

THE CHANGING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Illustrated by Translations of the Bible and Boethius

CHANGING LITERARY STYLE

Illustrated by the Arthurian Legend

Readings in Old, Middle, and Modern English

Recorded by Charles W. Dunn

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Both language and literary style are constantly subject to change. Any language tends gradually to alter its repertoire of sounds, its contrasting grammatical forms, its various systems of word-arrangements, its syllabic stresses and sentence intonations, the meaning of its words, and the scope of its vocabulary. English, through its long history from the time it was brought to Britain about 450 A. D. down to the present, well exemplifies this fact. Similarly, authors throughout the ages have continued to evolve new literary styles, even when treating traditional material.

This record is designed to bring to life something of the changes represented in the rich linguistic and literary heritage of the English-speaking world. For the purpose, the spoken word is much more informative than the written word. I have selected comparable passages from Old English (ca. 450-ca. 1100), Middle English (ca. 1100-ca. 1450), and Modern English and have read them according to the pronunciation appropriate to the various periods of the language, following as far as possible the probable sound of the earlier language as it has been reconstructed by the researches of linguistic historians.

SIDE 1: THE CHANGING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

THE PRODIGAL SON (Luke XV, 11-24)

SIDE I, Band 1: (Modern English)

Text: R. F. Weymouth, *The New Testament in Modern Speech* (1902), 5th ed. (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1930).

He went on to say,
"The lost Son" "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father,
"Father, give me the share of the property that comes to me."

"So he divided his property between them. No long time afterwards the younger son got all together and travelled to a distant country, where he wasted his money in debauchery and excess. At last, when he had spent everything, there came a terrible famine throughout that country, and he began to feel the pinch of want. So he hired himself to one of the inhabitants of that country, who sent him on to his farm to tend swine; and he longed to make a meal of the pods the swine were eating, but no one gave him any.

"On coming to his senses he said,
"How many of my father's hired men have more bread than they want, while I here am dying of hunger! I will rise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you: I no longer deserve to be called a son of yours: treat me as one of your hired men."

"So he rose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and pitied him, and ran and threw his arms round his neck and kissed him.

"Father," cried the son, "I have sinned against heaven and before you: no longer do I deserve to be called a son of yours."

"But the father said to his servants,
"Fetch the best coat quickly and put it on him; and bring a ring for his finger and shoes for his feet. Fetch the fat calf and kill it, and let us feast and enjoy ourselves; for my son here was dead and has come to life again: he was lost and has been found."

SIDE I, Band 2: (Scottish Dialect)

This translation is written in a generalized Scottish dialect based on that used by Burns and other writers. The Braid Scots (broad Scotch) spoken dialects differ from district to district, but the language of this version would be intelligible to all native dialect speakers in Scotland. (The reading has been made with a less strongly pronounced accent than that usually heard).

Text: Rev. William Wye Smith, *The New Testament in Braid Scots* (Alex. Gardiner, Paisley, 1924).

①

11. He said, forby, "A particular man had twa sons;²³

12. "And the young²⁴ son said till his faither, 'Faither! gie me my portion that wad fa' to me o' a' the gear!' And he portioned oot till them his leevin.

13. "And, a wheen days eftir, the young son gaither't a' his gear thegither, and gaed awa frae hame till a far-awa lan'; and thar sperf't his gear in riotousness.

14. "But mair: whan a' was gane thar cam up an awesome famine oot-throwe yon lan'; and he begude to be wantin.

15. "And he gaed awa, and was sornin on ane o' the men o' that lan': and he sent him oot-by to herd swine.

16. "And he fain wad fill't his sel wi' the hools the swine war eatin; and nae ane gied them till him.

17. "But, comin' till his richt min', quo' he, 'Hoo mony are the fee'd servants o' my faither, wha hae rowth o' breid, and an over-come; while I, here, dee o' hung'er!

18. "I will rise and gang tae my faither, and wull say till him, My faither! I hae dune wrang, again

Heeven, and afore you;

19. "'Nae mair ani' I fit to be ca'd yere son; mak me like till ane o' the fee'd servants!' And, sae riain, he cam awa till his faither.

20. "But, while he was yet haudin far-awa, his faither spy't him, and was fu' o' compassion; and rinnin, he fell on his neck, and begude kassin him.

21. "And the son said till him, 'My faither! I did wrang again Heeven, and afore you: I am nae mair wordie to be ca'd yere son!'

