Awntyrs A* and *The Awntyrs B* with the concluding stanza sequestered onto a final page.<sup>37</sup> The assumptions for each of the data tables which follow are indicated as appropriate.

#### **Alliteration**

*Awntyrs* stands apart from the other known poems written in the thirteen-line alliterative rhyming stanza form by what Hanna calls the poet's 'marked taste for hyperalliteration'.<sup>38</sup> This characteristic is created not only by alliteration within the lines (alliterative patterning) but also by continuing the same alliterative rhyme from one line to the next by either stanza linking (concatenation) or line-linking within the stanzas (conduplicatio). However, when reading *Awntyrs*, it is noticeable that the

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<sup>36</sup> Hanna, (1974), p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> Hanna (1974).

<sup>38</sup> Hanna, (1974), p. 12.

alliteration becomes less dense in the second episode. The following data demonstrate this numerically.

### **Stanza linking (concatenation) and consecutive alliteration (conduplicatio)**

The comparative data set out in Tables 3.01 and 3.02 below expresses occurrences of the features examined as a percentage of the opportunity for occurrence. No assumptions are made about structure other than the simple assumption that the episodic division of the poem is after stanza twenty-six; the poem then continues for a further twenty-nine stanzas to conclude in stanza fifty-five.

**Table 3.01: Stanza linking (concatenation) in *Awntyrs***

	<b>First episode (1-26)</b>	<b>Second episode (27 – 55)</b>
Possible	25	29
Actual	25	17
%	100.0	58.6

Note: the repetition of the first line of the poem as the last is not taken into account.

**Table 3.02: Lines 8 – 9 linking (conduplicatio) in *Awntyrs***

	<b>First episode (1-26)</b>	<b>Second episode (27 – 55)</b>
Possible	26	29
Actual	19	8
%	73.1	27.6

The reduction of repeated words from one line to the next in stanzas twenty-seven to fifty-five inevitably lessens the alliterative effect, but reduced concatenation and conduplicatio is not the complete explanation. The incidence of alliteration carried over successive lines, as exemplified by ll. 21 to 24 (see p.46 above), must also be considered. The incidence of lines other than first or ninth lines that continue the same alliterating letter as their predecessor is shown in Table 3.03 below. Note also the tendency (shown in parenthesis) for this to occur between the first and second lines of the stanza.



**Table 3.03: Other lines with continuing alliteration in *Awntyrs***

	First episode (1-26)	Second episode (27 – 55)
Possible	286	319
Actual	42 (ll.1-2, 12 times)	23 (ll.1-2, 7 times)
%	14.7	7.2

Thus, the complete picture is a consistent and very marked reduction in line to line alliteration in the second episode. Alongside this difference, though, there is an interesting similarity in both episodes (30% approximately), shown in parenthesis in the table, with respect to the proportion of repeat alliteration occurring between the first and second lines. Continuing an alliterating sound into the second line of a stanza enhances the effect of concatenation – or perhaps compensates for its absence in the second episode.

### **Alliterative patterning (long lines)**

However, the alliterative character of the romance form is generated principally within, rather than between, the lines. Amours seems to be the earliest scholar to examine statistically the alliterative patterning of the poem. His findings for *Awntyrs* are shown in Table 3.04 below, though he makes no attempt to compare the patterning in the two parts of the poem.

**Table 3.04: *Awntyrs*: Long line alliterative patterning retabulated from F J Amours<sup>39</sup>**

Alliterating words in each half-line	%	Alliterating words in each half-line (cont.)	% (cont.)
2 - 2	48.6	2 + 2*	3.8
2 - 1	26.7	3 - 1	2.2
1 - 2	8.7	2 - 0	0.5
1 - 1	5.1	0 - 2	0.5
3 - 2	3.8	0 - 0	0

\* Lines with two different alliterating letters, e.g. l.1.01

The various permutations of alliterative patterning of the long lines found in this investigation, arranged to compare the patterning in one episode with another, are shown in Table 3.05 below. The percent figure is based on the number of long lines

<sup>39</sup> Amours (1897), p. lxxxiii.

in their respective episodes. They are shown using the convention which enables the position of the alliterating stressed syllables to be identified within each half-line.

More conveniently for comparative purposes, the summary (Table 3.06 below) which follows it shows how the reduction in the alliterative character comes about in the second episode.

**Table 3.05: Variations of long line alliterative patterning in the two episodes of Awntyrs**

Pattern	Stanzas 1 – 26		Stanzas 27 - 55	
	Occurrence	%	Occurrence	%
<i>aa/aa</i>	129	55.4	122	46.7
<i>aa/ax</i>	25	10.7	36	13.8
<i>aa/xa</i>	31	13.3	32	12.3
<i>ax/aa</i>	4	1.7	16	6.1
<i>xa/aa</i>	10	4.3	13	5.0
<i>a*x/xa</i>	1	0.4	3	1.1
<i>xa/ax</i>	3	1.3	8	3.1
<i>ax/ax</i>	2	0.9	3	1.1
<i>xa/xa</i>	3	1.3	1	0.4
<i>aa/xx</i>	2	0.9	3	1.1
<i>xx/aa</i>	3	1.3	3	1.1
<i>xx/xx</i>	0	0	1	0.4
<i>2+2</i>	5	2.1	10	3.8
<i>5 or 6</i>	8	3.4	5	1.9
<i>Other*</i>	7	3.0	5	1.9
<i>All long lines</i>	233†	100.0	261§	100.0

\* Lines in which three or four alliterating syllables occur but not all on stressed syllables.

† 9 long lines in 26 stanzas less a missing line (Douce). § 9 lines in 29 stanzas.

**Table 3.06: Long line alliteration summarised**

Number of alliterating syllables	Stanzas 1 -26 %	Stanzas 27 – 55 %
4	55.4	46.7
3	30.0	37.2
2	6.1	7.9
5 or 6	3.4	1.9
2 + 2	2.1	3.8

The evidence here is that the lines with four or more alliterating syllables are replaced by an increase in those with three or fewer. The proportion of lines with two different alliterations (shown as 2+2 in the tables above) increases, which also breaks up the alliterative continuity.

### Alliterative patterning (short lines)

The occurrence of alliteration in the poem's short lines has received little attention to date: Hanna gives no comparative information about short lines and Amours does not publish his analysis of the short line patterning, merely giving an average for all five of the poems he studied of 'about sixty percent' having 'two rhyme-letters'.<sup>40</sup> Some short lines are a complete sentence, but most are a simple phrase within a sentence contained by the wheel. The following analysis records the incidence of three, two or no alliterative words within a line.

**Table 3.07: The occurrence of alliteration in short lines**

Number of alliterating syllables	Stanzas 1 - 26 occurrence	%	Stanzas 27 - 55 occurrence	%
3	11	10.6	5	4.3
2	65	62.5	54	46.6
0	28	26.9	57	49.1
All short lines	104	100.0	116	100.0

The noticeable feature here is the dramatic reduction in the number of alliterating short lines (shown in the table above as an increase in lines with no alliterating syllables) in the second episode. This particular difference between the two parts seems not to have been previously reported.

### Rhyming

The review earlier in this chapter (Section II) of well-established differences between the two episodes of *Awntyrs* refers to the occurrence of stanzas which do not conform strictly to the four-rhyme paradigm: the first episode has four three-rhyme stanzas and the second thirteen.<sup>41</sup> The following new examination of the frequency of occurrence of the various rhyme-word endings broadly agrees with Hanna's

<sup>40</sup> Amours (1897), p. lxxxv.

<sup>41</sup> See footnote 35, p. 48 for details.

observations ( also cited in Section II of this chapter), though the findings are expressed in a different format and presented in more detail.

There are sixty-eight different rhyme sounds in the work as a whole: the first episode employs fifty of them, the second and longer episode, forty-four. The first episode uses twenty-four rhymes which do not appear in the second, which in turn uses nineteen rhymes uniquely; thus, there are twenty-five rhymes which appear in both parts of the simplistically divided poem. The frequency (*i.e.* the gross number of lines) with which these rhyme sounds are used in each episode is shown in Table 3.08 below. The figures are arranged in descending order of occurrences within the poem as a whole. Table 3.09 below lists other most frequently used rhymes unique to one or other of the episodes.

**Table 3.08: Distribution of shared rhyme-sounds between the two episodes.**

Rhyme	Stanzas 1 - 55	Stanzas 1 - 26	Stanzas 27 - 55
-ight	97	18	79
-ene	63	22	41
-are	34	19	15
-al	31	16	15
-ay	28	13	15
-olde	27	12	15
-ode	23	11	12
-er	21	14	7
-ing,-yng	19	12	7
-ayn	18	12	6
-ede	18	4	14
-et.-ete	17	11	6
-is	15	13	2
-orne	15	4	11
-ake	11	4	7
-edes	10	7	3
-o	9	6	3
-as	6	3	3
-ert	6	3	3
-es	6	2	4
-ide,-ydde	6	4	2
-or	6	3	3
-ote	6	2	4
-e,-ee	5	2	3
-ost	4	3	1

**Table 3.09: Rhyme-sounds used most frequently in only one episode**

Rhyme	Stanzas 1 - 55	Stanzas 1 - 26	Stanzas 27 - 55
<i>-elle</i>	16	16	0
<i>-ides</i>	15	15	0
<i>-on</i>	9	9	0
<i>-owes</i>	9	9	0
<i>-ent</i>	8	0	8
<i>-ikes</i>	8	0	8
<i>-ile</i>	8	0	8

It can be seen plainly from the two tables, and without any need for further statistical treatment, that in the first episode, the poet has achieved a much more even distribution of more frequently used rhymes than is the case in the second episode. And the over-use of *-ight* in the second part of the poem, even allowing for the necessarily frequent use of the word *knight* or *knyght* in its story, must raise questions about the origins of the poem.

There is also an observation that may support Hanna's presentation of the poem with the last stanza sequestered from the second episode as the putative final stanza to an original poem, narrating only the encounter of Gawain and Guinevere with the ghost. The rhyme-sounds *-or* and *-ide* appear in the second episode only in this final stanza, though they are used six times each in the first twenty-six stanzas; and transferring the two rhymes realizes an even more consistent distribution of rhymes within the first episode – a point missed by Hanna.

The strophic differences suggested by the analyses tabulated here, if worth anything, should be recognizable as stylistic differences between the two episodes of *Awntyrs*. The following two examples are offered, each extract being the three opening stanzas respectively of the two episodes.

In the tyme of Arthure an aunter bytydde,  
 By the Turne Wathelan, as the boke telles,  
 Whan he to Carlyle was comen, that conqueour kydde,  
 With dukes and dussiperes that with the dere dwelles.  
 To hunte at the herdes that longe had been hydde,  
 On a day hem dight to the depe delles,  
 To fall of the femailes in forest were frydde,  
 Fayre by the fermesones in frithes and felles.  
 Thus to wode arn thei went, the wlonkest in wedes,  
 Bothe the King and the Quene,  
 An al the doughty bydene.  
 Sir Gawayn, gayest in grene,  
 Dame Gaynour he ledes.

Thus Sir Gawayn the gay Gaynour he ledes,  
 In a glitterand gide that glemed full gay –  
 With riche ribaynes reversset, ho so right redes,  
 Rayled with rybees of riall array;  
 Her hode of a hawe huwe, ho that here hede hedes,  
 Of pillour, of palwerk, of perré to pay;  
 Schurde in a short cloke that the rayne shedes,  
 Set over with saffres sothely to say  
 With saffres and seladynes set by the sides;  
 Here sadel sette of that ilke,  
 Saude with sambutes of silke;  
 On a mule as the mylke,  
 Gaili she glides.

Al in gleterand golde, gaily ho glides  
 The gates with Sir Gawayn, bi the grene welle.  
 And that burne on his blonke with the Quene bides  
 That borne was in Borgoyne, by boke and by belle.  
 He ladde that Lady so longe by the law sides;  
 Under a lorre they light, logh by a felle.  
 And Arthure with his erles earnestly rides,  
 To teche hem to her tristres, the trouthe for to telle.  
 To her tristres he hem taught, ho the trouthe trowes.  
 Eache lord withouten lette  
 To an oke he hem sette,  
 With bowe and with barsellette,  
 Under the bowes.

(1.01 – 3.13)

The King to souper is set, served in sale,  
 Under a siller of silke dayntly dight  
 With al worship and wele, innewith the walle,  
 Brides brauden and brad in bankers bright.  
 There come in a soteler with a symballe,  
 A lady lufsom leding a knight;  
 Ho raykes up in a res bifor the Rialle  
 And halsed Sir Arthur hendly on hight.  
 Ho said to the Soverayne, wlonkest in wede,  
 "Mon makeles of might,  
 Here comes an errant knight.  
 Do him reson and right  
 For thi manhede"

The mon in his mantel sites at his mete  
 In pal pured to pay, prodly pight,  
 Trofelyte and traversste with trewloves in trete;  
 The tasses were of topas that were thereto tight.  
 He gliffed up with his eighen that grey wer and grete,  
 With his beveren berde, on that burde bright.  
 He was the soveraynest of al sitting in sete  
 That ever segge had sen with his eye sight.  
 King crowned in kith carpes hir tille:  
 "Welcom, worthily wight –  
 He shal have reson and right!  
 Whethen is the comli knight,  
 If hit be thi wille.

Ho was the worthiest wight that eny welde wolde;  
 Here gide was glorious and gay, of a gresse grene.  
 Here belle was of blanket, with birdes ful bolde,  
 Brauded with gold, and bokeled ful bene.  
 Here fax in fine perré was fretted in folde,  
 Contrefelet and kelle coloured full clene,  
 With a crowne craftly al of clene golde.  
 Here kercheves were curiouse with many proude prene,  
 Her perré was praysed with prise men of might:  
 Bright birdes and bolde  
 Had ynogh to beholde  
 Of that frely to folde  
 And on the hende knight.

(27.01 – 29.13)

The two extracts provide a contrast of either, to use Hanna's terms, 'skill' or 'care' in the authorship of the two parts.<sup>1</sup> Observe that, in the first extract, the rhyme sounds progress and change from stanza to stanza: concatenation carries the *c*-rhyme of lines nine and thirteen forward to become the *a*-rhyme of the following stanza whilst the *b*-rhyme changes to a new sound. For the opening of the second episode the poet both abandons stanza-linking and uses only three different rhyme sounds within the stanzas. Moreover, he contrives to reuse the *-ight* ending in all three stanzas, thus contributing to the noticeable overuse of the rhyme throughout this latter section of the poem.

The lack of attention to alliterative patterning in the second extract, especially for the short lines, is also immediately noticeable. The concluding lines of stanzas twenty-seven and twenty-eight are particularly inept; besides lacking alliterating words, they have only a single stressed syllable and end the stanza in a rhythmically unresolved way. Compare these lines with the two-stress lines in the first example which bring their stanzas to a more satisfactory metrical conclusion.

#### **Section IV: Rhetoric**

Alliteration – homoeoprophoron – can be, of course, itself a rhetorical device to colour an oral delivery, though in alliterative verse it has a structural rather than a rhetorical function. However, there are other rhetorical expressions apparent throughout the work. In the analysis that follows, five figures of style most apparent in the poem have been noted and assigned to each episode. The findings for each rhetorical device are given in the tables which follow.

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<sup>1</sup> Hanna (1974), p. 23.

### Simile (similitudo) and metaphor (translatio)

Arguably the commonest figures of speech in a narrative of any era, especially when a story-teller is seeking to describe his own strange or spectacular imaginings to his audience, simile and metaphor might be expected to be poor differentiators of styles. However, this is not the case for the two episodes under scrutiny:

**Table 3.10: Simile and metaphor in *Awntyrs*, stanzas 1 -26**

Line	Stanza	Text	Device
25	2.12	On a mule as the mylke,	simile
76	6.11	As hit were mydnight myrke;	simile
109	9.05	Hit stemered, it stonayde, it stode as a stone,	simile
117	9.13	that gloed as the gledes.	simile
118	10.01	Al glowed as the glede the goste there ho glides,	simile
161	13.05	I was radder of rode then rose in the ron	simile
162	13.06	My lere as the lele lonched on hight.	simile
167	13.11	Muse on my mirrou;	metaphor
188	15.06	In bras and in brymston I bren as a belle.	simile
271	21.11	That wonderfull wheelryght,	metaphor
323	25.11	As eny spice ever ye yete."	simile
		<b>Count</b>	<b>11</b>

**Table 3.11: Simile and metaphor in *Awntyrs*, stanzas 27 – 55**

Line	Stanza	Text	Device
366	29.02	Her gide was glorious and gay, of a gresse grene.	simile
382	30.05	His mayles were mylke white, enclawed ful clene;	simile
388	30.11	Stode as a unicorne,	simile
389	30.12	Als sharp as a thorne,	simile
393	31.03	His gloves, his gamesons glowed as a glede	simile
574	45.02	As fresshe as a lyon that fautes the fille.	simile
		<b>Count</b>	<b>6</b>

The first episode has eight different similes (one of which is used in a repeated phrase), whereas the second uses six, two of which are also used in the earlier part. The two metaphors, the concept of a mirror reflecting ones good or bad behaviour, and the association of the rise and fall of kings with turning wheel of fortune are both



commonplace in the literature of the period.<sup>2</sup> The latter is extended over several lines of the stanza. The significant disparity in the use of simile points to a different approach to descriptive writing in the second episode.

### **Antithesis (oppositio)**

Antithesis or contraposition, the ‘conjoining of contrasting ideas’, is not frequently used in the poem.<sup>3</sup> There are three examples, one in stanzas 1 – 26 and two in stanzas 27 – 55.

Whan he is in his majeste, moost in his might, He shal light ful lowe on the sesondes.	(High and low (wheel of fortune.)) (ll. 267 - 268)
Thus may you dryve for the day to the derk night!	(Uniquely in a single line.) (l. 564)
Downe kneeled the knight Te King stode upright.	(Hierarchical positioning.) (ll. 647 and 649)

No statistical conclusion can be drawn from these few examples of antithesis.

### **Homonyms – antanaclasis and traductio**

Hanna perceives ‘playful local effects’ (antanaclasis) in the second episode not seen in the first and quotes two examples of homonymic puns to provide line-linking:

Sagh he never are. Arthur asked on hight, herande him alle.	(ll. 403 – 4)
If it be thi wille? Ho was the worthiest wight that eny wy welde wolde.	(ll. 364 – 5) <sup>4</sup>

However, the reasoning is rather strained: his first example relies on the penultimate syllable at the end of one line, ‘are’, being the first syllable on the following line, ‘Arthure’. In the second example the linking words are not strictly homonyms but

<sup>2</sup> References to the mirror of life and Fortune’s wheel are given in B. J. Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly Before 1500* (Cambridge Mass. Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 405 and 203-204.

<sup>3</sup> Lanham p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Hanna (1974), p., 21.

depend on 'the similarity of the preterite of the verb *willen* (Old English *wolde*, *walde*) with the noun *wille*'.<sup>5</sup> More interestingly, Hanna comments that the repeated words creating line links are sometimes homonyms, possibly suggesting a punning intent. Just which homonymic couplings are intended as puns (anacalasis) such as Chaucer's or which are convenient couplings (trductio) to achieve line or stanza linking is arguable. But a difference in the nature of the homonyms between the two episodes may be apparent in Tables 3.12 and 3.13 below.

**Table 3.12: Homonyms in *Awntyrs* stanzas 1 - 26**

Line	Stanza	Text	Device
38	3.12	With bowe and with barselette,	
39	3.13	Under the bowes.	trductio
203	16.08	That al thi burly body is broughte to be so bare!"	
204	16.09	"I bare the of my body, what bote is hit I layn?"	trductio
260	20.13	Hethen shal thou fare."	
261	21.01	"How shal we fare," quod the freke, "that fonden to fight,	trductio
		<b>Count</b>	<b>3</b>

**Table 3.13: Homonyms in *Awntyrs* stanzas 27 – 55**

Line	Stanza	Text	Device
468	36.13	Lorde,by your leve."	
469	37.01	"I leve wel," quod the King. "Thi lates ar light.	antanaclasis
611	47.13	With a sword kene	
612	48.01	Kenely that cruel kevered on hight	antanaclasis

Taken in isolation, the difference in the use of line-linking words is interesting but of limited statistical value.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

### Anastrophe (reversio)

Using the guidance set out in the previous chapter, an initial examination of the two parts of *Awntyrs* reveals that the second episode has forty-five percent fewer lines featuring anastrophe than the first episode. It is also very noticeable that the predominant reasons for the chosen word order are to achieve either the rhyme scheme or line or stanza linking. These lines are shown in Tables 3.14 and 3.15 below.

**Table 3.14: Anastrophe in *Awntyrs* stanzas 1 - 26**

Line	Stanza	Text	Device	Motive
3	1.03	Whan he to Carlele was comen, that conquerour kydde	anastrophe	rhyme
4	1.04	With dukes and dussiperes that with the dere dwelles	anastrophe	rhyme
13	1.13	Dame Gaynour he ledes.	anastrophe	rhyme
14	2.01	Thus Sir Gawayn the gay Gaynour he ledes,	anastrophe	rhyme
18	2.05	Her hode of a hawe huwe, ho that here hede hedes,	anastrophe	rhyme
27	3.01	Al in gleterand golde, gayly ho glides	anastrophe	rhyme
37	3.11	To an oke he hem sette,	anastrophe	rhyme
67	6.02	And suwen to the Soverayne within schaghesh schene.	anastrophe	rhyme
79	7.01	Thus to fote ar thei faren, the frekes unfayn,	anastrophe	rhyme
85	7.07	And glides to Sir Gawayn the gates to gayne,	anastrophe	rhyme
90	7.12	Alas! Now kindeles my care	anastrophe	rhyme
104	8.13	Of the bodi bare."	anastrophe	rhyme
105	9.01	Bare was the body and blak to the bone,	anastrophe	line linking
108	9.04	But on hide ne on huwe no heling it hadde.	anastrophe	rhyme
111	9.07	Agayn the grisly goost Sir Gawayn is gone;	anastrophe	rhyme
113	9.09	Drad was he never, ho so right redes.	anastrophe	line linking
132	11.02	How chatted the cholle, the chaffis and the chynne.	anastrophe	rhyme
137	11.07	"I was of figure and face fairest of alle,	anastrophe	rhyme
157	13.01	After Gaynour the gay Sir Gawayn is gon,	anastrophe	rhyme
158	13.02	And to the body he her brought, the burde bright.	anastrophe	rhyme
184	15.02	And I, in danger and doel, in dongone I dwelle,	anastrophe	rhyme
191	15.09	Now wil Y of my turment tel or I go.	anastrophe	line linking
217	17.09	Wrake thei me worchen, Waynour, iwis.	anastrophe	rhyme
301	24.02	Uppon Cornewale coost with a knight kene.	anastrophe	rhyme
325	25.13	The goste away glides.	anastrophe	rhyme
326	26.01	With grete the goost away glides	anastrophe	line linking
327	26.02	And goes with gronyng sore thorgh the greves grene.	anastrophe	rhyme
330	26.05	The King his bugle has blowen and on the bent bides;	anastrophe	rhyme
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>			

**Table 3.15: Anastrophe in *Awntyrs* stanzas 27 - 55**

Line	Stanza	Text	Device	Motive
342	27.04	Briddes brauden and brad in bankers bright.	anastrophe	rhyme
357	28.06	With his beveren berde, on that burde bright.	anastrophe	rhyme
366	29.02	Her gide was glorious and gay, of a gresse grene.	anastrophe	rhyme
391	31.01	In stele he was stuffed, that storne uppon stede,	anastrophe	line linking
396	31.06	His poleinus with pelydodis were poudred to pay.	anastrophe	rhyme
412	32.09	Fighting to fraist I fonded fro home"	anastrophe	rhyme
443	35.01	Pight was it prodly with purpur and palle,	anastrophe	line linking
485	38.04	After buskes him in brene that burneshed was bright.	anastrophe	rhyme
486	38.05	Sithen to Waynour wisly he went;	anastrophe	rhyme
488	38.07	After aither in high hour horses thei hent,	anastrophe	rhyme
497	39.03	The lordes bylyve hom to list ledes,	anastrophe	rhyme
504	39.10	And sithen with brondes bright,	anastrophe	rhyme
514	40.07	He swapped him yn at the swyre with a swerde kene;	anastrophe	rhyme
520	40.13	And cleft his shelde shene.	anastrophe	rhyme
587	46.02	Thei beten downe beriles and bourdures bright;	anastrophe	rhyme
611	47.13	With a swerde kene.	anastrophe	rhyme
620	48.09	He gretes on Gaynour with gronyng grylle:	anastrophe	rhyme
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>			

The difference between the two episodes is evident even without adjustment for the three additional stanzas: word order manipulation for strophic patterning is much less frequent in the second episode. The corollary to this observation is that the poet achieves the desired positioning of stressed syllables and rhyme endings without a stylised syntax. However, the studies of rhyme and alliteration described in this chapter show that the poetry in the second episode is less assiduously crafted than in the first and a further comparison of the nature of anastrophic lines supports this view.

