A STUDY OF THE LANGUAGE OF ROMANCE IN
SIR PERCEVAL OF GALES
AN EARLY ENGLISH ARTHURIAN ROMANCE

Hideo Yamaguchi

INTRODUCTION

THE TALE OF SIR PERCEVAL is one of the most well-known of all the mediaeval stories of the Arthurian cycle handed down to our own day, of which we have twenty-three in English literature (Robert W. Ackerman in R. S. Loomis 1959: 480—81). Sir Perceval of Gales (or Galles) is an Arthurian figure, as J. Frappier (1972) points out, cited among the knights of the king's court since Chrétien de Troyes's Erec and reappears in the same author's Cligés.

La reîne Ganievre i cort
et si vint meîsmes li rois,
Kex et Percevax li Galois
et mes sire Gauvins après,
et Corz, li filz au roi Arês

—Erec et Enide, 1504—08.

der êüene Lespîn
und Machmerit Parcefâl von Glois

—Hartmann von Aue, Erec, 1683—84.

Des rens devers Obsenefort
Part uns vasax de grant renon,
Percevax li Galois ot non.

—Cligés, 4772—74.
Thus steps forth our hero, a vassal of great renown hight Sir Perceval of Gales onto the Arthurian scene.

It is, however, only in the tail-rhyme romance *Sir Perceval of Gales* and in Malory that his figure appears in English literature. The former is the object of our present study. Sir Perceval in Malory, Bk XIV (E. Vinaver 1971 : 540—50), it is told, meets the 'Quene of Wast Landis', who professes herself to be his aunt, encounters Joseph of Arimathy, and narrowly escapes the temptations of the 'mayster fyende of helle' through the grace of God.

The date for *Sir Perceval of Gales* is given by Wells (1926 : 72) as 1350—1400 (in the Thornton MS, 1430—1440). But Robert W. Ackerman (Loomis 1959 : 480) revises the dating and places it before 1340. J. Burke Severs (1967 : 70) similarly decides that the poem was composed between 1300 and 1340.

There are other versions of the same tale, which have been frequently cited: the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach and the Welsh *Peredur*. These two, as well as *Sir Perceval*, however, are all later than the French version by Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval or Le Conte du Graal* (LiContes del Graal), as it is called by the author himself. Albert Wilder Thompson (Loomis 1959 : 211) thinks that the later works may have been influenced by Chrétien in some portions, while J. Burke Severs (1967 : 72) contends for different sources for the two groups of versions. R. S. Loomis (1959 : 292), on his part, rejects the view that Chrétien is the source of the other three.

Chrétien's *Perceval*, undertaken at the request of Philippe d' Alsace between May 1131 and September 1190 (J. Frappier 1972 : 1), was left unfinished because death's advance was too soon. On the latter date, Philippe departed for the Crusade, the third in history, and was killed in June the following year. The rest of his work was to be continued by his successors in four compositions, 'Continuation Gauvain' (Sir Gawain), 'Continuation Perceval' (Sir Perceval), Manessier's continuation, and a certain Gerbert's continuation (Severs 1967 : 70
and J. Frappier 1972 : 13–3). We have no certain evidence for the origin of *Sir Perceval of Gales*, Wolfram's *Parzival*, and the Welsh *Peredur*, but some critics, Severs (1967 : 72) and Frappier (1972 : 19) in particular, agree that the English poem is entirely unrelated with Chrétien's work.

The critics have shown that *Sir Perceval of Gales* corresponds to the so-called *enfances* of the hero in Chrétien’s *Le Conte du Graal*, Wolfram's *Parzival*, the Welsh *Peredur*, and further in the Italian *Carduino* (Severs : 72 and Robert W. Ackerman in Loomis : 510). Some scholars derive the *enfances* told in these narratives ultimately from the Irish accounts of the boyhood of *Cuchulain* and *Finn* (Ackerman, *ibid.*).

*Sir Perceval* and Chrétien’s *Perceval* differ prominently in that the former does not mention the tale of the Holy Grail or the King Fisher, which is the important part of the story in the latter. The scholars disagree as to the source of Chrétien’s *Le Conte du Graal* (J. Frappier in Loomis 1959 - 185 and J. Frappier 1972 : 53).

Jean Frappier (Loomis 1959 : 185) quotes from the prologue of Chrétien’s poem, where the poet mentions a book of the tale of the grail which the Count (Philippe d’Alsace) gave him to turn into rhyme:

*Ce est li contes del graal,*

*Don li cuens li baille le livre. v. 67—8.*

Jessie Laidlay Weston (1906–09 : 1) also refers to this circumstance and Frappier returns to this question in his later work (1972 : 53).

In the earlier passage, Frappier concludes: “It is impossible to say whether the *livre* combined the *enfances* of Perceval with the Grail theme, or the poet took the initiative.” But he sounds in a different strain in the later:

“Autre problème, autre débat : dans ce livre, dans cette source écrite, l’histoire de Perceval était-elle déjà soudée au mythe du Graal ? Les deux contes ont pu exister indépendamment l’un de l’autre. En tout cas le personnage de Perceval était connu de
Chrétien bien avant que celui-ci ait eu en mains le *livre* de Phillipe d'Alsace."

The latter view is more or less in consonance with that of Roger Sherman Loomis who speaks of 'consistent inconsistency' of those strange narratives about the Grail that have come down to us, and sums up: "This state of affairs strongly suggests that Chrétien did not invent his story, and that later romancers, even when they knew and drew upon his poem, drew also on an amorphous mass of traditional material."

*Sir Perceval of Gales*, on the one hand, is an unsophisticated romance that stresses action and marvels, as Severs (72) calls it. Chrétien's *Conte*, on the other, tells of something primitive about the grail, but he has not invented *le merveilleux*, for it was already there in the book which the Count of Flandre delivered him (v. J. Frappier 1972: 185). The former retains more early elements and is in comparison simpler than the latter. And it was this simplicity that Chaucer had in his mind when he made reference to Sir Perceval in his tale of Sir Thopas (915—17):

> Hymself drank water of the well,
> As dide the knyght sire Percyvell
> So worthy under wede.

With an ambition to become a knight, Sir Perceval starts in life's journey to see more wonders in the world. Thus—

> Now on his way rydes he,
> Moo selles to see;
> A knyghte wolde he nedis bee

*With-owtten any bade. Sir Perceval, 481—84.*

A description of his boyhood precedes the story of his knighth-errantry. Here we find the figure of the youth Wolfram's *Parzival* presents to us more or less akin to what we have in the English poem. After his father's death at the hand of the red knight, the widow retires into the wood where she raises her son Perceval. The wood scene occurs in all the three versions, and they also share the
motive of belief in the great God with which the boy's ideal of life becomes bound fast by his mother's devoted instructions.

Pe lady till hir son gun say:
'Swete childe, I rede, þou praye
To goddez sone dere,
Pat he wolde helpe the,
Lorde, for his poustee,
A gude man for to bee
And longe to duelle here.' St. 15, 234—40.

In turn the boy queries:
'Swete moder', sayde he,
Whatkyns a godd may þat be,
þat þe nowe bydd mee,
þat I schall to pray ? ' 241—44.


Parallels and differences between Sir Perceval and Parzival and other versions have been noticed by various authors: Weston (1906 : 88—91) and C. Strucks (1910 : 28—38, cf. Loomis : 1959, 292) among the rest. The primitive character of life in the wood and the hunting of wild life, small birds and deer, is shared as a common trait between the English and the German tale. The young Perceval's naïve wonder at the presence of God, as I have alluded to above, seems to have been missed by the critics, however.

On the other hand, the differences between the two are really pronounced. Otto Springer (Loomis 1959 : 225) calls our attention to the first few lines of Parzival, the so-called Vorspruch (I, 1—14), where is sounded "the principal theme of the entire work: man beset by doubt (zwivel), that is, 'unbelief, defection from God'.” He further explains that "The result of doubt is a situation in which man partakes of both heaven and hell, staete and unstae... Yet,
for an individual like Parzival, whose very nature is *triuwe*, ‘consistent loving devotion’, as pointed out in vss. 4, 9–26, Wolfram asserts that this *zwɪvɛl* may be the very experience to bring his personality to full bloom and maturity.” (225–26)

In Wolfram’s own words

Ist zwɪvɛl herzen nʌχgebʌr,
daz muoz der sɛle werden sʊr.

............................

wand an im (‘in man’) sɪnt beidiu teil
(‘If doubt is the neighbour of the heart,
That may be bitter to the soul........
Because there are in man both sides
Of heaven and hell.’)

