

WAS THE *PEARL* POET IN AQUITAINE WITH CHAUCER?
A NOTE ON *FADE*, L.149 OF *SIR GAWAIN AND THE*
GREEN KNIGHT

No one really knows when, by whom, or for whom any one of the poems uniquely preserved in BL, Cotton Nero A.x were written—or whether they were all written by the same person. One thing we do know of the Pearl Poet, however, is that his dialect was fairly close to that of the manuscript's scribe, whose dialect was spoken on the craggy borders of Cheshire. A result of these facts is that likely author/patron suspects lurk in many footnotes of the 1997 *Companion to the Gawain Poet*, where scholars deplore the namelessness, or try to puzzle out the name, of the presumed single author—dating his poems, identifying his patrons, and explaining the sociopolitical meaning of it all.¹

One persuasive 1986 essay, by Edward Wilson, makes a strong case that a Stanley family were patrons of the Gawain-poet, allowing a date for his work in the last decade of the fourteenth or first decade of the fifteenth century.² Wilson's essay is an exemplary piece of medieval scholarship—thorough yet brief, precisely documented, bold but not reckless. Yet even this essay considers only the Stanley family's residence and activities in Staffordshire and Cheshire, without noting participation by its members in soldiering and administration in France, which has seemingly been irrelevant to a poem whose language, to a modern audience wearing London spectacles, marks it as "English regional" or, at best, "English national." Our tacit 20th-century assumption seems to have been: if he talked like that, he must never have been to London and learned standard English—and

¹Andrew, Malcolm "Theories of Authorship," and Bennett, Michael "The Historical Background,"

² "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Stanley Family of Stanley, Storeton, and Hooton"

furthermore, like Chaucer's Prioress, his French was no doubt provincial and insular, though one might grant him a knowledge of priestly Latin.

Lately, indeed, yoicks and tallyhos have been floating up from scholars flogging hobbyhorses well away from the crags and woods of Olde Gawain Country, crashing through underbrush around castles of dukes, courts of princes, and the cloisters of Westminster. John Bowers, for instance, sets the *Pearl* in the court and perhaps the crown of Richard II during the 1390s; Frank Grady links the poet of *St. Erkenwald* not only to London—as did, of course, the poet—but to Westminster Abbey, and both Grady and Bowers would tie to his tail the clanking political struggles of the 1390s. Others suggest that the poet was the clever pet of Henry of Grosmont, first Duke of Lancaster, or his son-in-law John of Gaunt, or the Despensers of Tewkesbury, or Roger Mortimer, fourth Earl of March and grandson of Prince Lionel; and they have proposed that the poet came from such families of that region as the Mascys (Masseys), Cottons, Stanleys, Cradocks, Swettenhams, or Newtons among others.³

Some six years ago, however, one lonely bugle rang out from the Pas de Roland, proposing that the poet, though he hailed from the NW Midlands, did not forever abide in his home region or in London. In two 1996 pieces in *Notes And Queries*, Andrew Breeze, of the University of Navarre in Pamplona, showed that the Pearl Poet was familiar enough with certain "French" words, in forms and senses specific to dialects of southwestern

³ John M. Bowers, *The Politics of Pearl: Court Poetry in the Age of Richard II* (2001); Frank Grady, "St. Erkenwald and the Merciless Parliament," (2000). Against royal patronage or residence in London, Thorlac Turville-Petre argues that in *Pearl* the poet "de-regionalizes" and in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* emphasizes ubiquity of knightly values and skills over "local" aspects ("The Pearl Poet in his 'Fayre Regioun,'" (1997). Scholars proposing links to a Mascy family of the Cheshire/Staffordshire area include V. J. Scattergood, who documents manuscript ownership and perhaps copying by a John Mascy: "'Iste liber constat Johanni Mascy': Dublin, Trinity College, MS. 155 (2001); Scattergood cannot determine whether this John Mascy was of the Puddington, Tatton, or Cotton Mascys. Ann R. Meyer argues that the poet's patrons were the Despensers of Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire—even though their family base was in the Southwest, they were feudal lords of Macclesfield in Cheshire—and suggests (2001: 420) that the Pearl Poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, Jean Froissart, and Guillaume de Machaut met in Paris in April 1368, traveling from England to Milan for the wedding of Prince Lionel to Violante Visconti. For more proposed patrons, see below.

France, that he may well have lived there for some time: *torres* "towering clouds" (*Pearl* 875, *Cleanness* 951), *enbaned* "machicolated" (*SGGK* 790), and *tolouse* "Toulouse" (*SGGK* 78, *Cleanness* 1108). Such familiarity would imply that the poet, though he was a Cheshire man, in Breeze's words "actually lived in south-west France with the English community at Bordeaux or Bayonne." Breeze subsequently (in 1998) named the poet as someone from the same family that Edward Wilson had proposed as the poet's patrons: Sir John Stanley, K.G., who had supported Richard, but turned and became an important supporter of Henry IV and Henry V, until his death in 1414.⁴ This proposal certainly put the Cheshire cat among the pigeons, not to mention the vineyards of Aquitaine and even, as mentioned, the Pas de Roland. Could the Pearl Poet, then, have dwelt in Aquitaine, long enough to pick up some terms from there—and, perhaps more important, to drop them casually into his poems as if his readers could be expected to "get" them easily and naturally, with no need for an Occitanian Dictionary?