Tables 3.16 and 3.17 below repeat the information from Tables 3.14 and 3.15 abridged to show only anastrophe to achieve rhyming and amended to show the class of word manipulated to the line end. Note that where post-modification occurs to achieve rhyme, the adjectives used are Germanic.

Table 3.16: Anastrophe to realise rhyme in *Awntyrs* stanzas 1 - 26

Line	Stanza	Text	Class	Motive
3	1.03	Whan he to Carlele was comen, that conquerour kydde	adjective	rhyme
4	1.04	With dukes and dussiperes that with the dere dwelles	verb	rhyme
13	1.13	Dame Gaynour he ledes.	verb	rhyme
14	2.01	Thus Sir Gawayn the gay Gaynour he ledes,	verb	rhyme
18	2.05	Her hode of a hawe huwe, ho that here hede hedes,	verb	rhyme
27	3.01	Al in gleterand golde, gayly ho glides	verb	rhyme
37	3.11	To an oke he hem sette,	verb	rhyme
67	6.02	And suwen to the Soverayne within schaghnes schene.	adjective	rhyme
79	7.01	Thus to fote ar thei faren, the frekes unfayn,	adjective	rhyme
85	7.07	And glides to Sir Gawayn the gates to gayne,	verb	rhyme
90	7.12	Alas! Now kindeles my care.	noun	rhyme
104	8.13	Of the bodi bare.	adjective	rhyme
108	9.04	But on hide ne on huwe no heling it hadde.	verb	rhyme
111	9.07	Agayn the grisly goost Sir Gawayn is gone;	verb	rhyme
132	11.02	How chatted the cholle, the chaftis and the chynne.	noun	rhyme
137	11.07	I was of figure and face fairest of alle,	noun	rhyme
157	13.01	After Gaynour the gay Sir Gawayn is gon,	verb	rhyme
158	13.02	And to the body he her brought, the burde bright.	adjective	rhyme
184	15.02	And I, in danger and doel, in dongone I dwelle,	verb	rhyme
217	17.09	Wrake thei me worchen, Waynour, iwis.	adverb	rhyme
301	24.02	Uppon Cornewale coast with a knight kene.	adjective	rhyme
325	25.13	The goste away glides.	verb	rhyme
327	26.02	And goes with gronyng sore thorgh the greves grene.	adjective	rhyme
330	26.05	The King his bugle has blowen and on the bent bides;	verb	rhyme
706	55.04	With a mylion of Masses to make the mynnynge.	noun	rhyme
707	55.05†	Bokelered men, bisshops the best,	adjective	rhyme
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>of which 50% are verbs and 31% are adjectives.</b>		

† With mounting evidence that the work was originally two poems, it is appropriate at this stage to treat stanza 55 as the putative final stanza of the first episode.

It is noticeable that half of the anastrophic verses are verb phrases in which the verb is moved to the rhyme position (where it is always stressed). This often requires a more elaborately stylised syntax than that realised by the mere transposition of an adjective with its adjacent noun. The style of the writing is characterised by such lines as,

Al in gleterand golde, gayly ho glides (l. 27)

And, where anastrophe occurs additionally in the a-verse,

And to the body he her brought, the burde bright. (l. 158)

Such writing exemplifies a motivation for elegant expression.

**Table 3.17: Anastrophe to realise rhyme in *Awntyrs* stanzas 27 - 54**

Line	Stanza	Text	Class	Motive
342	27.04	Briddes brauden and brad in bankers bright.	adjective	rhyme
357	28.06	With his beveren berde, on that burde bright.	adjective	rhyme
366	29.02	Her gide was glorious and gay, of a gresse grene.	adjective	rhyme
396	31.06	His poleinus with pelydodis were poudred to pay.	verb	rhyme
412	32.09	Fighting to fraist I fonded fro home.	noun	rhyme
485	38.04	After buskes him in brene that burneshed was bright.	adjective	rhyme
486	38.05	Sithen to Waynour wisly he went;	verb	rhyme
488	38.07	After aither in high hour horses thei hent,	verb	rhyme
497	39.03	The lordes bylyve hom to list ledes,	verb	rhyme
504	39.10	And sithen with brondes bright,	adjective	rhyme
514	40.07	He swapped him yn at the swyre with a swerde kene;	adjective	rhyme
520	40.13	And cleft his shelde shene.	adjective	rhyme
587	46.02	Thei beten downe beriles and bourdures bright;	adjective	rhyme
611	47.13	With a swerde kene.	adjective	rhyme
620	48.09	He gretes on Gaynour with gronyng grylle:	adjective	rhyme
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>of which 67% are adjectives and 27% verbs</b>		

From this table it can be seen that in the second episode (without stanza 55) a large proportion of the words manoeuvred by anastrophe to the rhyming position are adjectives. To select an appropriate adjective with the desired rhyme sound is the easiest way to achieve rhyming, an afterthought when the last word of the line is needed: ‘bankers bright’, ‘burde bright’, ‘bourdures bright’ and so on.<sup>6</sup> Only once is a line dependent on a more elaborate manipulation to achieve rhyming: ‘Fighting to

<sup>6</sup> Line references are shown in Table 3.17.

fraist I fonded fro home'. To be more consistent with the poet's typical syntax, the line could have been written *I fonded fro home fighting to fraist*, but in order to rhyme with the last line of the stanza, 'And tell me thi nome' the clauses are reversed (ll. 412 and 416). But, as is exemplified earlier in this chapter, the more straightforward syntax of the poet in the second episode does tell the story in a compelling manner.

## Section V Syntax

### Anastrophe (reversio) and adjectival positioning

Approximately a third of the anastrophic lines extracted from the first episode and half of those from the second (tables 3.16 and 3.17 above) have simple constructions placing the adjective immediately after the noun. This contrasts with the consistent premodification identified in Caxton's prose writing in Chapter Two of this thesis.<sup>7</sup>

Also, in her discussion of noun phrases in Middle English Olga Fischer notes that:

The position of adjectival modifiers in Present-Day English is normally before the head; the exceptions are found mainly in poetry ... The position was somewhat freer in Middle English (but there, too, more in poetry than in prose) so that postmodification was not infrequent.<sup>8</sup>

And therein lies the danger of classifying such lines as anastrophe; nevertheless, the results suggest that there is a stylistic difference between the two episodes. A detailed study of the position of the adjective was carried out by K. Schmittbetz on the late fourteenth-century alliterative poem, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (*Gawain*).<sup>9</sup> He found that, with a single adjective, the *Adjective-Noun* order was the most prevalent with an incidence of eighty percent. Sixty-six percent of instances of *Noun-Adjective* order he explained on metrical grounds. In order to further

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<sup>7</sup> Table 2.02.

<sup>8</sup> O. Fischer 'Syntax', in Norman Blake ed. *The Cambridge History of the English Language 1066 - 1476*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 214.

<sup>9</sup> K. Schmittbetz, 'Das Adjectiv in "Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight"', *Anglia*, 32 (1909), 1-59, 163-189, 359-383.

investigate the findings for anastrophe, a similar exercise for the two parts of *Awntyrs* was done. The results are set out in Table 3.18 below. Only adjectives immediately adjacent to the noun are considered.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 3.18: Adjectival positioning comparison**

Order	Stanzas 1 - 26	%	Stanzas 27 - 55	%	Stanzas 1 – 55 %	Strophic explanation
adj - noun	48	72.7	44	77.2	74.8	n/a
noun - adj	17	25.8	11	19.3	22.8	All
adj - noun - adj	1	1.5	2	3.5	2.4	All
<b>Totals</b>	66	(100)	57	(100)	(100)	n/a

The incidence of *Adjective – Noun* order is consistent with the findings of Schmittbetz for *Gawain*, and is similar for both episodes. But the occurrence of *Noun – Adjective* is different and corresponds with the reduced incidence of anastrophe in the second episode. In addition, most of these postmodifications are done for rhyming reasons, rather than the sixty-six percent found by Schmittbetz. This is explained by the need to meet the exacting rhyme scheme that characterises *Awntyrs*.

The positioning of two adjectives, one each side of the noun, occurs too infrequently in both parts of the poem to make any significant contribution to the comparative exercise; there is, though, one observation worth recording. The lines containing this construction are:

With fresshe houndes and fele, thei folowen her fare. (l. 47)

Bright birdes and bolde (l. 374)

Two of the phrases follow a convention, observed by Matti Rissanen, that from the thirteenth century the conjunction *and* is used before the second adjective.

<sup>10</sup> Schmittbetz lists all the adjectives, no matter how used in a sentence. A more closely defined examination is reported here.



## Pleonastic use of the pronoun

T. F. Mustanoja has examined the various ways in which personal pronouns are used in texts from the period.<sup>11</sup> He suggests that in Old English and early Middle English

there is a tendency to use a pronoun in combination with a noun or other pronoun in a way which to the modern reader seems pleonastic.<sup>12</sup>

Lines such as, *Thus Sir Gawayn, Dame Gaynor he ledes* (l. 14), categorised earlier in this study as examples of anastrophe, can also use pronouns in this way, though this is not the case in Old English or Early Middle English. Mustanoja proposes that the practice seeks to avoid ambiguity or give prominence to the noun.<sup>13</sup> In poetry, the motive is more likely to be due to metrical considerations, as is the case in most of the examples listed in Table 3.19 below.

**Table 3.19: Pleonastic use of personal pronouns in *Awntyrs***

Line	Stanza	Text	Pronouns
3	1.03	Whan he to Carlele was comen, that conquerour kydde	pleonastic
13	1.12/13	Sir Gawayn, gayest in grene,/ Dame Gaynour he ledes.	pleonastic
14	2.01	Thus Sir Gawayn the gay Gaynour he ledes	pleonastic
40	4.01	Under the bowes thei bode, thes burnes so bolde	pleonastic
60	5.08	The grete greundes in the greves so gladly thei go	pleonastic
331	26.06	His far folken in the frith, thei flokken bydene	pleonastic
391	31.01	In stele he was stuffed, that storne uppon stede	pleonastic
449	35.07	Sithen thei braide up a borde, and clothes thei calle	pleonastic

**Total        8**

An important study of the Middle English alliterative long line was made by Hoyt Duggan from which he deduced nine conclusions.<sup>14</sup> Of these 'rules', the most relevant to the examples above are the second, third and the fifth (here abridged):

<sup>11</sup> T. F. Mustanoja, *A Middle English Syntax Part I Parts of Speech* (Helsinki: Societe Neophilologique, 1960).

<sup>12</sup> Mustanoja (1960), p. 120.

<sup>13</sup> Mustanoja (1960), pp. 137-8.

<sup>14</sup> Hoyt N. Duggan, 'The Shape of the B-Verse in Middle English Alliterative Poetry', *Speculum*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Jul., 1986) 564 – 592 (pp. 569 – 570).

2. Alliteration always falls on a stressed syllable.
3. The line is made up of two distinct half-lines divided by a caesura, which is often marked in the manuscripts.
5. The b-verse consists of two lifts and one to three dips. If two or three dips are filled, only one can have two or more syllables.

More recently, Putter, Jefferson and Stokes have carried out a three-year research project on the metre of alliterative verse.<sup>15</sup> Their conclusion, or rule, reached for the corpus of unrhymed alliterative works studied with respect to the b-verse (where the pleonastic pronouns occur in the examples from *Awntyrs*) is more closely defined than that of Duggan:

The b-verse must have one and only one long dip.<sup>16</sup>

But some consideration must be given to whether the b-verse rule applies to the rhymed alliterative poems which are studied in this thesis. Duggan, whilst acknowledging that more work needs to be done to understand the relationship between rhymed and unrhymed alliterative lines, notes that 'it is mildly surprising that the b-verse rule applies in rhymed stanzaic poems like *Susannah* and *The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Walthelyne*.' Ruth Kennedy, in the introduction to a critical edition of Saints' Hymns written in fourteen-line rhyming stanzas, remarks on the adherence (characteristically 98.5%) in two of the poems to the b-verse rule.<sup>17</sup> Thus the pronouns in the b-verse of long lines of *Awntyrs* such as 'Thus Sir Gawayn the gay Gaynour he ledes' (*Awntyrs* l. 201) and 'The grete greundes in the greves so gladly thei go' (l. 5.08) are used by the poet to conform to the b-verse paradigm. In these lines the pronoun provides a second unstressed syllable to follow a previous unstressed syllable to create the required long dip. There are six occurrences of a

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<sup>15</sup> Ad Putter, Judith Jefferson and Myra Stokes, *Studies in the Metre of Alliterative Verse* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 260. A long dip is formed by two or more unstressed syllables.

<sup>17</sup> Ruth Kennedy, *Three Alliterative Saints' Hymns: Late Middle English Stanzaic Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. xxxiv – xxxv.

pleonastic pronoun with six occurring in the first episode (stanzas 1-26), and two in the second episode. As is the case for adjectival positioning, the analysis supports the difference in literary style suggested by the differences in the use of anastrophe.

## **Section VI: Summary**

### **Alliteration**

The work on strophic patterning described here has confirmed the observations of previous scholars about the apparent differences in poetic technique between the first twenty-six (and the fifty-fifth) stanzas and stanzas twenty-seven to fifty-four of *Awntyrs*. The less extravagant alliteration, which differentiates the second episode from the first, can be explained by less frequent iteration of alliterating words both between stanzas (concatenation) and within stanzas (line linking), especially between lines eight and nine. An analysis of alliterative patterning of the long lines (stanza lines 1-9) has shown that the second episode has a higher proportion of lines with three, rather than four, alliterating syllables and fewer lines with more than four alliterations. The second episode has a higher proportion of lines using two different alliterating sounds, perhaps more interesting poetically, but contributing to the overall reduction in alliterative density. Therefore, the diminished alliterative character of the second episode is more precisely explained by this examination of the long lines. Moreover, there is the surprising find, hitherto unreported, for the second part of the poem of a doubly frequent occurrence of short lines with no alliteration at all.

The overall conclusion to be drawn about alliteration is that there is less concern with achieving a *tour de force* of alliterative auralty in the second part of the poem than is apparent in the first.

## Rhyme

There is also a shift in the attention to end-rhyming between the first and second episodes. All but four of the first twenty-six stanzas adhere to the four-rhyme scheme, whereas thirteen of the final twenty-nine stanzas have abnormal stanzas, employing only three rhyme sounds; there are also fewer different rhyme sounds used in the longer second part. Perhaps even more significantly for an assessment of the attention paid to rhyming, the analysis of the distribution of the most frequently used rhyme sounds in each part shows an avoidance of overuse of any one rhyme in the first episode and a steady progression through the different rhyme sounds. If the final stanza of the poem is counted as the twenty-seventh and final stanza to the first episode, an even more favourable distribution of rhymes is achieved. By comparison, there is a gross overuse of *-ight* and *-ene* endings, in the second part, sometimes in several successive stanzas.

## Rhetoric

### Summary of the use of rhetorical constructions

**Table 3.20: Comparative summary of use of rhetorical constructions in *Awntyrs***

Figure	Occurrences	
	Stanzas 1- 26	Stanzas 27- 55
Simile and metaphor	11	6
Antithesis	1	2
Antanaclasis / traductio	3	2
Anastrophe /reversio	28	17
<b>All rhetorical figures</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27</b>

The comparative summary table (Table 3.20 above) shows evidence of stylistic differences between the two parts. The most prominent difference in writing style is evidenced by the number of anastrophe or inverted constructions in the first episode, compared with the second. Stylistic traits such as the use of simile and antithesis in

the first episode may also indicate a desire to achieve literary excellence, not simply story-telling.

### **Syntax**

The study of sentential word order was limited to two features of anastrophe: adjectival positioning relative to the noun in simple noun phrases, and the pleonastic use of the pronoun in sentences. Both analyses corresponded with the stylistic difference between the two episodes suggested by the analysis of anastrophe.

## **Section VII: Conclusions**

The findings of this study for strophic patterning alone support the theory that *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, as we know it now, was originally two poems which have been conjoined. The rhyming and alliterative patterning differences clearly show that a sequel to the first story has been spliced into it, and the original final stanza moved to the end of the new work to achieve some semblance of unity. When the literary style differences, examined here by a consideration of the frequency of certain rhetorical constructions and sentential word order differences, are taken additionally into account, some consideration of authorship, differentiated by style and purpose becomes appropriate.

The matchless attention to rhyming, alliteration, stanza structure and phrasing in the first twenty-six and the last stanza indicate a wish to achieve poetic excellence for what is a serious moral tale and condemnation of King Arthur's acquisitive warring. The second episode is an exciting story along familiar Arthurian lines and, unlike the first episode, could be set in any one of the traditional locations of Arthur's court. Furthermore, the poet relies only on an assumption by the audience that the

'suppere' which closes the first episode and the 'souper' which opens the second are one and the same occasion.

The following stanzas, one from each episode, illustrate differences in the delivery of the narratives:

Al in gleterand golde, gayly ho glides  
 The gates with Sir Gawayn, bi the grene welle.  
 And that burne on his blonke with the Quene bides  
 That borne was in Borgoyne, by boke and by belle.  
 He ladde that lady by the lawe sides;  
 Under a lorre they light, loghe by a felle.  
 And Arthur with his erles earnestly rides,  
 To teche hem to here tristres, the trouthe for to telle.  
 To here tristres he hem taught, ho the trouthe trowes.  
 Eche lord withouten lette  
 To an oke he hem sette,  
 With bowe and with barselette,  
 Under the bowes. (ll. 27 - 39)

Thus wepus for wo Wowayn the wight.  
 And wenys him to quyte, that wonded is sare.  
 That other drogh him on dreght for drede of the knight  
 And boldely broched his blonk on the bent bare.  
 "Thus may thou dryve for the the day to the derk night!"  
 The son was passed by that mydday and mare.  
 Within the listes the lede lordly done light;  
 Touard the burne with his bronde he busked him yare.  
 To bataile they bowe with brondes so bright.  
 Shene sheldes wer shred,  
 Bright brenes bybled;  
 Many doughti were adred,  
 So fersely thei fight. (ll. 560 - 572)

Both stanzas relate contrasting scenes. In the first, a leisurely scene is described in three elegant sentences before a contrast with the task-orientated activity of Arthur and his knights.<sup>18</sup> In the second example, terse sentences with a prosaic syntax drive on the narrative at a pace. The reactions of Gawain to the death of Grissell, Galeron's fear for the consequences of his action, the time of day and the re-joining of battle are all described in a single stanza.<sup>19</sup> Poetic considerations are also secondary to narrative technique for the poet. For example:

<sup>18</sup>Armours, Hanna, Hahn and Gates all edit the manuscript lines in this way, with differences only in the use of a semi-colon or a full stop to divide the first and second sentences.

<sup>19</sup> In several Arthurian stories Gawain's strength is said to increase at noon e.g. in N. Bryant ed., *The Complete Story of the Grail: Chretien de Troyes' Perceval and its Continuations* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 207.

The King commaunded pes and cried on hight,  
And Gawayn was goodly and laft for his sake. (ll. 651 - 2)

The temptation to place 'cried' as the final (stressed) word to alliterate more effectively with 'King', and also avoid committing yet another stanza to a predominant *-ight* rhyme has been eschewed. More to the fore are the poet's techniques for storytelling – the suspenseful departures from the narrative into long descriptions of apparel, the unexpected and shocking decapitation of Grissell to break the deadlock in the fighting, the last-minute intervention of the women, and a happy, honourable ending with a swift return to courtly normality. There is no challenge here to Arthurian acquisitiveness or to the extravagance and opulence of their courts; and certainly, there is no adequate response to the dire warning of Guinevere's mother in purgatory:

Muse on my mirroure;  
For, king and emperour,  
Thus dight shul ye be."

Thus deth wil you dight, thare you not doute; (ll. 167 - 170)

The episode is no more than entertainment fulfilling the expectations for a heroic Round Table story.

The evidence in this chapter, both quantitative and qualitative, is therefore that two different literary styles are present in the poem and that the two episodes had separate origins. The detailed statistical findings in this chapter, extended and more comprehensively documented than Hanna's, justify his clear separation of *Awntyrs* into two poems, and a concluding stanza as the putative original final stanza of the first episode.<sup>20</sup> The outcome of the statistical differences in alliteration and rhyming is shown to be a clear difference of poetic skill, as is explained in the comparison of selected stanzas.<sup>21</sup> The comparison immediately above of two typical narrative

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<sup>20</sup> Hanna (1974).

<sup>21</sup> pp. 56 – 57.

stanzas also demonstrates the significant difference in story telling style between the two parts.

So, the conclusion suggested by the evidence is that the work consists of two poems, probably from the pens of two poets. But just how the two original romances came to be conjoined can only be surmised, though it seems unlikely that either of the original authors would have been content, or considered it necessary, to contrive *Awntyrs* as it now exists. If this was the case, perhaps a third hand produced the work that has come down to us with a structure that is now so contentious.



## CHAPTER FOUR: *GOLOGRAS, RAUF AND AWNTYRS*

### Section I: An inclination examined

F. J. Amours writes in his introductory notes to *Rauf*:

The narrative in the second part so strikingly resembles the fighting scenes in *Gologras*, and the vocabulary of the two poems has so many terms in common, especially words not used in any other part of this volume, that one feels inclined to ascribe both works to the same author.<sup>22</sup>

Much more recently, Matthew McDiarmid has argued, on the basis of joint themes, that the two poems (along with a third, Hary's *Wallace*) share authorship.<sup>23</sup> Whilst the parallels to which he draws attention are patently there in the texts, an argument based on thematic similarities alone cannot possibly be conclusive. Amours' inclination is unsupported by examples, as is a subsequent statement that during the compilation of the glossary he had seen many reasons why the author of *Rauf* was acquainted with *Gologras*, which therefore must have been composed a few years earlier. To reassemble the evidence which prompted Amours' assertion, a trawl of his glossary, which identifies the poem(s) and the line(s) in which each word may be found, has extracted words which are found in *Rauf* and *Gologras* but not in the three other poems in his book.<sup>24</sup> These words are shown italicized in Table 4.01 below in which the references are to Amours' editions. Where several uses are recorded the frequency is shown in parenthesis but only the first use is cited.