In Book 3 (instead of Book 4 as Springer puts it) we read (Paul Piper’s edition)

swer die durcʰ triuwe ɪldɛt,
(‘though she may suffer through truth
the soul escapes hell-fire’)

where Wolfram insists upon the felicity of poverty and truth that will earn you your constant gift in heaven.

des wart ir gʌbe niuwe
(‘therefore she gained a constant gift
in heaven with endless reward’.)

This spiritual strain which runs through the whole poem is less insistent in the English *Perceval*, though here it survives in formulaic Christian oaths and cravings for God’s grace and blessings. The main theme of this tale is what I would call the ‘progress of the ring’ in the hero’s hazardous wanderings which leads him finally to his reunion with his mother near

a welle,
Per he was wonte for to duelle

\textit{Ana} drynk take hym thare. \textit{—Sir Perceval}, 2206—08.

The ring was his mother’s gift to him on the morning when he rode forth from the wood where he had spent his boyhood with her.

His moder gaffe hym a ryng

And bad, he solde agayne it brynge:

‘Sone, pis sall be oure takynyng,

For here I sall pe byde.’

\textit{—Sir Perceval}, 425—28.

In his journey towards King Arthur’s court, he meets a noble lady, with whose ring he exchanges his own, his mother’s token. As he rides forth ‘moo selles to see’, he plunges himself into a life of adventures. Meanwhile it happens that he brings succour to the lady now in trouble with her husband, the black knight for a fault he found with her. From her own lips Sir Perceval learns the magic nature of her ring he now wears on his finger. It is told in st. 123 how the black knight took the original ring off the hand of his lady and took it to the lord of the land, ‘the stalwortheste geant of one,/pat any man wate’. The rediscovery of the ring is made after the slaying of the giant lord ‘that had those londis in wolde’, as we learn in st. 133. In a full cycle, it brings the story back to the happy reunion of mother and child, though it still remains to be told in the last stanza how

Sythen he went into pe holy londe,

Wanne many cites full stronge,

\textit{And} there was he slayne, I undirstonde ; \textit{—2281—83}.

The poet closes the tale as was the manner of his day by commend-ing our soul to the blessing of the heavenly king (2285—88).

\textit{Sir Perceval of Gales}, in its general nature, is an elementary pattern of folk-tale, which the scholars have characterized as a member of the group of tales known under the title of \textit{The Aryan Expulsion and Return Formula} (Weston I, 67, n. 1), as the retreat of the hero’s mother into the woods and their final reunion show.
Weston calls it further the best surviving representative of the original form of the Perceval Enfances (ibid., 93. 326; II, 134), just as Parzival is another faithful representative of the tale. The main difference between the two is that the English poem is no Grail-text.

The language is accordingly simple and direct with little display of literary metaphorical figures, though abundantly coloured with native formulaic expressions and framed regularly in constant prosodic patterns. The use of stock epithets for characterizing people and things is one of its lexical features. Synonyms, though in a limited range, help to vary its expressive power. In syntax, we note the frequent device of inversion and changes in word order as dominant features that render colour to the language of narrative. Dialectally it is Northern with a Midland admixture, reinforced as it is by a horde of foreign elements, Old Norse and Anglo-Norman.

The constant sources of meaning and style in such a narrative, as elsewhere, we find at different levels of language, phonaesthetic, lexical, and syntactic. If there is any peculiarity in its use of language, we may trace it to the deliberate choice the poet makes of devices available to him.

The Language of the Poem

1. Phonaesthetic Features.

Onomatopoeia is a more or less primitive, but still living phonaesthetic device. In the following alliterative lines in Sir Perceval, /m/ occurs in the role of expressing the emotion of either sorrow or joy:

For mournynge es his maste mane,
He syghes full sare. (1063—4)
The mayden menged his mode
With myrthes at þe mete (1327—28).

/s/ again is symbolic for the sighing in l. 1064 above.

The name of the sultan Golrotherame (1623) or Gollerotherame (1657) is again suggestive of the exotic world.

Alliteration in other cases usually functions as a means of binding
together the members of a significant phrase. Some of the examples from the poem follow:

/b/ Kay, þe bolde baratour (263), He was burely of body ana þerto riȝt brade (269)

/d/ þer he was done to þe dede (930), Ther solde no dynttis me dere (1895)

/f/ For þi feres folowyng (518), þat frely fode (38)

/g/ For þe gyftes, þat ware gude (39), þe greves graye (172), And on his gan he goo (866), The childe was of gamen gnede (1689), thurgh grace of god (2046)

/h/ in those holtes hare (230), And haylse hym in hy! (404), On horse hovande hym by (533), Hendely hailsed he þat fre (1275), Horse and hernays of hewe (145), In þe holtes hare (1780)

/l/ Lepe on loft (479)

/m/ The myldeste mayden one molde (1323), Off mekill myrthis þay mone (1531), With maystry and myghte (1660), The milde mayden in mode/Mirthe may scho ma! (1727–28), Many mirthes then he made (1729), My modir all manles (1787), Mary, þat es mylde of mode (1826)

/n/ He nykkes hym with nay (1024)

/p/ I giffe the prise to thi pyth (1505), putt un-to pyn (1612)

/s/ þou arte so semely to see (543), When he sawe þat syghte (536), seke and sare (1078)

/r/ He rydes in one a rese (1366)

/w/ oute of þe wod dez wilde (290)(507), þe kyng ...Pat all this wyde werlde wan (629–30), His wo es wansome to wroke (1065), never so wilde ne wigh te (1183), No thyng bot werkes wylde (1570), He hade wordis at wale (1587), olde werkes full wylde (1678), Ne wirke me no waa (1896)

/kn/ And knelyde one hir knee (388)

/sch/ With schafte ne with schelde (52)

/sl/-/sp/ And slaked his spere (1696)
/st/ Ever satt Percyvell stone-still (841), His stede es in stable sett (945), He was so styffe in stour (1566).

It may be noted here that in l. 945 we have an alliterating line in a Hopkinsian pattern of phonological structure: st—... st—... s—t.

In st. 7 there occur a few favourite Middle English rhyme pairs: stryffe—lyffe, lyffe—wyffe, the latter being also used by G. Chaucer and W. Shakespeare. In st. 32 there is a rhyme in vowel realized by the use of Old Norse forms: þaa—taa—fraa.

The tail-rhyme, which recurs throughout the poem, demands that an identical term should link the end-line of a stanza and the initial line of the succeeding stanza together in a continuous flow, but the expectation is often betrayed that the use of some key-words would be involved in this linking, for in many cases the choice of rhyme words is not made for a fixed purpose and the link itself is occasionally missing, as in ll. 10—11, 11—12, 15—6, 16—7 18—9, 19—20, 24—5, 25—6, 26—7, and so on.

The phonological interchange between/sch/ and /s/ is accounted for by dialectal alternative forms: ‘Now sone of þat sall wee see,/ Whose browes schall blakke’ (687—88). The Northern form ‘sall’ stands for ‘schall’ in l.128, l.133 and other lines.

2. Lexical Features.

The word-form may be either simple or compound. A compound word-form may be a composite of a bound form and a free form as: by-spakke, vi. 385 instead of the usual transitive use, by-seches, vt. 2145, bi-taughte, vt. ‘commit’ 2156; un-saughte, ‘irreconciled’ 2152.

The poem contains various types of compound nouns: 1) appositive such as hayle-stones 1191, clobe-lome 2053; 2) attributive such as hede-bones 1190, wode-ende 1820; sister-sones two 1441; 3) determinative in complex relation, such as fyre-iren, ‘tongs for holding burning coal’ 754; 4) attributive adjective + noun: wylde-fyre 855, common-belle 1348; 5) noun + adjective: containing a simile, such as blode-rede, ‘red as blood’ (+wede) 606, (+stede) 1101. Compound verbs are also found: 1) verb with adverb pre-posed or post-posed, such as
do...off, 403, smote...in 691; owt spryng 1418, owte glade 2116; 2) preposition + verb, such as 'A mayden... ṭat scho myȝte appon calle, 182—83, 'Percyvell... ṭat he solde with fyghte' 656, 'with his foo for to fighte' 657.

Alliteration sometimes calls for the use of homonyms: felle, 'fierce' in 'And felle in his fighte !' 3 and 'mountain' in 'He was fosterde in the felle' 6; stede 'horse' in 'His stede es in stable sett' and 'battle-field' in 'And styff appon stede' (945 & 1472).

A variant type of word-form is hybridism, which we may exemplify in the name Lufamour (1222), partly Anglo-Saxon and partly Norman, one of the key-names in the tale.

Alternative forms are used sometimes to suit the rhythm of the verse and sometimes to change the stress in the correlative grammatical forms: 'Sen a thefe hade hym slane...Sythen hafe I ever bene his fo' 555, 557; 'Owthir es z0ne man slane,/Or he slepis hym allane,/ Or he in batelle es tane' 1249—51.