The first thing to say in trying to answer those questions is that, as Michael Bennett notes, many soldier-administrators, from the 1320s into the fifteenth century, served royal, princely, and noble masters *both* in southwestern France *and* in Cheshire (and Lancashire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire and elsewhere in the Northwest Midlands). Bennett (1997), for instance, names most of the usual suspects from the lineup we have just looked at—Mascy, Cradok, Audley, and many others—as NW Midlands men who did serve in Aquitaine. There can be no doubt, therefore, that travel between Cheshire and Bordeaux or beyond would have been not only possible but completely unsurprising—for the poet as well as for his patrons. Furthermore, any poet dwelling in or more than casually connected to a courtly household—whether that of Edward III, or one of his sons Edward, John, or Lionel, or his grandson Richard—would have had to be fluent in French of some kind; and, if that poet were also a cleric either

⁴Sir John Stanley was a belted knight and astute political operator, continually involved in political and military dealings and maneuvers, whereas the poet was clearly a man expert in Biblical and theological texts and commentaries, more likely a friar, monk, or chaplain-confessor than a knight-politico. Yet Sir John Clanvowe was such a knight, but wrote a Lollard treatise and a courtly poem before going off to die on a crusading mission, so one cannot rule out knights as possible authors of the Pearl poems.

secular or monastic, as the Pearl Poet surely was, he must have been equally fluent in Latin. Common sense also suggests that a trilingual poet-cleric who served some years in a prince's *familia* in Aquitaine would have been present at festivals and diplomatic feastings and travels, in consequence would surely have conversed with and heard the poetry and songs of poets in that region; and would naturally have been in contact with secular and regular clerics of the region. The Black Prince and his cohorts, after all, often stayed in monasteries or friaries during their military expeditions, even while the soldiers carried on with looting and burning and raping.⁵ And in the last decade or so, scholars have begun looking into the massive documentary evidence of the interfacing among the users of English, Anglo-Norman, and Gascon/Occitan dialects of French in Aquitaine.⁶

And the Pearl Poet, though the most brilliant, would not have been the only alliterative poet to be fluent in French, if not also in Latin. Consider, for instance, the easy brilliance with which the poet of *Wynnere and Wastoure* could transform the Garter motto, *Hony Soyt Qui Mal Pence*, into an alliterative line of West Midlands English, *Hethyng haue the hathell that any harme thynkes*.⁷ Clearly this man used English by choice, not necessity.

⁵ See *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, ed. and transl. Richard Barber; and Richard Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*; also, for detailed financial reports on the Gascon campaigns from the Prince's receivers and administrators, Clifford J. Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III, Sources and Interpretations*.

⁶For instance, Daniel Trotter's "Some Lexical Gleanings from Anglo-French Gascony" (1998) and W. Rothwell, "Stratford Atte Bowe Re-Visited" (2001).

⁷ T. Turville-Petre (1989: 44). Ad Putter (1996: 6-11) shows that the poet's mastery of Latin underlies some famous English wordplay in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. As for his possible travels, Putter quite sensibly asks (1996: 5): "why...might not the *Gawain*-poet, like Chaucer, have traveled to Italy?" Even cloistered monks might travel: a John Coton, priest and canon of Haughmond Abbey in Shropshire, in April 1400 was made a papal chaplain (*Calendar of Papal Letters 1362-1404*, p. 310), a position that "exempted him from the regular life and from obedience to religious superiors" and was being particularly sought from and granted by the popes during the Schism as a source of desperately needed revenues, according to F. Donald Logan (1996: 51), citing Thomas Walsingham's *Gesta abbatum* of St. Albans Abbey as noting that "in 1386 a Carmelite friar, Walter Disse, was empowered by a papal bull to create fifty honorary papal chaplains to support the Lancastrian crusade in Spain," and that "White Monks, Black Monks, canons and friars of all orders, in order to free themselves from the obedience of their superiors, sent money to Rome to gain this honour and exemption." Well before the Schism, however, in 1343-8 the Carmelite friar John Reppes, Prior of the

And as for the Pearl Poet himself, we need only read carefully his *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl*, as Bennett says (1997:81), to see that they

...reveal both a close knowledge of the aristocratic culture of the time, and a deep immersion in the worlds of chivalry and courtesy. The poet is an insider, a courtier's courtier, adding complexity and refinement to issues of faith and honour, and points of ethics and etiquette. Moreover he assumes a courtly audience....Indeed in his account of Gawain's quest he adopts, to a surprising degree, the view-point of the royal court rather than the baronial household.

1. *FADE*, L. 149

To Breeze's linguistic evidence for the Pearl Poet's special knowledge of the French of Aquitaine, we may add the word *fade* (*SGGK* 149), used of the Green Knight at his first entrance into the hall at Camelot: *he ferde as freke were fade/ and oueral enker grene*.⁸ This is not a new suggestion: G. V. Smithers long ago proposed that *fade* must derive from a Romance word *fadus*, *fada* "supernatural being of male (female) sex," but his suggestion was bluntly dismissed by Kenneth Sisam, who reaffirmed his 1927 support of Henry Bradley's account of *fade* in the *OED*; and Smithers' suggestion

Carmelite Friary in London, who was both confessor and secretary to Henry of Grosmont, earl of Derby, had been made a papal chaplain with full privileges, and was an important diplomatic liaison with the Pope during peace negotiations in the 1340s; as papal chaplain he was specially licensed to hear confessions and preach anywhere in England, to lodge at any Carmelite house in England, and to keep for life, with his fellow and servant his chamber in the London Carmelite friary (*Calendar of Papal Letters 1342-62*, pp. 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 29, 32-3, 36, 38, 113, 168). Just before the Schism, in 1365 and 1366, the "Green Squire" from Cheshire, Simon Newton (see J. R. L. Highfield, *Medium Ævum* 22, 1953, pp. 18-23) successfully petitioned the Pope to make his brother Richard and his kinsman Walter Podmore, prior of Stone in Lichfield Diocese, honorary papal chaplains; while in April 1366 Sir John Chandos, titled "ambassador of the Prince of Aquitaine and Wales" and "Viscount of St. Sauveur and Constable of Aquitaine," successfully petitioned the Pope that his confessor John Lyons, O.P. (diocese of Bath), who had lately been made a papal chaplain, be granted the privileges and immunities of that office, "seeing that he has worked on the treaty of peace" (*Calendar of Papal Petitions 1342-1419*, pp. 505, 507, 510, 522, 524, 534).