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<sup>22</sup> Amours (1897), p. xxxv.

<sup>23</sup> M. P. McDiarmid, "'Rauf Colyear', 'Golagros and Gawane' and Hary's 'Wallace': Their Themes of Independence and Religion', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 26(1) (1991), 328-333.

<sup>24</sup> Amours (1897), 'Glossary', pp. 391-470.

**Table 4.01: Words extracted from Amours' glossary which are present in his editions of *Gologras* and *Rauf* but not in the other poems in his edition.** (The number of occurrences shown in parenthesis)

	<i>Gologras</i>		<i>Rauf</i>	
1	l. 1178	Ye mak me plane <i>ansueir</i> ; (2)	l. 224	And euer to his asking ane <i>answer</i> he ʒald (1)
2	l. 84	Than dynnt the duregh, in <i>angir</i> and yre. (2)	l. 156	For <i>anger</i> of that outray that he had their tane. (2)
3	l. 652	Than Gologrus graithit of his men in glisand <i>amour</i> . (3)	l. 771	Ane chalmer with <i>Armour</i> the King gart richt than. (2)
4	l. 51	To by vs vittale <i>boune</i> . (4)	l.124	Gif thou at bidding suld be be <i>boun</i> or obeysand. (3)
5	l. 844	<i>Braissit</i> in berneis and basnet full bene.(1)	l.551	Thocht thy body be <i>braissit</i> in that bricht hew. (1)
6	l. 994	The beryallis on the land of <i>bratheris</i> gart light, (1)	l. 471	Bricht <i>braissaris</i> of steill about his arme banis, (1)
7	l. 612	Closit in clein steill, vpone ane <i>coursyr</i> . (1)	l. 115	"The vther his <i>Corsour</i> als wa. (1)
8	l. 1057	On Criste <i>cumly</i> thay cry: "on croce as thou coft (1)	l. 265	Closit with Coutingis, and <i>cumlie</i> cled; (1)
9	l. 511	Or they be <i>dantit</i> with dreid, erar will thai de. (1)	l. .433	Or I be <i>dantit</i> on sic wyse, my lyfe salbe lorne. (2)
10	l.319	With deir <i>dyamonthis</i> bedene, that dayntely wes dicht.(1)	l.464	<i>Dyamountis</i> and Sapheir. (1)
11	l. 566	Throw all the <i>harnes</i> thai hade. (3)	l. 393	"Tak thy hors and thy <i>harnes</i> in the morning. (3)
12	l.444	I sall preif all my pane to do hym <i>pleasance</i> . (1)	l. 358	With all kin principall plenty for his <i>pleasance</i> . (1)
13	l. 113	The renk <i>restles</i> he raid to Arthour the king; (2)	l. 819	Thir riche <i>restles</i> renkis ruschit out full raith, (2)
14	l. 104	" <i>Traist</i> wel their till." (3)	l. 55	"Forsuith," said the Coilgear, " <i>traist</i> quhen thow will." (3)
15	l.587	With wailit wapnis or were, evin on youne <i>wald</i> [field / moor] (1)	l.405	That him behouit neidlingis to watche on the <i>wald</i> [moor] (1)
16	l. 7	Thai walit out <i>weryouris</i> with wappinis to wald. (3)	l. 766	And went with the <i>weryouris</i> wythest in weir; (3)

Amours' descriptive phrase 'so many' may overstate the evidence, and all of the words can be found in other Scottish texts of the period in DOST, though *weryouris* is rare.<sup>25</sup> As cited in the introduction to the thesis, Oakden is also dismissive of the significance of what he terms 'stock expressions' in Middle English alliterative works. Of the four hundred and seventy distinct alliterative phrases from alliterative works in

<sup>25</sup> *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* via *Dictionary of the Scots Language*. Available at <http://www.dsl.ac.uk> [accessed 14 February 2016].

rhymed stanzas which he lists, the following are examples of collocations found in both *Gologras* and *Rauf* and other stanzaic poems of the period.<sup>26</sup>

*With birny and brand*, Gol., 199, 679, Rauf, 764, 806.

*Boune at (your) bidding*, Gol., 330, 1209, Rauf, 124.

*Cumly and clere*, Gol., 178, 366, etc., Rauf 194.<sup>27</sup>

Further comparative observations from the poems are discussed in the sections following.

## Section II: Provenance

Both works have been reliably dated to the last half of the fifteenth century, both indicate Scottish origins and both are known only from sixteenth-century Scottish print editions.<sup>28</sup> These similarities, inconclusive in themselves, do not deny the possibility of a common source and merit the closer examination of the various strophic and rhetorical features of the poems.

## Section III: Rhyming and alliteration in *Gologras* and *Rauf*.

### Rhyme

The attention to maintaining the rhyme scheme typical of the thirteen-line stanza is formidable for *Rauf* – whilst there are a few examples of rhymes that are imperfect as they are set down in the manuscript but may have been true rhymes in the dialect of the poet, only one stanza of the poem's seventy-five has, at an unquestioning reading, a completely aberrant (last) line:

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<sup>26</sup> Oakden, Part II, pp. 350 – 361.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 351 – 353.

<sup>28</sup> See the relevant introductory notes to these poems in Chapter One of this thesis, pp. 12-13 (*Gologras*) and p. 19 (*Rauf*).

He trowit that the wy had wittin of Wymond he wend,  
 Bot to his raifand word he gave na reward;  
 Thair was no man thairin that his name kend.  
 Thay countit not the Coilyear almaist at regaird.  
 He saw thair was na meekness nor mesure micht mend,  
 He sped him spedely, and nane of thame he spaird;  
 Thair was na five of thay freikis that micht him furth send,  
 He socht in sa sadly, quhill sum of thame he saird.  
 He thristit in throw thame thraly with threttis.  
 Quhen he come amang thame all,  
 Yit was the King in the hall,  
 And mony gude man, with all,  
 Ungane to the meit.

(*Rauf*, ll. 649 - 661)

*Meit* and *threttis* (l.657) are the spellings used in the source print copy by Lekpreuik.

The poet may have intended the use of the singular noun, *threit* given in *The Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*.<sup>29</sup> A scribal error may be responsible for this unique departure from the rhyme scheme.

The author of *Gologras* is also fairly diligent in this respect for his one hundred and five stanzas. Five stanzas have only three rhyme sounds and in the Chepman and Myllar print edition, faithfully followed by Amours despite his own suggested emendation in his notes, one has fifth rhyme sound in lines 5 and 7:<sup>30</sup>

"A! Lord, sparis of sic speche, quhill ye speir more,  
 For abandonit will he nocht be to berne that is borne.  
 Or he be strenyet with strenth, yone sterne for to schore,  
 Mony ledis salbe loissit, and liffis forlorne.  
 Spekis na seccuedry, for Goddis sone deir!  
 Yone knicht to scar with skaitht, ye chaip nocht but scorne.  
 It is full fair to be fallow and feir  
 To the best that has bene brevit you beforene.  
 The myghty king of Massidone, worthiest but wene,  
 Thair gat he nane homage,  
 For all his hie parage,  
 Of lord of yone lynage,  
 Nor never none sene.

(Amours, ll. 274 - 286)

Hanna's edition, however, follows the suggestion by Amours in his notes to the text, that the word order of the first line may have been changed and should read *more speir*. The rhyme word at line three might then be *steir* (move, remove) instead of

<sup>29</sup> *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* via *Dictionary of the Scots Language*. Available at <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/> [accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018].

<sup>30</sup> Amours (1897), p. 260.

*schore* (threaten), a substitution which makes for a translation of the b-verse more cohesive with the a-verse as, *Before he may be constrained by force, to remove that strong one.*<sup>31</sup> Thus, with these emendations to *Gologras*, the aberrant stanzas are proportionally approximately the same for it and *Rauf*.

## Alliteration

Comparative statistical information on the various poetic features which contribute to the alliterative character of the two poems are shown in Table 4.02 below.

**Table 4.02: Incidence of alliterative features in *Gologras* and *Rauf***

Feature	<i>Gologras</i> (104 stanzas)	<i>Rauf</i> (75 stanzas)
<b>Long lines</b> with 4 or 5 alliterating syllables.	53%	20%
<b>Long lines</b> with no alliterating syllables	1.7%	21%
<b>Short lines</b> with 2 or 3 alliterating syllables	52% (48% with no alliteration)	19% (81% with no alliteration)
<b>Lines continuing</b> alliteration	4.5%	6.6%
<b>Long lines</b> with 3 alliterating syllables	26.5	28.9%

Whilst the attention to the end-rhyme scheme is similar for both poems, the same cannot be said for alliteration: *Gologras* is clearly more alliterative in character than *Rauf*. And there seem to be statements of intent in this respect in the opening stanzas of both poems:

### ***Gologras*** (ll. 1 - 13)

In the tyme of Arthur, as trew men me tald  
The King turnit on ane tyde towart Tuskane  
Hym to seik ovr the sey, that saiklese wes sald  
The syre that sendis all seill, suthly to sane;  
With barentis, barounis, and bernis full bald  
Biggast of bane and blude bred in Britane.  
Thai walit out werryouris and wapinnis to wald,  
The gayest grumys on grund, with geir that might gane;  
Dukis and digne lodis, douchty and deir,  
Ouir feidis sa fair thay fure be his syde;  
Rekis of grete renoune,  
Cumly kingis with croune  
Of gold that wes clier.

### ***Rauf*** (ll. 1 - 13)

In the cheiftyme of Charlis, that chosin chiftain,  
Thair fell ane ferlyfull flan within thay fellis wyde  
Quhair Emperouris and Erlis, and vther monayne,  
Turnit fra Sanct Thomas befor the 3ule tyde  
Thay past vnto Paris, thay proudest in pane,  
With mony Prelatis and Princis. That was of mekle pryde;  
All thay went with the King to his worthy wane;  
All the worthiest went in the morning,  
Sembillit to his summoune,  
Baith dukis and Duchepeiris,  
Barounis and Bacheleiris,  
Mony stout men steiris  
Of town with the King.

<sup>31</sup> Hanna (2008), p. 55.

All nine long lines of the *Gologras* stanza have four or five alliterating syllables and there are two instances of alliteration running across two lines; three-quarters of the short lines alliterate. In the *Rauf* stanza there are three long lines with four or five alliterations and four having three alliterating syllables. It is perhaps an indication of the poet's approach to alliteration that more of the long lines in this one stanza have three alliterations rather than four or five, and that in the complete poem this is also the case.

## Section IV: Syntax in *Gologras* and *Rauf*

### Anastrophe (reversio)

The difficulty of assessing the significance of anastrophic constructions in Middle English poetry has been discussed earlier in Chapter Two (Methodology) and in Chapter Three in relation to the two episodes of *Awntyrs*. The same caveats apply to the following comparison of *Gologras* and *Rauf*, where differences in the occurrence of anastrophe are also apparent. A summary of the features examined is given in Table 4.03 below.

**Table 4.03: Comparison of some syntactical features of *Gologras* and *Rauf***

Syntax	<i>Gologras</i>	<i>Rauf</i>
Anastrophe	5.9%	10.1%
Unexplained by rhyme	1.2% of the above	4.1% of the above
Adj - noun	76%	82%
Noun - adj	20%	14%
Adj – noun – adj Or adj-noun and-adj	4 %	4%
(Total adjectival modified nouns)	(255 = 100%)	(149 = 100%)
Pleonastic pronouns	8 instances in 105 stanzas	8 instances in 75 stanzas

That the *Rauf* poet writes anastrophic lines almost twice as frequently is immediately obvious; but note that the reason for his syntax is not as easily explained as is the case for *Gologras*. In *Rauf*, the anastrophe, more frequently than in *Gologras*, occurs in the a-verse of long lines as in the following examples.

To the Coil<sup>3</sup>earis hous baith, or thay wald blin,  
The carll had cunning weill qhhair the gait lay. (Rauf, ll. 92 - 93)

By contrast, in *Gologras* the syntax of the b-verse contrives to move a rhyme word to the end of the line. For example, in the tenth stanza, where the even-line rhyme sound of the first eight long lines is *-ynde*, lines 4, 6 and 8 all adopt this device:

Than spak Schir Gawane the gay, gracious and gude:  
"Schir, ye knaw that Schir Kay is crabbit of kynde;  
I rede ye mak furth ane man, mekar of mude,  
That will with fairnes fraist frendschip to fynd.  
Your folk ar febill and faynt for falt of thair fude;  
Sum better boidword to abide, undir wod lynd."  
"Schir Gawyne, graith ye that, for the gude Rude!  
Is nane sa bowsum ane berne, brith for to bynd." (Gologras ll. 118 - 125)

Table 4.03 above compares the total incidence of all (long and short) anastrophic lines in the two poems. When the long lines alone are considered, the differences outlined above can be expressed more precisely. In *Gologras*, only three lines out of the total number of long lines (945), that is 0.3 percent, have the disturbed syntax in the a-verse only. In *Rauf* there are nine such lines out of the total of long lines (675), that is 1.3 percent. These lines are shown in Table 4.04 below.

**Table 4.04: Long Lines in *Gologras* and *Rauf* with anastrophe in the a-verse only**

line	<i>Gologras</i>	line	<i>Rauf</i>
61	His hors he tyit to ane tre, truly that tyde.	40	Euill lykand was the King it nichit him sa lait.
1324	And syne fewte I yow fest, without fenyeing.	41	And he na harberie had for his behufe.
1354	Heir mak I the reward, as I have resoune.	92	To the Coilȝearis hous baith, or thay wald blin.
		93	The carll had Cunning (Cunniug) weill qhair the gait lay.
		97	Sa fell ane wedder feld I neuer, be my gude fay.
		106	In wickit wedderis and weit, walkand full will.
		417	Sa saw he quhair the Coilȝear come with all his fair.
		821	Kest thame with gude will to do vther skaith.
		897	Thow slane hes oft, thy self, of my Cousingis.

Differences in the occurrence of anastrophe, particularly in the b-verses of *Gologras* when a noun modifier is involved, is further evidenced by the higher incidence of noun-adjective constructions in the poem as a whole.

The frequency of the use of pronouns which seem pleonastic is higher in *Rauf* than *Gologras*, e.g., ‘The gentill knicht, Schir Rolland, he knelt on his kne’ (*Rauf*, l. 337). Whilst both the pronoun and the noun in the b-verse of this example simply provide enough words to form a poetic long line, such pronouns in both *Gologras* and *Rauf* are used for emphasis – as in ‘Thay Beirnis, as I wene, thay had aneuch thair’ (*Rauf*, l.187). The more frequent use in *Rauf* of pleonastic pronouns, therefore, can only be explained as a stylistic preference.

## **Section V: Rhetoric in *Gologras* and *Rauf***

### **Simile (similitudo) and metaphor (translatio)**

The use of rhetoric in the two poems has at once similarities and differences.

Outstandingly different is the use of imagery. Simile is much used by the *Gologras*



poet, as Table 4.5 below clearly shows, but both simile and metaphor are absent in *Rauf*.

**Table 4.05: Simile and metaphor in *Gologras***

Line	Script	Device
21	And uthir glemyt as gold and gowlis so gay	simile
108	Stok still as ane stane, the sterne wes sa sture!	simile
289	Yit shal be licht as leif of the lynd lest,	simile
302	And socht to the ciete of Criste, ovr the salt flude.	metaphor
350	" And he is meid on mold meik as ane child,	simile
351	Blith and bousum that berne as byrd in his bour,	simile
352	Fayr of fell and of face as flour infild,	simile
478	The sone, as cristall sa cleyne,	simile
558	As glavis glowand on gleid, grymly thai ride.	simile
675	As trasit in unquart quakand thai stand.	simile
676	The frekis freschly thai fure, as fyre out of flynt;	simile
684	Hoppit out as the haill,	simile
733	Than said bernys bald, brym as bair;	simile
758	As fyre that fleis fra the flynt, thay fetchin sa fast,	simile
770	Wod wraith as the wynd, his handis can wryng.	simile
822	He wourdis brym as ane bair, that bydis na beild.	simile
854	As roise ragit on rise,	simile
857	The sparkis flaw in the field, as fyre out of a flynt.	simile
945	Else ferse as the fyre,	simile
061	As lyoune, for falt of fude, faught on the fold.	simile
978	He leit fle to the freke, as fyre out of flynt.	simile
1001	The sparkis flew in the field, as fagottis of fire,	simile
	Total	22

The imagery in *Gologras*, besides being prolific though repetitive (e.g. 'fyre out of flynt'), can show originality in the way it is used. Sir Spynagros, telling what he knows of *Gologras* in a series of figurative lines, sees virtuosity in the physiognomy of the gracious knight:

And he is meid on mold meik as ane child,  
Blith and bousum that berne as byrd in his bour,  
Fayr of fell and of face as flour infild. (ll.350 - 352)

The word 'infil'd', used to describe a flower at its best and here a man with a fair face, at first reading seems an inappropriate expression to describe a fierce warrior. But 'undefiled' in the sense of not dishonoured proves to be a prescient observation. Sir Spynagros is given more wise words by the poet and a delightful two-line simile to picture the consequences for Arthur should he wish to challenge Gologras:

The wy that wendis for to were quhen he wenys best,  
 All his will in this warld, with welthis I wys,  
 Yit shal be licht as leif of the lynd lest,  
 That welteris doun with the wynd, sa waverand it is.      (ll. 287 – 290)

(Needless to say, Arthur remains stubbornly determined to conquer the city.) Such figurative rhetoric, though sometimes merely alliteratively convenient, often has a sentential character appropriate for the moral message carried by the narrative.

In *Rauf*, although there is much descriptive writing of landscape, the weather and clothing, the poet uses neither metaphor nor simile. The use of simile and metaphor is, therefore, in the case of *Gologras* and *Rauf* a significant point of difference, even more so than between the two episodes of *Awntyrs*, described in the previous chapter.

### **Proverbs**

Proverbs from the period which are listed by B. J. Whiting are occasionally used by both authors of the poems. They are listed in Tables 4.06 and 4.07 below along with their Whiting reference.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> B. J. Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases From English Writings Mainly Before 1500* (Cambridge Mass. Harvard University Press, 1968).

**Table 4.06: Proverbs in *Gologras***

Line	Text	Device
67.10- 67.11	Quhair that fortune will fail, Thair may na besynes avail.	proverb (F548)
68.11	Airy sporne, late speid.	proverb (S644)
95.01	"Sen Fortune cachis the cours, throu hir quentys,	proverb (F537)
	Total	3

**Table 4.07: Proverbs in *Rauf***

Line	Text	Device
7.09	For first to lofe and syne to lak, Peter! It is schame.	proverb (L562)
10.09	Now is anis," said the Coilȝear, "kynd aucht to creip,	proverb (K34)
	Total	2

The nature of the wisdom imparted differs somewhat between the two poems: those of *Gologras* reflect the Arthurian nobility's preoccupation with fate and fortune, seen previously in *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, whilst *Rauf* delivers proverbs which are commonplace in fifteenth-century literature and therefore, presumably also in colloquial conversation at the time. But to represent differences in speech styles by different personages is well within the capabilities of a single poet in the second half of the fifteenth century: possibly a hundred years earlier, Chaucer was using language as a marker of even quite subtle differences in the social status of his characters.

## Section VI: Other rhetorical style markers

The careful rhyming, figurative writing, the classical and religious references of *Gologras* carry a meaningful narrative; it is a substantial work in which the exciting descriptive passages of fearsome battle are interspersed with serious moral dialogue. The preceptive lines are given by the poet to the knights Spynagros and Gologras. Spynagros warns Arthur that even Phillip of Macedonia could not

subjugate Gologras and that a needless war for the sake of Arthur's pride could end in shame. His advice is 'The wy that wendis for to were quhen he wenys best' (l. 287). Gologras, citing Longuyon's 'Worthies' also reflects on his own defeat, counselling others, 'Quhen Fortune worthis unfrende, than failieis welefair' (l. 1239). The narrative concludes, in the words of Emily Wingfield, with Arthur acting in the interest of 'good public and private governance' and respecting the 'Scottish emphasis on personal and national freedom ...'.<sup>33</sup>

The poet shows in this work that he is writing for everyman. An arduous journey, a spectacular city and numerous fights are graphically depicted to excite an audience. A lesson in good manners is applicable to all, but the most profound teachings in the poem, like those of Richard Holland to be discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis, follow the literary tradition of Advice for Princes.

In the concluding remarks to the comparison of the two episodes of *Awntyrs* in Chapter Three, the discussion turned from purely statistically significant differences to comment on rhetoric less frequent but indicative of approaches to story-telling technique.<sup>34</sup> A similar comparison is even more relevant in this case.

### **Hyperbole**

The narrative in *Gologras* is a straightforward sequential account of events and conversations, though many of the descriptive lines, as shown in Table 4.04 above, have a tendency to hyperbole. And there are other lines which display this trait of exaggeration as exemplified below.

Myght non fang it with force, bot foullis to fle.	(l. 45)
Thought all selcought war soght fra the son to the see.	(l. 210)
That al thai that ar wrocht undir nethe hie hevin.	(l. 252)

<sup>33</sup> E. Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), p. 75. This observation is made to draw attention to the similarity to Arthur's conciliatory gestures concluding the second episode of *Awntyrs*, and will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>34</sup> pp. 69 - 71.

The descriptive passages in *Rauf*, on the other hand, whilst dramatic are not unrealistic and avoid hyperbolic simile.

The wind blew out of the Eist stiflie and sture,  
 The deip durandlie draif in mony deip dell  
 Sa feirsleie fra the Firmament, sa fellounlie it fure,  
 Thair nicht nair folk hald na fute on heich fell. (ll.16 – 19)

This description of the snow storm which engulfs Charlemagne and his entourage to begin the narrative is entirely credible and within the experience of any Northern European audience (though perhaps more familiarly so in Scotland than in France). The poet also makes use of commonplace alliterative collocations to describe the consequence of these wintery conditions:

For my Gaist and I baith cheueris with the chin. (l. 96)

The same expression is used in the earlier poem, *Awntyrs*:

How chatted the cholle, the chaftis and the chynne. (*Awntyrs* l. 132)

Another Scottish poet, Robert Henryson, who flourished in the latter half of the fifteenth century, similarly uses the alliterative quality of the *cheruis chins* of *Rauf* and the King in his description of the cold planetary god Saturn.

His face frosnit, his lyre was lyke the leid,  
 His teith chatterit and cheuerit with the chin,  
 His ene drowpit, how sonkin in his heid,  
 Out of his nois the meldrop fast can rin,  
 With lippis bla and cheikis leine and thin;  
 The ice schoklis that fra his hair doun hang  
 Was wonder greit, and as ane speir als lang.<sup>35</sup>

## Irony

The *Rauf* narrative, moreover, displays other storytelling devices not evident in the Arthurian narrative. The poet exploits to the full the opportunities for dramatic irony created by the collier's ignorance of the true identity of his guest:

<sup>35</sup> Robert Henryson, 'The Testament of Cresseid', in D. Fox ed., *Robert Henryson The Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), ll. 155-161.

