

“GRETE KYNDENES IS IN HOWNDYS”:  
DOGS AND MEN IN MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCE

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At the turning point of the romance *Sir Tryamour*, True Love the dog remains at his dying master’s side:

Hys gode hownde, for weyle nor woo  
Wolde not fro hys maystyr goo  
But lay lykyng hys woundys.  
He wende to have helyd hym agayne;  
Therto he dyd all hys mayne—  
Grete kyndenes is in howndys. (382-87)

True Love’s is an iconic, archetypal story of canine fidelity, a motif older than the *Odyssey* that persists in popular media and local legend as well as the ancient adage “a dog is a man’s best friend / dog is man’s best friend,” which neatly captures the gendering and the closeness of the relationship.<sup>1</sup> This scene and True Love are often the subjects of such scholarship as exists on *Sir Tryamour*, but the tag phrase at the end of the stanza has received little attention.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not the anonymous author intended a pun on the word “kind,” the comment has an emphatic final position. The word *kyndenes*, potentially carrying not only the modern meaning of benevolence but also the etymological sense of belonging to the same class or group, draws attention to the close relationship between men and dogs in this romance—they are of the same kind; dogs are men’s doubles, their second selves.

According to the *Middle English Dictionary*, *kind* denotes “a class of creatures . . . [or] genus” and the “inherent properties, . . . essential character . . . and attributes” of these creatures, as well as “parentage, lineage, . . . the station or rank one is born into.” *Kindness* refers to “the natural instincts, desires, or feelings within man or animal”; “good will, friendliness . . . courtesy, noble deeds, constancy in love”; and “natural affection due to kinship or other special relationship,” the last meaning being illustrated by the phrase from *Sir Tryamour* quoted above, though all of these meanings are relevant to True Love’s role in the story. This

paper is a study of the *kyndenes* of hounds in three Middle English romances—*Sir Tryamour*, *Sir Tristrem*, and *Sir Gowther*—in which dogs feature prominently and so present a unique opportunity to explore constructions of masculinity and caninity, gender and genus, in late medieval England.<sup>3</sup> Before considering dogs and men in these romances, however, some context is in order. A survey of medieval attitudes towards dogs as revealed in other genres, followed by a brief review of late medieval concepts of masculinity, will supply the necessary analytical framework for the consideration of individual romances.

#### MEDIEVAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS DOGS

Medieval writings about dogs stress their special relationship with men: according to bestiaries, often called “books of kind,” dogs occupy a unique position *vis a vis* people and are not able to live apart from them. Further reinforcing the *kyndenes* of humans and canines, these texts stress the human qualities of dogs, especially their noble deeds, constancy, and intelligence, often employing the very language of the definition quoted above. The bestiary entry on dogs, typically one of the longer and more profusely illustrated, incorporates numerous examples of heroic canine loyalty, all at least partial analogs to True Love’s story.<sup>4</sup> These faithful dogs fight to defend their masters, care for their wounds, guard their corpses, seek out their murderers, avenge their deaths, and, finally, die on their graves. A version more contemporary with the English romances, the story of Aubrich and Makerie, appears in the *Master of Game* which observes, in terms recalling True Love, “a hound is true to his lord and his master, and of good love and true” (Edward 79).<sup>5</sup>

Canine loyalty was a model for martial attributes: to quote Christine de Pisan, “The dog naturally has many characteristics which the good man-at-arms ought to have. The dog loves his master marvelously and is very loyal to him. And the man-at-arms should be also. . . . He [the dog] . . . is very tough and fights with great skill. He has good understanding, knowledge, and is very amiable to those who do him kindness” (17). The greyhound, present in all three romances, was especially prized for it will follow “its master and do all his commands, being sweet, clean, joyous, willing, and gracious in all its doings save to the wild beasts to whom it should be terrible, spiteful, and hostile” (Edward 115). Faithful greyhounds may be found in saints’ legends, notably that of the plague

victim St. Roch, who was sustained in exile by a bread-bearing greyhound (as in *Sir Gowther*) which licked his sores with its healing tongue (as in *Sir Tryamour*).<sup>6</sup> St. Guinefort actually was a greyhound, a martyred guardian of children venerated in a cult that flourished near Lyon, France.<sup>7</sup>

Medieval writings comment on the near-human intelligence of dogs. According to the bestiaries, they are the most intelligent of animals, able to recognize their own names and capable of rationality like that of the hunting dog who “reasons with itself, as if by syllogism, on the basis of its keen sense of smell” to follow the track of its prey.<sup>8</sup> Dogs’ capacity to reason and take instruction is affirmed by hunting treatises: “a hound . . . will learn as a man all that a man will teach him” (Edward 80). Different breeds were trained for their specialized skills such as hunting by smell or sight and pursuing different kinds of quarry. Hunting hounds are said to understand human speech and to use their own, “making great melody in their language and saying great villainy and chiding the beasts that they chase” (Edward 110).<sup>9</sup> Hunters, in turn, direct their dogs with horns blowing a variety of tunes, instruct them with human language—for example, “*Ha cy douce cy et venuz arere, so howe*” (softly there, here she...[the hare]...has been, back there)—and encourage them with terms of human praise and endearment: “*Beaumon le vaillaunt,*” and “*mon amy*” (Twici 16, Edward 183). A successful hunt depended on the close working relationship of men and dogs—a relationship which blurred the boundaries of kind. Susan Crane notes that, in *chasse à force*, as the treatises call hunts with relays of dogs, “the integration of hounds and hunters . . . is so thorough that humans are in some ways not distinct from, and not distinctly superior to, the hounds” (*Encounters* 112).

Of all domestic animals, dogs lived in especially “close and privileged proximity with people” (Figg 106n32); as companion animals and guardians of property they shared shelter and, to some extent, sustenance with their masters. The sharing of food is a primary means of signifying intimacy and establishing social bonds, and there is no lack of evidence that dogs were included in this practice, from Chaucer’s Prioress who had “smale houndes . . . that she fedde / With rosted flessch, or milk and wastelbreed” (GP 146-47), to the well-known illumination from the Duke of Berry’s *Grandes Heures* depicting lap dogs standing on the laden table at his New Year’s feast. Hunters shared the quarry with their dogs: manuals of venery prescribe the etiquette for breaking the animal and how and when which parts should be given to the dogs as a reward for their success, and dogs roam among the hunters depicted

eating their lunch in the illuminations of the *Livre de Chasse*.<sup>10</sup> I will have more to say about sharing food with dogs in my discussion of *Sir Gowther*, but its implications for the *kyndenes* of hounds are nowhere more striking than in the year-long penance the penitentials decreed for consuming food or water set out for dogs. As Joyce Salisbury points out, this was not only a longer period than those assigned for consuming items contaminated by other animals, but, in fact equaled the penance for incest and patricide, taboos arising from the closeness of family relationships (53).