22. "But the faither said to the servants, 'Waste nae time! bring oot a robe—the first and best ane—and pit it on him; and gie a ring for his fing'er, and shoon for his feet;

23. "And bring oot the stall'd cauf, and kill it;²⁵ that we may eat and be joyfu'!

24. "For he my son, was deid, and cam to life again; he had been tint, and is fund again!' And they begude to be joyfu'.

SIDE I, Band 3: (Early Modern English)

This is the familiar and justifiably admired Authorized or King James Version completed by a committee of translators in 1611. Because they aimed at achieving a dignified tone, their choice of language was even in their own age slightly archaic, but their sense of style has perhaps never been rivaled. (The reading does not attempt to reconstruct the actual pronunciation of the period).

11 ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

SIDE I, Band 4: (Middle English)

John Wyclif instigated the translation of the Bible into the Middle English of his day; a preliminary version, of which the present passage is represen-

tative, was completed about 1380; and a later version prepared about 1388-1395. The origin and relationship of the almost two hundred surviving manuscripts copies have not yet been satisfactorily established; and the respective role played by Wyclif (who died in 1384), Hereford, Purvey, and presumably other translators is unknown.

Text: F. Mossé, *A Handbook of Middle English*, trans. J. A. Walker (Johns Hopkins Press, 1952), pp. 280-81.

1. The Prodigal Son

A man hadde two sones; and þe zonger of hem seide unto his fadir: 'Fadir, 3yve me a porcioun of þe substance þat falliþ me.' And þe fadir departide him his goodis. And soone aftir, þis zonge sone gederide al þat fel to him, and wente forþ in pilgrimage in to a fer contré; and þer he wastide his goodis, lyvynge in lecherie. And after þat he hadde endid alle his goodis, þer fel a gret hungre in þat lond, and he bigan to be nedý. And he wente oute, and clevede to oon of þe citizeins of þat contré, and þis citisein sente him into his toun, to kepe swyn. And þis sone coveitide to fille his beli wiþ pese-holes þat þe hogges eten, and no man 3af him. And he, turninge a3en, seide: 'How many hynen in my fadirs hous ben ful of loves, and y perishe here for hungre. Y shal rise, and go to my fadir, and seie to him: "Fadir, I have synned in heven, and bifore þee; now y am not worþi to be clepid þi sone, make me as oon of þin hynen."' And he roos, and cam to his fadir. And 3it whanne he was fer, his fadir sawe him, and was moved bi mercy, and rehning a3ens his sone, fel on his nekke, and kiste him. And þe sone seide to him: 'Fadir, y have synned in hevене, and bifore þee; now I am not worþi to be clepid þi sone.' And þe fadir seide to his ser-vantis anoon: 'Bringe 3e forþ þe firste stoole, and cloþe 3e him, and 3yve 3e a ryng in his hond, and shoon upon his feet. And bringe 3e a fat calf, and sle him, and ete we, and fede us; for þis sone of myn was deed, and is quykened a3en, and he was parishid, and is foundun.'

SIDE I, Band 5: (Old English)

The Old English version of the four gospels was written in the West Saxon dialect by an unknown translator about 1000 A. D.

Text: *The Gospel of Saint Luke in Anglo-Saxon*, ed. J. W. Bright (Oxford, 1893).

11. Hē cwæð, sōðlice sum maþ hæfde twēgen suna;
12. þa cwæð sē *gingra* tō his fæder, Fæder, syle mē minne dæl minre æhte þe mē tō gebyrep: þa dælde hē him his æhte.
13. Ða æfter *stæwum* dagum ealle his þing gegaderude sē *gingra* sunu, and fērde wræclice on feorlen rice, and forspilde þar his æhta, lybbende on his gælsan.

14. Ða hē hig hæfde ealle āmyrrede, þa wearð mycel hunger on þam rice, and hē wearð wædla.

15. Þa fērde hē and folgode ānum burhsittendan men þæs rices; Ða sēnde hē hine tō his tūne, þæt hē hēolde his swyn.

16. Ða gewilnode hē his wambe gefyllan of þam bēan-coddum þe Ða swyn æton; and him man ne sealde.

17. Þa bepōhte hē hine, and cwæð, Æalā, hū fela yrðlinga on mīnes fæder hūse hlāf genōhne habbað; and ic hēr on hungre forwurðe!