"Schir, thou art vnskilfull, and that sall I warrand,  
 Thou byrd to haue nurtour aneuch, and thow hes nane;  
 Thow hes walkit, I wis, in mony wylde land,  
 The mair vertew thow suld haue, to keip the fra blame;  
 Thow suld be courtes of kynd, and ane cunnand Courteir.

(ll. 159 – 163)

Besides the rough treatment of his guest for his apparent lack of good manners, there are subtler ironies such as when Rauf reveals that he is a thorn in the side of the foresters who annually threaten to take him before the King because he poaches the best deer to serve at his table for his guests. The King's reaction is one of cleverly controlled irony:

"The King him self hes bene fane  
 Sum tyme of sic fair." (ll. 205 - 206)

And, unrelated to Rauf's lack of acuity, the rejoinder of the palace porter as he is relieved of the responsibility of dealing with the ranting collier without the gates is another wittily ironic line:

"Be God," said the Grome, "ane gift heir I geif."  
 (l. 611)

### **Antithesis (oppositio)**

Just as the situation in which the poet places Rauf provides opportunities for irony, he similarly exploits the contrasts between his hero and the aristocratic company into which he is introduced. In the initial confrontation with Sir Roland when,

The Carll beheld to the Knicht, as he stude than;  
 He bair grauit in Gold and Gowlis in Grene. (l. 454 – 455)

And after a long description of the knight's finery, the poet draws attention to Rauf's workman's attire:

For thow seis my weidis ar auld and all to-worne. (i. 560)

In the same episode, this magnificently equipped knight in full battle-dress is flabbergasted when Rauf spoils for a fight with nothing,

Bot ane auld Buklair,  
 And ane roustie brand. (ll. 517 – 518)

The poem has only one example of rhetorical antithesis:

After ane euill day to haue ane mirrie nicht. (l. 135)

But *Gologras* does not use antithesis.

## Section VII: A partial conclusion

The findings detailed so far in this chapter do not support Amours' proposal that *Rauf* and *Gologras* were written by the same person. Whilst the fighting scenes in the two poems bear some resemblance, as he suggests, the same observation can be made about both these narratives in comparison with other alliterative Arthurian fight descriptions such as those found in *Awntyrs* and *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, two texts which, on similar grounds, have been claimed to share authorship.<sup>36</sup> Amours' second claim, that 'the vocabulary has so many terms in common, especially words not used in any other part of this volume' is not overwhelmingly confirmed by the list of only sixteen terms (Table 4.01) which are in any case to be found elsewhere in literature of the period.

When considering the strophic features of the two works, both are shown to have a similar adherence to the rhyme scheme, especially if the emendations suggested are adopted. But the alliterative character of the two is quite different as detailed in Table 4.02 and the subsequent discussion and exemplified in their opening stanzas, which, respectively, are representative of the complete poems.

Turning to the syntactical traits and in particular the problem of assessing what represents anastrophe in poetic lines written in a language with no national standards, there is, nevertheless, evidence of a difference in writing style. The

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<sup>36</sup> See Section VIII below of this chapter on *Awntyrs* and V. Krishna ed., *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., Inc., 1976) pp. 10-11.

poems were written around the same time and in Scotland, so the syntactical differences detailed in Table 4.03 can be argued to be stylistic rather than of a period or dialect. In *Gologras*, the narrative is often plainly written and easily flows to satisfy the metre and the rhyme scheme:

Thus the Royale can remove, with his Round Tabill,  
 Of all riches maist rike, in riall array.  
 Wes never funden on fold, but feneying or fabill,  
 Ane farayr floure on ane field of fresch men, in fay;  
 Farand on thair stedis, stout men and stabill,  
 Mony sterne ovr the streit stertis on stray.  
 Thair baneris schane with sone, of silver and sabill,  
 And uthir glemyt as gold and gowlis so gay;  
 Of silver and saphir schirly thai schane;  
 Ane fair battell on breid  
 Merkit ovr ane fair meid;  
 With spurris spedely thai speid,  
 Ovr fellis, in fane. (Gologras, ll. 14 – 26)

Note the ease with which rhyming is achieved without a contrived syntax and the intimate oral delivery quality of ‘in fay’ in line four. A similar expression is used in *Gologras* in speech:

"Me think thow fedis the vnfair, freik, be my fay!" (Gologras l. 93)

Indeed, fifty-five of the poem’s one hundred and five stanzas are fashioned to clearly tell the story yet satisfy the requirements of the poetic line. Anastrophe, where it occurs, is predominantly in the b-verse and serves to manipulate the rhyme-word to the end of the line. In *Rauf*, there are only twenty-one stanzas of the poem’s seventy-five which have no anastrophic line. And as has been shown, the reason for the particular word order chosen is not always apparent. A higher incidence in *Rauf* of pronouns which seem pleonastic has similarly been noted and assumed to be an authorial preference.

Some significant differences in rhetorical and story-telling technique have been demonstrated also which, in combination with the strophic and syntactical differences previously discussed, strongly suggest that the two poems were written by different people.



## Section VIII: The relationship of *Gologras* to *Awntyrs*

Several scholars have noted the echoes of *Awntyrs* in *Gologras*, most notably Ralph Hanna, Rhiannon Purdie and Emily Wingfield who also provide useful discussions of their observations.<sup>37</sup> Purdie, though principally concerned with identifying uniquely Scottish traditions in *Gologras*, draws attention to examples of similar narrative in *Awntyrs*. Wingfield observes that *Gologras* shares with *Awntyrs* a ‘tradition of interrogation of the chivalric ethos and value of courtesy.’

It combines this with a particularly Scottish emphasis on good public and private governance, derived from the advice to princes tradition, and a further Scottish emphasis on personal and national freedom, originating in propaganda generated during the Anglo-Scots Wars of Independence.<sup>38</sup>

Hanna draws attention to the opening lines, given here for both poems (p. xxxiv).

In the tyme of Arthur an aunter bytyde,  
By þe Turne Wathelan, as þe boke telles.      (*Awntyrs* ll. 1 -2)

In the tyme of Arthur, as trew men me told,  
The King turnit on ane tyde toward Tuskane.      (*Gologras* ll. 1-2)

Hanna also points out the Arthurian association with Tuscany in *Awntyrs* (ll. 283 – 4) when the ghost of Guinevere’s mother warns Gawain ‘Get þe, Sir Gawayn; / Turne þe to Tuskane’ (p. xxxv).

There are alliterative collocations common to both poems which Hanna sees as significant, exemplified by him in the following lines which are from Hanna’s editions.<sup>39</sup> (xxxvii):

He clef þorgh þe cantell þat coured the kniȝt.      (*Awntyrs* l. 521)  
And claiþ throw the cantell of the clene schelde.      (*Gologras* l. 940)

<sup>37</sup> Hanna 2008. Rhiannon Purdie, ‘The Search for Scottishness in *Gologras* and *Gawane*’ in *The Scots And Medieval Arthurian Legend*, eds. Rhiannon Purdie and Nicola Royan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005). Emily Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> Wingfield p. 75.

<sup>39</sup> Hanna 1974 and 2008.

Þorgh blazon and brene, that burnished were brigt. (Awntyrs I. 527)  
 Throw birny and breistplait and bordour it baid. (Gologras I. 941)<sup>40</sup>

With a bytand bronde thorgh him he bare.  
 The bronde was bloody þat burnished was brigt. (Awntyrs II. 528 – 9)  
 With ane bitand brand, burly and braid. (Gologras II. 937)

There were others noticed in the course of this study of the poems, the most pertinent of which are listed below.<sup>41</sup>

The burnes broched þe blonkes þat þe side bledis. (Awntyrs I. 499)  
 Thay brochit blonkis to their sides brist of rede blude. (Gologras I. 307)

Fifté mayles and mo. (Awntyrs I. 517)  
 Fifty mailyeis and mair. (Gologras I. 635)

Vnder a siller of silke dayntly digt. (Awntyrs I. 340)  
 The sylour deir of the deise dayntely wes dent. (Gologras I. 66)

There are other very similar shared passages descriptive of fighting to be found in the texts, though the dangers of over-reliance on shared alliterative collocations has been previously discussed in this thesis. Oakden includes sixteen such ‘stock phrases’ in his list of alliterative collocations taken from works in rhymed stanzas which appear in the two poems in question and others, but none of the above phrases feature in his list.<sup>42</sup> In this case, the limitations for variety of action when two men in steel armour set about each other with heavy swords, combined with the disciplines of the alliterative metre, must result in similar descriptive writing, whoever the author. But the similarities of narrative themes and phrasing are at least an indication of a knowledge of *Awntyrs* by the *Gologras* poet.

<sup>40</sup> Note that the items of equipment in the two alliterative collocations are different, perhaps diminishing the significance of the example. (See Hanna’s respective glossaries.)

<sup>41</sup> For convenience, the references continue to Hanna’s editions of the poems.

<sup>42</sup> Oakden, Part II, pp. 351 – 361.

## Section IX: Provenance

Hanna, in his examination of the language of *Gologras* presents the dialectal evidence that ‘places the poem within a generally Northern speech community, one which would have one that would have straddled the Anglo-Scottish border and whose forms would have been available to almost any writer practising his craft north of the Ribble, Aire, and Humber.’<sup>43</sup> Hanna illustrates this difficulty with a comprehensive account of examples of linguistic features which can indicate either a Northern English or a Scots provenance. The following are two examples drawn from Hanna’s list which occur most regularly in the poem. (The words extracted by Hanna are here given in their complete line along with the rhyming line(s) and are taken from Hanna’s edition.)

1. In the North and Scotland, the present third person singular of a verb ends in *-s*, mostly usually confirmed by rhymes with plural nouns:

e.g. *tellis*

The king faris with his folk our firthis and fellis  
 Bot deip dalis bedene, dovnis and dellis,  
 Birkin bewis about, boggis and wellis  
 Bot torris and tene wais, teirfull quha tellis. (ll. 27,29 31,33)

Hanna’s other examples include *needis*, *lyis* and *standis*.

2. In the North and Scotland, the present participle ends in *-and*, regularly confirmed in the poem’s rhymes:

e.g. *haldand*

Quha is lord of yon land  
 Lusty and likand  
 Or Quham of is he haldand. (ll. 257 – 259)

Hanna’s other examples include *bledand*, *weepand*, *obeyand* and *muuand*.

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<sup>43</sup> Hanna 2008, p. xxv.

But Hanna also finds a number of linguistic features which are distinctive to Middle Scots, singling out as ‘telling’ the word *abanondit* as in

For abandonit will he nocht be to berne that is borne. (l. 275) <sup>44</sup>

The meaning here is clearly ‘subjugated to’ which contrasts with the Middle English senses of ‘to surrender’ or ‘give up’.<sup>45</sup> Hanna argues that

Although the Scots features identified above may seem minimal, particularly in the light of abundant examples of nationally inspecific ‘Northernisms’, they are extremely telling.

When discussing the indebtedness of *Gologras* to *Awntyrs*, Hanna suggests that Gawane’s adversary, Galeron, is a ‘foretaste’ of *Gologras* and draws attention to the *Awntyrs* poet’s familiarity with ‘the geography and political divisions of southwestern Scotland.’<sup>46</sup> His linguistic analysis of *Awntyrs* also supports an opinion that ‘Although its circulation as now visible is entirely English, there is no special evidence to indicate that, in origin, *The Awntyrs* should be placed south of the Solway Firth.’<sup>47</sup> More specifically on the vocabulary of *Awntyrs*, Hanna finds that ‘several words in the poems [*sic.*] are rare in Middle English but fairly common in Scots.’<sup>48</sup> The evidence for the provenance of the poems (and he demonstrates that both poets used the same dialect) are set out in an appendix to his edition.<sup>49</sup>

That both poems could have Scottish origins, at least in part for *Awntyrs* (which has been shown in Chapter Three of this thesis to be the work of two poets), seems not to be in doubt. To progress further a comparative analysis of *Gologras* with the appropriate episode of *Awntyrs*, the nature of the debts of the former to the latter need to be considered. There are thematic relationships between both parts of

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<sup>44</sup> Hanna 2008, p. xxx.

<sup>45</sup> Middle English Dictionary. Available at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mec/> [accessed 2 April 2018].

<sup>46</sup> Hanna 2008, p. xxxv.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Hanna 1974, p. 50.

<sup>49</sup> Hanna 1974, ‘The Dialect of the Authors’, pp. 143 – 149.

*Awntyrs* and *Gologras*, but the shared collocations identified above are all from the second episode of *Awntyrs* – though perhaps inevitably, given the similarity of the scenes described by the two narratives. Similar too in both poems is the plain narrative style which is commented upon in the comparison writing in the two episodes of *Awntyrs* in Chapter Three of this thesis. Therefore, the detailed comparative analysis of *Gologras* and *Awntyrs* concentrates on the second episode of the Arthurian romance.

## **Section X: Rhyming and alliteration in *Awntyrs* (27 – 54) and *Gologras***

The rhyming and alliterative features of the two parts of *Awntyrs* have been discussed previously in some detail in Chapter Three of this thesis. The data for the second episode is compared here with that for *Gologras* shown earlier in this chapter.

### **Rhyming**

A failure consistently to achieve four different rhyme sounds in a high proportion of stanzas in the second episode of *Awntyrs* (thirteen of the twenty-nine) is a significant differentiating factor when comparing the two parts of that poem. A similar difference is again apparent alongside *Gologras* which has but five 3-rhyme stanzas in a work of one hundred and five stanzas.

The comparison of the two *Awntyrs* episodes' deployment of end-rhymes demonstrated a lack of poetic skill in the second episode by an overuse of the *-yght* ending and a lack of variety of rhyme sounds. Table 4.08 below shows the distribution of rhyme word endings that are used most frequently in *Gologras*. It can

be seen that there are thirty-one rhyme sounds used more than ten times in the poem, with a much more even distribution than is the case for the second part of *Awntyrs*.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 4.08: Distribution of the most frequently used rhymes in *Gologras***

Rhyme	<i>Gologras</i>
-eir	65
-ay	61
-e,-ee	61
-ing,-yng	49
-is,-ys	44
-and	41
-ane	40
-ight,-yght	37
-ede	32
-ene,-en	32
-ent	31
-eid	30
-ill	29
-aw	27
-ere	27
-oune,-oun	27
-in,	26
-ell	24
-ide,-ydde,-yde	24
-ude	24
-ang	22
-aill,-ail	20
-a	19
-yre,-ire	16
-ald	15
-est	14
-orne	11
-all,-al	12
-out	12
-ace	11
-orne	11

The large difference in length between *Gologras* and the *Awntyrs* episode precludes a direct statistical comparison but a representative comparison of rhyming skill may be achieved by comparing the first twenty-eight stanzas of *Gologras* with the second part of *Awntyrs* without the putative last verse of the first episode, *i.e.* also twenty-

<sup>50</sup> Chapter Three, Table 3.08, p. 52.

eight stanzas. The *Awntyrs* episode uses thirty-one different rhymes in its twenty-eight stanzas: in the first twenty-eight stanzas of *Gologras* there are fifty-six different rhyme sounds. The distribution of the more frequently used rhymes in these stanzas are shown in Table 4.09 below.

**Table 4.09: The distribution of the most used\* rhymes in *Gologras* (stanzas 1 – 28) and *Awntyrs* (stanzas 27 – 54)**

<i>Gologras</i>		<i>Awntyrs</i>	
Rhyme	Uses	Rhyme	Uses
-ay	31	-ight	79
-e,-ee	25	-ene	41
-ing,-yng	17	-are	15
-ane	16	-al	15
-eir	14	-ay	15
-i/yght	14	-olde	15
-i/ys	14	-ede	14
-eir	14	-ode	12
--oun,e	14	-orne	11
-ill	13	-ent	8
-yre	12	-ikes	8
-ell	10	-ile	8
-in	9	-ake	7
-eid	8	-er	7
-ene	8		
our	8		
-ude	8		
-eid	7		
-end	7		
-aw	7		
<b>Lines</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>255</b>	

\*To provide a representative comparison, the cut-off point to meet the criterion 'most used' has been set so that approximately the same number of lines in each of the poems are compared.

The table shows that in *Gologras*, twenty different end-rhymes are used in two-hundred and fifty-five lines. In a very similar number of lines, *Awntyrs'* second part uses only fourteen rhymes. That a much more even distribution of rhymes is achieved in *Gologras* is also apparent.

### Alliteration

One significant difference between the two parts of *Awntyrs* noted previously is the virtual abandonment of concatenation and line linking in the second episode, a technique which intensifies the alliterative character of the first episode. *Gologras*, similarly, does not feature this practice. Thus, the alliterative features already determined for *Gologras* can be compared with similar data from the second part of *Awntyrs*.

**Table 4.10: Alliterative features of *Awntyrs* (2<sup>nd</sup> episode) and *Gologras***

Feature	<i>Gologras</i>	<i>Awntyrs</i>
<b>Long lines</b> with 4 or more alliterating words.	53%	48.6%
<b>Long lines</b> with no alliterating words	1.7%	0%
<b>Short lines</b> with 2 or 3 alliterating words	52% (48% with no alliteration)	50.9% (49.1% with no alliteration)
<b>Lines continuing</b> alliteration	4.5%	12.8%
<b>Long lines</b> with 3 alliterating words	26.5	37.2%



Given the large difference in their respective lengths, the alliterative features, perhaps with the exception of the incidence of lines continuing an alliterative sound, are very similar for both poems and show a similar approach to the achievement of an alliterative appeal.

## Section XI: Syntax

The syntactical traits examined previously for each poem are shown in the comparative table below.

**Table 4.11: Comparison of syntactical features of *Gologras* and *Awntyrs***

Syntax	<i>Gologras</i>	<i>Awntyrs</i> (27 – 54)
Anastrophe	5.8%	5.8%*
Unexplained by rhyme	1.2% of the above	nil
Adj - noun	76%	77%
Noun - adj	20%	19%
Adj – noun – adj Or adj-noun and-adj	4 %	4%
(Total adjectival modified nouns)	(255 = 100%)	(56 = 100%)
Pleonastic pronouns	8 instances in 105 stanzas (1: 13)	2 instances in 28 stanzas (1:14)

\* The figures on anastrophe for *Awntyrs*, previously given as actual numbers in Table 3.18, p. 61 are here shown as percentages to enable comparison with the much longer *Gologras*. The slight differences between the figures here for *Awntyrs* and those in Table 3.19, p. 62 are the result of discounting the final stanza.

The syntax in the two poems is strikingly similar. But both poems carry narratives full of action to be told in an exciting way and as prosaically as the poetic requirements

will allow. This plain writing has previously been remarked upon in the comparison of writing style between *Gologras* and *Rauf*.<sup>51</sup>

## Section XII: Rhetoric

The rhetorical devices used in each of the works have previously been described.<sup>52</sup>

A numerical summary of their use is shown in table 4.12 below.

**Table 4.12: Comparative summary of use of other rhetorical constructions in *Gologras* and *Awntyrs***

Device	Occurrences	
	<i>Gologras</i>	<i>Awntyrs</i> (27- 54)
Simile and metaphor	22 (1:4.8)	6 (1:4.3)
proverbs	3	0
Antithesis	0	2
Digression	0	2
<b>All rhetoric</b>	<b>32</b> (1:3.3)	<b>10</b> (1:2.6)

The disparity in length of the two works makes any direct comparison invalid though the ratios shown in parenthesis may give an indication of a similar inclination to use simile and metaphor.

## XIII: Conclusions

The opening paragraphs of this thesis and of this chapter are critical of the narrow approach taken by previous scholars when hypothesising common authorship for the corpus of anonymous alliterative poems from the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Amours' reliance on vocabulary alone as evidence for common authorship on

<sup>51</sup> For *Gologras*, p. 86; for *Awntyrs*, p. 72.

<sup>52</sup> *Awntyrs*: pp. 58 - 65, tables 3.11, 3.13, 3.15 and 3.17. *Gologras*: pp. 80 - 82, tables 4.04 and 4.06.

*Gologras* and *Rauf*, somewhat inadequately supported by the evidence, exemplifies such flawed reasoning. The descriptive passages of the fighting in *Gologras* are far more extensive, and hence more noticeable, than the single five-stanza account (ll. 63.01 - 67.13) in *Rauf*, and use very similar language to *Awntyrs*. Whilst far from conclusive, such observations do tempt further comparisons of the writing.

The alliterative character of the two poems (Table 4.10) shows interesting similarities and, more importantly, the elements of line construction examined (Table 4.11) are patently similar. The rhetorical figures used in *Awntyrs* are more varied than in *Gologras* though the recourse to metaphor and simile in both poems, despite their great difference in length, are proportionally identical.

There remains to be thought through the question of the noticeable difference in rhyming technique. Some fifty-six different rhyme-endings are used in *Gologras* and thirty-one of these appear more than ten times. Of the thirty-one different rhyme-sounds in the *Awntyrs* episode, only seven of these appear more than ten times. In the comparison of the two episodes of the complete *Awntyrs* poem, the impact of this latter shortcoming was illustrated by considering the rhyme progression over the first three stanzas of each work: a similar exercise with the writings now being considered is also illustrative of contrasting rhyming techniques.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See Chapter Three, p. 56 - 57.

*Gologras*

In the tyme of Arthur, as trew men me tald  
 The King turnit on ane tyde toward Tuskane  
 Hym to seik ovr the sey, that saiklese wes sald  
 The syre that sendis all seill, suthly to sane;  
 With barentis, barounis, and bernis full bald  
 Biggast of bane and blude bred in Britane.  
 Thai walit out werryouris and wapinnis to wald,  
 The gayest grumys on grund, with geir that myght gane;  
 Dukis and digne lodis, douchty and deir,  
 Sembillit to his summoune,  
 Rekis of grete renoune,  
 Cumly kingis with croune  
 Of gold that wes cleir.

Thus the Royale can remove, with his Round Tabill,  
 Of all riches maist rike, in riall array.  
 Wes never funden on fold, but feneyng or fabill,  
 Ane farayr floure on ane field of fresch men, in fay;  
 Farand on thair stedis, stout men and stabill,  
 Mony sterne ovr the streit stertis on stray.  
 Thair baneris schane with sone, of silver and sabill,  
 And uthir glemyt as gold and gowlis so gay;  
 Of silver and saphir schirly thai schane;  
 Ane fair battell on breid  
 Merkit ovr ane fair meid;  
 With spurris spedely thai speid,  
 Ovr fellis, in fane.

The King faris with his folk, ovr firthis and fellis,  
 Feill dais or he fand of flynd or of fyre;  
 Bot deip dalis bedene, dounis and dellis,  
 Montains and marresse, with mony rank myre;  
 Birkin bewis about, boggis and wellis,  
 Withoutin beiding of blis, of bern or of byre;  
 Bot torris and tene wais, teirfull quha tellis.  
 Tuglit and travalit thus trew men can tyre,  
 Sa wundir wait wes the way, wit ye but wene;  
 And all thair vittalis war gone,  
 That they weildit in wone;  
 Resset couth thai find none  
 That suld thair bute bene.