The classical figure of repetition is not unknown in this poem:

With his craftes gan he calle,
And callede ṭam recrayhandes all (609—10).
Thanked godde alle three,
That he wolde so appon ṭam see,
As it was there sene (2266—68).

These examples would no doubt show the practised hand in the art of rhetoric.

The number of terms expressing mentality is small and limited, but is perhaps enough for describing the simple world of a rough and ready man the poem sings of.

blyth: Ever at ṭe laste ende/The blythere wexe ṭe knyghte 935—36; Full blythe was ṭat birde brighte 1289; The birde was blythe of ṭat bade 1305;Als blythe, als he myȝhte be 1518;His hert lightened in hy, /Blythe for to bee 2219—20; ṭan blythe myȝhte ṭay bee 2280. ('cheerful')

fayne: of ṭaire fare fayne 1037; Here will I make ṭe chaungyng/
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And of myn awnn be fayne 1952. (‘joyful’)
prowde: Thi prowde worde 3061. (‘proud’)
tene: At Kayes wordes wexe he tene 301. (‘zornig’, angry)

There is a group of adjectives which the poet uses as qualifiers with regards to a person or less often a thing, that is, what has traditionally been called epithets. These epithets may be regarded as indicators of distinctive elements that make up a personality or the nature of a thing.

Dere, free, noble: Arthure the dere 508; A, dere god 629; Percyvell þe free 521; 901; þe lady so free 1337; Percyvell þe free 1517; 1597; 1702; 1909; 2019; 2045; þat free (scho) 2165; þe lady so fre 2212; þe vesage free 585. (‘noble’) ‘God’ is also ‘grete’:

‘Bi grete god’, sayd he 413. Cf. 246, 255, 282, 381, etc.

brighte: þe lady so brighte 401; The lady Lufamour, þe brighte 1222; þe lady so brighte 1245; the lady brighte 1399; Lufamour þe brighte 1632; þat mayden brighte 1732; the lady so brighte 1875; 1918; a birde, brighteste of ble 1829; The coupe of golde bryghte 648; The stane es bright and no thyng dym 1994. (‘bright’)

An armour may be ‘bryghte and blody’ 1099. A lady may also be

‘lele’: My lady, lele Lufamour (‘loyal’) 1275. ‘Faire’ occurs in: Þat faire to ta 2174.

gude, swete, hende: He was a gude knave 216; my gude knyghte 635; a gude mone 1962. ‘swete son’, þan said he 309; þat swete thynge (a lady) 473; hende Hatlayne 1262; (‘good’, ‘sweet’, ‘gracious’).

‘Lyghte’ occurs in: Percyvell þe lyghte 313; 741 (‘light’, ‘easy’).

foull, lethir, sory, uncely, wilde: þat foull wyghte 532; Þou art a lethir swayne 700; þat lyther swayne 864; The sory sowdane to sla 1331; This uncely sowdane 1674; This ilke uncely sowdane 1699; He was a wilde man 596 (‘foul’; ‘evil’; ‘miserable’; ‘savage’).

‘Mylde’ is the epithet for Virgin Mary: Scho prayd to mylde
Mary 1823, Mary, pat es mylde of mode 1826.
bold, kene, ryfe, wight : His body bolde and borely 1098 ; The bolde body Percevellle 1175 ; a bolde knyghte 1418 ; the beryns so bolde (‘bold heroes’) 1525 ; bold Percevell 1574 ; Percevell, pat was bolde 2007 ; Kay, pe kene knyghte 1392 ; Percevell the kene 1925 ; Percevell pe bolde 1970 ; Thou knawes, pat es so kene 1980 ; His craftes are so ryfe 560 ; Bot he were kempe ryfe 1004 ; Now es pe sowdan so wyghte 1001 ; He was wighte and worthy 1097 ; Percevell pe wighte 1500 ; 1589 ; Pan saide pe geant so wight 2037 ; Percevell wighte 1695 ; sir Percevell pe wight 1917. (‘bold, brave’) ‘Wight’ is also found as predicative : The childe was full wighte 1304.

riche : his riche stede 1254 ; The riche ryng 1993 (‘rich, powerful’).
Colour-terms ‘rede’ and ‘blake’ are used to characterize two of Perceval’s arch-enemies, the red knight who destroyed his father’s life and the black knight who bore away his mother’s token : pe rede knyghte 50 ; 61 ; 98 ; 121 ; 133 ; 138 ; 142 ; 603 ; 665 ; 742 ; 762 ; 767 ; 914 ; pe blake knyghte 1837 ; 1887 ; 1899 ; 1918 ; 1930 ; 1954. Other collocations are found in : a rede stede 1244 ; And hir, pat is so faire and rede 1631 ; Gret brandes and blake 774.

Collocation determines, as J. R. Firth argues, the kind of meaning with which a word is associated. There are various types of such collocation.

Some collocations are favoured by reason of alliteration : He dranke water of pe welle 7 ; He was doughty of dede 18 ; A styffe body on a stede 19 ; Wapynes to wolde 20 ; For to wedde pat frely fode (‘noble maiden’) 38 ; Siche ill farande fare (‘such an unpleasant journey’) 848. See the examples above (p. 87).

Others are chains of synonymic or correlated terms in coordination :
to justez ne to tournament 174 ; boure and haulle 181 ; Mete and drynke was per dighte 949.

Others again are pairs of contrastive terms : Bothe pe lesse and pe mare 70 ; By nyghte ne be daye 168 ; be day or by nyghte 540 ; olde
and 3ynge 529; noþer evyll ne gude 594; All þat nyȝte, till it was
day 416; Now es broken, þat are were hale 1477.

Still others are a sequence of words in direct syntactic relation: a
dart doghty ('a powerful dart') 203; under þe wilde wodde-wande
211; A bryghte fire, welle bett ('well kindled') 439; The mere was
bagged with folé 717; Now he kyndils a glede 757; and various
other examples.

A number of such collocations are found to be idiomatic or formulaic
combinations: His righte name was Percyvell 5; so Criste mote me
saye 287; Moo sellys to see 468; 482; I ame myn awnn modirs
childe 506; Who so þe sothe will luke 695; For oughte þat may be-
tyde 871; Als he ware sprungen of a stane 1043; Over more and
mountayne 1127; I tell 3ow for certen 1199; He roghte wele þe
lesse/Aþer of lyfe or of ded 1200-01: If I kane righte rede 1248;
ct. who so redis ryghte 16; The myldeste mayden one molde 1323;
þay wolde no lengere þer duelle 1111; And he wold there no lengere
duelle 1351; So mote I one erthe ga,/It ne sall noghte be-tyde me
swa 1462-63; Tuke his lefe at þam alle, / Bot[h] at grete and at
smalle 1798-99; þe certen sothe, als I 3ow say 1818; 1759; I say
it 3ow, certainly 1831; I say 3ow, sir, certainy 1890; His best socour
in telde 1920; Ther was no more for to say, / Bot sythen appon þat
þoper day / He weddys Lufamour þe may 1741-43; Ther es no more
for to say, / Bot late me wynn it, 3if I may 1981-82; At þe firste
by-gynnyng 2105; 2149; Righte there appon þe faire molde 2115;
For sothe, als I saye 2192; I say 3ow full certeynly 2227; 2275.

Another type of formulaic expression is the pattern: A knyghte
wolde he nedis bee/ With-owment any bade ('without delay') 484;
Sythen with-owment any bade 1533; 1760. with-owment any stynt 755.

His mere with-owment faylynge 494; I tell 3ow withowment lese
('without lying') 1226; For wele with-owment lesyng/ He helde, þat
he highte 1739-40; And gresse etys with-ownt lesyng 1778; To wete
with-owment lesyng 1947; And þan with-owment any lett ('without
let or hindrance') 947; Now in his way es he sett,/ Þat may hym
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lede with-owtten lett 1054; 1315; Scho kiste hym with-owtten lett 1357; And lightis downn with-owtten lett 1715; Strykes þe geant with-owtten lett 2066; Percevell saide withowtten mare (‘without more delay’) 1393; Rydis furthe with-owtten mare 1363; To þe castell with-owtten mare/ þe righte way gon he fare 2238; Þou sall wele wete with-owtten wene (‘for certain’) 1987; Wete þe wele, with-owtten wene 2230.

Leaving the field of syntagmatic use of words, we now enter the paradigmatic system of language. We find a number of words in the poem that may be grouped into several pairs of synonymous terms partly of native and partly of foreign origin, that are interchangeable in similar contexts.