⁸Vantuono (1999:12)

was likewise rejected by the *MED*,⁹ although it has recently been adopted by William Vantuono in his revised edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*—in his notes to lines 149-50, he translates *he ferde as freke were fade* as "he acted like an elvish knight."¹⁰

Sisam in 1927 (p. 60) had pointed out that a word of the same form, *fade*, "is well attested; it is found in contemporary Northern poems, often in alliteration; it is usually applied to warriors; and it rimes with *hade* (e.g., thrice in "Sir Perceval"), which is the rime-word in 'Gawain'." However, the *OED* (second edition) in its entry for †*fade*, *a*¹ says, "Etymology unknown; the senses assigned are somewhat uncertain; and perh. the examples do not all contain the same word." Its illustrative quotations from *Cursor Mundi* and the ME romances *Sir Perceval of Galles* and *Sir Tristrem* (the same passages cited by the *MED*) must therefore be viewed with this cautionary note in mind: etymology admittedly uncertain, and some cited occurrences might involve different words taking the same form. This means, ineluctably, that the *fade* of *SGGK* 149 need not be the *fade(s)* of *Cursor Mundi*, *Sir Perceval of Galles*, and *Sir Tristrem*. So much, then, for Sisam's first objection to a French derivation of *fade*.

As for his second objection, that the only evidence cited by Smithers for a French-derived *fade* was from an early thirteenth-century Latin text,

⁹ G. V. Smithers, *Notes and Queries* 195 (1950), pp. 134-36; Kenneth Sisam, *Notes and Queries* 195, p. 239; and see K. Sisam, "'Fade' in *Gawain*, Line 149," in *Times Literary Supplement*, January 27, 1927 p. 60, and *TLS*, March 17, 1927, pp. 193-4. Smithers packs into his brief note extremely interesting testimony by Gervase of Tilbury (in his *Otia Imperialia*) of a Catalan poet at the English court in late 12th and early 13th centuries, whose "magical" dancing horse is referred to by Gervase as *fadus*—which, as Smithers' careful philological analysis shows, most likely is a Latin calque on a dialectal French form. The second edition of the *OED* cautiously notes of *fade* that its etymology is unknown, while the *MED* suggests that *fade* is an adjective formed on the OE noun *fa*, "foe"—a derivation that surely presents difficulty both in sense and form, whereas (at least for *SGGK* 149) derivation from Occitan *fado/a* "supernatural being, fay" makes full and perfect sense both formally and semantically. The question that must then be answered, however, is how an Occitan word could plausibly have got into an English poem transcribed in a Cheshire dialect. The answer proposed here is that poet, patrons and early audience lived for some years in Aquitaine.

¹⁰ Vantuono, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, p. 161. He notes that other editors, except for Cawley, follow Sisam (and *OED/MED*) and translate *fade* as "bold" or "doughty."

Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia Imperialia*—which Sisam thought unlikely to have been read by the poet—lexicographers since 1950 have supplied abundant evidence that *fada*, *fado* were in common literary use, in French and Spanish lyrics and geste and romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and indeed are still used in modern times.¹¹ The Spanish forms would be *hada*, *hado*, so behind the Pearl Poet's *fade* (just as Smithers proposed) would be Occitan or Catalan *fada*, *fado*. Louis Alibert has the following entry:

fada, *f.* Fée [regionally in Foix, Agenais, Narbonne]; nymphe; sorcière; magicienne; femme rusée; femme qui charme.
Derivative: fadar, féer; enchanter; ensorceler; jeter un sort.
fadarèla, fée.¹²

As for the Catalan version, Pompeu Fabra defines fada as *Esser fantàstic que es representa sota la figura d'una doña dotada d'un poder sobrenatural*; his exemplary phrase *Treballar com una fada* (= "amb una habilitat meravellosa") looks parallel to the Gawain poet's *he ferde as freke were fade*.¹³ And as for "standard" Spanish, the *Diccionario Ilustrado de la Lengua Española* entry for hada (de fada) says it is a "fantastic being in the form of a woman to whom are attributed magical powers and the gift of divination," and says of its literary use:

Las hadas desempeñan papel muy importante en las leyendas de la Edad Media, época en que se empieza a hablar de ellas. Las más notables fueron Melusina, Morgana, Viviana, la Dama Bianca, etc. Tienen su origen en Oriente; los persas las transmitieron a los árabes y éstos a los españoles.¹⁴

¹¹ Karl Reichl, for instance, in 1997 cited for ME lyrics a number of Continental analogues, including Portuguese *cantigas de amigo*; and in discussing the ME *Maiden in the mor lay*, Reichl quotes as analogous a Portuguese popular ballad, *A Encantada* ("The Enchanted Maiden"). In this piece, collected in many widespread variants in the nineteenth century, a maiden is encountered in the wilderness by a knight, and when he asks what she is doing there, she replies (1997: 52): *Sete fadas me fadaram/ No ventre d'uma mae minha* ("Seven witches have bewitched me/ In my mother's womb"). *Fada*, which Reichl translates here as "witch," is a word for "enchantress, fay."

¹² *Dictionnaire Occitan-Français* (1965).