Being so closely identified with humans, dogs played a significant role in the construction of social ideologies. The loyal bond of dog and master was a model for all levels of the medieval social hierarchy from lord and vassal to king and subject, commander and soldier, landlord and tenant, master and apprentice. Aristocrats commonly gave hunting dogs as gifts, cementing friendships and alliances. In the romance *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, the Emperor's retainers lament his death which has left the kingdom without a male heir:

Dewkys and erles ther hondys wronge,  
 And lordys sorowe was full stronge,  
 Barons myght haue no roo:  
 "Who schall vs now gue londys or lythe,  
 Hawkys, or howndys, or stedys stythe,  
 As he was wonte to doo?" (838-43)

Hunting and its hounds were status symbols integral to the aristocratic activities and modes of display so important to the construction of class, and they were lavishly illustrated in the manuscripts of Gaston Phoebus' hunting manual cited above.<sup>11</sup> Crane argues that the noble hunt was a secular ritual designed to "affirm the rightness of a single social and natural order headed by the aristocracy" (*Encounters* 103). From early in the Middle Ages, training in hunting was an essential part of the education of aristocratic youth, and "even a lesser nobleman ... was expected to keep hawks and hounds and to talk knowledgeably about them" (Keen 154).<sup>12</sup> As we will see, hunts are important plot elements in both *Sir Tryamour* and *Sir Tristrem*.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

Given that medieval society was patriarchal, it follows that hunting, and dogs, would play a role in the construction of masculinity, a further aspect of *kynde*. While small dogs were associated with women, and we will have occasion later to discuss Ysonde's Peticrewe, these were lap dogs that did not participate in the hunt.<sup>13</sup> Hunting was a demonstration of masculine prowess, a kind of ritualized combat requiring skill in horsemanship, weaponry, and the deployment of troops (the packs of dogs and their handlers), standing third in chivalric prestige behind military combat and tournament.<sup>14</sup> *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight's* well-known hunt scenes construct masculinity through violent physical competition, in contrast to the feminizing seduction scenes. Another familiar example is Chaucer's Monk: "An outridere that lovede venerie, / A manly man, to been an abbot able . . ." (GP 166-67) whose greyhounds apparently accompany him on pilgrimage. The *kyndenes* of dogs is gendered male.

Concepts of masculinity in the European Middle Ages varied according to time and place, so it is more accurate to speak in the plural, of masculinities. My discussion here is confined to the later period in northern Europe and to those cultural forms and practices most relevant to the English romances—what Ruth Mazo Karras in *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* calls chivalric masculinity. This form was embodied in codes of knighthood and found its literary expression in the genre romance.<sup>15</sup> She explains masculinity as a system of privileges, claimed in competition between men and sustained by bonds among men forged in that competition, through which men assert "dominance over men of . . . [their] . . . own social stratum as well as over women and other social inferiors" (21) and, we might add, over animals (in particular horses and hounds). Competition found various manifestations, but physical aggression was important to all medieval constructions of masculinity, as was the absence of femininity. The subjugation of women, while always a feature of masculinity, was not an end in itself but rather a means to demonstrate masculinity to other men and to establish bonds with them through the exchange of women (11).

One characteristic that distinguished chivalric masculinity from other forms is "military prowess—expertise in the use of violence" demonstrated in knightly combat (25). Knightly prowess directed violence away from women and towards men who are not chivalric,

especially enemies of the Church. Other imperatives of chivalric masculinity complicated this ethos of aggression, and it was the work of chivalric literature to “reconcile several sets of competing ideas: romantic love, gentility, knightly prowess, and piety” (26). Gentility, expressed in refined manners and courtly accomplishments, threatened to feminize men (44). Earlier in the period, Bernard of Clairvaux had preached against the feminine luxury of knights whose stylish long hair and fine silk gowns contradicted the monastic codes of the Knights Templar. We have only to consider Chaucer’s *Troilus*, or the Squire in contrast to the Knight, to see this tension. Romantic love, which privileged bonds between men and women, also threatened to feminize men: Vern Bullogh reviews discussions of passionate attachment in medieval Latin writings where it is typically characterized as “womanly love” unsuitable to a man (38). But Karras points out that “love service . . . was largely a performance to display to other men the lover’s appeal to women” (52), that is, his ability to subjugate them. A further complication of chivalric masculinity was introduced by ideals of piety that subordinated prowess to ecclesiastical agendas and required sexual purity, even the absence of those women who, in theory at least, motivated chivalric behavior. Men without women, especially if celibate, “came dangerously close to traditional versions of femininity,” as Jo Ann McNamara observes (8). Throughout the Middle Ages, the church sought to direct the aggression of knights to its own ends, inveighing against such pastimes as tournaments, but it was precisely in such demonstrations of prowess that bonds between men were established and chivalric masculinity was achieved.

The tensions arising from the contradictions inherent in chivalric masculinity are at issue in our romances, and the roles of dogs in each are aligned with the narratives’ different treatments of what it means to be a man. The protagonists of all the romances achieve manhood by bonding with other men and displaying prowess; these are the particular concern of *Sir Tryamour*, where even the dog is a loyal combatant. The other romances seek to reconcile chivalric masculinity with the potentially contradictory paradigms of courtliness and piety: courtly love is at issue in *Sir Tristrem*, where dogs seal a pledge between lovers; piety predominates in *Sir Gowther*, where dogs are instruments of redemption.

These romances’ treatments of masculinity and canine-human bonds are of a piece with the poems’ common aesthetic and literary history. All three belong to the late medieval florescence of Middle English popular romances; they exhibit the formulaic plots, episodes, and

phrases which make up the shared grammar of those texts and encode the cultural values of their milieu.<sup>16</sup> Our poems relate male Cinderella stories of families separated and reunited, of kingdoms lost and won, of orphans who discover their identities, prove themselves in combat, and win brides. All are narratives of masculinity, affirming patrilineage and patriarchy through marriage and the exchange of women—their protagonists are male (as are the dogs), they have heroes not heroines, and plot complications are resolved by establishment of the male line. The heroes fight to avenge or support their fathers (or father figures), and to appropriate women by protecting them from giants, Saracens, and other figures of sexual and religious aggression. The poems express a certain anxiety about women and sexual contact with them; in initial episodes the pregnancies so important to the continuation of the families and the kingdoms they rule are clouded by questions of illegitimacy that lead to the families' dissolution. Like most other Middle English popular romances, these have bipartite plots, one tracing the decline of chivalric masculinity through the weakening of male bonds and protagonists' loss of dominance over women and men of lesser status, the other recounting its restoration through combat and the exchange of women. Masculinity is not the only feature that declines and is restored in these narratives; gender is part of a network of ideologies including chivalry, class, religion, and family, all of which are involved at the plots' turning points, where dogs play a prominent role.