18. Ic arise, and ic fare tō minum fæder, and ic secge him, Æalā fæder, ic syngode on heofenas and beforan þe:

19. nū ic ne eom wyrðe þæt ic bēo þin sunu nēmed: dō mē swā āne of þinum yrðlingum.

20. And hē aras þa, and cōm tō his fæder. And þa gyt þa hē was feorr his fæder, hē hyne geseah and wearð mid mildheortnesse āstyrod, and agēn hine arn and hine beclypte and cyste hine.

21. Ða cwæð his sunu, Fæder, ic syngode on heofon and beforan ðe: nū ic ne eom-wyrpe þæt ic þin sunu bēo genēmed.

22. Ða cwæð sē fæder tō his þeowum, Bringað raðe þone sēlestan geyrelan and scrýdað hyne, and syllað him hring on his hand and gescy tō his fōtum;

23. and bringað ān fætt styric and ofsleað, and utun etan and gewistfullian;

24. for þam þes min sunu was dēad, and hē geedcude; hē forwearð, and hē is gemēt. Ða ongunnon hig gewistlæcan.

CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY (III, meter 3)

SIDE I, Band 6: (Latin original)

The *Consolation of Philosophy*, one of the most influential books written in the Dark Ages, was composed by the Roman consul Boethius while he was in prison awaiting execution in 524 A. D. It is cast in the form of a debate between Philosophy and the prisoner. The prose argument is, throughout, lightened with brief alternating lyrics, of which the present excerpt is an example.

Text: Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand (Loeb Classical Library: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 238.

Quamvis fluente dives auri gurgite
 Non expleturas cogat avarus opes,
 Oneretque bacis colla rubri litoris,
 Ruraque centeno scindat opima bove,
 Nec cura mordax deseret superstitem,
 Defunctumque leves non comitantur opes.

SIDE I, Band 7: (Modern English)

Translation: C. W. Dunn.

Although in rushing flood of gold the rich man,
 avaricious, should confine wealth beyond spending,

and should load his neck with pearls from the Red Sea, and should plough his luxuriant fields with a hundred oxen, yet gnawing care will not desert him while he lives, nor will his fleeting wealth accompany him in death.

SIDE I, Band 8: (Elizabethan English)

Queen Elizabeth in 1593 at the age of sixty prepared a translation of the *Consolation* which is of singular interest, despite its lack of polish. She completed the work in less than a month, dictating part of it to her Clerk of the Signet and writing the remainder herself in her own somewhat irregular spelling. The manuscript, which is still extant, thus preserves a first-hand example of the Queen's English. (The recorded reading attempts to suggest the manner in which the words would have been pronounced in her day.)

Text: *Queen Elizabeth's Englishings of Boethius*, ed. C. Pemberton (Early English Text Society 113) (London, 1899), p. 49.

Thogh riche man with flowing golden golfe,
 Covetous, hepes not rechis that suffice,
 His neck adornes with geme of Reddis Sea,
 With hundred oxe the fruitful fildz doth til:
 Yet eating care leves not him quicke,
 Nor ded the fliting good accompnies.

SIDE I, Band 9: (Middle English)

Chaucer, much of whose greatest poetry is colored by Boethius, prepared a prose translation of the *Consolation* about 1380 in the Middle English spoken in London in his own day.

Text: *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*², ed. F. N. Robinson (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957), p. 344.

Al weere it so that a riche coveytous man hadde a ryver or a goter fletynge al of gold, yit sholde it nevere stanchen his covetise; and though he hadde his nekke charged with precyous stones of the Rede See, and though he do ere his feeldes plentevous with an hundred oxen, nevere ne schal his bytynge bysynesse forleeten hym whil he lyveth, ne the lyghte richesches ne schal nat beren hym companye when he is deed.

SIDE I, Band 10: (Old English)

Alfred the Great, the scholar-king who ruled the West Saxons from 871 to 899, prepared for his people,

some two years before he died, a free prose translation of the Consolation in their own dialect of Old English.

Text: King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius (Oxford, 1899), p. 60. Translation: C.W. Dunn.

Tha se Wisdom tha this spell asaed hafde, tha ongan he eft giddian and thus singende cwaeth: Hwelc fremu byth tham welgan gitsera thaet he gegaderige ungerim thissa welena, and aelces gimcynnnes genog begite, and theah he erige his land mid thusend sula, and theah eall thes middaneard sie his anwealde undertheoded, ne laet he his nanwuht of this middanearde mid him mare thonne he brohte hider.