Have, hold: He gaffe hym his systër Acheonflour/ To have and to holde 23—4; batelle, fyghte: And now is Percyvell þe wighte/Slayne in batelle and in fyghte 161—2; waa, sorow: He wirkes hir full waa 984, He dose hir sorow all hir sythe 985; stede, horse: his riche stede 1254, þe horse stode still 1272; hendely, kyndly: Hendely hailsed he þat fre 1275, So kyndly takes he þat kyth 1281; pytth, pouste, strength: The man, þat was of myche pytth,/ Hir prayer to fulfill 1283—84, The childe hadd no powste,/ His laykes to lett 1703—4, (in a somewhat different context) With strenght tuke he þe stede 727; aske, frayne: And [scho] askede hym in hy; At þat fre gan scho frayne 1929—93; maystry, myghte: And he myghte wyn hir in felde/ With maystry and myghte 1311—12; And wele wonn þat wymman/ With maystry and myghte 1735—36; reden, carpin: It ne sall noghte be-tyde me swa,/ If I may righte rede ! 1463—64; No more carpys he þat tyde 1470; pese, grythe: So by-seges he that woman,/ That scho may hafe no pese 979—80, (Kyng Arthour) Bad hym, þer he his fo fande,/ To gyff hym no grythe 1647—48; crien, greten: Scho gret and cried in hir mane 2153; abyde, duelle: will scho noghte abyde 2168, I will assaye full snell,/ To make þat lady to duelle 2170—71; call, cry: Scho bigan to call and cry 2217.
We are reminded that some expressions which differ in form may be the same in meaning, while others may be the same in form but differ in meaning, for example, *stede* (1. horse, 2. place) and *lighte* (1. light, easy, 2. alighted) in the poem in question. This is only a statement of the well-known semantic fact, but the question of synonymy has been a matter of dispute for some. We are not always settled on theoretical criteria for determining synonymity. Roy Harris (1973) rejects distributional criteria as insufficient, for if it leads to equation of 'meaning' with 'distribution', the proposals concerning synonymy will be trivial. He is also opposed to 'quantification' of synonymy, with distinctions between various degrees of or approximations to synonymy based on 'componential analysis' or 'semantic classification', for identity of meaning would then be determined according to a given system of categorization and no other.

We are not going to the extreme by claiming the non-occurrence of synonymous expressions in natural languages on the ground that no two expressions are absolutely the same. Harris (1973:19) suggests a possible hypothesis to be set up about regarding two terms or expressions as synonymous in order 'to account for the fact that the communicational purpose served by both words (appears) to be the same'. I would add here that this communicational purpose will appear to be the same most clearly when the words in question are found in two similar contexts, linguistic and/or situational, and not otherwise. In counting on the context in our semantic analysis, however, we must be aware of what Harris (1973:90) calls the difference between structural synonymy and intrinsic synonymy because 'there are many cases where one member of a pair of apparently intrinsically synonymous items rarely if ever occurs, and if it did occur would seem in some way odd or incongruous.' Our examples are the terms 'honour' and 'mensk', the former of French and the latter of Norse origin, in our poem, which are glossed as partly synonymous in our dictionaries, but are different in use.
Honour : Another was Gawyne with honour 262; I come fro be lady Lufamour, / That sendes me to kyng Arthoure/And prayes hym for his honour,/ Hir sorowes for to sesse 973—76.

Mensk: Pen myȝte we bothe with myȝte/ Menskfully to-gedir fyghte 706—6, And we foure kempys agayne one knyght,/ Littil menske wold to us lighte,/ If he were some slayne 1422—24.

An instance of two forms the same in sounds but different in sense occurs in the sole example of pun in the poem.

Fole (1) foal, (2) fool: The knyghte by-haldes hym in threo,/ Calde hym fole, That was his foo,/ For he named hym soo/ Pe stede, That hym bere 673—76 (soo=fole, mere).

A particular type of synonymic expression is what has traditonally been called simile, which compares two different terms which are similar in semantic features:

Now he strykes for be nonys,/ Made be Sarazenes hede-bones/ Hoppe, als dose hayle-stones,/ A-bowtte one be gres 1189—92.

Another semantic feature of this poem is the use of tautology in which partially synonymic elements are combined to form a syntactic sequence. Linguistic evidence for synonymy in such cases is generally the etymological identity of those elements, as in

It neghes nere nyghte 808; And for to see hym with syghte 677, When scho sawe hym with syghte 1290; Thus he woones in that wane 1769. Synonymic words of different origin are found in: The portare was redy 3are/ And lete hym in glyde 2239—40.

Words sometimes undergo change of meaning when they are used in different contexts. Thus Campion and Holthausen explain the phrase ‘full gnede’ (very little) as an example of litotes in the following passage: He made þam gammen full gnede/ With craftez, þat he can, ‘He made very little, that is, very great joy with all the arts that he knew’ 607—8. Within the range of a single word, too, this transfer of meaning may take place, as in ‘carebedd’: The kyng to carebedd es gane,/ For mournynge es his maste mane 1062—63 (cf. Cursor Mundi 3612 þar i lig her now, in bed of care), where it means
that the king was woe-begone.

Several kinds of lexical fields are of special interest for they show
the components of the conceptual world presented in this poem.

Terms for the animal world: *pe stede was swifter* pan *pe mere*
713; *The mere was bagged with* fole/ And *hir-self a grete bole* 717
—18. Hertys, hyndes also 218. marte ‘dead beasts’ 207.

Somatic terms: *I kepe nothynge of* pi *coste,/ Ne noghte of thi*
spalde ! 795—96. *Make me knyghte with* thi *hande* 579. *Bothe fote*
and *hande* 1832.

Cultural terms: *Now*per nurture ne lare/ Scho *wolde hym* none
lere 231—32. *Lyttill* pou can of nurtoure 397.

Feudal and military terms: *Percyvell* have borne downn/ *Knyght,*
duke, erle and baroun,/ And vencusede the play 134—36 ; With
schafte and *with* schelde 126, Wo *worthe wykyde armour!* 139, Tuke
hym *be* Scottes spere gude 195, Kepes he no sadill-gere 345, Tuke
with *hym* his schorte spere 478, *Hym* thoghte no spede at his spere
1177, Thus he dalt with his brande 1185 ; *Pe kyng* and *pe qwene*
1560, Luke, he a knyghte make mee 523. knyghte *and* kyng 1528.

Kinship terms: *He wolde have hir wyfe* 987, *Hir fadir and hir eme*
slane/ And *hir brothir ilkane* 990—91, And we are sister-sones two !
1441.

Psychic terms: *His hert lightened in hy,/ Blythe for to bee* 2219
—20, *Pan blythe myghte* pay bee 2280, *Dofe* pay ware of *paire fare*
fayne 1037 ; *Pase folkes of envy* 1296, *His pride for to spyll* 1336,
The childe was of gamen gned 1689, The childe wann owt of study,/ *Pat* he was inn sett 1711—12, *He wirkes hir full waa* 984.

Intellectual terms: *And I myghte hym* *pus* ken 778, I *wene* 847, I
undirstande 1942, And *I may, als I hafe mynt* 1667, with *craftez*
*bat* he can 608, I rede, *at it be swaa !* 524, *Pen sall I ken be my*

Religious terms: (i) References are to God, Christ, Jesus, and the
Rood in statements and oaths: *He sware by grete goddez my3te* 381,
“*Bi grete god*”, sayd he 413, *He sware by mekill goddes my3te* 526,
'A, dere god', said þe kyng þan 629, He sware by mekill godez payne 669, god luke thee ! 884, The childe sayde : "God lukeþe ! " 885, Late we Percyvell þe 3ynge/ Fare in goddes blyssynge 1057—58, ‘A, dere god ! ’ said Wawayne þe fre 1435, Thankede god also sone 1530, Thurgh grace of god so sall I the/ And siche geantez as þe,/ Sle thaym in the felde 2046—48, Thanked godde alle three 2266 ; Son, so Criste mote me sayne,/ For swilke are we noghte 287—88, He swere by Jesu, heven-kyng,/ To wete with-ovtten lesyng 1946—47, Now Jesu Criste, hevenskyng,/ Als he es lorde of all thyng,/ grante us all his blyssyng 2285—87 ; Bi the gude rode ! 2080.

(ii) Other references are to the Yule-tide, the Holy Land, loyalty, sin, and recreants : To-morne es forthirmaste 3ole-day 393, The laste 3ole-day, þat wes 1785, Till þe heghe dayes of 3ole were gane 1803 ; Sythen he went into þe holy londe 2281 ; Then alsone said he/ And sware by his lewte 2125—26 ; ‘For’, he sayde, ‘it es no synn,/ The man, þat may þe mete wynn,/ To gyffe þe travellande ’962—64 ; And (he) callede þam reocrayhandes all 610.