¹³ *Diccionari General de la Llengua Catalana* (rev. Josep Miracle).

¹⁴ *Enciclopedia Universal Sopena*, Tomo Cuarto, 1963.

Joan Corominas & José Pascual, *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico Castellano e Hispánico*, vol. G-MA, s.v. hado, fado, note that this corresponds in Asturias to the vernacular *fau* in phrases referring to good or evil fortune experienced by a family, and cite occurrence in the *Alexandreis* and elsewhere, and with Gallician form *fada* (*suerte, destino*: 'por boa ou por mala *fada*'). They comment:

En los Libros de Caballerías se aplicó hada a un ser femenino sobrenatural que intervenía de varias maneras en la vida de los hombres, y en este sentido permaneció el vocablo en la literatura maravillosa e infantil de hoy en día. Para más ejs. del sentido etimológico, vid. el derivado *ENFADAR*. En Portugal fado se ha aplicado a un tipo de canción popular, que comentaba líricamente el destino de las personas.

2. A CHESHIRE POET—IN AQUITAINE?

If we accept that *SGGK* 149 *fade* is an Anglicized form of Occitan *fado/fada*, whose reference to an enchanted or supernatural being the poet would expect his audience to understand, such ready understanding would imply familiarity of both poet AND audience with the literature of that region of southwest France—a possibility that must seem very unlikely to scholars who have always located the poet in England. Yet Aquitaine is where the Black Prince and his large court lived, ruled and administered, tourneyed and conducted warfare, from 1362 until 1369, and where he had campaigned from 1355 onward; it is also where John of Gaunt briefly (1370-71) succeeded the Black Prince as governor, and acquired his second wife Constance of Castile and with her a claim to be King of Castile and León.¹⁵ It is entirely possible that the Pearl Poet was a servitor of the Black Prince, or his brother John of Gaunt, or of Gaunt's father-in-law—another English noble with long-term interests and frequent presence in that region—Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster. The case for Henry of Grosmont has

¹⁵See Anthony Goodman, *John of Gaunt* (1992), esp. chapter 7, "Gaunt and Iberian Affairs." The most detailed account of Gaunt's involvement with Aquitaine, Spain, and Portugal is P. E. Russell, *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II* (1955); for Gaunt's 1370-71 lieutenancy of Aquitaine, marriage to Constance of Castile in 1371, and beginning of close involvement with Spanish and Portuguese affairs, see Russell, pp. 165-9.

recently been urged again by W. G. Cooke and D'A.J.D. Boulton; and still more lately, Leo Carruthers has made a complex argument for Roger Mortimer, fourth earl of March and grandson of Prince Lionel—yet every argument for patronage by Henry of Lancaster, or John of Gaunt, or Edmund Mortimer, would fit the Black Prince just as well.¹⁶

Is there, however, any evidence linking the Black Prince to alliterative poetry, and can we name any of his servitors who produced such poetry? We might, for the beginning of an answer to these questions, look at a certain priest named Henry Cotton, who in a petition to King Richard II for himself and several other men, made from the dialectal heart of the Gawain country at Middlewich in Cheshire, tells of their having served the Prince from youth over many years, in France, Aquitaine, and Spain, and asks that he and the other men be compensated for the service—for which the Prince had not paid them when he died—by granting them the franchise of Middlewich, where they were then dwelling. The petition was at first granted, then withdrawn—because, as the King said, the people of Middlewich objected, and other grants to the men were made instead.¹⁷ It is

¹⁶ W. G. Cooke and D'Arcy J. D. Boulton, "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: a poem for Henry of Grosmont?" (1999); Leo Carruthers, "The Duke of Clarence and the Earls of March: Garter Knights and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" (2001). See also, as noted above, Richard Barber (1978: 110-237) and Clifford J. Rogers (1999).

¹⁷ London, Public Record Office, *36th Annual Deputy Keeper's Report, Appendix 2.1* pp. 60, 128, 461: entries on the Welsh Recognizance Rolls of Chester, including (p. 461) a grant in October 1367 by the Prince to Thomas Swettenham of Middlewich, Richard Brothersonne, and others (not including Henry Cotton) of the franchise of Middlewich, for 3 years; and, pp. 60-61, an undated petition to the King (date uncertain, but 1377-1387) by a group of men including Cotton and Robert Brothersonne, but not Swettenham, requesting the franchise of Middlewich for long service to the Prince; on July 26, 1387 the franchise is granted, then on September 11 it is revoked as prejudicial to the town's franchise of liberties; but in 1397 (September 29) Robert Brothersonne—one of those who had asked for Middlewich—is granted livery of the Crown, with 6d. daily for life. Perhaps Henry Cotton was retained to petition for the former retainers, as being closely connected (see note 22 below) to the family (and heirs) of Sir John Delves, a member of the Black Prince's Council from 1348 to his death in 1369. The Cotton/Swettenham link is intriguing, since Michael Bennett—as reported by Bowers in *The Politics of Pearl* (p. 82, note 26)—has stated that "if *Pearl* can be connected with the court in the mid-1390s, the field of possible patrons can be narrowed considerably: Sir John Stanley, Matthew Swettenham, John Macclesfield, and Sir Richard Cradok." Swettenham is 3 miles east of Holmes Chapel—"Green Chapel" country. Was Henry Cotton a Swettenham scribe? For Gascon service of the Swettenhams: *BPR*

worth mention here that in 1377, Joan, widow of the Black Prince, was granted by their son King Richard the lordship of Macclesfield, the town of Middlewich, and the manor of Frodsham.¹⁸

But why should we think of Henry Cotton, a lawyer as well as priest, as in any way to be connected with the poems of the *Pearl* manuscript? For one thing, Henry Cotton was a close associate of Sir John Delves (d. 1369), the sometime Deputy Justiciar of North Wales and of Cheshire, and Governor of the Black Prince's Council, who had travelled with the Prince to Aquitaine—and association with Delves forges an interesting literary link, for the name of John Delves appears on a legal roll containing a satiric alliterative lyric originally composed in a Northern dialect, transmitted via the West Midlands, and apparently copied onto its roll, between 1349 and 1369, in Oxford, as I have shown in a paper in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*.¹⁹ Cotton survived Delves and the Prince, living to do legal work

3 (London, HMSO 1932), pp. 235, 254, 299, 386, 409, 449; for grant to John Cotoun of office of parker of Pecforton, p. 386.