#### *SIR TRYAMOUR*

*Sir Tryamour* is primarily concerned with that most fundamental aspect of chivalric masculinity—prowess in combat. Many studies of the romance make much of the disparate foci of the bipartite plot (faithful dog, calumniated queen, maturation of the hero), but its unity becomes apparent when the parts are read as complementary narratives of masculinity.<sup>17</sup> The first half shows the bonds among men broken, resulting in unfettered aggression and loss of control of the woman in their charge. However, the loyalty and prowess of True Love in defending his master prepares the way to the second part of the story where Tryamour's chivalric expertise in combat—tournament, individual combat, and hunting—enables him to bond with other men, thus restoring women and authority to rightful rulers. The number of combats is noteworthy—seventeen separate encounters, amounting to a quarter of the poem's lines—and one of them features a dog.

The story opens with a crux of masculinity: the inability to father children. King Arduus of Aragon and his queen, Margaret, are childless. He prays for an heir, pledging to fight in the Holy Land, and, unknown to him, Margaret conceives. On his departure, Arduus leaves his wife to the care of his steward, Marroch, who tries to appropriate her for himself, slanders her when she rejects him, and reports to her returning husband that she is pregnant by another man. Marroch is a negative example of chivalric masculinity. He breaks his bond to his lord and makes unchivalric use of military might by attacking a woman. He persuades Arduus to exile Margaret, then stages an ambush, choosing an old knight, Sir Roger, to escort the queen because he is weak and thus an easy target. He is expendable—Marroch says he can “wayne wyth the wynde” (246). However, Sir Roger, described as “curtes ... and kynde” (240)—a formulaic expression, but apt—fights well in the ambush and “kydd ... [proved]... he was a knyght” (304). True Love, who accompanies him, fights by his side, biting fiercely the whole time (315). Marroch, on the other hand, is described as “unmanly” (360); in context the word suggests a number of meanings—literally without men, dispirited, cowardly, lacking prowess, or simply without masculine virtue.

The dissolution of chivalric masculinity is reversed through the heroic loyalty of the dog. During the ambush, True Love defends his master and insures the queen’s survival by remaining with the dying Sir Roger and attempting to heal his wounds, eliciting the comment on the kindness of hounds that inspired this study. In scenes totaling nearly two hundred lines, True Love slays all but two of their assailants, buries his master, guards his grave, and, after seven years, returns to Arduus’ court where he seeks out, identifies, and kills the steward. His remarkably purposeful behavior alerts the King, who follows the hound to discover Roger’s grave as well as Marroch’s treachery and Margaret’s fidelity. Roger, his body miraculously preserved, is re-interred with due observance while the steward’s corpse is disposed of with ignominy. The dog accompanies his master to the new grave where he finally joins him in death. True Love performs chivalric masculinity when the humans around him do not or can not. He exhibits extraordinary agency and is briefly imbued with a kind of subjectivity as he searches for his master’s murderer. He becomes the protagonist, acting independently and changing the course of the action. More than the dogs of the other romances discussed in this paper, True Love is a character.

The spirit of the hound lives on in his namesake, our eponymous hero. Margaret, alone in the forest, gives birth to a son she names

Tryamour (a French approximation of True Love) after her savior, the valiant hound, and as a testament of her own fidelity to Arduus.<sup>18</sup> Tryamour is the hound's double. He replicates the hound's fidelity and prowess in ambushes and other confrontations, restoring bonds among men. The reconstruction of masculinity proceeds with Margaret's return to male authority—she is rescued by a knight, Sir Bernard, who is hunting nearby and becomes, informally, Tryamour's foster-father. He instructs the young man in the art of combat and provides the arms he will need in contests with other men. Our hero encounters his father at a tournament for the hand of Helen, the orphaned princess of Hungary, and the two men's bond is forged in a series of episodes of chivalric combat. Though father and son are unknown to each other, and even fight once on opposing teams, Arduus and Tryamour come to each other's aid, with the result that Tryamour is recognized as the victor in the tournament and as Helen's betrothed.

Dogs play a role again in the next stage of the two men's relationship and Tryamour's achievement of manhood. He is hunting on his way to claim his bride when his hounds raise a deer and their barks alert nearby foresters who take the youth for a poacher. After Tryamour repels their attack, killing all but one, he returns to his hounds only to find that two have been killed by the hart. "Full wo" (1086), he saves the other one, tends its wounds, slays the deer, then feeds the hound from its hide according to the established hunting ritual. All these details illustrate Tryamour's kindness towards his hounds, as well as his expertise as a hunter. The surviving forester reports the loss of his companions to his lord, who happens to be Arduus, in terms that leave no doubt as to Tryamour's masculine prowess: "twenty men were full fewe / To take the knight, he is soche a schrewe," to which Arduus replies with similar emphasis, "I have "mystur of soche a man" (1105-09). He sets off to find Tryamour, whom he discovers feeding his hounds, and the two men return to court where they spend the days together hunting (presumably with dogs).

This male bonding is a prelude to further affirmations of their loyalty. Arduus has need of Tryamour to repel the attacks of the giant, Moradas, champion of the Emperor of Germany, whose son Arduus had helped Tryamour to defeat in the tournament for Helen. As Arduus explains his predicament, Tryamour recognizes his former companion in arms. In a demonstration of loyalty and kindness worthy of his namesake, and in language that echoes his response to the wounding of

his dog, Tryamour recalls his friend's prowess, credits him with saving his life, and offers to fight as his champion:

“...Y am ful woo  
 That thou art for me anoyed soo,  
 Yf Y myght hyt amende,  
 At the day of batayll forthy  
 Ther schall no man fyght but Y.” (1162-66)

Following this pledge, Ardu knights the warrior and designates him as his heir, thus confirming Tryamour's achievement of manhood and establishing the father-son bond in all but name.

The remainder of the romance narrates a series of lengthy combats in which Tryamour further demonstrates prowess by vanquishing the brothers of Moradas, securing his claim to Helen and preparing the way for the revelation of his paternity. In contrast to True Love, who had an animal form but exhibited noble human qualities, the giants have human form at its most animalistic, and behave bestially. Like the giants of other romances, the brothers are monstrous embodiments of sexual violence representing, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen notes, the animal impulses that must be overcome if one is to establish a human identity and become a man (“Diminishing Masculinity” 145).<sup>19</sup> After defeating these hypermen, Tryamour is ready to learn his paternity (his *kynde*), which his mother reveals at the culminating wedding. Here, in a further exchange of women, the hero returns his mother to his father. Bernard attends. Tryamour becomes king and fathers sons—paternity, patrimony, patrilineage are re-established, male bonds and masculinity are restored, the values of chivalry are affirmed. Lee Ramsey is correct in noting that Tryamour's only “advances toward . . . [Helen] . . . are military” and that marriage as depicted in this romance is not based on emotional involvement or physical attraction; however, I would submit that the romance is not about marriage, rather, it's about chivalric masculinity, in which the role of women is to cement bonds between men. That “*Sir Tryamour's* best image of ‘true love’ is the love of a dog for its dead master” (165) is entirely in keeping with that project.