Further examples: Swete childe I rede, þou praye/ To goddes sone dere,/ þat he wolde helpe the 235—37, It es þe grete godd of heven 246, The grete godd for to layte,/ Fynde hym when he may 255—56. (God’)

A comparison of Sir Perceval of Gales with Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Parzival will show partial resemblances and greater dissimilarities in the set up of their respective vocabulary for the intellect. Jost Trier’s study, Der deutsche Wortschatz (1931) provides us with a great help for studying this question. Trier distinguishes between Naturalia and Accidentia in Wolfram’s vocabulary for intellect (‘Sinnbezirk’), citing ‘sin’ and ‘witze’ from the former class and ‘wisheit’, ‘kunst’, and ‘list’ from the latter. Here is not the place for discussing his now famous theory about the history of Wortfeld which he aptly illustrates by following up the fortunes these latter terms had to undergo. But we will only note here that these terms are totally absent in the English poem, though ‘wisheit’ and ‘kunst’
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are distantly related with the verbs 'ken', to know, to point out, and 'wete', to know, to understand: Now to wete how scho fare,/ The knyght busked hym 3are 1794, Bot gate couthe he get nane,/ So ill was he kende 1675—76. 'Sin', sense, is also absent in the English vocabulary, while 'witz' is the German cognate of 'witt' (1467).

Trier sets 'sin' and 'witz' against 'muot', 'herze', and 'geist' (1931: 245), which partially corresponds to the English distinction between 'witt' on the one hand and 'mode' and 'herte' on the other: be my witt 1467; It ran in the kynges mode/ His syster Acheflour þe gude,/ How scho went into þe wodde,/ With hym ('Sir Percyvell son') to wonn 589—92, Mary, þat es mylde of mode 1826; His hert (2219—20).

On MHG sin, sinne Trier explains: "Öfters bedeuten sin und sinne Bewusstsein, Besinnung und zwar als Gegensatz zu Bewusstlosigkeit, Betäubung" (1931: 245). It means consciousness as opposed to unconsciousness or insensibility as the English word sense does. On MGH witz he says: "Wie immer ist auch im Parzival witze schärfer auf das intellectuelle Feld beschränkt als sin" (ibid.: 246). The word witt in the above passage similarly means 'intelligence' or 'mind'. The English phrase 'be my witt' (1467) and the following MHG phrase may be profitably compared as to the meaning of this word: Parzival 355, 20 nu ratet mir mit witzen ('verständig'), cf. J. Trier, a. a. O., 263.

Besides 'wete' and 'ken' the following synonyms occur in the English poem: mynten 'think, intend, point', reden 'explain', understanden 'understand, perceive', which all point to intellectual activity: And I may, als I hafe mynt 1667 (cf. also 524 and 1942).

Judging from the religious vocabulary of the poem it may be said that the German Parzival's 'ZWIVEL HERZEN' never seems to touch the mind of the English hero, though the Christian background of the tale is as plain as the broad daylight from the very beginning, where to the very naïve question the child asks (241—44) the mother as simply answers: 'It es þe grete godd of heven' (246).

Another lexical feature of this poem is the triple nature of its
vocabulary in origin, English, Nordic, and French. A sprinkling of Old Norse elements found in the poem gives a decidedly Northern colouring to its language, while we come across an increasingly larger dosage of French terms as we proceed through the tale.

Nordisms: *oper* gudez wolde scho none nayte (*'enjoy'*) 185, There he levede in a tayte (*'joyfulness'*) 253, And kevylles his stede (*'bridles'*) 424, And sone kevells did þay caste (*'lot', Icel. kefli*) 1426, Lepe on lofte, as he was ere (*'on high'*) 479, I rede, at it be swaa (*'that it be'*) 524, Siche ill farande fare (*'unpleasant'*) 848, Busked þam and forthe rade (*'prepared themselves'*) 1030, The knyght busked hym þare 1794, The birde was blythe of þat bade,/ þat scho siche an helpe hade,/ Agayne þe sowdane, was fade,/ Wih-alle for to fighte (*'who was ?powerful'*) 1305—8, No more carpys he þat tyde (*? talks, ON karp*) 1469, The childe hadd no powste,/ His laykes to lett (*'sword-blow'*) 1704, Then was scho un-saughte (*'hostile'*) 2152.

Gallicisms: Ewayne fytz Asoure (*'son of Asour'*) 261, Scho schewedede hym þe menevaire (*'miniver'*) 409, 882, Seese he no better wane (*'seize'*) 422, And þan þay senen of þaire fighte (*'cease'*) 1511, The corne he pertis in two (*'divides'*) 449, Was þe kynges trenchepayne (Godefroy, Dict. : tranchpain, ‘Officier qui coupe le pain ; panetier’ ; Das Wort trenchepayne habe ich sonst in keinem me. Texte gefunden. —Campion—Holthausen) 514, Come I to the, appert folde (*'manifest fool'*) 681, His akton and his oper wede (*'a sort Of quilted jacket', OFr aqueton) 1102, Pavelouns mekill and unryde (*'pavilion'*) 1131, The lady Lufamour (a compound of Anglo-Saxon and French equivalents) 1222, The curtesye of Wawayne 1263, Sythen talked and tolde/ Off othir estres full olde (*'objects, histories', L. exteras*) 1558-59, Appon siche a covenande (*'covenant'*) 1625, þaire waryson to þelde (*'remedy'*) 1908, To do þat lady no lothe,/ þat pendid to velany (*'belonged'*) 19 35—36, velany (*'villainy'*) 1936, In þone heghe palays (*'palace'*) 1991, Siche a vertue es in þe stane 1858, Thus þe portare woke (by),/ The whilk hir luffed se(kerly) (Fr lequel) 2257—58 (completed by the editors). And Kay, þe bolde baratour (*'warrior'*) 263.
From the above lists we may infer that Northern words generally concern everyday life, but that French words are more or less derived from the Norman world of courtly culture (baratour, fitz, menevaire, trenche, payne, akton, pavelouns, Lufamour, curtaisye, covenande). To this list I may also add the word ‘gentilman’ from Old French gentil (gentilem, belonging to a clan), ‘noble, high-born’: He folowed þe gentilmans will 1286.

3. Syntactic Features.

Some formal features of syntactic elements of the language used in Sir Perceval may be noted for their difference from the current usage observed.

The pronoun ‘one’ occurs in the following prepositional phrases no longer acceptable today: the maistry to fyghte,/ A man for ane (‘all alone’) 1620—21, I bare it to a gude monæ,/ The stalwortheste geant of one (‘the stalworthiest giant of a man’) 1962—63. ‘Men’ is a singular generic pronoun: He mette a wych, as men says 826.

The genitive case of a noun is sometimes indicated by the s-ending and sometimes endingless, as: He sware by mekill goddez payne 669, Whatkyns a godd may þat be 242, For nonkyns nede 748; Venge his fader bane 568, His dame sonne 1094. Dame, f. is endingless as a rule.

We find a few examples of that type of compound verbs which are formed of simple verbs and adverbs: A mayden scho tuke hir wæt’ñ,/ þat scho myȝte appon calle,/ When þat hir nede stode 182—84, At þe knyghte lete he flee,/ Smote hym in at þe ee/ And oute at þe nakke 690—92, I se a bolde knyghte owt spryng 1418, The ryng owte glade 2116.

It may be noted here that the adverb regularly stands before the verbal element when intransitive, that it follows when the verb is transitive, and that in the first citation it is a matter of choice whether to call the particle an adverb or a preposition.

At the phrase level, we find the use of the present participle in -ande as predicative in the nexus-object construction developing in order to achieve the conflation of two underlying sentences into one.
He fande a brade borde sett, / A bryghte fire, wele bett, / Brynnande þer by 438–440, He dalte it even with his hande, / Lefte þe halfe lyggande, / A felawe to byde 458–60, Riche clothes fande he spred-ďñe, / A lady slepande on a bedde 469–70, He fande þe rede knyght lyggand 469.

Occasionally the form in -ande functions as a compressed nominal element, as in : Scho made hym semblande so gude 1325, where it means 'semblance, mien'.

One of the syntactic features at the sentence level in the poem is that the rule of concord between the subject and the predicate verb is not always strictly observed, for a plural subject often goes together with the verb in the singular : Hedes and helmys þer wes,/ I tell 30w withoutten lese 1225–26, The folkes, þat by-fore hym wes 1367, Þaire metis was redy 1549.

Certain verbs, intransitive or transitive, are found to stand in the reflexive construction, in some cases even where it is no longer the rule today : Owthir es 3one man slane,/ Or he slepis hym allane 1249–50, Fully feftene 3ere/ To play hym with þe wilde dere 1581–82 ; Sone, þou has takyn thi rede,/ To do thi-selfe to þe dede 389–90, Now he getis hym flynt 753, He laide hym doun in þat tyde 1209, Bot busked þam and to bedde 3ede,/ The more and the mynn 1607–8.