¹⁸ London, PRO, *28th Annual Deputy Keeper's Report, Appendix 6*, p. 70. Could the Pearl Poet, or the scribe who copied his poems in a dialect used in or near the Middlewich and Macclesfield area, have been patronized by Joan of Kent as well as by her husband? To investigate this matter, one should examine the retinues of the Black Prince and Princess Joan, with special attention to their clerical retainers—and, of course, the retinues of such other possible patrons as Henry of Grosmont, John of Gaunt, Lionel of Antwerp, and others. Michael Bennett discusses these in considerable depth. One might look, further, at clerics papally provided to benefices at the request of noble patrons, as recorded in the Calendars of Papal Petitions and Papal Letters; these clerics could be traced further (in Aquitaine; and in Navarre and Spain) in secular and regular clerical records of such patronage requests and grants. Thereafter, cursive hands on relevant English documents could be compared with the hand(s) of the *Pearl* manuscript—for even though its scribe is surely not the poet, to identify the scribe's hand in dated documents might let us trace his manuscript's provenance and patronage. Admittedly, such an effort would take several years, and might not produce definitive results.

¹⁹ "The *Papelard Priest* and the Black Prince's Men: Audiences of an Alliterative Poem, c. 1350-1370" (2001). As Barber notes (1978: 184), Delves, a Staffordshire/Cheshire lawyer and administrator, was with the Prince in Angoulême in early March 1365 when the Prince's eldest son Edward (who died young) was born, and when "to celebrate the churking of the princess, the prince held a great tournament on 27 April." Delves carried this news back to Edward III in England, news so pleasing that the King granted Delves an annuity of forty pounds for bringing it. For the Gascon trip by Delves, see *Register of Edward, the Black Prince* (London, HMSO, 1930-33), vol. 4, pp. 465, 540, 543; for the royal annuity, *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1364-7*, p. 180.

in the 1390s for Delves' heirs and the circle of Cheshire administrators who had been associates of Delves in serving the Prince in Cheshire and Aquitaine. Further, it is well known that the name *Cotton* recurs in discussions of the manuscript and its poems: for instance, Clifford Peterson, in 1977, noted that between lines 1544 and 1545, in the manuscript of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, "cropping has left the last four letters of a longer word, written in a different hand than that of the poetic text," the four letters being *O-T-O-N*. Observing that line 1544 reads, *as I am, other euer schal, in erde ther I leue*, Peterson suggests that the cropped word names the place where the poet lived—and, since he wants to identify the poet as a certain John Massey of Cotton, he deduces that the cropped word was originally *Coton*.²⁰ Presumably it could as well refer to the lawyer/priest Henry Cotton, as to John Mascy of Cotton.

There is, furthermore, evidence that there were practicing poets in the military circle around the Black Prince. Not only did the Chandos Herald, whose *Life of the Black Prince* is well known, serve Sir John Chandos (a key knight for the Prince in all his French campaigns),²¹ but at least one other

²⁰ Clifford Peterson, "Hoccleve, the Old Hall Manuscript, Cotton Nero A.x., and the Pearl-Poet" (1977: 54-5) and see Scattergood, "*Iste liber constat Johanni Mascy*": Dublin, Trinity College, MS. 155". According to George Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, Volume II, p. 404-5, Sir George Cotton (an Esquire of the Body for Henry VIII) in 1544 was granted the manor and chapel of Poulton, which before the Dissolution had belonged to Dieulacres Abbey, and also was granted Combermere, including Dodcote, the parish of Childs Ercall in Salop; Cliffe, in Drayton; Hales, in Drayton; Erdly Grange, in Staffordshire; Winchull Grange, in Cheshire; Newton Grange, in Ashburne; Cotes Grange, or Cote field, in Hartinton, in Derbyshire. (I thank, for this reference, Tanya Joyce.) In his account of the Gawain-Poet's "Landscape and Geography," Ralph Elliott notes that the Cistercian abbey of Dieulacres "was originally founded at Poulton (its "holy head"), near Aldford, the...ancient fording place on the Dee a few miles upstream from Chester," and that in the fourteenth century not only were the monks "maintaining regular contact with their possessions in Chester and across the Dee, presumably following much the same route as Gawain's likely course" (sc., in the poem, from Camelot to Bertilak's Castle and the nearby Green Chapel), but they also had "a grange in the forest about five miles north of the abbey, at a place called Swythamley Park,...where the earls of Chester [*e.g.*, the Black Prince and later his son Richard II] owned a hunting lodge on an eminence recorded as Knight's Low...*just two miles from Ludchurch*" [which Elliott would identify as the site of the Green Chapel]. (Quoted here from Elliott 1997: 117)