#### *SIR TRISTREM*

As does *Sir Tryamour*, *Sir Tristrem* relates a story of true love, and also, as in that romance, dogs act as the protagonists' doubles and have

names that suggest their fidelity. But unlike Tryamour's dogs which mediate bonds between men, Tristrem's mediate bonds between a man and a woman, and emotional involvement and physical attraction are at this heart of the narrative. Tristrem's dogs take part in the construction of courtly chivalric masculinity. While courtly love is not new territory for the motif of the loyal dog, dogs in classical lore and bestiary narratives have masters only. In *Sir Tristrem*, one dog, like the hero himself, has a mistress. The fact that the loyalty exemplified by the dogs bonds a man and a woman, breaking the feudal and familial bonds which should exist between a vassal and his lord and kin, leads this romance into narrative patterns not found in the other two poems I discuss, for it ends in tragedy for the lovers rather than comic recognition, reunion, and restoration.

However, the comic plot does inform the first half of *Sir Tristrem*, which begins with the love and untimely deaths of the hero's parents and culminates in his achievement of manhood. Raised as Tantris by a faithful vassal, Tristrem eventually discovers his given name and parentage from King Mark, his maternal uncle. Concluding the *enfance*, Mark knights the youth who then avenges his father's death, and, in a series of combats, wins the love of a lady and her hand in marriage—only not for himself, for his uncle. In keeping with the aesthetic of English popular romance, *Sir Tristrem* treats this part of its hero's career at proportionately greater length than do earlier Anglo-Norman and continental versions, employing the motif of giant brothers to unite the hero's combats before and after the winning of the bride. Dana Symons characterizes the battles as “extravagant scenes of fighting and manly exchange in combat” (18). The hero dismembers his opponents hand and foot, a motif rendered as gleefully here as in *Sir Tryamour*. Through these displays of prowess Tristrem achieves manhood, social status, and public acclaim, which his love affair with Ysonde threatens to undermine. The combats establish bonds between Tristrem and other men—as well as demonstrating his superiority to them and, most importantly, in the second half of the narrative, to Mark, an unmanly man who exhibits no prowess and must rely on Tristrem again and again to protect his kingdom and his wife against wrongful claimants and jealous courtiers.

The construction of masculinity in this romance incorporates more than expertise in combat. Tristrem also succeeds through his courtesy. In childhood his nobility of character is affirmed by his appreciation for fine hunting falcons and skill at chess and harping; the latter ingratiates him with the Irish court where he becomes Ysonde's teacher. Not only does

his musicianship establish a relationship with his lady, it also facilitates his return visit to claim her as Mark's bride. After the marriage, Tristrem's musical abilities enable him to reclaim her for Mark when the king's rash promise would require him to give Ysonde as a gift to a minstrel. Tristrem's masculinity is affirmed by Mark's lament, "Lesen Y mot mi manhed / Or yeld Ysonde me fro" (1840-41), and by his nephew's victory over the minstrel in a harping contest. Skill at arms is not the only way to assert dominance over other men and display one's ability to subjugate women.

As in *Sir Tryamour*, hunting, with its dogs, facilitates the bonding of unrecognized son and father-figure. Tristrem's mastery of venery, a masculine tradition learned from his foster-father, gives him entrée to Mark's court. Kidnapped and abandoned in a forest, the boy encounters hounds pursuing a hart. The hunters are Mark's men, and, in a scene of some one hundred lines, Tristrem introduces them to the etiquette of the hunt including the proper sounding of the horn and breaking of the deer, after which he feeds the hounds on its hide. This performance so impresses the party that they bring him before their king. Tristrem is credited with originating the art of the hunt: the *Book of St. Albans*, a fifteenth-century hunting manual, tells would-be hunters to "take hede how Tristram dooth you tell / How many maner beestys of venery ther were" (1215-16).<sup>20</sup> In the literature of *amour courtoise*, hunting is a common metaphor for love, so it is fitting that Tristrem, an iconic courtly lover, should be the sport's originator. Instances abound of hunter/lovers and hunted/beloveds, of lovers hunted by Love in the form of Cupid with his arrows. In the romance the figurative is made literal since the lovers become the hunted, pursued by Mark and his courtiers with hounds in the forest of Morois.

Dogs are incidental to Tristrem's achievement of manhood and identity in the first part of the romance, but play a more prominent role in the second. As in *Sir Tryamour*, dogs are present at the turning point of the plot: Tristrem's hunting hound is there when the couple shares the love potion. This is an innovation of the English author; unlike any of its sources, in this narrative the dog accompanies Tristrem on the fateful voyage to bring his uncle's bride. Even more striking is the fact that the dog partakes of the potion with the lovers.<sup>21</sup> Though he has not been mentioned before, he is abruptly introduced as they drink:

An hounde ther was beside  
That was ycleped Hodain;

The coupe he licked that tide  
 Tho down it sett Bringwain.  
 Thai loved al in lide  
 And therof were thai fain. (1673-78)

And a few lines later:

Al blithe was the knight,  
 He might with ... [Ysonde] ... play.  
 That wist Brengwain the bright  
 As tho.  
 Thai loved with al her might  
 And Hodain dede also. (1688-94)

The inclusion of Hodain in the final line of the stanza, its emphatic position enhanced by the rhyme of bob and wheel, is not unlike the placement of *Sir Tryamour's* assertion of the *kyndenes* of hounds. Most writings on *Sir Tristrem* comment on this scene. Crane remarks on the “startling equation of human and animal sentiment” (*Insular* 193), and Alan Lupack cites the sharing of the potion as evidence that *Sir Tristrem* is a parody of romance, making much of Hodain’s proximity to the “playing” lovers as a further parodic feature (*Sir Tristrem* 147). Later the dog sleeps beside the exiled lovers in the forest. The threesome may strike us as odd, but it is in keeping with the devoted behavior of bestial dogs and the bond of hunter and hound; further, it resonates with Ramsey’s comment about the canine image of true love in *Sir Tryamour*—another example of the *kyndenes* of hounds that resists the reading of dogs as signifiers of bestiality.<sup>22</sup> By sharing the potion, Hodain, Tristrem, and Ysonde are of one kind—lovers—and the dog becomes their double, an emblem of fidelity.<sup>23</sup> And since dogs are signifiers of chivalric masculinity, Hodain’s presence attests to Tristrem’s masculinity at the point in the story where it is most threatened by the feminizing aspects of courtesy and romantic love with its heterosexual rather than homo-social bonds. This may explain why the author introduced the loyal dog at this pivotal scene—it may not be well integrated, but it has a significant function.