The relative construction is formed with the use of the particle þat, the Northern form at, the adjectival whilke, þe whilke, the adverbial þer als, and the Ø-form. Þat is sometimes followed by an adverb (that corresponds to the modern preposition) later in the clause. The construction with the Ø-form may be characterized as the oldest type.

...he was fade,/ þe body, þat his bridill hade 1166, The childe hadd no thyng þat tyde,/ þat he myȝte in his bones hyde 266–67, Mi grete socour at þou here sende 1541 ; The geant stode in his holde,/ That had those londis in wolde,/ Saw Percevell, þat was bolde,/ One his lande dryfe 2005–8 ; He es large, there he lyse,/ And wele made in alle wyse,/ Ther als (=where) man sall be tane
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1258–60; His craftes are so ryfe, / Per is no man apon lyfe, / with swerde, spere, ne with knife, / May stroye hym allane, / Bot if it were sir Percevell son, / Who so wiste, where he ware done ('brought') ! 562–66, where 'who' and 'where' also occur.

Pre-position is preferred by certain elements in the sentence, such as 'whatkyns' and adverbials, in the following instances: Whatkyns a godd may pat be...? 242, In everilke strange stede / Doo, als I bydde the ! 391–92 ; Scho frayned... What life he had in bene 1562–64, Bot are it was doun caste, / Ere was Percevell paste 653–54 ; To feche doun armoure, / De childe in to dyghte 651—62, A grete fyre made he pen, / The rede knyghte in to bren 761—62 ; Whatkyns a godd may pat be, / Pat 3e nowe bydd mee, / Pat I schall to pray ? 242—44.

In these examples we observe that 'whatkyns' precedes the indefinite article just as 'everilke' does and that the adverb is followed by the verb in the final position whether in a phrase, with or without its object, or in a relative clause. In many cases, the pre-position of the adverb may be accounted for by the fact that the following verb is the rhyme-word : In stede, righte there he in stode ( : mode) 1693 ( : 1695). In the same way that the adverb precedes the verb in these examples, it may be the infinitive that follows : pat he wolde helpe the, /...A gude man for to bee/ And longe to duelle here 237—40.

Post-position is the rule in the amphidextrous use of adjectives : Grest brandes and blake 774, with more drynke and lesse 1775.

The question is still unsettled whether the Indo-European languages were originally the SOV or the SVO type. The first type of word-order is preferred in Latin and Sanskrit, while both types are prevalent in Classical Greek. In modern European languages, there is a general trend to adopt the second type, though in some Germanic languages the verb may occur at the close of a subordinate clause, preserving the SOV type there. According to Ch. Fries (1940), the balance tilted more towards the second type ca. 1300 in the history of the English language.
A survey of the relevant examples in *Sir Perceval* shows that the type SOV only rarely occurs, but that the other two types, OSV and OVS are equally well instanced under various subtypes.

**SOV**

Now hase þat ilke sowdane/ Hir fadir and hir eme slane/ And hir brothir ilkane 989—91, A preste he made forthe bryng,/ Hym a messe for to syng 1806—7, Sythen aftir gan þay ta,/ A riche bathe for to ma 2269—70. See further below.

The first example above shows a modified type with a sentence-head and inversion of the auxiliary. The second and the third example contain the infinitive instead of the finite form.

**OSV**

A mayden scho tuke hir with-alle 182, The sorowe, þat þe kynge hade,/ Mighte no tongue tell 627—28 (with inversion of the auxiliary), Now þe travellande man/ The potere lete in þan 865—66, Fayne wolde he hafe hym slane,/ This uncely sowdane,/ Bot gate couthe he get nane 1673—75 (with inversion of the auxiliary and an anaphoric pronoun), His honde he strykes hym fro 2069 (object of the preposition), Þe kayes durste he noght layne 2102 (with inversion of the auxiliary), By then hys swerde owt he get 2065, His armour he leved 2197.

**OVS**

Brydill hase he righte nane 421 (with an anaphoric pronoun), Siche a knyght in this thede/ Saw I never nane 1255—56 (with an anaphoric pronoun), Siche wilde gerys hade he mo 1353 (with an anaphoric pronoun), Grete wondir had Lufamour 1565, Now þe lady by-seches he,/ þat scho wolde his leman be 2145—6, His modir ne fyndis he noghte 2202, Siche a sone hade I ! 2218.

From these examples it may be concluded that the pre-position of the object is mostly due to some stylistic purpose of emphasis or prosodic reasons demanded by the language of the poem.

Similar inversion is very common here with various other elements of the sentence.

**VSO**

Holde if scho may,/ þat scho schall never… 164—65, Þer wiste no man þat tyde,/ Whedirwerde he wolde ryde 1810—11, Sone askede he who,…þat had served hir so 1833—35, In alle this
werlde wote I nane/ Siche stone in a rynge 1859—60, Kepes he no sadill-gere 345, Sythen taken hase he three 637.

AdvSVO : By-hynde scho leved boure and haulle 181.

AdvVS : So commes þe rede knyghte in 603, Up ryses sir Arthours 649, And up stirt one, þat was bolde 1149, Then said þe lady so brighte 1245, Than saide þe kyng full sone 1593, þan righte sone saide he 1789, Down satt the lady 1877, þonder out comes he 1891.

Copula-S-Predicative : Of schottyng was þe childe sleæ 689, Now are þay bothe bown 2033.

AuxSP : And þer was he slayne 696, 2283; Now es þe rede knyghte slayne 709,

AuxSVO : Fayne wolde he hafe hym slæne 1673, Fayne wolde I take þat free 2165; AuxSOV : Now hase þat ilke sowdane/ Hir fadir and hir eme slæne/ And hir brothir ilkane 989-91; SOVAux : If I hym ken may, ···1157; ‘gan’ +SV: And faste gan þay flee 876, Faste forthe gan þay fare 1113, Now fro þam gun he ryde 1809, Bot sone to-gedir gan þay ryde 1914, Forthe gonn he fare 2196, Forthirtmare gan he glyde 2211, Þe righte way gon he fare 2238, Sythen aftir gan þay ta 2269.

Various kinds of meaning are implemented in language through relations formed between syntactic elements, which are also associated with lexical meaning as it is generally called.

A pronoun may refer anaphorically to an antecedent element in the sentence. Anaphora of this type is a common feature of Sir Perceval, where the prosody demands repetition in order to fill in the gap in the verse, if there is any : þay sayne, þat sir Percyvell,/ þat he will in felde duelle 113—115, It ran in the kynges mode/ His syster Achefflour þe gude,/ How scho went into þe wodde,/ With hym for to wonn 589—92.

Sometimes it is a whole phrasal or sentential structure that is repeated with a little modification; then we have the so-called parallelism in expression : His wo es wansome to wreke,/ His hert
es bowyn for to breke 1065—66, Ever þe nerre hym he drewe,/ Wele þe better he hym knewe 1433—34, To þe grownde, þer he was felled,/ And to þe erthe he hym helde/ With his speres ende 1670—72.

Within a phrasal structure, parallel elements may occur in close association, often by means of connectives. The kind of association we commonly call co-ordination serves as an important means of syntax and style in our poem.

The relation of syntactic co-ordination varies according to different kinds of forms co-ordinated in a phrase or a clause. These forms may be classified under the parts of speech or as phrase, in the affirmative or the negative.

N and N: By-hynde scho leved boure and haulle 181, He tase þe rynge and þe spere 429, his sadill and his gere 715, Sir, he præyes the/ Off mete and drynke for charyte 957—58, Over more and mountayne 1127, With maystry and myghte 1660, Thurgh ventale and pesane 1722, He was bothe kyng and knyght 1873,

Adj and Adj: The mane, þat es seke and sare 1078, The more and the mynn 1608, And hir, þat is so faire and rede 1631, þer-to hende and curtayse 1642,

AdjN and Adj(N): With more drynke and lesse 1775,

Vb and Vb: Wende and see 1265, Bid hym com and speke with me 1267; Sittande and lyggande 1143,

Phr and Phr: with schafte and with schelde brade 126, Slayne in batelle and in fyghte 162, Bothe at baron and at raye 179, With schafte and with schelde 1216, Bot[h] at grete and at smalle 1799. Owtir by day or by nyghte 87.

NegN and N: He ne wiste noþer of evyll ne gude 1694, Nowþer nurture ne lare 230,

NegAdj and Adj: The stane es bright and no thyng dym 1994,

NegAdv and Adv: spakke lesse ne mare 844,

NegPhr and NegPhr: Nowþer in erneste ne in play 147, By nyghte ne be daye 168,

S & S: Scho tuke hir leve and went hir waye 178, There will
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pay fight, per pay stande, Sittande and lyggande 1142—43.