(1.01 – 3.13)

*Awntyrs*

The King to souper is set, served in sale,  
 Under a siller of silke dayntly dight  
 With al worship and wele, innewith the walle,  
 Briddes brauden and brad in bankers bright.  
 There come in a soteler with a symballe,  
 A lady lufsom leding a knight;  
 Ho raykes up in a res bifor the Rialle  
 And halsed Sir Arthur hendly on hight.  
 Ho said to the Soverayne, wlonkest in wede,  
 "Mon makeles of might,  
 Here comes an errant knight.  
 Do him reson and right  
 For thi manhede"

The mon in his mantel sites at his mete  
 In pal pured to pay, prodly pight,  
 Trofelyte and traverste with trewloves in trete;  
 The tassess were of topas that were thereto tight.  
 He gliffed up with his eighen that grey wer and grete,  
 With his beveren berde, on that burde bright.  
 He was the soveraynest of al sitting in sete

That ever segge had sen with his eye sight.  
 King crowned in kith carpes hir till:  
 "Welcom, worthily wight –  
 He shal have reson and right!  
 Whethen is the comli knight,  
 If hit be thi wille.

Ho was the worthiest wight that eny welde wolde;  
 Here gide was glorious and gay, of a gresse grene.  
 Here belle was of blanket, with birdes ful bolde,  
 Brauded with gold, and bokeled ful bene.  
 Here fax in fine perré was fretted in folde,  
 Contrefelet and kelle coloured full clene,  
 With a crowne craftly al of clene golde.  
 Here kercheves were curiouse with many proude prene,  
 Her perré was prayssed with prise men of might:  
 Bright birdes and bolde  
 Had ynogh to beholde  
 Of that frely to folde  
 And on the hende knight.

(27.01 – 29.13)

The shortcomings of the opening of the *Awntyrs* episode, the failure to achieve four different rhymes and the monotonous *-yght* ending contrast with the carefully crafted stanzas of *Gologras*. The thirteen-line rhyming paradigm is achieved for each stanza; one rhyme (*-ane*) is carried forward from the first into lines nine and thirteen of the second; then the third stanza uses a new group of four rhymes. This practice of minimal or no repetition of rhyming is followed throughout the poem, as the statistics in Table 4.9 suggest.

There is general agreement that the *Gologras* poet drew heavily on the structure and themes of *Awntyrs*, and this research has shown that the greater indebtedness is to the second episode of the earlier romance. In writing his poem, the author of *Gologras* has both extended the scope of the adventure and improved upon the rhyming technique of the *Awntyrs* poet.

## CHAPTER FIVE: *THE PISTILL OF SWETE SUSAN*

### Section I: *Susan* and *Awntyrs*

The review of authorship theories in Chapter One of this thesis describes the origins of the attribution of *Susan* to the otherwise unknown poet, Huchown, and the attempts to assign other extant alliterative poems to the same author. As the review reveals, the arguments about which poems were the work of any one man have continued from the nineteenth century through to the last decade of the twentieth without any consensus being reached. The various groupings proposed were highly speculative and the weaknesses in the arguments put forward in the earlier essays were exposed (even ridiculed) by MacCracken.<sup>1</sup> However, within the 'maze of guesswork', as he termed the various theories, there is a pairing which does merit scrutiny.<sup>2</sup> Amours, in his discussion of poems which could be attributed to Huchown, at least may be pointing the way to a supportable proposal when he makes his position clear:

A comparison between the vocabularies of the 'Awntyrs' and of 'Susan' produces parallel results and, confirms the theory that the three [including 'Morte Arthure'] poems belong to the same person. A run through the glossary will prove that many vocables are common to both pieces [*Awntyrs* and *Susan*], and a good few (about 25) not appearing in other parts of the volume.<sup>3</sup>

And, in contrast to his conjecture about authorship of *Gologras*, Amours does offer some examples of similar expressions from the two poems. His abbreviated references are shown below as pairs of complete lines taken from his editions of the works:<sup>4</sup>

"Thou maker of Middelert, that most art of miht,	(S. l. 263)
Als to mane in this medilerthe makles of might."	(A. l. 645 T)

<sup>1</sup> MacCracken (1910). A more detailed reference to his paper is in Chapter One, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> MacCracken (1910), p. 534.

<sup>3</sup> Amours (1897), p. lxxvii. Amours mentions *MA* only in passing and offers no other commentary on the subject of its relationship with other poems in his corpus. Neither is the work examined in this thesis as it does not meet the criteria established for study at this time (see Chapter One p. 3).

<sup>4</sup> A = *Awntyrs*; S = *Susan*; D = Douce MS; T = Thornton MS.

The rose ragged on rys, richest on Rone, I was radder in rode than bene rose in be rone	(S. l. 72) (A. l. 161 D)
And ale the stoteyd and stode, It stottyde, it stounned, it stode als a stane,	(S. l. 285) (A. l. 109 T)
Lord herteliche tak hede, and herkne my steuene Dere one hertly take hede, while þou art here,	(S. l. 268) (A l. 171 D)
Blithest Briddes o the best, In siluer sa semly þe serue þame of the beste,	(S. l. 77) (A. l. 456)
And undur this lorere ben vr lemmone? Sythene vndir a lorere sco lygthte, lawea felle.	(S. l. 136) (A. l. 32 T)

But Amours' pairings lack the convincing shared collocations and phraseology found in the Cheshire group of poems now attributed to the 'Gawain poet'. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Cleanness*, *Patience* and *Pearl* are the four alliterative poems contained in London, British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x<sup>5</sup>. Numerous parallel passages were extracted by R. J. Manner in his edition of *Cleanness* (which he titles 'Purity'), from which the following are illustrative examples.<sup>6</sup>

Til hit was negh at the night Hit was negh at the night	<i>Cle.</i> l. 484 <i>Gaw.</i> l. 929
Bot all was nedles her note Bot all was nedles her note	<i>Cle.</i> l. 381 <i>Pat.</i> l. 220
I fel upon that floury flight Falles upon fayr flat, flowres there schewen	<i>Pea.</i> l. 57 <i>Gaw.</i> l. 507

Oakden lists six stock alliterative collocations shared by the two poems. They are of the kind exemplified in the previous discussions on *Awntyrs*, *Gologras* and *Rauf*.<sup>7</sup>

A further observation, possibly of some significance, to escape the notice of Amours is that four out of the six of examples of similar phrases in *Susan* and *Awntyrs* are drawn from the first episode of *Awntyrs*. This is consistent with the findings in Chapter Three of this thesis, that the Arthurian romance is the work of two

<sup>5</sup> Though *Pearl* is not written in the alliterative metre and alliteration does not occur in every line of that poem.

<sup>6</sup> R. J. Manner ed., *Purity. A Middle English Poem* (London: New Haven, 1920), pp. lviii-lxii. To emphasize the similarity of the phrases, the quotations are taken from A. Putter and M. Stokes eds. *The Works of the Gawain Poet* (London: Penguin Group, 2014) in which the orthography is 'partially modernized and regularized' (p. xxviii).

<sup>7</sup> Oakden, Part II, pp. 351 – 361.

poets and justifies the separation of the two parts of the poem for this comparison with *Susan*.

## Section II: Provenance

The questions to be addressed here are whether the first episode of *Awntyrs* and *Susan* could have been written within the active lifetime of one man and what geographical relationship the poems might share. As the review of authorship theories in the first chapter of this thesis concludes, to pursue any further the association of Huchown with either of the poems is probably futile. At best, it would be a distraction from the main purpose of this research - to explore possibilities for common authorship amongst the selected works.

The antiquity of *Susan* is evidenced by its inclusion in the Vernon manuscript which puts its composition as before the early 1400s, and possibly before 1380.<sup>8</sup> Of the various attempts to date *Awntyrs*, the most robust are those by Gates and Hanna who place its composition, at the earliest, in the late fourteenth century but possibly as late as 1430.<sup>9</sup> *Susan* and *Awntyrs* could, therefore, have been written within the active career of one man. Geographically, there is potential for common authorship, but no clear connection. *Awntyrs* is generally accepted as having its origins in the Northwest of England or Scotland, partly from traces of a more northerly dialect in its North Midlands copies, partly from its setting in the Carlisle area in the first episode and Scottish references in the second.<sup>10</sup> *Susan*, likewise, has been placed as having more northerly origins than its extant West Midlands copies. Oakden, from his dialectal studies, suggests that the original composition is northern and 'it is quite

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter One, for details of the poem's history.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter One, p. 8 for a review of the proposals for the dating of *Awntyrs*.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter Four, p. 94.



possible, however, that the poem was N. E. Midland, but not probable.<sup>11</sup> Peck introduces *Susan* as 'originating in Yorkshire' but without citing any particular authority.<sup>12</sup> Miskimin builds on the work of Rolf Kaiser.<sup>13</sup> Miskimin lists thirty-six words which are classified as Northern by Kaiser.<sup>14</sup> In addition, she identifies four other words identified as Northern or North Midland such as *bedene*:

Of fals domes bedene. (l. 310)

Here the word (meaning *forthwith*) is used as a rhyme tag and is described in the Middle English Dictionary as 'found only in North and North Midland dialects'.<sup>15</sup>

### Section III: Rhyming and alliteration in *Susan*

#### Rhyming

A differentiating characteristic in the comparison of the two episodes of *Awntyrs* is the attention paid to rhyming, as measured by counting the number of stanzas which fail to conform to the four-rhyme paradigm. Further differentiation is apparent from the number and distribution of rhyme-sounds used in each part of the poem.<sup>16</sup> The same methodology applied to a comparison of *Susan*, which has twenty-eight stanzas, with the first of the *Awntyrs* adventures results in no such disparity. *Awntyrs* has four aberrant stanzas in twenty-seven (including the final one of the complete work); the twenty-eight stanzas of *Susan* also include four stanzas which fail to achieve a satisfactory rhyme pattern. *Susan* uses more rhyme sounds than the

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<sup>11</sup> Oakden (1968), Vol I, p. 112.

<sup>12</sup> Peck (1991), p. 79.

<sup>13</sup> Rolf Kaiser, *Zur Geographie der mittenglischen Grammatik, Palaestra 205* (Leipzig: Mayer and Muller, 1937). Kaiser provides a vocabulary, by negative definition, of distinctively Northern words not found in texts identified as Southern.

<sup>14</sup> Miskimin, p. 68.

<sup>15</sup> Middle English Dictionary. Available at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/> [accessed 2 April 2018].

<sup>16</sup> Chapter Three, pp. 55 - 55 and Tables 30.8 and 3.09.

*Awntyrs* episode though slightly fewer than the complete *Awntyrs*, but the distribution of endings used ten or more times is similar for both poems.<sup>17</sup> See Table 5.01 below.

**Table 5.01: Distribution of rhyme sounds used ten or more times in *Awntyrs* and *Susan***

Rhyme	<i>Awntyrs</i> (stanzas 1 – 26 + 55)	Rhyme	<i>Susan</i>
-ene	22	-ere	21
-are	19	-iht	19
-ight	18	-ay, -ai	17
-al	16	-ene	17
-elle	16	-on, -one	17
-ides	15	-ede	16
-er	14	-ewe	16
-ay	13	-ees, -es	13
-is	13	-eue	11
-olde	12	-ar, -are	10
-ing, -yng	12	-i, -y, -ie	10
-ayn	12		
-et, -ete	11		

As can be seen from the table, there is no unbalanced preponderance of any particular sound, as the case with the second episode of *Awntyrs*.<sup>18</sup>

### Alliteration

The first part of *Awntyrs* is a *tour de force* of alliterative poetry writing. A key contribution to its aural impact is made by the practice of continuing a rhyme sound across successive lines, both within a stanza and by repeating words or phrases from the last line of a stanza in the first line of the following one (conduplicatio and concatenation).<sup>19</sup> In *Susan*, continuing alliteration within stanzas occurs ten times but there is only one, though cleverly wrought, example of concatenation:

Blithest Briddes o the best,  
In Blossoms so briht.

The briddes in Blossoms thei beeren wel loude. (ll. 77 – 79)

<sup>17</sup> *Susan* uses 65 rhymes, *Awntyrs* first episode 50 and *Awntyrs* entire 68.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter Three, p. 54, Table 3.08.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter Three, pp. 50 - 51 and Tables 3.01, 3.02 and 3.03 for a detailed description of the techniques.

The shortening of the ninth line to a 'bob' of two syllables in *Susan* additionally removes an opportunity for alliterative rhyming. This problem is, to some extent, addressed by continuing the alliterating syllable from the previous line in nine of the stanzas. *e.g.*

And thus this cherles unchaste in chamber hir chise  
With chere. (ll. 47 – 48)

Other aspects of alliteration, however, are more closely equivalent. The attention paid to four and three-stress alliterations in the long lines is very similar for both poems, though the *Susan* poet has not entirely avoided lines with no alliteration.

Table 5.02 below shows the detailed comparison of *Susan* with the first episode of *Awntyrs* (together with the final stanza of the complete work).

**Table 5.02: The occurrence of alliteration in long lines**

Number of alliterating syllables	Awntyrs (Stanzas 1-26 + 55) %	Susan %
4	54.3	51.0
3	32.5	32.2
2	7.0	9.5
5 or 6	4.0	2.3
2 + 2	2.1	3.6
No alliteration	0	1.3

N.B. The figures for *Susan* discount the 2-syllable ninth line and are based on stanzas with eight long lines.

Whereas the difference in short line alliterative patterning for the two episodes of *Awntyrs* proved to be a significant factor in the overall conclusion that the poem was the work of two different authors, the comparison of the first episode of *Awntyrs* with *Susan* displayed in Table 5.03 below shows quite a different outcome.

**Table 5.03: The occurrence of alliteration in short lines**

Number of alliterating syllables	Awntyrs Stanzas (1-26+55) %	Susan %
3	10.2	4.5
2	61.1	66.0
No alliteration	28.7	29.5

N.B. The figures for *Susan* discount the 2-syllable ninth line and are based on stanzas with four short lines.

Although there is a reduction in the number of short lines with three alliterating syllables which is offset by an increase in those with two rhymes, overall the patterning is significantly similar; both the long and short lines exhibit a comparable attention to alliteration by the poet or poets.

#### Section IV: Syntax in *Susan*

The various syntactical features of the two *Awntyrs* adventures which contribute to a writer's style have already been set out and discussed individually in Chapter Three of this thesis. For a more immediate appreciation of the similarities and differences with *Susan* these elements are shown combined in Table 5.04 below. Note that the figures shown for *Awntyrs* here, which now include the final stanza of the complete work, differ slightly from those in Chapter Three; the derivation of the anastrophe and adjectival positioning percent figures are based on the data in Tables 3.18 and 3.19 respectively.

**Table 5.04: The syntax of *Awntyrs* (first episode) and *Susan* compared.**

Element	<i>Awntyrs</i> (stanzas 1 - 26 +55)	<i>Susan</i> (28 stanzas)
anastrophe	11.4%	11.3%
adj – noun	72.75%	64.9%
noun – adj	24.25%	27.0%
adj – noun - adj	1.5%	0%
Absolute adjectives	1.5%	8.1%
pleonastic pronouns	8 occurrences	0 occurrences

N.B. The adjectival positioning figures for *Susan* are mathematically depressed by this higher proportion of absolutes within the total adjective count. This relatively frequent occurrence of absolute adjectives is noteworthy.

Although the incidence of all anastrophic lines is the same for both poems, there is a greater tendency in *Susan* for noun-adjective constructions. The antiquity of *Susan* and the occurrence of post-modification in the a-verses (*i.e.* not for rhyming purposes) necessitates some consideration of the etymology of the adjectives and what might be their customary late fourteenth-century use. Table 5.05 shows the adjectives so used (*italicized*) in *Susan*.

**Table 5.05: Noun-adjective constructions in *Susan***

Line	Stanza	Text	Adjectives	Etymology <sup>20</sup>
1	1.01	There was in Babiloine a bern, in that borw riche	noun - adj	Inherited from Germanic
2	1.02	That was a leuw <i>iiertil</i> , and Joachim he hiht;	noun - adj	Old French
27	3.01	He hedde an orchard <i>newe</i> , that neiched wel nere,	noun - adj	Inherited from Germanic
72	6.07	The rose <i>ragged</i> on rys, richest on Rone,	noun – adj	Uncertain, possibly Scandinavian <i>i.e.</i> Germanic <sup>21</sup>
99	8.08	With wardons <i>winlich</i> and walshe notes <i>newe</i> ,	noun - adj	Old English. Of Germanic origin.
125	10.08	Vndur a lorere ful <i>lowe</i> that ladi gan leende,	noun - adj	Germanic
197	16.02	In A selken schert, with scholdres wel <i>schene</i> .	noun - adj	Old English. Of Germanic origin.
205	16.10	Thus with cautles <i>waynt</i> ,	noun - adj	French
293	23.07	Ayein to be the yilde-halle the gomes <i>vn-greith</i> ;	noun - adj	Germanic
303	24.04	And he him apeched sone with chekes wel <i>pale</i> :	noun - adj	Old French

The French adjectives might be expected to be positioned after the noun as the normal syntax of the period, but there is some evidence that pre-modification may have been common. The first two French adjectives are to be found used as pre-modifiers by Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*. Of similar antiquity to *Susan*, *The*

<sup>20</sup> As given in The Oxford English Dictionary On-line. Available at <http://www.oed.com> [accessed 2 March 2018].

<sup>21</sup> DOS suggests cf. Norw. *ragget shaggy*. *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* via *Dictionary of the Scots Language*. Available at <http://www.dsl.ac.uk> [accessed 20 April 2018].

*Nun's Priest's Tale* has the lines 'This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce / Seven hennes for to doon al his plesaunce' (ll. 2865 – 6); and 'Waynt', with its more common initial letter, appears in *The Miller's Tale* to describe Nicholas's plan as 'this queynte cast' (l. 3605).<sup>22</sup> The use of 'pale' in literature of the period is more variable but the Wycliffe Bible (c. 1348), for example, has in Revelations 6.8 'And loo! a paal hors, and the name Deeth to him that sat on him.'<sup>23</sup> Hence the post modifications in these cases can be regarded as manipulations to achieve rhyming.

The adjectives with Germanic or Scandinavian etyma are more likely to be found as pre-modifiers, and some assurance of this can be found in texts of the period as demonstrated in the examples in Table 5.06 below. The citations are taken from the Middle English Dictionary where the full details of the sources quoted may be found.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 5.06: Evidence of adjectives as pre-modifiers**

Adjective	Text	Source
newe	Nowe thanne takith, and makith a newe weyn	Wycliffite Bible (1382)
ragged	Ryden and rennen in ragged wedes.	<i>Piers Plowman</i> (c.1378)
winlich	pat wynnelych Lorde wonyes in heven.	Cleanness (c.1380)
schene	My schrowde and my schene weid schire to be schawin;	<i>Howlat</i> (1448)

## Section V: Rhetoric in *Awntyrs* and *Susan*

### Simile (similitudo) and metaphor (translatio)

Tables 5.07 and 5.08 below list the tropes in each poem.

<sup>22</sup> The line references are taken from Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer* third edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>23</sup> J. Forshall and F. Madden eds., *The Holy Bible by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, 4 vols. (1850).

<sup>24</sup> Middle English Dictionary. Available at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mec/> [accessed 4 April 2018].

**Table 5.07: Simile and metaphor in *Awntyrs*, stanzas 1 - 26 + 55**

Line	Stanza	Text	Device
25	2.12	On a mule as the mylke,	simile
76	6.11	As hit were mydnight myrke;	simile
109	9.05	Hit stemered, it stonayde, it stode as a stone,	simile
117	9.13	that gloed as the gledes.	simile
118	10.01	Al glowed as the glede the goste there ho glides,	simile
161	13.05	I was radder of rode then rose in the ron	simile
162	13.06	My lere as the lele lonched on hight.	simile
167	13.11	Muse on my mirroure;	metaphor
188	15.06	In bras and in brymston I bren as a belle.	simile
271	21.11	That wonderfull wheelryght,	metaphor
323	25.11	As eny spice ever ye yete."	simile
<b>Total</b>			<b>11</b>

The two metaphors amongst nine similes, the reference to the mirror of life (*speculum vitae*) and the allusion to the wheel of fortune, were much used in literature of the period. The similes are common alliterating collocations. There are fewer figures of speech in *Susan*:

**Table 5.08: Simile and metonymy in *Susan***

Line	Stanza	Text	Device
192	15.10	Hir hed was yolow as wyre	simile
212	17.04	In riche robus arayed, red as the rose;	simile
226	18.05	He was borlich and bigge, bold as a bare,	simile
284	22.11	"Whi spille ye Innocens blode?"	metonymy
305	24.06	Thou dotest nou on thin olde tos in the dismale.	metonymy
<b>Total</b>			<b>5</b>

The expression *olde tos* in the last line of the table is the rarest. It appears in an early version of 'The Judgement' from the *Wakefield Cycle* of mystery plays during the discussion between the two demons on the sin of sexual misbehaviour:

Primus Demon  
-----

Youre leyfys and youre females / ye brake youre wedlake;  
Tell me now what it vales / all that mery lake?  
Se so falsly it falys

Secundus Demon  
I dar vndertake  
Thai will tell no tales – bot so thai quake  
For moton  
He that gam gose  
Now namely on old tose.<sup>25</sup>

In the biblical version of Susan's story, Daniel calls the judge 'Inveterate dierum malorum' [a relic of evil days].<sup>26</sup> The youthful Daniel in the poet's interpretation mocks the judge with a disparaging synecdoche and suggests that he has attained the sexual silliness of old age:

Thou dotest nou on thin olde tos in the dismale. (l. 305)

### **Antithesis (oppositio)**

There is but one antithetic construction in the first episode of Awntyrs:

Whan he is in his majeste, moost in his might,  
He shal light ful lowe on the sesondes. (ll. 267 - 268)

The reference here is, of course, to the wheel of fortune as the ghost of Guinevere's mother reprises the medieval thinking that only God could for ever be supreme and even the mighty personage of Arthur would eventually be brought down. Antithesis in *Susan* is more frequent though four are clustered into a single stanza with a fifth in the next:

Neither in word ne in werk, in elde ne in youthe. (l. 251)

Was neuer mor serwful segge bi se nor bi sande. (l. 254)

Ne neuer a sorioire siht bi north ne bi south. (l. 255)

Alle my werkes thou wost, the wrong and the riht. (l. 265)

<sup>25</sup> 'The Judgement' in, A. C. Cawley ed., *The Wakefield Pageants in the Townley cycle: the Wakefield Cycle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), pp. 416-436, ll. 586-592.

<sup>26</sup> The Vulgate, Daniel 13.52.





Y haue twey douytris, that knewen not yit man; Y schal lede out hem to you, and mys vse hem as it plesith you, so that ye doon noon yuel to these men, for thei entridden vndur the schadewe of my roof.<sup>32</sup>

The symbolism is of purity, the circumstance one of vulnerable females sexually threatened, paralleling the story of Susanna. Medieval audiences would know these biblical stories and perceive the ambiguity of the expression, positioned as it is in the introductory stanzas to the familiar story of Susanna and the judges. As a wife, Susanna was not virginal but 'To God stod hire grete awe' (l. 25): the poet's audience would recognise her fear of breaking the seventh commandment given by God to Moses: 'Thou schalt not do letcherie' [You shall not commit adultery].<sup>33</sup>

***The rose... itheuwed with the thorn***

The closing lines of stanza five which describe the motive for the visits to the garden by the judges,

Whiles thei mihte Susan assay,  
To worchen hire wo. (ll. 64 - 65)

precede a description of the flora of Joachim's garden. The list of plants concludes, craftily, with another couplet,

The rose ragged on rys, richest on Rone,  
Itheuwed with the thorn trinant to sene. (ll. 72 - 73)

The poet, perhaps, is invoking the Roman myth of Rhodanthe who was pursued by two suitors into the temple of Diana. Annoyed by the behaviour of the men, Diana turns Rhodanthe into a rose and the two suitors into thorns.