In addition to Hodain, the romance features Ysonde’s dog, Peticrewe, another double for the lovers and symbol of their fidelity. He is a gift to Tristrem from the conventionally but notably named Triamour, King of Wales, whose daughter the knight has saved from the

advances of a giant. Initially, Triamour offers his kingdom as a reward, but Tristrem cedes it back to the princess, accepting only the dog. What begins as an exchange sealing a bond between men becomes a token of the bond between a man and a woman when Tristrem sends the dog as a gift to Ysonde. Unlike the other dogs in our romances, Peticrewe is described: he is soft as silk, colored red, green, and blue, and “Thai that him seighen oft / Of him hadde gamen and glewe (2405-06). These distinctive characteristics suggest the marvelous nature, rarity, value, and pleasure of true love, though this dog lacks the fairy pedigree, magic bell, and complex symbolic significance of his counterparts in other versions of the Tristan story.<sup>24</sup> Peticrewe’s name is enigmatic, and variously spelled, but if *crewe* represents a form of *croire* (believe), the name may mean something like “little thought” or “little pledge,” though Figg suggests that the name may refer to the dog’s small stature, since it is referred to as a *whelp*, that is, a small hound or puppy (2399, 2422).<sup>25</sup> Ysonde’s dog at times resembles a *cheinet*, a little dog of the type given to ladies as love tokens and, in literature at least, acting to assist the lovers; it is a feminized counterpart to the masculine hunting dog—living indoors as a companion, not as a working animal (Walker-Meikle 90-92). However, in some parts of the poem both dogs are referred to by terms that suggest larger hunting hounds, such as *rasche*, which denotes a running hound (2470), and Peticrewe participates in the forest hunts, aligning him with masculine activities. Peticrewe plays a role in the lovers’ reunion when Tristrem’s friend Ganhardin arrives at Mark’s court wearing a ring Ysonde had given her lover. As Tristrem had instructed him, Ganhardin covertly reveals his identity to her by remarking on the dog and extending his ringed fingers to stroke it; he is then able to arrange the lovers’ meeting.

The English poem draws attention to the loyalty of the lovers and the dogs’ function as their doubles by including both dogs where none or only one appear in other versions of the story. Both are present in the Ganhardin episode and are represented with Ysonde in the grotto of marvelous statues that Tristrem commissions to assuage his grief in separation from his beloved. Both dogs accompany their master and mistress in their forest exile, where there are several references to Tristrem and the dogs hunting for game. The suffering, food, and shelter shared by the lovers and their dogs provide other instances of the *kyndenes* of hounds and humans. But if *Sir Tristrem’s* author more often refers to both dogs, he does not exploit the full potential of canine significance present in other Tristan romances. Hodain and Peticrewe

originate in different strands of the story: Husdant appears in Beroul's version, Petitcru in Thomas'; both dogs appear in Gottfried Von Strassburg's poem. Beroul's *Tristan* incorporates classic demonstrations of canine fidelity: Husdant joyfully runs to his master, recognizing him in spite of his wretched appearance when even Yseut cannot. When Tristan and Yseut are banished and Husdant is enchained, he howls madly and refuses to eat. Mark releases the dog, thinking it will lead him to the couple, but employing the near-human reasoning attributed to dogs in the bestiaries, Husdant loses the king's party and tracks his master to his forest refuge. Tristan even teaches the dog to hunt silently, a suppression of animal instinct which makes him more human and demonstrates his loyalty as well as his master's skill as a trainer.<sup>26</sup> Beroul's Husdant fulfills the function of love token that is elsewhere Petitcru's: Yseut asks for the hound in an exchange of pledge gifts when Tristan returns her to Mark following their exile.

In other versions of the story, Petitcru's magical qualities are the focus of attention. In Thomas' *Tristan*, the dog is said to be a fairy gift from Avalon; he is not multicolored so much as changing colors, or even colorless, according to the perspective from which he is viewed. On his collar is a bell whose delightful ringing drives away sadness from all who hear it, and it is this quality that gives the dog particular importance. The Duke of Wales, noting Tristan's sadness, displays the dog to cheer his guest, who then asks for Petitcru as a reward for defeating the giant rather than accepting his host's offer of his daughter in marriage. (In *Sir Tristrem*, this substitution of the dog for the woman in the exchange between men is not made explicit.) Additionally, Thomas elaborates on his hero's motive in presenting the dog to his lover—to alleviate her suffering in his absence—and relates how Iseult had a golden dog house built for Petitcru. Gottfried von Strassburg develops the dog as a symbol of the lovers even more since Iseult removes the bell, forgoing pleasure to insure the mutuality of their suffering in separation. The gilded doghouse takes on aspects of a reliquary, and the dog does not bark or eat, yet it lives—a miracle in keeping with the romance's religion of love. Much has been written about Petitcru's changing hue as a complex signifier of *fin amour*.<sup>27</sup> The English author does not point to the dog's enigmatic qualities or to the spiritual dimensions of the couple's love and suffering, nor is he concerned to examine the extremity of their passion and its destruction of self and society. As is typical of English popular romances, elements that in analogues are vehicles for otherworldliness, magic, and emotion are treated matter-of-factly, a feature that can be

related to the English focus on male characters and masculine prowess, since in the romances magic is almost always associated with females. While Hodain and Peticrewe are not complex signifiers as in other treatments of the Tristan story, or agents that advance the plot like the dogs of *Sir Tryamour* and *Sir Gowther*, like them, they are doubles and proxies for the protagonists. Hodain's sharing of the fateful potion and the presence of the *cheinet* Peticrewe are especially significant for *Sir Tristrem's* negotiation of the tension between prowess and the feminizing potential of romantic love in the construction of chivalric masculinity.