Nouns, adjectives, and adverbs in co-ordination will be seen to be semantically related, but in the case of verbal statements the relation of the two terms is not always so simple, for they are sometimes linked together in an internally subordinate relation, as in 'wend and see'. These associated terms are linked together by the co-ordinators 'and', 'or', and 'ne'. To the question whether these co-ordinators are merely 'markers of the structural relationships' of other constituents of the phrase, I would answer, with Simon C. Dik (1972 : 51), that they are not meaningless and that they not only serve as markers of a particular linkage, but also enter into the phrase construction as constituents. They indicate, it may be said, a certain context or situation in which the two constituents of a phrase may be brought into association and so collocated.

The relation of subordination in which words and phrases, or again clauses may stand is more varied than that of co-ordination. Only a few characteristics of this relation may be discussed here, so far as our poem is concerned.

Comparison may be counted among the more salient features of the grammatical and stylistic structure of our poem. Several means of comparison serve the purpose here, as it will be shown below:

The use of 'als': with his foo for to fighte, None oþer-gates was he dighte, Bot in thre gayt-skynnes righte, A fole als he ware 657-60, Bot þen was Percevell þe free, Als blythe, als he myghte be 1517—18, As evyll als þou ever 3ode, Of þi fote þou getis no gode 2082—83; Bot ryghte now will I ryde, Als so faste als I may 1019—20,

The use of the comparative: Alle belyffe fro hym þay fledde, And ever þe faster þat þay sped[dê]de, The swiftlyere sewed hee 878—80, þaire dynttis deris hym no mare, þen who so hade strekyn sare, One a harde stane 1370—72,

The use of the superlative: To my sonnes he hade envy, Moste of any men 919—20, Wele welcomed scho þe geste, With riche
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metis of þe beste 1553—54, Drynkes of þe derreste 1555, Als lay althir best,/ His hede one hir kne 1883—84.

A subordinate relation may convey various kinds of meaning in the sentence-structure: conditional, concessive, temporal, dependent, and so forth. The language of our poem shows a preference for the use of inversion and 'that' as connective in formulating sentences with such implications.

Inversion implying condition: Hade I bene in the stede,/ Per he was done to þe dede,/ I solde never hafe etyn brede,/ Are I hade sene hym bren 929,

Inversion implying concession: Be I fole, or whatte I bee,/ Now sone of þat sall wee see,/ Whose browes schall blakke 686—88, Were þay wighte, were þay wake,/ Alle, þat he till strake,/ He made þaire bodies to c(rake 1373—75,

'that' with conditional 'with':...he schold dub hym to knyghte,/ with thi þat he wolde doun lighte/ And ete with hym at none 582—84,

'that' with temporal 'be': Be þat he come hir nere,/ þat scho myght hym here,/ He said: 2221—23,

'that' with a dependent question: The knyghte askede hym þare,/...how ferre þat he walde so fare/ with-owten any lese 969—72.

The use of 'and' conditional may also be listed here: For þen mekill sorowe me betyde,/ And I lenger here habyde 1017—18.

Predication as the main function of the sentence may be formulated in various ways, independently or dependently. In an independent sentence, the predicate part may be nominal or verbal, and may be further expanded with other elements. The following patterns of sentence-expansion are more or less common in our poem:

With the nominal type of expression: Sone, þou has takyn thi rede 389, And of þe menevaire he had syght 882, Of þat fare was he fayne 1431, No more carpynge þay made 1654.

With the infinitive phrase: Siche dedis to do moo,/ Was þe childe fayne 867—68, Þerne he prayes hym, to taa/ His nyne sonnes,
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with hym to gaa 1022--23, Than comanded þe kyng/ Horse ana armes for to brynge 1105—6.

Besides the logical type of proposition, we also have an exhortative form of predication, which is not uncommon in an early form of poem like the present.

Exhortative in the first person: Goo we faste fro this hill! 806, Go we to Percyvell a-gayne! 1125,
in the second person: Ly still þer-in now and roste! 794, Bot lepe, if þou may! 2084.

This exhortative form of the verb is known to be a continuation from the Old English syntax.

Among the auxiliaries that are used for expanding the verbal nucleus of the sentence we find: can (coupe), may (myghte), dare (durste), lete (lette), gan (gonne, gun), will (wolde), sall, schall (solde, scholde), and also: mote, mon.

On the emphatic use of 'gan' we have already spent a few lines above. 'Mote' is a competing form for 'may', as in the following examples:

Son, so Criste mote me sayne,/ For swilke (=þe grete godd) are we noghte 287—88, Als ever mote I thryfe or thee 333, So ever mote I thryfe! 2016 (Precative use).

'Mon' is a futuric auxiliary doing the office of modern 'will':

The bokes says, þat he mon/ Venge his fader bane 567—68, Here mon I stande/ For a faute, þat he fande 1841—42. (Cf. F. H. Stratmann, MED, sub man, vb.)

'Will' is a more or less volitional auxiliary and often stands alone in the poem: And þou says, þou will away 394, þou hase done, what þou will 808, And scho will noþte saa 988, And I will forthir in my playe/ To Percyvell a-gayne 1123; Till on þe morne he wolde away/ For thyng, þat myþte betyde 419—20, Fro þam he wolde everichone 1814.

'Sall, schall' is obligatory in its implication: I schall holde, þat I hafe highte 382, Go, reche me my playlome,/ And I sall go to hym
sone 2013—4, That sall þou see,/ I say the, full sekirly 2001—2 ('prophetic'); Than þe kynge hym hendely higte,/ þat he schold dub hym to knyghte 581—82. And þerne he prayed Percyvell,/ þat he solde þer wïth hym duelle ('consecutive') 938—39. In þone heghe palays,/ Therin solde he be ('certainty') 1991—92.

These uses are generally continued into Modern English in similar contexts.

Two main patterns of predication are the personal and the impersonal construction. The impersonal is still the living pattern in Sir Perceval, but there already sets in a tendency to replace it by the personal.

Impersonal : Hir thoghte wele, þat scho myȝt dy 387, For by þe vesage hym thoghte,/ The rede knyȝte was it noȝte 389—90, Grete ferly thaym thoghte,/ Who þat wondir had wroghte 1229—30 ; hym were better hafe bene at Rome 2015; Bade hym take what hym liste /Of that he hafe wolde 2111—12 ; I say sow full certeynly,/ Hir by-hoved þer to byde 2227—28 : Me aughte to bring hir of wa 2175.

In transitional form : Then was the lady full wo 1405, Thus es þe lady so wo 2159.

Personal : He, þat lifes, will be full wo 1443 ; It is not to layne,/ Men tolde me, þat þou was slayne/ With Arthours men 834—36, It semede wele bi þe syȝhte,/ þat he hade slayne þe rede knyȝt 893—94, So it by-felle appon a day,--- Mi lorde went hym to play 2141—43.

The verbal nucleus of a sentence may be associated with various case relations, which are either local or non-local in the sense of John M. Anderson (1971 : 10—11, 169). Local case-relations are well represented in the sentence-structure of the language of Sir Perceval, besides the usual non-local case-relations.

Local : For to rynne scho myȝte not thole,/ Ne folowe hym (the steed) no spede ('no success', traditionally called the adverbial use of the absolute accusative case) 720, Saw þe swerde come hym till,/ Leppe up over an hill/ Fyve stryde mett ('measuring five strides', a similar use) 1706—8 ; He hitt hym even one þe nekk-bane (a
locative phrase) 1721 Als sone als I þe ryng fande,/ I toke it sone off hir hande 1957—58 (a prepositional phrase).

Non-local : The blak knyght with hym mett,/ His maistrys to ma 1899—900 (as the subject and the object); Es it nowþer knyghte ne kyngr,/ Þat dorste aske hym Þat ryng 1965—66 (a double object); Scho tuke hir leve and went hir waye,/ Bothe at baron and at raye 178—79 ('hir leve', direct object, non-local, 'hir waye', local, 'at baron and at raye', a prepositional phrase, local); The stede was his awnn will 1705 ('will', traditionally called the free use of the predicative noun).

The process and the state denoted by the verbal nucleus are formally represented by the present, past, and perfect tense forms, distinguished in meaning and function by contrast between themselves in related contexts, as regularly here as in Modern English.