When Wisdom had spoken this utterance, then he began again to entune and thus singing said: "What profit is there for the wealthy miser though he gather untold quantity of these stores, and gain a supply of every kind of gem, and though he till his fields with a thousand ploughs, and though all this middle-earth be subject to his control? He could not take with him from this earth one whit the more than he brought here."

SIDE I, Band 11: (Old English)

King Alfred's prose translation of the meters in the Consolation was also turned into Old English alliterative verse, perhaps by the King himself.

Text: The Paris Psalter and Meters of Boethius, ed. G. P. Krapp (Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 173. Translation: C.W. Dunn.

Hwæt bið ðæm welegan woruldgilsera
on his mode ðe bet, þeah he micel age
goldes and gimma and gooda gehwæs,
æhta unrim, and him mon erigen scyle
5 æghwelce dæg æcera ðusend,
ðeah ðes middangeard and þis manna cyn
sy under sunnan sud, west and east
his anwalde eall underðieded?
Ne mot he þara hyrsta hionane lædan
10 of ðisse worulde wuhle þon mare,
hordgestreona, ðonne he hiðer brohte.

What better is it for the wealthy, world-greedy one in his mind even though he own much of gold and gems and every good thing, untold possessions, and though for him every day a thousand acres shall be ploughed; though this middle-earth and race of men under the sun, south, west, and east, be subject all to his control? He cannot carry off from this world one whit the more of these treasures, these hoarded properties, than he brought hither.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED (Vulgate 99)

SIDE I, Band 12: (Old English)

About 900 or later, a group of psalms were turned into somewhat irregular alliterative Old English verse by a poet who was certainly not at home in the formal tradition of Old English heroic verse. Its very simplicity, however, gives this translation an appropriate charm.

Text: The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius (Columbia Univ. Press, 1932), ed. Krapp, pp. 70-71. Translation: C.W. Dunn.

1 Nu ge mycle gefean mihtigum drihtne
eall þeos eorðe elne hyre,
and blisse gode bealde þeowie.
2 Gangað on ansyne ealle bliðe;
witað wislice þæt he is wealdend god;
he us geworhte and we his syndon.
3 We his folc syndan and his fæle sceap,
ða he on his edisce ealle afedde;
gað nu on his doru, god andettað,
and hine, weorðiað on wictunum
mid lofsangum lustum myclum.
4 Heriað naman drihtnes, forþon he is niðum swæs;
is þin milde mod, ofer manna bearn.

Rejoice you now greatly in the mighty lord, all this earth in her vigor, and with pleasure boldly serve God. Go you all joyfully into his sight. Know truly that he is God the ruler. He made us, and we are his. We are his people and his faithful sheep, all of whom he has fed on his pasture. Go now into his doors, acknowledge God, and extol him in the dwelling places with great joy in songs of praise. Praise the name of the lord, for he is gentle in anger. Thy mood is mild towards the sons of men.

SIDE I, Band 13: (Middle English)

This is a translation of the same psalm into prose in the later Wyclif version. (See Band 4). For comparison, the version in the Great Bible (1539-40) is printed below; this latter rendering is widely familiar through its use in the Order for Morning Prayer as first prescribed in the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer in 1549 and still in use.

Text: The Books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs... according to the Wycliffite Version, ed. W.W. Skeat (Oxford, 1881), p. 155.

1 The titil of the nyne and nyntithe salm. A salm to knouche; in Ebrew thus, A salm for knoucheching.

2 Al erthe, singe 3e hertli to God; serue 3e the Lord in
3 gladnesse. Entre 3e in his sight; in ful out ioiying. Wite
3e, that the Lord hym silf is God; he made vs, and not
we naden vs. His puple, and the scheep of his lesewe,
4 entre 3e in to hise gatis in knoucheching; entre 3e in to hise
5 porchis, knoucheche 3e to him in ympnes. Herye 3e his
na-e, for the Lord-is swete, his merci is with-outen ende;
and his treuthe is in generacioun and in to generacioun.

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands:
serve the Lord with gladness,
and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God:
it is he that hath made us,
and not we ourselves;
we are his people,
and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with
thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise:
be thankful unto him,
and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious,
his mercy is everlasting:
and his truth endureth from generation
to generation.