²¹ *Life of the Black Prince by the Herald of Sir John Chandos*, ed. Mildred Pope and Eleanor Lodge (1910; 1974). J. J. N. Palmer, "Froissart et le héraut Chandos" (1982: 271ff), argues that the poem was written c. 1385 to draw support for Gaunt's

poet of some note served the Black Prince and John of Gaunt in Spain and France between 1356 and 1370, as that poet himself says: Walter of Peterborough, a Cistercian of Revesby in Lincolnshire—a poet of some fame who "wrote for both Edward the Black Prince and John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster; he may have been John of Gaunt's confessor."²² Walter

efforts at that time to claim the crown of Spain; see, further, *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, ed. and transl. Richard Barber (1986); and Richard Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine* (1978). Over a decade ago, Thorlac Turville-Petre plausibly suggested that the earliest surviving long poem of the "Alliterative Revival," *Wynnere and Wastoure*, was composed by a poet who was "part of the administration at Chester Castle dealing with the affairs of the Black Prince" (1989: 39). In two papers delivered in 1986 and in 1990, I have argued that the poem is directly linked to the Black Prince's 1353 and 1358 visits to his Cheshire palatinate; the evidence shows that it best fits his visit of 1358. *Wynnere and Wastoure*, after all, begins with a reference to the founding of England by Brutus, moves on to a vivid portrayal of (probably) Edward III and the Black Prince in a pavilion on the crest of a cliff, decorated with representations of the Order of the Garter—a description climaxing with an alliterative translation of the Garter Motto—and ends with the King proclaiming his intent not merely to do what in 1359-60 he actually attempted, i.e. conquer France and be crowned in Paris, but go on to Cologne (taking over the Holy Roman Empire?), and perhaps as Arthur almost did in the *Alliterative Mort Arthur* become Emperor of All Christendom. In this way the poem begins and ends in prophetic mode, echoing especially the *Six Kings* prophecy that was influential in the period when Edward III was seeking the French throne. It is a reasonable inference that such portrayal implies royal or (more likely?) princely patronage.

As for royal patronage of poets, there are apparent links between Edward III and a Yorkshire poet writing alliterative celebrations of his victories—Laurence Minot, of whom T. J. James and John Simons remark (1989: 10): "he should be seen as one amongst the increasingly large retinue of minor functionaries who thronged the later medieval courts and who decided to seek preferment through the production of laudatory poetry in a style which may have appealed to the king himself." They cite (1989: 10-11) documents suggesting that Minot was under patronage of Edward III (and of his mother Isabella and his wife Philippa), and Minot's poems deal with the military operations of Edward III in France and Scotland during the period 1333-1352. The early fifteenth century manuscript uniquely containing Minot's poems (British Library, MS. Cotton Galba E.ix, folios 52-57) includes romances in English verse (*Ywain and Gawain* and *The Seven Sages*), moral and satiric poems in English, *The Prick of Conscience*, and *The Prophecies of Merlin* as well as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. In short, it is reasonable to think that Minot wrote alliterative verse (in Yorkshire English) under royal patronage, and the author of *Wynnere and Wastoure* (in West Midlands English) wrote under princely patronage. We should therefore not be surprised if it should turn out that the Pearl Poet, writing in a Northwest Midlands dialect, was under royal or princely patronage.

²²Rigg 1992: 276. See below for Rigg's tripartite survey of manuscripts containing Latin poetry by such medieval writers. With the Black Prince to Gascony in 1355-6 went (as confessors?) Friars Richard de Leominster (Dominican) and Richard

accompanied the Black Prince and Gaunt on the 1367 Spanish expedition that culminated in the Battle of Najera, and wrote a narrative poem in Latin describing that expedition and battle that was printed in 1859 by Thomas Wright.²³

In his proem to that piece, Walter refers to a previous poem of his which he called a *Theotecon*, in praise of the Virgin Mary, a poem of 5,000 lines that he claimed to have written about the Black Prince's victory at Poitiers in 1356. In his epilogue to the 1367 poem on the Battle of Najera (written at the command of his abbot), Walter complains to John of Marthon of not being properly rewarded for his poetry, and says perhaps he cast his Pearl before swine: *Sed margarita numquam fuit ulla cupita,/ Porco plus placita stercora dentur ita.*²⁴ We must here note that Walter says he sent his poems

Savage (Augustinian): *Black Prince's Register* vol. 4, pp. 167, 205, 228, 239, 255, 283, 295, 352, 402. The name Savage (of a family from "Gawain country"?) is given prominence in *SGGK* (lines 550-53) in a reference to Sir Doddinal le Savage, alongside the names of Lionel and the Duke of Clarence (see note 34 below). The Augustinian friar Richard Savage was dead by 1358, but the Prince kept in touch with Friar Richard Leominster, giving him (p. 352) a tun of vermail wine in June 1360 for his Oxford commencement in divinity. For Gaunt, see Goodman (1992), Russell (1995) and Walker (1990).

²³Wright (1859: 97-122). The Chandos Herald, of course, devoted a great deal of his *Life of the Black Prince* to the Prince's role and actions in the Spanish expedition and the battle of Najera: see Barber (1986: 106-34).