### SIR GOWTHER

If *Sir Tristrem* presents dogs as faithful lovers, *Sir Gowther's* dogs can be read as an allegory of the soul's devotion to God, but the *kyndenes* of the dogs is ambiguous since they signify both divine mercy and mankind's fallen, animal nature. Like *Sir Tryamour*, *Sir Gowther* opens with a crisis of lineage and infertility and an attempt to remedy it through prayer. The Duke of Austria threatens to put aside his barren wife, who prays to God and the Virgin that she might bear a child. Shortly thereafter she is impregnated by a fiend who appears in "tho kynde of men" (16), assuming the likeness of her husband. Though the fiend later reveals himself, the duchess tells her husband that the child is his. True to his demonic patrimony, Gowther is a wild child, biting his mother's nipples, draining his wet nurse of life, precociously forging his own weapon, and driving his human father to an early grave. Parricide—the destruction of such a fundamental masculine bond—would seem the antithesis of chivalric masculinity. Ascending to the dukedom, Gowther continues the work of his demonic father by attacking the church, destroying buildings, driving friars to leap off cliffs, hanging parsons, burning nunneries, and, according to one manuscript, raping the nuns. He rapes other maidens too, spoiling their chances for marriage. His behavior is the opposite of chivalric: he attacks rather than protects women, the church, and men of lesser status. His violence and sexual aggression are bestial, irrational, hyper-male, like the giants of *Sir Tryamour* and *Sir Tristrem*. *Sir Gowther* may be a pious romance, but it is no less violent than others of its genre, affirming the hero's prowess in many combats. Eventually, at the nadir of chivalric masculinity, Gowther's vassals question his paternity, citing a rumor that he is some devil's son (for surely no one of Christian parentage would behave as he does). When his mother identifies his true father, the young man

undergoes a spiritual reversal—he prays for salvation and undertakes a pilgrimage to Rome where he confesses to the pope who assigns his penance: to go forth without weapons (prowess) or speech (humanity), and to eat only what he can take from the mouths of dogs—in effect, to become a dog.<sup>28</sup>

Like Hodain sharing the potion and True Love routing the ambush, the dogs of *Gowther* play a role in the turning point of the story. Journeying in a wilderness, the penitent knight is met by a silent greyhound bearing a loaf of white bread. The dog's unexplained appearances over a period of three days give it an aura of mystery. Like the legendary greyhounds of St. Guinefort and St. Roche, its bread suggests the Eucharist; its arrival heralds Gowther's redemption.<sup>29</sup> In the next step he moves from wilderness to civilization, making his way to a castle where he joins the dog pack under the table at dinner. The Emperor, lord of the castle, recognizes that his mute visitor may be fulfilling some penance and sends food to Gowther, who refuses it, instead snatching a bone from the mouth of a spaniel and gnawing it hungrily.

Ther come a spanyell with a bon,  
 In his mothe he hit bare,  
 Syr Gowther hit fro hym droghhe,  
 And gredely on hit he gnofe,  
 He wold nowdur curlu ne tartte.  
 Boddely sustynans wold he non  
 Bot what so he fro tho howndus wan,  
 If it wer gnaffyd or mard. (353-60)

Observing this behavior, the company in the hall and the Emperor's daughter (who, like Gowther, is mute) send him "hondus meyt ynoughhe" (364). They dub him Hob the fool and provide a special place for him, a kind of cross between dog house and penitent's cell, signaling the hero's domestication and elevation from bestial status, though he is not yet fit for human society.

Gowther's dinners with dogs take place during a series of combats by which he is able to return the Emperor's kindness and complete their bond, culminating in the hero's restoration and marriage. For three days, Gowther (in miraculously appearing armor) defends his host and his daughter against the attacks of a Sultan who is formulaically, but significantly, designated a "hethon hownde" (392).<sup>30</sup> Thus Gowther

defeats his own unredeemed self. Each day Gowther returns to his canine status unrecognized by the court, except by the daughter who dispatches greyhounds with bread and meat in their mouths, having washed them with wine. This nice attention to canine hygiene adds another sacramental touch, a step up from gnawed bones snatched from the mouths of spaniels. The combats are described in some detail, exhibiting the hero's prowess as he vanquishes the enemies of his host and faith and subordinating the aggression at the heart of masculine prowess to pious, not diabolical, ends.

Following the third combat, Gowther is ready to transcend his canine status and claim a bride. When he returns to the castle wounded, the maiden swoons at the sight and appears to be dead. The pope comes to officiate at her interment, but as he approaches the bier, she miraculously speaks to release Gowther from his dog-like state, declaring God has forgiven him and that he may now talk and eat human food, and be of good cheer. After this mutual restoration to fully human status (the maiden continues to speak), the two marry, rule, and have a family, as in *Sir Tryamour*. Gowther becomes an exemplar of chivalric Christianity, helping the poor, defending the right, supporting the church, building abbeys and convents to compensate for the ones he had burned and to ensure prayers for the souls of those he had killed. After miracles are attributed to him, he is buried as a saint.

Two kinds of dogs are present in *Sir Gowther*: the ministering greyhounds figure divine grace, love, and fidelity, as in saints' legends, while the spaniels under the table who behave as dogs represent the protagonist's bestial, sinful nature that must be transcended. *The Master of Game* speaks equivocally of spaniels: they "have many good customs and evil" (119): they are great barkers and may pursue farm animals rather than proper prey; if run with hounds, spaniels may egg them on to go after cattle, run hither and thither and mislead them, and "make them overshoot and fail" (121). This characterization of spaniels seems relevant to the romance: they are figures of error, riot, and harm. Unlike the dogs of *Sir Tryamour* and *Sir Tristrem*, the dogs of *Sir Gowther* do not participate in any hunts, have no names, and do not belong to the protagonist. Apparently, the Emperor's daughter is the greyhounds' mistress; significantly, Gowther is not their master for he is not yet master of his own animal nature. However, the dogs' *kyndenes*, both in providing sustenance and analogs for his spiritual status, is essential to the hero's recovery of identity: Gowther finds his humanity by becoming a dog. As Cohen says "Gowther gains his adult identity . . . [by] . . .

mapping the potentialities of his unsocialized self across the grid of the canine bodies with whom he shares food and place” (“Gowther” 220). Only by becoming a dog can he become a man.

Gowther’s penance is particularly fitting when we consider the *kyndenes* of dogs in light of their treatment in penitentials and other didactic writings. Medieval theologians generally held that animals, lacking immortal souls, were excluded from salvation, so the dog, on account of its closeness to humans, was an apt representation of the sinful person separated from God, or more specifically man’s fallen animal body with its instincts and appetites, returning to eat its vomit like sinners returning to their sins.<sup>31</sup> Moralists frequently inveighed against undue attention to and fondness for dogs as an impediment to spiritual pursuits. Salisbury observes that in cultures, like that of medieval Europe, which are very concerned to distinguish what is human from what is animal, the animals closest to people are often perceived as moral threats because they call the distinction into question. Food appears to have been “an area in which it was especially difficult to keep the separation clear,” and, as previously noted, eating dogs’ food was an especially serious offense (51).<sup>32</sup> That Gowther’s penance is exactly the behavior condemned by the penitentials appears at first to be ironic but is actually functionally most appropriate. If eating dog food is taboo because it violates an essential distinction between beasts and humans, it also provides a point of connection, an avenue of ascent from demonic, through animal, to human—from irredeemable to saved. In the words of Andrea Hopkins, Gowther “grows a soul” through penance (173), that is, by becoming a dog. Though dogs were not believed to possess rational souls, they are the animal whose emotions and intelligence most resemble those of humans, who do.