In the following examples, the present perfect tense contrasts with the present and the past perfect with the past or the present perfect:

Sythen hafe I ever bene his fa,/ For to wayte hym with wo,/ Bot I myȝte hym never slo ; / His craftes are so ryfe 557—560 ; We wende wele, þat it had bene/ þe rede knyȝte, þat we hade sene 913—14 ; Þare hafe I thre knyȝtes sene,/ And I hafe spoken with þam, I wene,/ Wordes in threo 374—76 ; cf. 914 ; Sythen taken hase he three,/ And ay awaye will he bee,/ Or I may harnayse me,/ In felde hym to felle 637—640 ; The folkes, þat by-fore hym wes,/ Thaire strenght hade þay tane 1367—68 ; Thefe, hase þou my sone slane/ And the ryng fro hym tane,/ Þat I hym bi-taughte? 2154—56 ; Fiftene þeres es it gane,/ Syn he my brodire had slane 921—22 ; Fiftene þere es it gane,/ Sen a theffe hade hym slane/ Abowte a littill stryffe 554—56 ; Þyff[ten]e þeres hase he þus gane/ And my coupes fro me tane 633—34 ; why ne hade I tournede and gone/ A-gayne with the knyȝte? 1093—4 ; Bot þan spake þe olde knyȝhte,/ þat was paste out of myȝte 905—6.

In the above examples, the be-perfect in particular contrasts with the past perfect which refers to some point of time in the past.
4. Further Stylistic Features.

In respect to its narrative form, *Sir Perceval of Gales* is a historical tale, but in the passages where a vivid tone of reality is required, the use of the historic present is duly called for as a traditional art of rhetoric known already in the classical times.

And *per* was he slayne./ He falles down one *be* hill,/ His stede rynnes where he will;/ Pan saide *Percyvell* hym till 696—99, For he walde, none sold hym ken./ Forthe rydes he then,/ Amangez uncouthe men/ His maystres to make 1045—48.

Our attention should be called to a sudden change in the context from the past tense to the present.

Several other devices of style may also be discussed by way of explaining the artistic nature of poetic language employed, though still undeveloped and immature in many ways, in this early English poem.

In st. 76 we find two pairs of synonyms: 1. place, stede and 2. stede, *fole* besides a pair of homonyms: stede ‘horse’ and stede ‘place’. For the word *fole* (1211), in addition, we find its homonymic counterpart elsewhere, as the pun in ll. 673—76 may suggest. The choice of these words in st. 76 in spite of the inconvenience of the so-called homonymic clash, often mentioned in the history of words, would call forth some explanations outside the regular grammatical rules. The reason why the word *stede*, used in l. 1202, is avoided in l. 1207 (a faire place) seems to be semantic, for it might suggest a battlefield (cf. l. 1472.) The word *stede* in the sense ‘horse’ in l. 1210 is chosen here apparently for a prosodic reason: ‘his stede stode’ is an alliterating phrase. The use of *fole* in the verse ‘The fole was fayne for to byde’ may be explained in a similar way.

Other sectors of the vocabulary may require other sorts of explanation. Certain words are what Matoré (1953) calls ‘mots clefs’, for they are key-words that would tell the essential meaning of some passages in a work that you study.

Among other things, the world of knighthood is portrayed in terms
of honour, mensk, maystry and so forth.

'My lady, lele Lufamour,/ Habyddis the in hir chambour,/ Prayes the for thyn honour,/ To come, 3if 3e will' 1277—80, The thirde Wawayne with honoure 1390 ; Pen my3te we bothe with my3te/ Menskfully to-gedir fyghte 705—6, And we foure kempys agayne one knyght,/ Littill menske wold to us lighte,/ If he were sone slayne 1422—24 ; Syche maistres he made 492, With maystry and myghte 1736.

From the world of romance and wonder come the following colourful words: ferly, sellys, wych ; rynge.

The kyng had ferly ßaa 497 ; All ßat ßer weren, olde and 3ynge,/ Hadden ferly of ße kyng,/ ßat he wolde suffre siche a thyng/ Of ßat foull wyghte 529—32, Forthiremore gan he glyde—Moo sellys to see 466—68, 3itt was ßer more ferly 1217, As he come thurgh the wode,/ A ferly he fande 1827—28 ; Till on ße morne at fortherdays/ He mett a wyche, as men says 825—26, In ill wrethe and in grete/ He keste ße wiche in ße hete 861—62 : His moder gaffe hym a rynge/ And bad, he solde agayne it bryng 425—26, He come one his play[ï]nge,/ With me he chaungede a rynge,/ The richeste of aue 1850—52, Of hir fynger he tuke a rynge,/ His awenn modir takynnynge/ He lefte with ßat fre 474—76, In alle this werld wote I nane/ Siche stone in a rynge 1858—60, I toke a rynge, ßat I fande 1941, Als sone als I ße rynge fande,/ I toke it sone off hir hande 1957—58, ‘heghe on galous mote he hyng,/ ßat to ße here giffes any rynge,/ Bot ßou myn agayne brynge’ 1973—75, He askede ße portere of the rynge,/ If he wiste of it any thyng 2106—7, The rynge owte glade (Rediscovery of the rynge) 2116. Wondir 1230.

The image of a wild forest completes the romantic scene: Bot (he) in ße wilde wodde went,/ With bestez to playe 175—76, I ame myn awnn modirs childe,/ Comen fro ße wodde wylde/ Till Arthure the dere 506—8.

Where the attention is focused on a particular element in the sentence and the concept mediated by it, it is sometimes placed outside.
the main structure with special stress falling on that prominence:

With the anaphoric pronoun following or preceding: It ran in the kynges mode/ His syster Acheflour þe gude,/ How scho went into þe wodde,/ With hym for to wonn 589—92, Þe childe, þat come with þe knyghte,/ Enoghe þer he fande 951—52; He tuke it up in his hande,/ Þe coupe, that he there fande 621—22, He sayse, þat scho may have no pese,/ The lady, for hir fayrenes/ And for hir mekill reches 981—83, The childe sawe, þat he was fade,/ Þe body, þat his bridill hade 1165—66, Who þat wondir had wroghte,/ That had þam to dede broghte,/ That folke in the felde 1230—32, Bot son to-gedyr gon þay ryde,/ Men, þat bolde were to byde/ And styff appon stede 1470—72, Siche anothir sowdane/ In faythe sawe I never none,/ By nyghte ne by daye 1482—84.

Emphatic expression may take the form of negation, sometimes. Emphatic is a negative expression in which a negative sentence is once again negated in the second clause that follows: Non-øber-gates was he dighte,/ Bot in thre gayt-skynnes righte 658—59.

An emphatic negative phrase may repetitively continue the negative idea contained in the earlier part of the sentence in question: He wolde no lengare duelle thare,/ For noghte, þat myghte bee 1795—96, He couthe not gett of a dele/ For nonkyns nede 747—48, and in many examples we are concerned with cumulative negation, where the whole sentence is simply negated and the use of double negation is pleonastic:

And þou ne solde never more then/ Fighte for no wymmen 1682—83, Þat he come never undir clothe,/ To do þat lady no lothe 1934, Ne I ne sall never mare/ Come owt of þone holtis hare,/ Till I wete how scho fare,/ For sothe, als I saye 2189—92, I did hir never no velany 1937, Ne none armoure, þat may be,/ Sall come appone me,/ Till I my modir may see,/ Be nyghte or by day 2181—84, And als wele in hir gate,/ Als scho hadde nowthir arely ne late/ Never þer-owte bene 2262—64.

Besides never, none, no, ne, we have such negatives as nangatis (‘in
no way’), littill ( : Of the he giffes littill dowte), and word-forms with the negative prefix un-: unlace (786), unwyse (1449: Ane unwyse man), un-failande (1474), un-saughte (2152), uncely (1674), and so forth, which are also more or less emphatic.

Expletive or formulaic expressions of the type ‘with-owtten any bade’ have already been mentioned above.

Among the rhetorical figures, taught in the classical age and handed down to the Middle Ages in the text-book of the rhetoricians, we may acknowledge a few examples of Hyperbole, Paradox, and Irony which enliven the narrative to the delight of the reader of this early English poem. Of punning we have said a word or two in an earlier paragraph.

These are means of the emotive or expressive, consequently often provocative function of language known to the poet.

Hyperbole: Now he strykes for Þe nonys,/ Made Þe Sarrazenes hede-bones/ Hoppe, als dose hayle-stones,/ A-bowtte one Þe gres 1189—92.

Irony: And we are sister-sones two ! / And aythir of us othir slo,/ He, þat lifes, will be full wo,/ Þat ever was he made 1441—44.

Paradox: What sulde he say, when he was dede ? / The childe couthe no better rede,/ Bot down gun he lyghte 738—40.

Of Metaphor, we have said earlier, there is not wanting a good example (1062) nor an instance of Allegory missing, for the motive of the ring opens our tale and leads the hero by an unseen hand through the labyrinth of life of knight-errantry to his glorious end in the Holy Land, which was, ‘littill dowte’ there is, the ideal way of his time.

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