²⁴Wright (1859: 122). Rigg describes and discusses contents of the two Bodleian Library manuscripts including Walter's poems (MSS. Rawlinson B.214 and Digby 166) in his "Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (III)," *Medieval Studies* 41 (1979); Rigg's earlier pieces on such anthologies are found in *Medieval Studies* vol. 39 (1977) and vol. 40 (1978). He suggests that Digby 166 may have been written and put together in fourteenth century Oxford, and notes that Rawlinson B.214 was compiled and (mostly) copied by John Wilde (who was also scribe/compiler of a musical manuscript, BL MS Lansdowne 763), at the Augustinian Abbey of the Holy Cross in Waltham, Essex, some time after 1469. Both manuscripts include not only Goliardic satire, but historical material including political propaganda, and their contents overlap heavily with those of BL MSS Cotton Titus A.xx and Cotton Vespasian E.xii, and Bodleian MSS. Bodley 603 and Bodley 851—much of whose assemblage of poetic texts, Rigg suggests (*MS* vol. 49, pp. 503-5), may have taken place in Oxford. Wilde's post-1469 anthology (Rawlinson B.214), Rigg says (1977: 329), was compiled "with a clear plan in mind," pointing out that its first two texts are "Trojan"—the St. Albans chronicler Thomas Walsingham's *Dites ditatus* and Simon Chèvre D'or's *Ylias*—and that these "are clearly prolegomena to...recapitulations [by fifteenth-century English writers] of British history (which begins with Brutus), and hence to the whole series of poems on Edward Third's wars and Henry V." In other words, this monk-anthologist of Waltham Abbey shaped a book in which the history of England, beginning with Brutus, led directly

to his good friend John de Marthon, treasurer of the Duke of Lancaster: could this imply that John was a connoisseur of poetry or even himself a poet, and thus more likely to recommend Walter's Pearl as *plesaunt to princes paye*—Prince John of Gaunt, that is? More intriguing, could the monk-poet's highly-placed friend *John de Marthon* be the *John de Marton*, of the diocese of York, who in 1345 petitioned the pope for a benefice in the gift of the prior and chapter of Durham, and for whom in 1355 Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster, petitioned the Pope to provide a benefice in the gift of the abbot and convent of St. Mary's, York—referring to him as *John de Marton, S.C.L., of the diocese of York?*²⁵ If these references were to the same man, we could infer that he was a cleric with advanced legal training who in 1345 was seeking a benefice, who by 1355 had found service with Henry, Duke of Lancaster for which Henry was requesting that he be provided with a benefice, and who at some time after 1355 moved on to serve as treasurer for Henry's son-in-law and successor as Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt—whether he moved around the time of the Battle of Poitiers (1356), which Walter of Peterborough, Cistercian monk of Revesby, celebrated in his Latin *Theotecon*; or in 1361 when Gaunt married Henry's daughter Blanche; or shortly before 1366-7, when Gaunt and the Black Prince were conducting the Spanish campaign and fighting the Battle of Najera, which Walter celebrated in another Latin poem.

Most intriguing of all is the surname of this *John of Marthon*. There is a vill of Marton in the heart of the Gawain country as Ralph Elliott has mapped it, perhaps ten miles east of Middlewich, six miles southwest of Macclesfield, nine or ten miles west of Wildboarclough and eight or so from Ludchurch, which Elliott would identify with the Green Chapel where

into the gests of English kings and princes, specifically Edward I, Edward III and his sons Edward, John, and Lionel, and then onward to Henry IV and Henry V. We may well recall at this point that *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* sets its account of King Arthur's court at its height, and of a quest of the great Sir Gawain, knight of the Round Table, between full-circle references to the Trojan War and Brutus's founding of Britain.

²⁵ *Calendar of Papal Registers, Petitions I, 1342-1419* (ed. W. H. Bliss 1896: 96, 275). See Goodman (1992: 228-9). Simon Walker (1990: 285) lists John Marthon as Gaunt's treasurer on the strength of the reference to him by Walter of Peterborough, but says the date of his service is "unknown."

Gawain nearly lost his head.²⁶ On dialectal grounds the English of John de Marton, IF his surname truly marked him as from that vill,²⁷ would far better match that of the Pearl Poet than would the dialect of Walter of Peterborough—and yet, in his Proem to the Battle of Najera, Walter's Latin verses alliterate heavily, and a gloss on his *Theotecon* carefully notes that it has exactly 5,000 lines—reminding us of the careful line-counting evident in the Pearl poet's keeping his stanza-count to precisely 101 stanzas in both *Pearl* and *SGGK* (1212 lines for *Pearl*, 2525 plus 5 for *SGGK*).²⁸ We see, in Walter of Peterborough, a monk who wrote long Latin poems for both the Black Prince and John of Gaunt, who was perhaps Gaunt's confessor, who was much with them in France and Spain: at Poitiers in 1356, at Najera in 1367. And we apparently see in the man to whom Walter sent his poems, John de Marthon, a York Diocese cleric, servitor in 1355 of Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster, and by 1366-7 (apparently) treasurer in John of Gaunt's household. *What is documented for this monk-poet and his ducal-servitor friend was surely possible for the Pearl Poet.*

But Walter of Peterborough is not the only poet of note who was in Aquitaine and Navarre in the 1360s: Geoffrey Chaucer was there, quite possibly in the service of the Black Prince,²⁹ though more likely still serving

²⁶ See the maps provided by Ralph Elliott; on the Ordnance Survey Road Map #6, *Wales/Cymru & West Midlands*, Marton can be located in the 4Y region, in a triangle with apices at Macclesfield, Congleton, and Holmes Chapel.

²⁷ There are certainly other places named Marton, and other clerics named John de Marton at the time; for instance, there was a priory of Marton in Yorkshire (East Riding); and there is a Long Marton in Cumberland, where a John de Marton was ordained acolyte in 1341 and subdeacon, deacon, and priest in 1342, while a Frater John de Marton was ordained priest in 1336 (*Register of John Kirkby, Bishop of Carlisle 1332-1352*, ed. R. L. Storey (1993, 1995). The *Register of Gilbert Welton, Bishop of Carlisle 1353-62* (ed. R. L. Storey 1999) shows a John de Marton, chaplain, as longtime resident and functionary in the parish of Long Marton in Cumberland—serving as proctor to instal a new rector in 1358, receiving gifts willed to him by deceased rectors in 1358, 1360 and 1362 (pp. 215-16, 336, 501). He of course could not have served John of Gaunt; the point is that both place-name and personal name are common enough.