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<sup>32</sup> Wycliffe Bible, Genesis 19.8.

<sup>33</sup> Wycliffe Bible, Deuteronomy 5.18.

## Section VI: Summary of the findings

From what chronological information can be gleaned from the earliest known copies of the two poems and, with some caution, the earliest references to them, it can be supposed that both poems could be the work of one person. But this comparison of the other parameters considered by this thesis raises some interesting arguments. There are differences which can be rationalised and similarities which, on further examination, prove to be dissimilarities.

### Strophic characteristics

An obvious variance between the two poems is the stanza form. In *Susan* the ninth line, a long line in *Awntyrs*, becomes the ‘bob’ of two syllables before the wheel of four short lines. Like *Awntyrs*, this line introduces the *c-rhyme* of the rhyme scheme but does not carry any alliteration. However, this stanza form is not unique amongst poems of the period and there is no reason why it should not have been the preferred form in this case.<sup>34</sup> By the same rationale, the demanding discipline of stanza-chaining, such a striking feature of *Awntyrs*, is not adopted in *Susan*. An inevitable consequence of the stanza structure of *Susan* is that the exuberant alliteration of *Awntyrs* cannot be emulated. Nevertheless, there are ten instances of continuing alliterative rhymes in *Susan* and, more significantly, the attention paid to alliteration within both long and short lines is almost identical to *Awntyrs*, as Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show. With respect to the end-rhyming (see Table 5.2), the ‘skill or care’, as Hanna describes the quality of a poem’s rhyming, is very similar in each poem and is not a point of difference as is the case with the bipartite *Awntyrs*.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> E.g. *The Quatrefoil of Love, Fortune, The Ballad of Kynd Kittock*.

<sup>35</sup> Hanna (1974), p. 23.

## Syntax

The syntax of the two poems does show some differences, both in the positioning of adjectives relative to the noun and their use as nouns. The greater tendency of the *Awntyrs* poet to use pleonastic pronouns is also a significant difference in writing style.

## Simile (similitudo) and metaphor (translatio)

J. P. Oakden, in a brief chapter on style in Middle English alliterative works, notes that 'early alliterative works are for the most part devoid of simile' and that later alliterative poets, whilst using simile, 'make little or no attempt to get away from conventional forms'.<sup>36</sup> The observations are true of both *Awntyrs* (Table 5.6) and *Susan* (Table 5.7).

## Narrative style

The uses of antithesis in *Susan* occur in what is the most affective passage in the poem, when Susanna assures Joachim of her faithfulness before he kisses her farewell:

Heo fel doun flat on the flore, hir feere whon heo fond,  
 Carped to him kyndeli, as heo ful wel couthe:  
 "Iwis I wrathed the neure, at my witand,  
 Neither in word ne in werk, in elde ne in youthe."  
 Heo keuered vp on hir kneos, and cussed his hand:  
 "For I am damned, I ne dar disparage thi mouth."  
 Was neuer mor serwful segge bi se nor bi sande,  
 Ne neuer a soriore siht bi north ne bi south;  
 Tho Thar,  
 Thei toke the Fetres of hir feete,  
 And euere he cussed that swete:  
 "In other world schul we mete."  
 Seid he no mare. (ll. 248 - 260)

The everyday antitheses of *elde* and *youthe*, *se* and *sande*, and *north* and *south* together with the collocation *word* and *werk* take on a plaintive character in the words of Susanna. The emotion conveyed by such simple phrasing in this scene is

<sup>36</sup> Oakden (1968), Vol. 2, pp. 399-400.

another indication of the skill of this poet. Note also how the enjambement from lines nine to ten also carries forward the alliteration.

Digression, absent in the first episode of *Awntyrs*, is used sparingly but effectively by the poet in *Susan*. The stanza just discussed is a digression from the biblical account, but it enhances the narrative. There is a further digressive passage which, at a critical point in the narrative, launches into a suspenseful descriptive passage. At the end of stanza five as the judges prepare, 'To worchen hire wo', the poet begins a four-stanza diaeresis of the flora and fauna of the garden (l. 65). This extensive dinumeratio is a digressive technique not used in *Awntyrs* (nor in *Gologras* nor *Rauf*) though it is also a feature of *Howlat*. Digression is a differentiating feature between the two episodes of *Awntyrs* described in Chapter Three of this thesis; in this case, the dissimilarity between the poems is enhanced by lists of species.

The *Susan* poet occasionally substitutes the reportage-style Latin prose of the Vulgate with wry expressions. The adjective *lillie-whit*, whilst conventional in either of its two meanings if the context is obvious, is cleverly deployed in a way to make it ambiguous. The expression *the rose ... ltheuwed with the thorn* in the final lines of the flora of Joachim's garden is allegorical of the situation that threatens Susanna.

## VII: Conclusion

Setting aside Amours' lexical evidence as unreliable, there remain a number of aspects of the poems which neither confirm nor deny joint authorship and others whose significance needs discussion.

The origins of the poems could have overlapped chronologically in the closing decades of the fourteenth and the first decade of the fifteenth centuries. *Susan's* inclusion in the Vernon manuscript and the reference to the title by Andrew of

Wyntoun puts its composition as the earlier of the two poems. Hanna's earliest date of 1400 for *Awntyrs* could allow a twenty-year or more span for their writing – well within the writing career of the same person. A geographic congruency cannot be so precisely established. *Awntyrs*'s links with the Carlisle area are convincing evidence of a poet from, or with connections with to, the Northwest. *Susan* is also Northern in origin but that in itself is not especially significant: much of the alliterative poetry of the period has its origins in the North of England or Southern Scotland. An additional linguistic observation is that the elements of syntax considered do show some important differences.

The strophic features have interesting similarities and some fundamental, though explainable, differences. The stanza form used is an obvious difference, though that would have been a matter of choice as would the techniques of line and stanza linking in *Awntyrs*. The attention or skill applied to end-rhyming and alliteration within both long and short lines is almost identical, but a variant in *Awntyrs* is the prominence of the alliteration. Concatenation and iteration account for much of the alliterative impact but the poet additionally carries the same syllable across several successive lines. However, the poetry in *Susan* can emulate that of *Awntyrs* to achieve the same alliterative density, even with the foreshortened line nine.

*Awntyrs*

"With riche dayntes on des thi diotes are dight,  
 And I, in danger and doel, in dongone I dwelle,  
 Naxte and nedefull, naked on night.  
 There folo me a ferde of fendes of helle;  
 They hurle me unhendely; tei harm me in hight;  
 In bras and in brymston I bren as a belle.  
 Was never wrought in this world a woefuller wigh  
 Hit were ful tore any tonge my turment to telle;  
 Now wil Y of my turment tel or I go.  
 Think heartly on this –  
 Fonde to mende thi mys.  
 Thou art warned ywys:  
 Be war my wo." (ll. 183 - 195)

*Susan*

The briddes in Blossoms thei beeren wel loude,  
 On olyues and amylliers, and al kynde of trees,  
 The popiayes perken and pruyen for proude,  
 On peren and pynappel thei ioyken in pees;  
 On croppen of canel keneliche thei croude,  
 On grapes the goldfinch thei gladen and gleees;  
 Thus schene briddus in schawe chewen heore schroude,  
 On Firres and fygers thei fongen heore fees,  
 In Fay;  
 Ther weore growyng so grene  
 The date with the Damsene  
 Turtills tronned on trene  
 By sixti I saygh. (ll. 79 - 91)

Whilst the poetic skill stanza for stanza is comparable, there is an added layer of complexity introduced by the concatenation and iteration in *Awntyrs*. But this does not preclude joint authorship with *Susan*. Indeed, perhaps writing the work many years after *Susan*, the poet relished a new challenge. The suggestion here is that a writer is developing his skill over time, but there is one point of comparison between the poems which casts doubt on this hypothesis – their narration.

To write successfully the form of alliterative verse in these stanzas is a matter of following conventions, building alliterative collocation and rhyme-word 'banks', and practice. The skill is one of an acquired technique; hence the difficulty of establishing a relationship between one poem and another. The artful application of rhetorical figures and other expressions in *Susan*, however, seems beyond formal study or book-learning. There is an inherent facility here, an intellectual talent which is inborn. The examples of tropes in the two poems, despite the low number in the biblical story, when critically reviewed, reveal such innate differences of narrative style.

Whilst none of the evidence presented here can rule out the possibility that both poems are the work of one man, there are stylistic inconsistencies which cannot be explained by the elective decisions or the skills development of one writer. The conclusion in the light of these doubts must be that the works are probably from the pens of different poets.

## CHAPTER SIX: *THE BUKE OF THE HOWLAT*

### Section I: The poet

Thus for ane dow of Dunbar drewe I this dyte,  
 Dowit with ane Dowglas, and boith war thai dowis  
 In the forest forsaide, frely parfytte,  
 Of Terneway tender and tryde, quhoso trast trowis.  
 Way my wit as my will, than suld I wele wryte,  
 Bot gif I lak in my leid that nocht till allow is,  
 Ye wyse for your worschipe wryth me no wyte.  
 Now blyth ws the blist barne that all berne bowis;  
 He len was lyking and lyf euerlestand.  
 In mirthful moneth of May  
 In myddis of Murraye,  
 Thus on a tyme be Ternway  
 Happinnit Holland. (ll. 989 – 1001)

From this final stanza we know by whom the work was written, of where he was writing, perhaps why; and by datable references elsewhere in the poem, it can be deduced when it was written. The poet identifies himself in the final line of his work as 'Holland'. One Richard Holland became amanuensis to Archibald Douglas, Earl of Moray around the time that the poem was written: he styles himself in a feudal land conveyance of 1449 (a 'sasine' in Scots law) as rector of Halkirk, notary public and secretary to the Earl of Moray.<sup>37</sup> Nothing is known of Richard Holland's early life or family, though there is circumstantial evidence that he originated from Orkney and was ordained in Caithness Cathedral. The earliest reference to him is in a legal copy of a feudal bond drawn up for the Earl of Ross by "Ricardus de Holande, clericus Cathaniensis' (no benefice specified), notary by imperial authority, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1441." Later documents suggest that Holland led a diverse and often polemical career as he pursued advancement. In 1444 he was accused of simony and spent several litigious years dealing with the consequences until he appears in the records as rector of Halkirk. This appointment is, at least in part, the motivation for the

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<sup>37</sup> This information and other aspects of Holland's career pertinent to his poetry writing which follow are liberally taken from M. M. Stewart, 'Holland of the Howlat', *The Innes Review*, 23(1) (1972), 3-15.



twenty-one-stanza panegyric of James Douglas (great-grandfather of Archibald) which, in the very centre of the poem, interrupts the story of the owl. And it is Archibald's wife, Elizabeth Dunbar who is referred to in the poem as the 'dow of Dunbar' (l. 989 above). Various livings, some contentious, followed until the 1460s when Holland was forced to flee, eventually to England, to join others of the Douglas family who had sought refuge there after the failed 'Black Douglas' uprising against James II. Nothing further is heard of him after 1482 by when, it is assumed, he had died.

Previously, though, in 1455 and after two years of squabbling over the benefice with a predecessor unwilling to relinquish the post, Holland became precentor, or cantor, of Moray Cathedral; this may tell us a little more of the man's artistic talent and the of poem itself. Marion Stewart has extracted the following information from the Sarum Customary to speculate that the work taken on by Holland, 'would require specialised liturgical and musical knowledge':

The cantor set the pitch of the singing: he it was who started the antiphon to the 'Magnificat' and 'Benedictus,' who began the processional chants and sequences and gave the key to the celebrant in a sung Mass. He had to see that the whole choir sang together in regular time and tune: he appointed each singer what he should sing in his turn; and was responsible for arranging chants appropriate to the various days and feasts in the calendar.<sup>38</sup>

Having delved into a little of the poet's working life, and before critically examining the poem in the light of the findings, the relationship of the poem to the others in the group is considered below.

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<sup>38</sup> Stewart (1972), p. 7. The Salisbury Customary is the book (though there are two versions) detailing the duties of the individual clergy members, and the customs to be followed for the administration and governance of Salisbury Cathedral in the Middle Ages. The procedures were originally drafted by Bishop Osmund in the eleventh century for Salisbury Cathedral. By the twelfth century, the Customary had been widely copied for use in the cathedrals and larger parish churches throughout England, Wales and Ireland, and was introduced into Scotland in the mid-thirteenth century.

## Section II: Some comparisons

Holland is not known to have written any poem other than *Howlat*, yet it is a substantial and intricate work, as will be shown. The following two comparative tables bring together the various principal elements of the four stanzaic alliterative poems discussed in the preceding chapters with those of *Howlat* in order to demonstrate the skill with which it is set down. Possible sources of his inspiration to write in such a difficult stanza form are also apparent.

### Historical comparisons

The composition date quoted in Table 6.01 below is that determined by Felicity Riddy from various datable references in the poem itself.<sup>39</sup> The earliest known form of the poem is a fragment (ll. 437 – 599) on what is confidently thought to be a leaf from a Chepman and Myllar pamphlet published in April 1508.<sup>40</sup> The composition date places the poem in a grouping with *Gologras* and *Rauf*, though Riddy opines that the poem, ‘is the earliest substantial poem of the alliterative revival in Scotland.’<sup>41</sup> The earliest complete source is a copy in the ‘Asloan manuscript’, written on paperstock datable between 1509 and 1524 and during the reign of James V of Scotland (d. 1542).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> F. Riddy, ‘Dating the *Howlat*’, *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 37 (1986), 1-10.

<sup>40</sup> Hanna (2014), pp. 1-3 gives an account of the discovery and examination of the fragment.

<sup>41</sup> Riddy (1968), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 16500.

Table 6.01: Historical and strophic comparisons

Poem	Composition date	Earliest source	Dialect	Rhyme % conform	Stanza linking %	No allitn. long %	No allitn. short %
Awntyrs 1	1400-1430	1422-1454 MS	N. England/ S. Scotland	85	100	0	27
Awntyrs 2	Post Awntyrs 1			55	59	0.4	49
Golagros	1450-1507	1508 print	N. England/ S. Scotland	90.5	0	1.7	48
Rauf	1450-1500	1572 print	Scotland	96.0	0.4? fortuitous	21	81
Susan	Late 14th	1400 MS (Vernon)	Northern England	100.0	0	1.3	44
<b>Howlat</b>	<b>1448</b>	<b>1508 print fragment</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>92.0</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>43</b>

### Strophic features

From Table 6.01 it can be seen that *Howlat* shares an attention to rhyming which is similar to its near contemporaries, *Gologras* and *Rauf*. The success rate of stanza linking resembles that of the second episode of *Awntyrs*, and the incidence of lines with no alliteration is akin to that of *Gologras*. The poem's combined strophic characteristics, therefore, set it apart from the rest of the group.

### Syntax

The figures in Table 6.02 below seem to indicate a syntactical style for *Howlat* that is similar to the second episode of *Awntyrs* and *Gologras*, though the penchant for using adjectives as nouns resembles that of the *Susan* poet.

Table 6.02: Syntactical comparisons

Poem	Anastrophe %	Adj – noun %	Noun-adj %	Adj – noun – adj % (No.)	Absolute Adjectives % (No.)	Pleonastic Pronouns (No.)
Awntyrs I*	11.4	72.75	24.25	1.5 (1)	1.5 (1)	(8)
Awntyrs II*	5.8	73.7	19.3	3.5	3.5 (2)	(2)
Golagros	5.9	73.5	19.3	3.8	3.4	(8)
Rauf	10.2	80.3	13.8	3.9	2.0	(8)
Susan	11.3	64.9	27.0	0	8.1	(0)
<b>Howlat</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>(0)†</b>

\*Awntyrs I = stanzas 1-26 + 55; Awntyrs II = stanzas 1-54

†some pleonasmus in ll. 954 - 957. (see commentary on rhetoric below)

Like the much earlier poem, *Susan*, there is a notable absence of pleonastic pronouns. These various comparisons point to an individual style, perhaps developed from a study of other alliterative works in circulation at the time. This possible influence of earlier alliterative poems on the composition of *Howlat* will be discussed further later in this chapter.

### **Section III: The structure and rhetoric of *Howlat***

An unfavourable opinion of *Howlat* can be formed at an initial reading, and some derogatory views of the poem have been cited in Chapter One of this thesis.<sup>43</sup> But those remarks also suggest that there is much to admire about the poem when the manner of its composition is understood. Indeed, but for the risk of attracting an accusation of plagiarism, this chapter could well be entitled ‘Holland and the Rhetoricians’: *Howlat* is a worked exemplum of medieval poetic precept studiously followed.<sup>44</sup>

#### **Holland’s structural design**

Holland seems to have been following the advice of the early thirteenth-century text of Geoffrey of Vinsauf:

If a man has a house to build, his impetuous hand does not rush into action. The measuring line of his mind first lays out the work, and he mentally outlines the successive steps in a definite order. The mind’s hand shapes the entire house before the body’s hand builds it.<sup>45</sup>

Rita Copeland draws attention to Chaucer’s borrowing of these same words to describe the careful planning of a scheme by Pandarus to bring about a liaison between Troilus and Criseyde:<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> With due acknowledgement to J. M. Manly, ‘Chaucer and the the Rhetoricians’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XI (1926), 95-113.

<sup>45</sup> M. Nims., ed., *Poetria Nova of Geoffrey of Vinsauf* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1967), pp. 16 – 17.

<sup>46</sup> Rita Copeland, *loc. cit.*, p. 132.

For every wyght that hath a hows to founde  
 Ne rennet nought the werk forto bygynne  
 With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde'  
 And send his hertes lyne out fro withinne  
 Alderfirst his purpos forto wyne:  
 Al this Pandareyn his herte thoughte,  
 And caste his werke ful wysly or he wrought.<sup>47</sup>

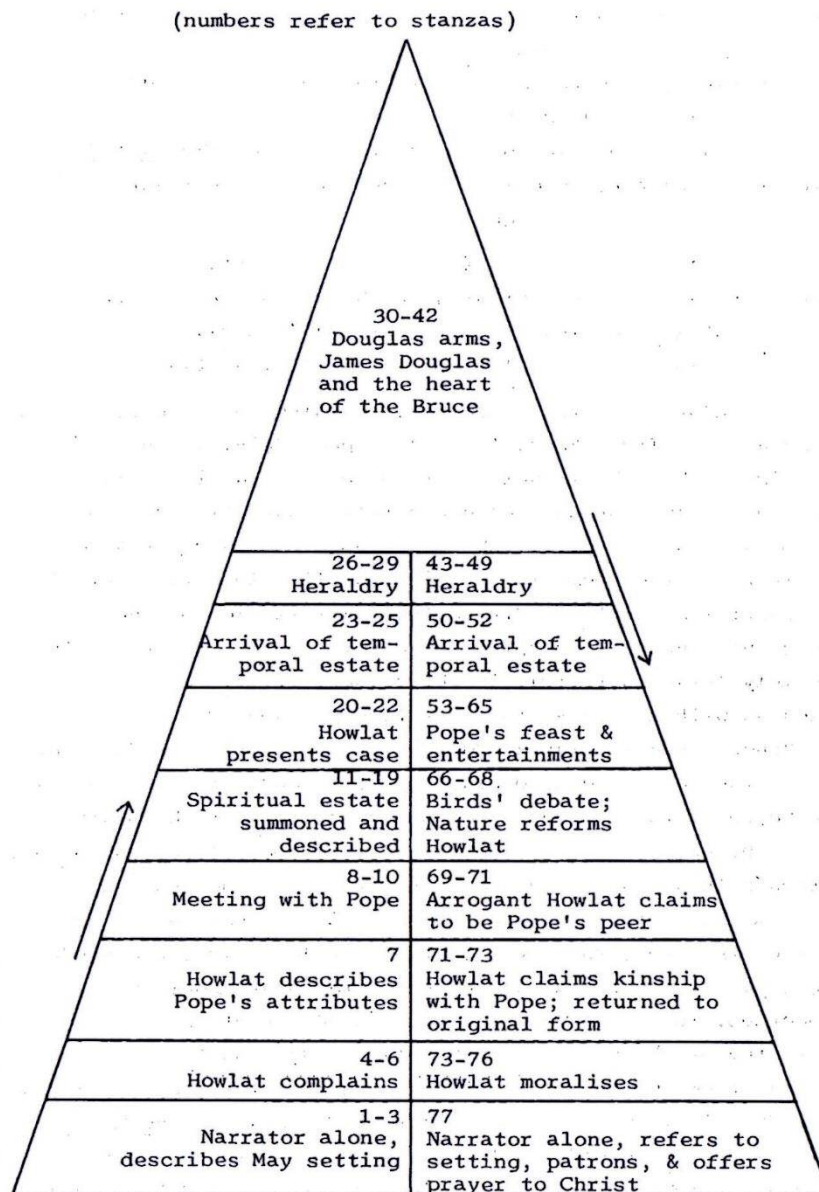
The carefully planned 'building' of Howlat is evident from a numerical exploration of its narrative structure by Margaret Mackay who also suggests that there are allusions to medieval religious numerology in its organisation.<sup>48</sup> Mackay presents two diagrammatic representations of the poem's structure, the second of which most usefully illustrates the hypothesis of this thesis that Holland's poetic technique was book-learned. MacKay's diagram is shown below (Figure 6.01).

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<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. Maldwyn Mills (London: J. N. Dent, 2000), ll. 1.1065 – 71.

<sup>48</sup> M. MacKay, *The Alliterative Tradition in Middle Scots Verse* (PhD thesis). University of Edinburgh, 1975. The pyramid is a helpful representation of the poem's structure for the purposes of following the argument in this thesis. MacKay's observations on the religious numerology apparent in the poem, whilst fascinating, are not relevant here.

Figure 6.01: A representation of the structure of *Howlat* by MacKay<sup>49</sup>



After his 'General remarks on Poetry', Geoffrey counsels in 'Ordering the material':

Let that part of the material which is first in the order of nature wait outside the gates of the work. Let the end, as a worthy precursor, be first to enter and take up its place in advance, as a guest of more honourable rank, or even as master.

Holland as the 'master' introduces and concludes his work, leaving the owl to 'wait outside the gates' until the fourth stanza. Geoffrey's advice for the development of a poem continues:

<sup>49</sup>Mackay (1975), p. 37.

The way continues along two routes: there will be either a wide path or a narrow, either a river or a brook. You may report the matter with brevity or draw it out in a lengthy discourse.<sup>50</sup>

Holland chooses to follow the advice literally despite the rhetorician's representation of his advice almost entirely through metaphor. However, the poet's three-stanza meander along the *rich rever* (l. 14) does lead us into an elaborate avian allegory, taking up the suggestion,

In order to amplify the poem, avoid calling things by their names; use other designations for them. Do not unveil the thing fully but suggest it by hints.<sup>51</sup>

But the fable proves to be the 'gate' to another, seemingly tenuously related, section, as is shown immediately below the apex of the pyramid (fig. 6.1). At the centre of the poem, approached and exited by way of descriptions of historical armorial bearings, is a panegyric lauding the ancestors and brothers of Archibald Douglas. The account of how James Douglas ('the Good', d.1330) undertook to fulfil the dying wish of Robert the Bruce by carrying his heart to the Holy land for burial is 'quite literally in the "heart" of the poem', as Hanna points out.<sup>52</sup> Further discussion on the panegyric will follow below in Section III of this chapter.