*Sir Gowther’s* distinctive treatment of the motif “sharing food with dogs as penance” is evident in comparison to its analog, *Robert of Sicily*. In punishment for King Robert’s pride, an angel orders him to be shorn like a fool and to eat on the ground with the dogs in his own palace. Much is made of the king’s loss of status. Unlike Gowther, Robert resists his penance, the more so since he can speak. Also unlike Gowther, he almost starves—no one sends him loaves. There are no canine equivalents to the greyhounds who provide spiritual nurture and redemptive mystery (that role is taken by the angel), nor do the dogs mediate bonds between men or figure in the recuperation of pious chivalric masculinity. Robert’s dogs provide a lesson in humility but do

not represent an advance from his sinful condition—if anything they affirm it. There is no *kyndenes* in these hounds.

Gowther's pious story and saintly ending have occasioned controversies as to the poem's genre that have implications for its construction of masculinity and the *kyndenes* of hounds. Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury note the influence of the legends of St. Guthlac on the Royal MS text (307n744); Deiter Mehl classifies it as a homiletic romance; E.M. Bradstock expounds its relationship to the legends of St. Alexius and says it is an example of "secular hagiography" sharing content and mode with the saint's life within the structure of romance (41). Significantly, the romance does not promulgate the woman-and-world-renouncing model of chivalry with which *Guy of Warwick* concludes; through it all Gowther remains a knight; the medium of his sin and his salvation is knighthood (Hopkins 159). The dogs that enable his redemption and restoration to manhood belong not to the traditions of chivalry—the loyal hound of bestiaries and manuals of venery—but to the traditions of didactic literature and saint's legends, in keeping with the poem's "hybrid" genre. The *kyndenes* of the greyhounds and spaniels is different from that of True Love, Hodain, and Peticrewe, but, like theirs, it is essential to the protagonist's achievement of bonds with other men and to the romance's reconciliation of competing ideals within chivalric masculinity, here prowess and piety.

## CONCLUSIONS

This investigation of the *kyndenes* of hounds has highlighted their roles in the system of privileges, competition, and affiliations that is chivalric masculinity as constructed by Middle English romances. In them dogs fulfill some of the same social and narrative functions as female characters, which is to be expected given the parallels that animal studies have identified between animals and subjugated humans. Like women, dogs assert the hero's status, create bonds among men, and are implicated in the hero's discovery of identity; but, being firmly identified as masculine, dogs are less threatening than women to the hero's perceived manhood. While it is not unusual for romances to mention dogs, especially in connection with a hunt, the dogs of *Sir Tryamour*, *Sir Tristrem*, and *Sir Gowther* are integral to the development of the narrative and to the hero's maturation. In these poems, the proximity and difference between humans and canines allows the dogs to function as the heroes' doubles in ways that can either affirm or interrogate their

status among men. While dogs' ancient, archetypal loyalty remains an essential feature of the narratives, it is adapted to new cultural forms: feudalism, courtly love, Christianity, and chivalry. Because they are "other" yet closely identified with humans and, in particular, ideals of manhood, dogs offer an especially apt way to represent and to reconcile some of the contradictions implicit in chivalric masculinity—another chapter in the long and storied relationship of dogs and men.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Motif B 301.2 in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*. Faithful dog at master's grave avenges his murder. An urban legend concerning a faithful hound at his master's grave circulates in Terre Haute, Indiana, where it is associated with a local businessman whose hound was his constant companion. When the man passed away, in 1921, the dog followed his coffin to the cemetery where he remained until he died—his ghost is said to defend the grave. The family buried the dog there and placed a statue of him nearby, but had to remove it when it became the focus of vandalism and pranks, especially on Halloween. This cultural coding runs deep; the special relationship of dogs and humans goes back to prehistory when the ancestors of dogs were the first animals to be domesticated. Salisbury cites evidence that 14,000 years ago, dogs were buried with humans (14).

<sup>2</sup> Ramsey comments that this is “one of the most notable effusions of sentiment to be found in medieval romance” (164).

<sup>3</sup> Parts of this paper were presented to the New Chaucer Society in 2010, also at the Kalamazoo International Congress on Medieval Studies in 2008 and 2009, and to the Medieval Association of the Midwest in 2007. I am grateful to the editor of *Enarratio*, and to the anonymous readers for their many helpful suggestions.

<sup>4</sup> King Garamentes is rescued from captivity by 200 hounds; Jason's dog dies refusing food when his master is killed; the dog of Rome accompanies his master to prison and attempts to rescue his body following his execution; the dog of Antioch guards his master's body and exposes his murderers.

<sup>5</sup> The *Livre de Chasse* (ca. 1387) is one of the most complete and influential hunting manuals, being translated into English (with additions) as *The Master of Game* by Edward, Duke of York (ca. 1410). One of the earliest treatises is the Anglo-Norman *Le Arte de Venerie*, composed by William Twici, Master of the Hunt to Edward II (ca. 1325).

<sup>6</sup> Bestiaries mention the healing capacities of a dog's tongue. See Thompson, Motif B511.2 Animal as healer.

<sup>7</sup> See Schmitt for a detailed study of St. Guinefort's legend and cult.

<sup>8</sup> *Aberdeen Bestiary*, f.18v. Crane points out that sources of the bestiary do not share its assessment of canine rationality: according to St. Ambrose the ability to track is instinctual and thus due to nature, not

reason, which is a function of an immortal soul (*Encounters* 95). All bestiaries are not equally positive in their treatment of dogs: French bestiaries tend to portray them more negatively than Latin ones, according to Smets and van den Ableele (73).

<sup>9</sup> See Yamamoto for a discussion of hunting manuals' attention to dog's intelligence and capacity for language (116-19). The *Master of Game* details at length and in sequence the commands a hunter should speak to his dogs in pursuit of the hare (182-85).

<sup>10</sup> Human food and dog food could be very similar. *Souppes de levrier* (greyhound soup) consisted of brown bread soaked in beef fat. Dogs ate blood pudding, broth, and table scraps; coarse bread eaten by peasants and dogs was called "horsebread." See Figg, "Froissart's 'Debate'" for a discussion of the rich diet of dogs belonging to the aristocracy (96). Hunting manuals recommended feeding bread to keep hunting dogs keen for meat when they were not in the field. .