²⁸ See Edward Condren, *The Numerical Universe of the Gawain-Pearl Poet* (2002).

²⁹ After the present paper was at the journal, I discovered the excellent essay by Professor Eugenio M. Olivares Merino that makes a very persuasive case for Geoffrey Chaucer's knowing of the Spanish language, and discusses his presence in Spain and France at the times when the *Pearl Poet* was, I believe, there; see "Juan Ruiz's Influence on Chaucer Revisited: a Survey" (2004). There is obviously an important area of research for biographical and literary study opened by the

Prince Lionel, and soon to be serving their brother prince, John of Gaunt. A document in the archives of Navarre records that Chaucer had a safe-conduct for the period February 22 to May 24, 1366 to allow him and three companions to travel through Navarre, and as Derek Brewer has suggested, it seems likely that Chaucer "was on some sort of official business," and quite possible that he had moved over from the service of Prince Lionel when his wife, the Countess of Ulster, died in 1363, to serve in the Black Prince's court in Aquitaine.³⁰ It is, therefore, possible that Chaucer and the Pearl Poet were at the same time serving the Black Prince in Aquitaine,³¹

study of Professor Olivares Merino, and I hope my suggestions in the present paper may be seen as added evidence for the influence of French and Spanish language and literature on both Chaucer and the *Pearl* Poet.

³⁰ Suggested in 1978 by Derek Brewer, *Chaucer and his World* (1992: 68-9); inferred also by Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1992: 51-55 and note 7, p. 319); and see Donald Howard, *Chaucer, His Life, His Works, His World* (1987: 113-22). Discussing Chaucer's travels Scott D. Westrem (2000: 196-197) says: "Chaucer's whereabouts are uncertain between late 1360 and 20 June 1367, when he is recorded as being a *valettus* to the king: he may have accompanied Lionel to Ireland in September 1361, joined part of the royal household in Aquitaine or remained in England. In all likelihood he spent time in Prince Edward's entourage in Aquitaine, for in the spring of 1366 he was in Spain on unstated business; the letter of safe conduct from Charles II of Navarre that Chaucer and three 'compaignons' received for the period from 22 February to Pentecost (24 May) was routinely given to pilgrims, and...he may have been under way to Compostela or on a secret mission connected with Pedro I of Castile.... "

In *Chaucer Life-Records*, ed. Martin M. Crow and Clair C. Olson, it is pointed out (1996: 65) that the letter of safe conduct referred to by Westrem "is preserved in a chancery register known as the Cartulary of Charles II (Charles le Mauvais)," that "the French and Spanish records of the cartulary...show that about 1366 there were in Spain, especially in Navarre, many Englishmen, including the Black Prince..., as well as numerous English knights and esquires," and that documents in the cartulary for 1365-6 "refer also to safe-conducts granted by the king of Navarre to various pilgrims who were on their way to or from the shrine of St. James of Compostella." To put it facetiously, anyone wishing to do a bit of *Pearl*-diving should trawl through this cartulary's personages and trace their affiliations.

³¹ Chaucer had certainly served in the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, wife of the Black Prince's brother Prince Lionel, from at least 1357, and had served under Prince Lionel in the French campaign of 1359-60 when Chaucer was captured and had to be ransomed. Lionel's troops were in the division led by the Black Prince: Brewer (1992: 46-7, 57-61); Pearsall (1992: 34-41). In 1362, Lionel had been made the first Duke of Clarence, and the poet of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is careful to list Lionel and the Duke of Clarence among the knights at Arthur's feast on All Saints' Day as Gawain prepares to set forth on his quest for the Green Chapel (lines 550-53):

and that we need to reconsider in the most profound way our notions of how some of the literary history of England actually was being created by two of the age's greatest poets, and the roles in that creation of princes and their retinues both in England and in Aquitaine, during the period 1353-1376. It could well be that when Chaucer makes his Pilgrim Parson speak as though he knows the Alliterative Tradition very well even as he dismisses it as "rum-ram-ruf," Chaucer is paying a kind of tribute to the author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and when another of his characters speaks of "Gawain, with his olde courtesye," it was not only to romances in French that he was referring. Perhaps there should be a sequel to the brilliant recent account of English/Italian cultural relations offered by David Wallace (1997) in his *Chaucerian Polity*, a sequel that would consider English poets and patrons and the Matter of Aquitaine.

Carter Revard

Washington University, St. Louis

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Thenne the best of the burgh bowed togeder,
Aywan, and Errik, and other ful mony,
Sir Doddinal de Sauage, the Duk of Clarence,
Launcelot, and Lyonel, and Lucan the gode....

As Vantuono notes (1999: 176) in 1913 Isaac Jackson proposed that the poet was alluding here to Prince Lionel, and in 1959 D'Ardenne "also associated the title Duke of Clarence with the contemporary Lionel, who in 1368 was married to Violante Visconti, the niece of Amadeus VI, Count of Savoy, known as the Green Count." Chaucer may have attended that wedding in Milan: see Howard, *Chaucer* (1987: 118-24). Recently, Leo Carruthers has proposed (2001) that the patron for whom *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* was written was Roger Mortimer, fourth earl of March (1374-1398), son of Prince Lionel's daughter Philippa (1355-81) and therefore grandson of King Edward III. Carruthers suggests (20001: 76) that in 551-2 the poet's reference to *the duk of Clarence, Launcelot, and Lyonel* is "a flattering reference to the late Prince Lionel and his grandson Roger Mortimer."

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