Returning to the fable and its 'Amplification', as Geoffrey describes the development of a poem, Holland populates his spiritual and temporal estates with over sixty kinds of birds, and with more than a hint of satire.<sup>53</sup> The designations are clever and often amusing. The sight of an owl in daylight was an omen of evil in medieval times and the choice of the peacock as pope also may be an obvious designation, but there are other, subtler castings:

Bad send for his secretar and his sele sone.  
That he was the turtour trewest,  
Ferre faithfull and fast. (ll. 126 – 128)

<sup>50</sup> Nims (1967), p. 23.

<sup>51</sup> Nims (1967), p.24.

<sup>52</sup> Hanna (2014), p. 35. The account occupies stanzas 37-39 of the poem's 77 stanzas.

<sup>53</sup> Bird imagery has its origins in classical literature and is a feature of three of Chaucer's works – *The Parliament of Fowls*, *The House of Fame* and *The Nun's Priest's Tale*.

The trewe turtour has tane with the tythandis;  
Done dewlie his det as the deir demyt. (ll. 135 – 136)

The trewe turtour and traist, as I eir tauld.. (l.287)

Besides their traditional role as messengers of peace, members of the dove family are noted for their strong pair bonding and Holland, as a priest, would have been familiar with the ‘Song of Solomon’ and its repeated references to the dove.<sup>54</sup> The canticle, in its Jewish origins, was read as an expression of the relationship between God and Israel, and, later by Christians, as an allegory for Christ’s commitment of fidelity to the Church as his bride. Holland is suggesting a similar relationship between the avian pope and his *trewe turtour and traist*. In a wryer example of Holland’s wit, there is a certain irony to the choice of the clerical officer to judge cases of misbehaviour by priests, often of a sexual nature:

The crows capone, a clerk vnder cleir weidis,  
Full of cherite, chast and vnchangeable,  
Was officiale, but les, that the law leidis  
In causs consistoriale that ar coursable. (ll. 222 – 224)

The capon is, of course, a castrated cockerel deprived of any hormonal drive for sexual activity. Holland’s appointed judge, presumably, would have little understanding of or sympathy with ‘human’ failings in this respect.

Within the allegorical narrative, and true to Geoffrey’s instruction to ‘use other designations’, there are also a number of alliterating metaphors: some are inventively apposite to the narrative. Holland refers to bird song as, ‘that noys in nest’ (l. 47) and the Douglas warriors, recognisable by their arms are, ‘Of Scotland the wer-wall’ (l. 382). The owl, post transformation, is ‘Flour of all fowlis’ (l. 899) and imagines himself to be ‘in Luciferis lair’ (l. 905). But somewhat reminiscent of Guinevere’s ghostly mother in *Awntyrs*, the owl warns those who do not heed his

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<sup>54</sup> ‘The Song of Solomon’ *The Holy Bible* (Revised Standard Version), 1.15, 2.12 (here specifically the turtle dove), 4.1, 5.2, 5.12, 6.9.



'merour' that they too will be no more than a 'nakit cors bot of clay a foule carioun' (ll. 970 and 981).

Geoffrey of Vinsauf continues his instruction on rhetorical devices - here to introduce 'delay' to the narrative:

In order that you may travel the more spacious route, let apostrophe be the fourth mode of delay. By it you may cause the subject to linger on its way, and in it you may stroll for an hour.<sup>55</sup>

The suggestion to 'cause the subject to linger on its way' is taken up enthusiastically by Holland, but he delegates the lines of apostrophe to the bird choir in their hymn to the Virgin Mary:

Haile! Temple of the Trinite, [tro]nit in hevin;  
 Haile! Moder of our maker and medicyn of mys;  
 Haile! Succour and salf for the synnis of sevyne;  
 Haile! Bute of our baret and beld of our blis.  
 Haile! Grane full of grace that growis so ewyn,  
 Ferme our seid to the set quhar thi son is.  
 Haile! Lady of all ladyis, lichtest of leme.  
 Haile! Chalmer of chastite;  
 Haile! Charbunkle of cherite;  
 Haile! Blissit mot thow be  
 For thi barneteme. (ll. 716 - 728)

The succeeding stanza continues the anaphora and apostrophe in a similar fashion.

A technique for amplification used by Holland, and seen in other alliterative works, is that of diaeresis – the division of a genus into its species:<sup>56</sup> This stanza showcases his musical knowledge.

All thus Our Lady thai lovit with lyking and lyst  
 Menstralis and musicianis mo than I mene may;  
 The psaltery, the sytholis, the soft sytharist,  
 The crovde and the monycordis, the gittyrnis gay,  
 The rote and the recordour, the rivupe, the rist,  
 The trumpe and the talburn, the tympane but tray,  
 The lilt-pipe and the lute, the fydill in fist,  
 The dulset, the dulsacordis, the schalme of assay,  
 The amyable organis vsit full oft;  
 Claryonis lowde knellis,  
 Portatius and bellis;  
 Cymbaclausis in the cellis  
 That soundis so soft. (ll. 755 - 767)

<sup>55</sup> Nims (1967), p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Susan lists the bird and plant species in Joachim's garden (ll. 6.02-9.13).

Geoffrey also illustrates his advice on how 'one may celebrate the feasts of kings and joys of the feast' with a musical interlude:

You could see musical instruments follow the sport, each with its own way of pleasing: the feminine flute, the masculine trumpet, the hollow drum, the clear bright cymbals the mellow symphonia, the sweet-sounding pipe, the cithera sleep-inducing, and the merry fiddle.<sup>57</sup>

However, Holland's instruments only capriciously 'follow the sport... with its own way of pleasing': only one third of his twenty-four instruments are given any adjectival modification, but the Holland's adherence to Geoffrey's paradigm indicates a close connection with *Poetria Nova*.

Antithesis, or 'opposition', is Geoffrey's final recommendation under the heading of amplification:

... any statement at all may assume two forms: one makes a positive assertion, the other negates its opposite. The two modes harmonize in a single meaning; and thus two streams of sound flow forth, each flowing along with the other.<sup>58</sup>

Holland's response is to describe the divided opinion amongst the spiritual leaders about the owl's plea for their intervention in his predicament.

The prelatiþ þar apperans proponit generale.  
 Sum said to and sum fra,  
 Sum nay and sum ya,  
 Baith pro and contra;  
 Thus argewe thai all. (ll. 269 -273)

But Geoffrey also recognises the need for abbreviation:

If you wish to be brief, first prune away those devices mentioned above which contribute to an elaborate style; let the entire them be confined within narrow limits. ... Let *emphasis* be spokesman, saying much in few words. ... Give no quarter to *repetition*.<sup>59</sup>

The wheel lines of the thirteen-line stanza form suit this purpose well. Holland uses these short lines several times to move on the narrative, sometimes quite explicitly:

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<sup>57</sup> Nims (1967), p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> Nims (1967), pp. 39-40.

<sup>59</sup> Nims (1967), p. 40.

Bot all that names to nevyne as now it nocht neidis;  
 It war prolix and lang and lenthing of space,  
 And I haue mekle mater in meter to glos  
 Of aneother sentence,  
 And waike is my eloquence.  
 Tharfor in haist wil I hens  
 To the purpos.

Of that purpos in the place be pryme of the day. (ll. 33 - 40)

As if to emphasise the brevity to follow, the pupil rhetorician begins with a blatantly tautological line (l. 34 above). Similarly, he uses the wheel lines to introduce the owl's plea to the gathering of spiritual leaders:

Of thar come the haile caus  
 Was said into schort sawis,  
 As you will hear. (ll. 245 - 247)  
 As ye heir sall.

And he introduces an account of James Douglas's service to his dead king claimed, misleadingly, to be devoid of prolixity:

In his mast misteir,  
 And sal be said to yow heir  
 Into schort sawis. (ll. 34.11 – 34.13)

And so into the heart of the poem, the panegyric.

#### **Section IV: The rhetoric of the panegyric**

The numerological central position in the poem of the eulogy of the ancestors of Archibald Douglas is, as described earlier in this chapter, no accident.<sup>60</sup> But before an exploration of Holland's motives for this important component of his poem, some consideration of the literary precedent to which he may have had recourse is appropriate. John Burrow introduces an account of the development and decline of eulogistic poetry from 'Pindar to Pound'.

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<sup>60</sup> See the appendix to this chapter for information about the Douglas family members who were the subjects of Holland's poem.

Homer and Pindar were early masters of the poetry of praise, many varieties of which were to flourish throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance, in panegyrics, hymns, epics, romances, love lyrics, elegies, saints' lives, allegories and the like.<sup>61</sup>

More specifically of medieval eulogistic poetry, Burrow notes that

Praise of contemporary kings and lords appears hardly at all in Middle English until the turn of the thirteenth century – in part, no doubt, because poets in the earlier period were more likely to address such subjects in Latin or French than in the lowly vernacular.<sup>62</sup>

For an example of Scottish praise poetry, Burrow draws on the hyperbolic writing of William Dunbar (born 1459 or 1460–died by 1530), a poet in the court of James IV.<sup>63</sup> *Howlat* predates Dunbar but Holland may have had in mind the much older origins of panegyric in Scotland. This could explain the puzzling diversion provided by the raucous intrusion of the 'bard owt of Irland with banachadee':

Sa come the ruke with a rerd and a rane roch,  
A bard owt of Irland with banachadee;  
Said, 'Gluntow guk dynyd dach hala mischy doch;  
Raike hir a rug of the rost, or scho sall ryme the.  
Misch macmory ach mach mometir moch loch; (ll. 62.01 – 62.05)

Previous critics such as Benjamin Hudson have suggested that Holland's rook, with his list of Irish kings and impolite table manners, merely represents a contemporaneous vogue to ridicule Gaelic genealogical panegyric.<sup>64</sup> Robert Crawford is much of the same opinion, additionally suggesting that drunkenness is being portrayed.<sup>65</sup>

But Felicity Riddy has made some sense of Holland's representation of a Gaelic speaker attempting to be understood in Scots.<sup>66</sup> Of relevance to this research is her suggestion that,

<sup>61</sup> J. A. Burrow, *The Poetry of Praise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 1 – 5.

<sup>62</sup> Burrow, *loc. cit.* p. 63.

<sup>63</sup> Burrow, p. 65.

<sup>64</sup> B. T. Hudson, 'Historical Literature of Early Scotland', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 26 (1991), 141-155 (p. 154).

<sup>65</sup> Robert Crawford, *Scotlands Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), pp. 885 – 86.

<sup>66</sup> Notes to the *Buke of the Howlat* in P. Bawcutt and F. Riddy eds., *Longer Scottish Poems Volume One 1375 - 1650* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987) pp. 336-337.

The whole line is possibly a rendering of Gael. *Mise Mac Muirheadhaigh muintir Muigh Loch(a)* 'I am Macmuirheadhaigh of the people of Magh Loch'.<sup>67</sup>

Riddy goes on to associate the rook's name with the 'MacMuirihics', an eminent bardic family who were the hereditary poets of the Lords of the Isles. M. Pia Coira gives similar information about the family in a chapter on the historical background of Gaelic court poetry in Scotland, but names them as Mac Muireadhaigh.<sup>68</sup> So Holland features the rook to bring to mind the Irish origins of classical Gaelic court poetry in Scotland and the bardic family's esteemed ancestor, Muireadhach Ó Dálaigh, who left Ireland for Scotland in the thirteenth century.<sup>69</sup> Sounding like a drunken Gael trying to speak Scots the rook may be, but he is a reminder that panegyric was once the work of skilled practitioners, as Holland would wish to appear to his lord.

The tradition of panegyric in Gaelic poetry has its origins in the royal courts of Ireland and arrived in Scotland, it is traditionally believed, with the Gaels around 500 AD. The Irish *filidh* (sing. *file*) were an elite order (often hereditary) of scholar poets who served the wealthier Irish courts also as chroniclers, genealogists, philosophers and political advisors to their lords. The Gaelic *filidh* were extremely skilled, writing verse in the complex syllabic metres of Gaelic poetry. An important duty which fell to them was the composition of panegyrics, particularly when the right to rule of a new king or noble was to be established at a ceremonial inauguration.

By Holland's time in the mid-fifteenth century, however, the Gaelic language had all but disappeared from the central and eastern coastal lowlands of Scotland, though it continued to be spoken in the Highlands and the North West. Some Highland clan chiefs continued to retain court bards – though these were of lesser

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>68</sup> M. P. Coira, *By Poetic Authority: The Rhetoric of Panegyric in Gaelic Poetry of Scotland to c. 1700* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press Ltd., 2012), p. 9. This and other information on the history of Gaelic court poetry, here drastically condensed, is taken from this text.

<sup>69</sup> Coira, p. 8.

social status than their predecessors, the *filidh*. Scottish monarchs and the wealthier houses continued to employ non-Gaelic poets writing in Scots or English who ‘were well aware that poetry was an instrument of political power and used it as such.’<sup>70</sup> This notion is true of many literary traditions but is of some significance with respect to Richard Holland and will be discussed further in Section IV of this chapter.

Although it is unlikely that Holland was able to read poems in Gaelic (the Orcadian dialect is influenced by Norse rather than Gaelic), he presumably had some knowledge of the language, at least enough to parody it, and a familiarity with panegyric traditions. Crawford states that Holland worked for some time at Abriachan near Loch Ness where he would have been surrounded by Gaelic speakers.<sup>71</sup> Holland’s tribute to the Douglas’s follows the paradigm and motifs of praise poetry establishing the nobility and heroism of an ancestor. Pia Coira usefully provides a comprehensive list of such motifs from which the following are to be found in Holland’ account of his Lord’s ancestor’s loyalty to the crown.<sup>72</sup>

**banner** a motif closely connected with the **warrior** motif. In eulogies the poet may refer to the subject’s banners on the battlefield, in elegies to their inactive unused condition. (p. 352)

Holland’s motifs are heraldic devices, similar in function to banners, rather than banners proper. Having described the arms of the prelates, Holland introduces the first subject of his panegyric, James Douglas, and how his loyalty to Robert the Bruce introduced the blood red heart to the Douglas arms:<sup>73</sup>

Of the douchty Dowglas to dyte I me dres  
 Thar armes of ancestry honorable ay,  
 Quhik oft blythit the Bruse in his distres; (ll. 391 - 393)  
 -----  
 Forthi to the Dowglas that senye was send,  
 As lelest, all Scotland fra scaith to reskewe.  
 The siluer in the samyn half, trewly to tend,  
 In cleir corage in armes, quha the richt knewe

<sup>70</sup> Coira, p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> Crawford, loc. cit., p. 85.

<sup>72</sup> Coira, pp. 351-362. The page numbers of the extracted examples are given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>73</sup> See the appendix to this chapter for an image of the Douglas arms.

The bludy hart that thai bere the Brus at his end, (ll.432 - 436)

**written word** a reference to old written documents as containing proof of the case argued by the poet. (p. 362)

Reid the writ of thar werk to your witnes;  
Furth on my mater to muse I mufe as I may. (ll. 395 - 396)

This type of referencing to a written authority is, of course, found elsewhere in alliterative narrative:

In the tyme of Arthur an aunter betydde,  
By the Turne Wathelan, as the boke telles. (Awntyrs, ll. 1 - 2)

**character qualities** the subject is praised for his character qualities. (p. 353)

There are allusions to the loyalty and courage of James throughout the panegyric but the most explicit are those in which he is bestowed the task of carrying the heart of the dead king to the Holy Land:

With lordis of Scotland, Ierit, and the laif,  
As worthy wysest to waile in worschipe allowit,  
To Iames, lord Dowglas, th[ai] the gre gaif,  
To ga with the kingis hart. Tharwith he nocht growit, (ll.446 - 449)

**true faith** the representation of the subject as the defender of the true faith, typically the Catholic religion. (p. 360)

The whole panegyric is suffused with Christian references, but Holland makes an overt indication that his subject is a defender of his Christian (and Catholic) faith:

Now bot I semle for this saull with Sarazenis mycht,  
Sall I never sene be into Scotland!  
Thus in defence of the faith, he fure to the fecht  
With knychtis of Cristindome to kepe his con[n]and. (ll. 484 - 487)

**genealogy** recitation of the subject's genealogy, to proclaim his prestige, to prove his claim, or both.

Holland is a little more subtly prolix and uses the device of describing the histories of the armorial shields of his employer's (or potential employer's) ancestors and his brothers, Hugh (*Anonethir erll, of Ormond*, l 47.01) and John.<sup>74</sup> Hence:

**Youth no impediment** a motif arguing that the subject's youth is no impediment to his attainment of his people's leadership.

And richt so did the ferd quhar he furth fure,  
Yaipe, thocht he yong was, to faynd his offens;  
It semyt that thai sib war, forsuth I assure. (ll. 601 - 603)

Holland is referring to John of Balvanie who was the youngest son of James 'the Gross', but a boy at the time the poem was written.<sup>75</sup>

With an observation on the close linkage of the successive heraldic devices, perhaps implying a noble synergism now bestowed on his patron, the Earl of Moray, from his ancestors, the Earls of Douglas, Holland concludes the panegyric:

Thir four scheldis of pryce into presence  
War chenyeit so chevalrus that no creatur  
Of lokis not lynis mycht lous worth a lence. (ll. 604 - 606)

## Section V: Other sources of inspiration

The panegyric is embedded in a moralistic fable in which the natural order is challenged only for hubris soon to precipitate a restoration of order. But how are they interconnected? Matthew MacDiarmid persuasively integrates the central panegyric into the fable to read the whole poem as, 'a lengthy allusion to the great House of Douglas, soon to be forfeited.'<sup>76</sup> Hanna examines the narrative of the panegyric to demonstrate how Holland draws from both the *Chroniques* of Jean Froissart and

<sup>74</sup> An ancestral chart of the Black Douglas clan may be found in the appendix to this chapter.

<sup>75</sup> Archibald's youngest brother, John, was in fact the fifth son of James. For some reason Holland fails to mention James Douglas (Archibald's twin). MacDiarmid (*v.i.*) suggests that this is because the poem predates the military achievements of James – but why, then, mention John?

<sup>76</sup> M. P. MacDiarmid, 'Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*: An Interpretation', *Medium Ævum*, 28 (1969), 277-290.



John Barbour's *Bruce*.<sup>77</sup> Hanna also identifies some details which are not documented in either source and may be a product of Holland's imagination:

The hert costlye he couth clos in a cler cace  
 And held all hale the behest he hecht to the king:  
 Come to the Holy Graf, throw Goddis gret grace,  
 With offerandis and vrisounis and all vther thing,  
 Our salautouris sepultur and the samyn place  
 Quhar he rais, as we reid, richtuis to ryng.  
 With all the relykis raith that in that rvme was,  
 He gart hallowe the hart and syne couth it hyng  
 About his hals full hende and on his awne hart. (ll. 469 - 477)

Whilst Barbour provides the information about the reliquary which James carried around his neck, the suggestion that it was so hung as to rest on his heart is Holland's own. These lines also record that James fulfilled his pledge to have Bruce's heart venerated at the Holy Sepulchre, a version which is not born out by documented history.

In the course of the argument for his reading of *Howlat*, McDiarmid demonstrates how Holland, for his avian fable, had recourse to precedents by Chaucer, Alain of Lille, Odo of Sherington (Cheriton) and others.<sup>78</sup> Hanna supports McDiarmid's interpretation of the poem and provides additional evidence and discussion around Holland's probable sources for his work.<sup>79</sup> Hanna additionally sees echoes of *Awntyrs*, *Rauf* and *Le Roman de la Rose* in Holland's lines. Both critics draw parallels between the peacock pope's convocations and the three great Catholic General Councils of the fifteenth century.<sup>80</sup> These ecumenical Councils were also attended by temporal national powers and were called principally to grapple with problems of the aftermath of the Western schism which had left the authority of the papacy damaged and challenged by the Conciliar movement. The

<sup>77</sup> Hanna (2014), pp. 36-40.

<sup>78</sup> McDiarmid, pp. 281-283.

<sup>79</sup> Hanna (2014), pp. 23-45.

<sup>80</sup> i.e. Basle, 1431-39; Ferrara, 1438; Florence, 1439-43.

Conciliarists held that supreme authority in the Catholic Church should not lie with the Pope but with an ecumenical council of representatives of all branches of the Christian faith. The movement was seen as a means by which the Western and Eastern Christian Churches could be reunified, thus the Council of Basel was constituted on Conciliarist lines. Basel and the subsequent councils called by the Pope (Eugenius IV) at Ferrara and Florence (whilst the Conciliarists remained at Basel, even electing an alternative Pope, Felix V), were characterised by the struggle for supreme authority between the Councils and the papacy. Eventually Eugenius prevailed over Conciliarism when the Basel council dissolved itself in 1449.<sup>81</sup> The Scottish Kings, James I and II, were Conciliar supporters, and, as the power behind the throne, so was Clan Douglas.<sup>82</sup> Both McDiarmid and Hanna also make the link between the Conciliar cause in Scotland and the Councils; but neither explicitly remarks on the significance of Holland's allusions in the two avian convocations to the Councils with respect to their outcomes and Holland's own loyalty to the papacy. Holland's own feelings about conciliarism may be read in the peacock pope's councils.

The peacock pope's first meeting of the spiritual estate, called to consider the owl's complaint is clearly intended to be an ecumenical convocation:

I can nocht say sudanelye, so me Crist safe,  
Bot I sall calll my cardinalis and my counsall,  
Patriarkis and prophetis, of lerit the laif. (11.120 -1 22)

or all statis of kirk that vnder Crist standis  
To semble to his summondis, as it wele semyt. (11.133 - 134)

All manner of religioun, the les and the mair. (1.190)

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<sup>81</sup> N. P. Tanner, *The Councils of the Church A Short History* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), pp. 64-71.

<sup>82</sup> J. H. Burns describes in some detail the Conciliar involvement of James, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Douglas, and Thomas Livingston, a leading Scottish attendee at Basle. (J. H. Burns, 'The Conciliarist Tradition in Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 42 (1963), 89-104 (pp. 93-97).

Holland ensures an understanding that the many branches of Christianity are to be brought together to consider what amounts to a challenge to the established natural order existing since the creation. The traditional Catholic belief was that the successors to St. Peter are the supreme heads of Christ's Church on earth.

Holland's first avian ecumenical council fails:

Thai couth not trete but entent of the temporale. (l. 277)

Similarly, the Council of Pisa of 1409, an ecumenical Council called by the Cardinals in an attempt to end the Western Schism, failed to restore a single Pope, concluding in its judgement (of itself) that:

It resembles no other council and has a place by itself in the history of the Church as unlawful in the manner in which it was convoked, unpractical in its choice of means, not indisputable in its results, and having no claim to represent the Universal Church.<sup>83</sup>

Historically, the more broadly representative Council was called to meet at Basel and Holland's peacock pope does likewise.

Tharfor thai counsall the pape to writ in this wys  
 To the athile emprior, souerane in saile,  
 To adres to that dyet to deme his awys –  
 With dukis and digne lordis, darrest in dale,  
 Erles of ancestry, and vtheris ynewe –  
 So that the spirituale staite  
 And the secular consait  
 Mycht all gang in a gait. (ll. 278 - 285)

The owl's appeal for help at the second avian Council meets with more success: its unanimity persuades Nature, against her better judgement, to 'To reforme the howlot of faltis full fell' (l. 875). The apparent success of this conciliary process is, inevitably, short-lived: the boorish behaviour of the now bizarrely fletched owl soon brings about a reversal. Under the supervision of Nature, who cannot resist, 'a lyte leuch hir allane', and confirming that, 'My first making ... was vnamendable' (ll. 927 – 928),

<sup>83</sup> 'Council of Pisa', *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 2012.