<sup>11</sup> Their value as status symbols is, no doubt, why hunting and dogs are so often mentioned in Middle English romances, for whose largely gentry audience the poems and the manuscripts that contained them were also status symbols. The treatment of hunting dogs ranges from simple references as in *Richard Coeur de Lion* and *Sir Launfal*, to lengthy scenes as in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Hunting with hounds is the opening episode of a number of popular Arthurian romances—*Sir Gawayne and the Carle of Carlisle*, *The Awentyr of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*, *The Avowing of Arthur*, and *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*—as it is in *Sir Isumbras* where the knight's hounds desert him in the loss of worldly goods that signifies his reversal of spiritual and social status. Generides hunts a magic stag. In *Sir Degrevant*, hunting is the occasion for a feud between the protagonist and the father of his beloved. Several romances include dogs that go with their masters on adventures to win a bride; this is the pattern in *Sir Tryamour*, and *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. In romances, a young man who is master of his hounds is likely to become master of a kingdom.

Items pertaining to hunting appear in manuscripts alongside romances. MS Porkington 10 includes *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*, a list of 107 hunting terms, and extracts from a treatise on hawking (Guddat-Figge 73). MS Arundel 58, containing *Richard Coeur de Lion*, opens with a list of hunting terms (215). MS Lambeth Palace 306 includes *Lybeaus Desconus* and six texts on falconry and beasts of venery (218). In Advocates MS 19.3.1, *Sir Gowther* follows *The Hunting*

of the *Hare* (127). Though the poem is primarily a burlesque of peasant manners, David Scott-MacNab has shown that it “relies on a sophisticated understanding of the significance of medieval hunting terminology and practice, which suggests that it was composed for an audience of gentry” (abstract).

<sup>12</sup>As early as the Carolingian period “hunting and the Christian liberal arts were the two pillars of a nobleman’s education” (Goldberg 617).

<sup>13</sup> See Walker-Meikle’s *Medieval Pets* for a discussion of the gendering and feminizing of small dogs (3-5).

<sup>14</sup> In the romances *Roswall and Lillian* and *Ipomadon*, the protagonists are mocked for hunting rather than tourneying when, in fact, they have taken part in the tournaments incognito.

<sup>15</sup> Karras discusses two others models of masculinity: one, clerical, was associated with the rise of universities; another, urban, was exemplified in the societies of craft workers, but these play no part in the romances.

<sup>16</sup> *Sir Tristrem*, composed in the late thirteenth century perhaps in the SE Midlands, is found in the Auchinleck MS (Advocates 19.2.1, 1330-40). *Sir Tryamour*, composed in the NE Midlands sometime after 1350, survives in Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 2.38 (1450-70). *Sir Gowther*, composed in the NE Midlands circa 1400, appears in British Library Royal MS 17.B.43 and the Hegge MS (Advocates 19.3.1), both from the late fifteenth century. Though their contents, formats, and particulars of production vary, all these manuscripts may be associated with gentry audiences.

<sup>17</sup> See Loomis (283-5) and Fellows (xvii) for comments on the two parts. Ramsey notes the masculine focus of the romance which “concentrates on male rivalries and attachments almost to the exclusion of male-female relationships” (164).

<sup>18</sup> It is appropriate that the human has the more “cultured” French form of the name. It is not unique to this romance: Tryamour is also the name of the hero’s fairy mistress in *Sir Launfal* and of a minor character in *Sir Tristrem*. The name Arduus could have its root in the word *ardor*, making it homologous to the dogs’ and the protagonist’s names.

<sup>19</sup> Given giants’ phallic associations, Tryamour performs a kind of castration when he literally cuts them down to size.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Cummins 43 from Rachel Hands, *English Hunting and Hawking in 'The Boke of St. Albans.'* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975.

<sup>21</sup> The dog sharing the potion is present in one other version, a remote Italian text of the thirteenth century (Rumble 225).

<sup>22</sup> The reading is suggested by Lundblad's comment regarding the portrayal of human-animal relationships in the stories of Jack London which "gesture towards inter-species erotic desire that resists the single and reductive signifier of bestiality" (500).

<sup>23</sup> Hodain was so closely associated with the lovers that he appeared on brooches and other items depicting them; often the couple is shown drinking the potion. I am indebted to Carolyn Eckhardt for two such images, drawn from B. W. Spencer's *Medieval finds from excavations in London, VII, Pilgrim souvenirs and secular badges.*

<sup>24</sup> Thompson, Motif 731.0.1, magic dog changes colors. This motif is associated with Celtic folk traditions from which the romance sprang.

<sup>25</sup> Spelled Petitcreu (Gottfried), Peticru (Thomas). *Creue* is the past participle of *croire*, and means "reliable, trustworthy." The name may also suggest something like "little grown" from *cru*, past participle of *creistre* "to grow," which also gives us the surname Pettigrew (*The Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, Figg,"Re: Peticreu").

<sup>26</sup> Hunting manuals gave instructions for training dogs to hunt silently. The silent hunting also reminds us of the importance of secrecy to courtly love. Husdant's feat is perhaps more striking given the likely derivation of his name. Though it is variously spelled, the initial element is some version of *hou*, an approximation of a dog's bark, as well as the cry used by hunters to encourage their packs, according to the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, citing the *Livre de Chasse*.

<sup>27</sup> See Margaret Schleissner for a discussion of the dogs as complex metaphors for love in Gottfried's *Tristan*; Ben Ramm finds linguistic significance in the multicolors of Peticru in the Old French romances.

<sup>28</sup> Thompson, Motif Q523.3 –sharing food with dogs as penance.

<sup>29</sup> Bradstock refers to the sacramental nature of the food (40). The dog performs the same function as the angelic messengers who provide penitent knights with Eucharistic sustenance, for example, in *Sir Isumbras*. Other romances include animal nurses—see *Octavian* and *Sir*

*Eglamour of Artois*—but these have no particular religious significance. Yvain's lion deserves mention here as well.

<sup>30</sup> Cohen says the sultan represents the giant that Gowther no longer is ("Gowther" 233). Each day he prays for horse and armor and it appears—their colors progressing from black to red to white in token of his spiritual progress. Each day he chases the Sultan from the field; upon his return to court the armor and horse disappear and Gowther returns to his canine status, declining to take part in the dances and society of the hall and thinking only on his sin.

<sup>31</sup> Proverbs 26:11, also 2 Peter 2:22. The medieval ambivalence about dogs is striking, and they are certainly polysemous signifiers—no doubt a function of their close connection to people. In spite of their generally negative treatment in didactic works, they appear positively in saints' legends, as already noted, and in allegories, as faithful guardians, they were likened to preachers who protect against the ambushes of the devil, and the healing qualities of their tongues figure the spiritual healing of confession.

<sup>32</sup> Eating bestially—that is, in a horizontal or other than upright position—was classified as a species of gluttony. The Canons of Adamnan state that only "human beasts eat the food that has been served to beasts" (Salisbury 52).

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