Available at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12112b.htm> [accessed 5 July 2016].

natural order is restored. At Basel too, there could have been success for conciliarism but for the unreasonable behaviour of individuals:

The Council of Basle might have done much to secure reforms, then so badly needed, and to restore confidence in ecclesiastical authority. From all sides it was assured of sympathy and support as the one remedy for the abuses which existed. But under the influence of extreme theories and theorists it allowed itself to be hurried into an inglorious struggle with the pope.<sup>84</sup>

Although it was not until 1449 that the authority of a single Pope was restored, Holland, writing around 1448, may have sensed that the Conciliar cause was, by then, doomed to failure and that the historically established order of Papal supremacy would return.

## **Section VI: A reading of the *Buke of the Howlat***

The preceding sections of this chapter have established, severally and together, that the *Buke of the Howlat* is a carefully crafted and purposeful work, perhaps better described as a poetic tract. It is also evident that its author, not accredited with any other extant or recorded poetic work, turned to a variety of resources for ideas, formats, and techniques to give expression to his own erudition. *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* informs us that alliterative poetry began to appear in Scotland in the mid-fifteenth century,

where this metrical technique remained a viable part of the central poetic tradition long after it was only a curiosity in an England dominated by Chaucerian court-verse ... for a century thereafter, every major Scots court-poet made at least one assay at alliterative verse.<sup>85</sup>

Holland, either already in, or yet aspiring to enjoy, the patronage of the Earl of Murray assumes the role of court-poet. As such, he chooses the fashionable verse form, the difficult, alliterative thirteen-line stanza, with the additional challenge of

<sup>84</sup> 'Council of Basle, *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 2012.

Available at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02334b.htm> [accessed 5 July 2016].

<sup>85</sup> Ralph Hanna, 'Alliterative Poetry' in D. Wallace ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 497.

concatenated stanzas. The strophic characteristics of *Howlat* most closely resemble *Susan*, though the encouragement to concatenate could stem from a familiarity with the first part of *Awntyrs*. He also incorporates within that verse form his own version of a traditional panegyric, flattering the Douglas clan's history directly and, by association, Archibald. More indirectly, by assuming the role of a court bard Holland also seeks to flatter. Since the fourteenth century, only the wealthiest houses were able to retain the so called 'vernacular poets' writing in Scots or English.<sup>86</sup> By extending his role as amanuensis to include that of court poet, Holland enhances the perceived status of Archibald's household.

But why the moralising fable which is, if McDiarmid's interpretation holds good (that it is a, 'lengthy allusion to the great House of Douglas, soon to be forfeited'), so ominous?<sup>87</sup> What motivates such presumption from an employee? A related genre, which flourished in Scotland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is that of the 'advice to princes' literature. This is one of the oldest literary genres of many cultures, including that of Gaelic Ireland, from whose tradition it may indeed have originally taken some inspiration.<sup>88</sup>

Holland is at once assuming the role of a scholar *file* as political advisor and anticipating a development in the output of the Scottish vernacular poets. So Holland is showcasing his usefulness to the Douglas family, but without directly criticising his patron: he leaves Archibald to read the allusion if he has the wit. But what also of the peacock's parallel Great Councils? To whom does Holland direct this insinuation? The discussion in Section V (pp. 134-138) of this chapter leaves the interpretation open but, considered alongside McDiarmid's reading, the direction is clear. As a

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<sup>86</sup> Coira, p.16.

<sup>87</sup> McDiarmid, p. 277.

<sup>88</sup> Coira, p. 17.

clergyman and a politically astute clergyman, Holland perhaps did not wholly sympathise with the conciliar view of the Douglas clan and their support for the anti-pope.<sup>89</sup> He disguises his own conservatism with gentle satire, but implicit in the peacock pope's attempt to resolve a grievance is a warning. Even if unanimity between the spiritual and temporal estates is eventually achieved, the resolution may be flawed and unstable if it subverts a natural order.

This twenty-first century interpretation of *The Buke of the Howlat*, and previously acknowledged twentieth-century readings, could not be more at odds with nineteenth-century opinion:

We cannot do better than adopt the common-sense opinion of Sir Walter Scott in a communication prefixed to Laing's edition that "Holland amused his leisure at Ternoway by compiling a poetical apologue, upon a plan used not only by Chaucer, but by many of the French minstrels, without any view whatever to local or national politics."

Though Amours did concede that,

If Holland had no set purpose in the selection of his subject, he certainly meant that a eulogy of the house of Douglas should be an essential part of a poem dedicated to the wife of a powerful son of that house.<sup>90</sup>

Even though Amours' assessment of Holland's work follows after an account of this man's remarkable career, the impression is one of a sycophantic, dilettante plagiarist: with a proper understanding of the poem, a quite different opinion emerges.<sup>91</sup> Certainly what is known of Holland's career and his determination to advance supports a view that one motive for the poem would have been to win preferment with Archibald; but there is nothing superficial or clichéd about the poem itself.

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<sup>89</sup> Hanna states that support for the anti-pope was unpopular in Scotland and 'certainly the Douglases had retired from active support of Felix V by the mid-1440's, before the poem was written – though they may have retained their conciliarist biases.' (Hanna (2014), p. 43.)

<sup>90</sup> Amours (1897), pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

<sup>91</sup> Amours' opinion is somewhat at odds with his careful, extensively annotated editing of his edition and his detailed study of the historical references contained in the poem.

The verse form chosen was fashionable, but nevertheless a difficult medium for an occasional amateur and one with no record of alliterative (or any other) composition: a choice made to impress. Whilst there are reminders of phrasing from earlier alliterative works such as *Susan*, *Awntyrs* and *Rauf*, many of the alliterative collocations have an originality occasioned by Holland's exhaustive collection of bird species and the narrative within the panegyric. The overall structure of the poem is meticulously planned and set down, literally, with mathematical precision. The narrative within that structure is fashioned as would a master of the poetic art, the pupil author possibly following the text of Geoffrey of Vinsauf himself. The rhetorical colouring, though formulaic in its deployment, is witty, especially in the carefully controlled satire. The panegyric strays from contemporaneous historical record to flatter; but it is made less obviously ingratiating by its adherence to traditional origins and the clever way in which it is introduced into the narrative. And the work in its entirety carries its author's disapproval and misgivings of the political and religious affiliations of his employer.

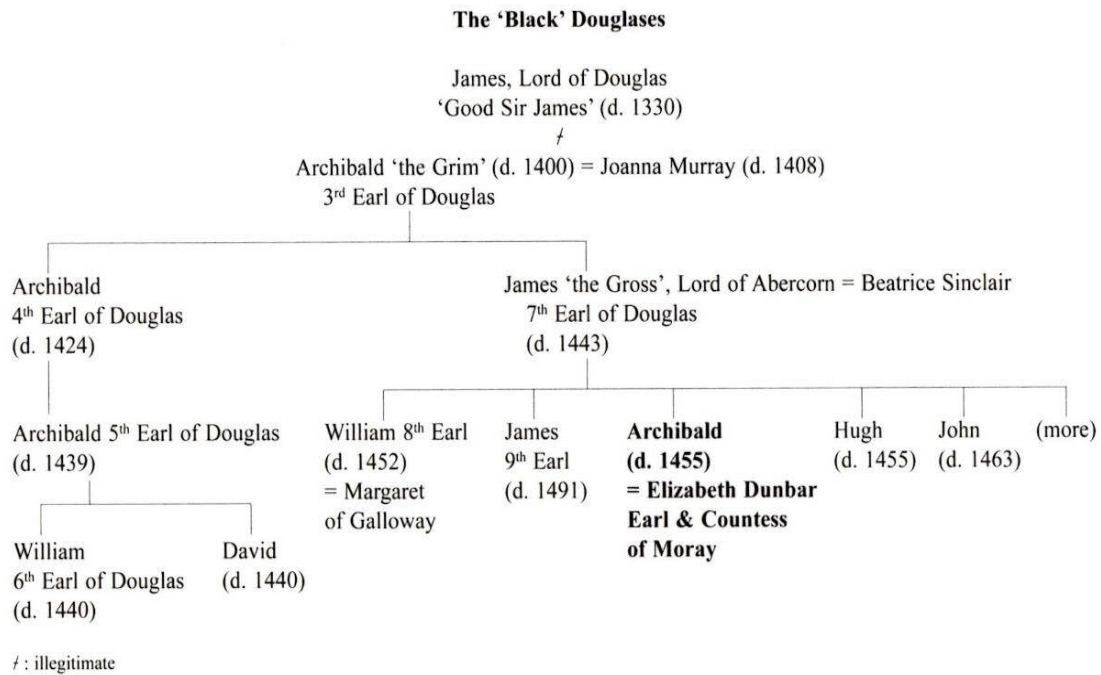
*Howlat* is a remarkable work and unique in several ways. It is Holland's only surviving literary opus, and if his sole composition it represents a considerable personal achievement. It has a structure quite unlike any other alliterative poem of the period and in its writing the poet is clearly following authoritative sources of guidance of composition. Whilst it is not unusual to be able to trace the literary and historical sources of a narrative, such a studied adherence to identifiable models has not been previously described. Holland's biography suggests that he was polemical and ambitious, his poem shows us that he was also an astute and erudite man: one of the *Awntyrs* poet's 'bokelered men'.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *Awntyrs*, l. 369.

## Appendix to Chapter Six

### The Douglas family in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries



Adopted from Hanna (2014)

### The Arms of the Douglas Family





## CHAPTER SEVEN: A SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND A REVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

### I: A summary of the findings<sup>93</sup>

Four anonymous alliterative poems have been closely scrutinised with the aim of learning more about their composition and to enable past claims for shared authorship to be evaluated. The methodology developed in the course of the research was also applied to a fifth poem whose author is known in order to understand more about its composition.

- i. **Chapter Three.** *The Awntyrs off Arthure* is shown to be the work of two different poets, the second episode of the poem having been grafted onto the first by moving what was the final stanza of the first episode to the final stanza of the poem as we now know it.
- ii. **Chapter Four.** F. J. Amours' 'inclination', in his 1897 collection of alliterative poems, to believe that that *Gologras* and *Rauf* were written by the same person is shown to be of doubtful substance because of its lack of evidence. This study refutes Amours' hypothesis through a more detailed analysis than he undertook using criteria other than his flawed lexical comparison. The opinion that *Gologras* is influenced by *Awntyrs* held by others, especially Hanna and Wingfield, is further explored to conclude that the poet drew heavily on the structure and themes of *Awntyrs* and both extended the scope of the adventure and improved on the rhyming.

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<sup>93</sup> References for the texts and critics cited here are given in the respective preceding chapters.

- iii. Chapter Five.** Several nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century scholars were of the opinion that *Susan* and *Awntyrs* (and other alliterative works) were the work of one man. Whilst the geography, estimated composition dates, and strophic characteristics might suggest this, the nature of the rhetoric in the poems indicates otherwise. Rhetoric is shown to be important differentiator of writing style.
- iv. Chapter Six.** An insight into the composition of Holland's *Howlat* is gained by reference to the precepts of medieval rhetoric and traditional panegyrics. A reading of *Howlat* by Mathew McDiarmid is further developed and evidenced to develop an understanding of the circumstances prompting the narrative of the fable and motives for the panegyric which is central to it.

## Section II: The methodology – a review

This exploration of the writing styles observed in a group of poems, reliably related only by their verse form and era, uses but a few basic elements of the techniques of literary stylistics but it has been encouraged and guided by the words of the stylistician Paul Simpson:

It is the full gamut of the system of language that makes all aspects of a writer's craft relevant in stylistics analysis. Moreover, stylistics is interested in language as a function of texts in context, and it acknowledges that utterances (literary or otherwise) are produced in a time, a place, and in a cultural and cognitive context. These 'extra-linguistic' parameters are inextricably tied up with the way a text 'means'.<sup>94</sup>

Time and place present particular difficulties for the analysis of the chosen group. Their precise dates of composition are but for one poem only a best estimate and

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<sup>94</sup> P. Simpson, *Stylistics A Resource Book for Students* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

there is likely to be over a century between the oldest and the latest of them. Time for the English language in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries brings an added complication – that of linguistic change. In her introduction to Middle English dialects Donka Minkova begins with the cautionary note:

Linguistic change is continuous and uneven, and putting an exact date on an innovative pronunciation or a variant grammatical form is impossible.<sup>95</sup>

And when a poet's original manuscript is not extant (as is the case with all the poems which are the subject of this study) the difficulty of recognising authorial style increases. Place, that is the dialectal area in which the earliest source copy was made, is not necessarily the poem's place of origin; the words on the page may not be faithfully those of the poet. Context can be a matter of opinion; the different readings of the poems which have been cited in this thesis are illustrative of that. With these caveats in mind, the usefulness of various parameters assayed in each poem are here evaluated.

### **Strophic characteristics**

The chosen group of poems are all written within a structured stanza form and to a prescribed end-rhyme pattern. They are all also written in alliterating lines, though the pattern of four alliterations on stressed syllables in the long lines is more an aspiration than a prerequisite. The adherence to these various paradigms can be numerically assessed for a poem to realise a measure of its author's skill and consistency with versification of these long narrative poems. The possibility that two episodes of *Awntyrs* were originally two different poems later conjoined was raised in the nineteenth century by a comparison of the consistency of stanza structure, rhyming and alliterative patterning for the two parts.

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<sup>95</sup> D. Minkova, *A Historical Phonology of English* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 184.

That two poets contributed to the work has been an unresolved argument ever since but by extending the scope of the analysis the evidence for two writers has been considerably strengthened in this thesis. In a comparison of *Gologras* and *Rauf*, the difference in alliterative character was a significant differentiating factor but an aspect of great similarity when *Gologras* was compared with the second episode of *Awntyrs*. The attention to rhyming and alliteration was also shown to be very similar for the first episode of *Awntyrs* and *Susan*. For Richard Holland's *Howlat*, the comparison with the rest of the group suggested that the author modelled its rhyming and alliterative character on the geographically close and contemporary poem, *Gologras*, and the concatenation of *Awntyrs*. Strophic parameters considered in isolation prove nothing, of course; considered with other stylistic observations, composite theories of authorship were developed.

### **Syntax**

A useful adjunct to the study of rhyming and metrical technique is provided by consideration of how the syntax of a line is arranged to manipulate rhyming syllables to the desired position. As an extension to the study of rhyming in the two episodes of *Awntyrs*, a comparison of anastrophe to achieve rhyming revealed a marked tendency in the second part for rhyming to be achieved by merely postmodification of a noun at the end of a line. The author of the first episode used more complex phrasal transpositions to position a wider range of word classes. A closer examination of anastrophe in *Rauf* suggested that the syntax was a matter of stylistic preference. The incidence of anastrophe in *Susan* and the first episode of *Awntyrs* is very similar but the examination of certain elements of the syntax demonstrated that differences in writing style can be detected. For *Howlat*, Holland's syntax had no

consistent resemblance to any single other poem – another indication of the individuality of this work.

### **Rhetoric**

The review in Chapter Two of previous rhetorical studies of medieval poetry suggests that this thesis, by systematically exploring the incidence of rhetorical expression, is using a novel approach to the critical analysis of non-Chaucerian medieval poetry. Though the incidence in the poems of rhetorical figures, other than anastrophe, is not high, the nature and exploitation of the rhetoric are important stylistically. Antanacsis is a feature of the ghostly episode of *Awntyrs*, the word play occurring between linked lines or concatenated stanzas, e.g.

With bowe and with barselette,  
Under the bowes. (ll. 38 - 39)

Hethen shal thou fare.  
How shal we fare," quod the freke, "that fonden to fight. (ll. 260 - 261).

Such homonymic pairings are absent in the second episode of *Awntyrs*. The comparison, whilst in isolation may lack numerical weight, in concert with other rhetorical usages is an important marker of a literary style. The same argument applies to digression. Digression as a story-telling element to introduce suspense into a narrative is demonstrably used by the poet in the Gawain and Geleron episode of *Awntyrs* but not in the first part of the poem. The striking characteristic there is the poet's practice of switching to directly contrasting situations.

Simile and metaphor (including metonymy) have made an important contribution to the description of the literary style evident in the chosen poems. This should not be surprising:

An important feature of cognitive stylistics has been its interest in the way we transfer mental constructs, and especially in the way we map one mental representation onto another when we read texts.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Simpson p. 41.

Some indication of a poet's propensity to use simile and metaphor has been by counting their occurrences, though the disparity in length of the works allows this to be only a rough guide when comparing poems. However, the research has identified individual traits such as the fondness for metaphor of the *Susan* poet or the more prosaic style of *Awntyrs* (second episode) and the complete absence of simile in *Rauf*.

More interestingly, the nature and intertextuality of both the simile and metaphor have identified particular authorial skills. Similes, by the very demands of the alliterative line, are almost always commonly used head-rhyming collocations:

as fyre out of flynt	(Gol. l. 978)
as cristall sa cleyne	(Gol. l. 478)
mule as the mylke	(Awn. 25)
gloed as the gledes	(Awn. l. 117)

But some are unusual, cleverly appropriate in their context:

Fayr of fell and of face as flour infild (Gol. l. 352)

This unexpected image for a fearsome fighter is the expression given to a knight portrayed as wise and senior enough to reprimand Arthur for his recklessness; the figure is prescient, as discussed earlier in Chapter Four.<sup>97</sup> His wisdom is also worthy of another expressive simile:

Yit shal be licht as leif of the lynd lest (Gol. l. 289).

The warning to Arthur is diplomatically framed in a poetic simile.

The most individually coined similes are from the pen of Richard Holland for his aviary of birds in *Howlat*:

My neb is netherit as a nok	(l.5.05)
Howlat Lykar a fule than a fowle	(l. 9.02)

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<sup>97</sup> pp. 81 – 82.

These figures, like other aspects of the poetics in the poem, support the position taken in this thesis that *Howlat* is a unique work from a person motivated to impress with his erudition those who might further his career.

The outcomes of consideration of the examples of metaphor to be found in the five works have varied in interest. For *Awntyrs*, the presence of two very common tropes in the first episode, consistent with the context of the narrative, and a complete absence of metaphor in the second was helpful to the overall evidence for their separation, but hardly significant in isolation. Comparatively rarely used and contextually common, the use of metaphor in *Gologras* was not a prominent stylistic feature. However, in *Rauf*, four metaphors with a complete absence of simile was a useful comparator in the challenge to the Amours hypothesis of joint authorship. The metaphor of Susan proved to be an important stylistic feature. A high proportion of the imagery in *Susan* (7/11) is metaphoric, of some intertextual interest and skilfully invoked. In *Howlat*, itself an elaborate fable, Holland was shown to have been, as he was with simile, an inventive practitioner of metaphor.

In a more general consideration of rhetoric, the rhetoric of verse-writing, a considerable understanding was achieved of how Richard Holland set about the composition of his singular known poem. The proposition was made there that Holland followed the instruction of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, the late twelfth to early thirteenth-century grammarian. J. J. Murphy notes a, ‘conscious existence of an “art of verse-writing” at the beginning of the [thirteenth] century.’<sup>98</sup> His evidence for this opinion is the appearance of three works on writing verse and prose between 1208 and 1216, two by Geoffrey and a third by Gervase of Melkley.<sup>99</sup> That Holland’s

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<sup>98</sup> Murphy, p. 168.

<sup>99</sup> *Poetria Nova* and *Documentum* by Geoffrey; *Ars Versificario* by Gervase. The precise dates of their respective appearances are unknown.

choice of preceptive text would have been Geoffrey's is encouraged by three considerations: it was widely available in Holland's time and the work was dedicated to Pope Innocent III (Holland was a priest) ; but the most important reason is its emphasis on the structure of a poem. Douglas Kelly points to the,

fundamentally distinct ways to begin a poem, the one pure embellishment and related to the sentence structure of the first few lines, the other more truly compositional in that it is concerned with the orderly arrangement of the poem's content.<sup>100</sup>

The *Ars Versificatoria* (Art of the Verse-maker) of Matthew of Vendôme also would have been in circulation. It is, as its title suggests, a teaching text on the art of verse writing.<sup>101</sup> The book is concerned with elegance of expression:

A verse is metrical language moving along succinctly and lause by clause in a graceful marriage of words and depicting thoughts with the flowers of rhetoric, containing in itself nothing played down, nothing idle.<sup>102</sup>

The three subjects on which instruction is given are schemes, tropes and colours of rhetoric. The only reference to organisation of the material is that a beginning may be made in one of four ways: zeugma, ypozeusis, methonomia and sententia or proverbialia. A contemporary of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Gervase of Melkley, also offers specific advice on verse writing. His *Ars Versificaria* (c. 1215) is summarised by James Murphy.<sup>103</sup> In the three parts of the book described by Murphy, there is no advice on the ordering of material or the structuring of a poem.

Holland's demonstrable adherence to Geoffrey's instruction, not least with respect to the architecture of his poem, but also to the ornamentation and amplification of its material, is conspicuous. It is remarkable that this correspondence of literary theory and its practice seems not to have been remarked upon previously.

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<sup>100</sup> D. Kelly, 'The Scope of the Treatment of Composition in the Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Arts of Poetry', *Speculum*, 41 (No. 2) (1966), 261-278, p. 261.

<sup>101</sup> Mathew of Vendôme, *Ars Versificatoria*, tr. Roger P. Parr (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981).

<sup>102</sup> Parr, p. 19.

<sup>103</sup> Murphy p. 174.



### Section III: Conclusion

This thesis records the twofold application of a stylistic approach to the identification of authorial idiosyncrasies in an otherwise formulaic style of poetry. The methodology was developed initially to resolve a curiosity about the structure of *Awntyrs* and found a further use in the examination of other conjectures about shared authorship. But the understanding gained of the techniques exercised in the writing of rhyming alliterative narrative poetry in these explorations suggested that proving or disproving the scholarship of previous authorship hypotheses is not exploiting the full potential of the approach. The emphasis of the thesis turned to the development of a better understanding of a poet's priorities for his poem, the skills apparent in their achievement and their sources of motivation or inspiration. Thus, there has been developed a holistic methodology which goes beyond simply counting measurable stylistic traits.

But measurement has made (and must continue to be) an important first step. The attention exercised in writing consistently patterned alliterating lines and, also, observing the disciplines of a complex rhyme pattern has allowed evidenced opinion on the skill or purpose exercised in the writing of the poems. The numerical assessment of syntactical features such as adjectival positioning or more complex anastrophe, the use of absolute adjectives to satisfy rhyming has also informed appraisals of the poets' skills or priorities. The study of rhetorical figures to be found within the narratives has been revealing. At a purely numerical level, some indication of a stylistic characteristic has been demonstrated, but a closer examination of simile and metaphor has been more fruitful. The clever deployment of established metaphor in *Susan* and the innovative tropes in *Howlat*. made a substantial contribution to the conclusions about their composition.

Intertextual investigations have played an important part in understanding the *modus operandi* of Richard Holland. The composition of the poem has also been shown to follow a preceptive model with classical origins. The interpretation of Horace's *Ars Poetica* by Geoffrey of Vinsauf is evident throughout Holland's poem and says much about its author's determination to achieve conventional excellence.

Future research might fruitfully employ the methodology developed in this thesis to examine other texts, including the other extant alliterative thirteen-line stanza poems. In the course of the research, the wheel may turn full circle and identify works by the same author.

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