PSALM TWENTY-THREE (Vulgate 22)

SIDE I, Band 14: (Middle English)

This translation is taken from the same Wyclif version listed in the description of Band 13.

Text: As above, pp. 77-78.

PSALM XXII (XXIII).

1 The title of the two and twentiethe salm. The salm,
ether the song of Dauid.

THE Lord governeth me, and no thing schal faile to me;
2 in the place of pasture there he hath set me. He nurschide
3 me on the watir of refreischyng; he conuertide my soule.
He ledde me forth on the pathis of rijtfulnesse; for his
4 name. For whi thou; Y schal go in the myddis of schadewe
of deeth; Y schal not drede yuels, for thou art with me.
5 Thi yerde and thi staf; tho han coumfortid me. Thou hast
maad redi a boord in my sight; ayens hem that troblen me.
Thou hast maad fat myn heed with oyle; and my cuppe,
6 fillinge greetli, is ful cleer. And thi merci schal sue me;
in alle the daies of my lijf. And that Y dwelle in the hows
of the Lord; in to the lengthe of daies.

This metrical version has retained favor through its adoption into the Scottish Psalter compiled in 1650. Originating from the revision of earlier translations approved by the Westminster Assembly of 1643, it has become particularly associated with Scottish Presbyterianism. (The reading does not reproduce the pronunciation of the period).

PSALM 23.

- 1 THE Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
- 2 He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.
- 3 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
ev'n for his own name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk in death's dark
vale,
yet will I fear none ill:
For thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.
- 5 My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.
- 6 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me:
And in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Matthew vi. 9-13)

SIDE I, Band 16: (Elizabethan English)

This version first appeared in the New Testament published in 1582 by English Catholic refugees at Rheims; in 1609-10 they published a version of the Old Testament, the two together now being known familiarly as the Douai Bible from the place of printing of the latter. This translation exercised some influence upon the Protestant Authorized version but differs from it particularly in that it was translated from the Latin Vulgate, rather than the original Hebrew and Greek, and adopted many Latinate words. Thus, "daily bread" (in Greek *arton epiousion*) is rendered "supersubstantial bread" because the Vulgate reads *panem supersubstantialem*.

Thus therefore shall you pray:
Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is
in heaven.

Give us this day our supersubstantial
bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive
our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation.
But deliver us from evil.

Amen.

SIDE I, Band 17: (Modern English)

This version, in striking contrast with those produced in the Elizabethan period when our vocabulary was rapidly expanding, is written in Basic English, a system devised in the twentieth century by C. K. Ogden to limit the vocabulary to an agreed list of 850 words (or 1000 for Biblical use).

Text: The Bible in Basic English (E. P. Dutton & Co., 1949).

- 9 Let this then be your prayer: Our Father
in heaven, may your name be kept holy.
- 10 Let your kingdom come. Let your pleasure
be done, as in heaven, so on earth.
- 11 Give us this day bread for our needs.
- 12 And make us free of our debts, as we
have made those free who are in debt to us.
- 13 And let us not be put to the test, but keep
us safe from the Evil One.

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR
(Ecclesiastes xii. 1-8)

SIDE I, Band 18: (Middle English)

This is the later Wyclif translation (see Band 4). Comparison with the Authorized Version printed below will show that here it fails to match the lyrical sweep achieved by the more famous translation in choice of words and balance of phrases.

Text: As for Band 13, pp. 267-8.

HAUE thou mynde on thi creatour in the daies of thi
yongthe, bifore that the tyme of thi turment come, and the
yeres of thi deth neize, of whiche thou schalt seie, Tho plesen
not me. *Haue thou mynde on thi creatour, bifor that the*

sunne be derk, and the list, and sterrys, and the mone;
and cloude turne aȝen after reyn. Whanne the keperis of
the hous schulen be mouyd, and strongeste men schulen
tremble; and grynderis schulen be idel, whanne the noumbre
schal be maad lesse, and seeris bi the hoolis schulen wexe
derk; and schulen close the doris in the steet, in the low-
nesse of vois of a gryndere; and thei schulen rise at the
vois of a brid, and alle the douȝtris of song schulen wexe
deef. Ahd hiȝ thingis schulen drede, and schulen be aferd
in the weie; an alemaunde-tre schal floure, a locuste schal
be maad fat, and capparis schal be distried; for a man schal
go in to the hous of his euerlastyngnesse, and weileris
schulen go aboute in the street. *Haue thou mynde on thi
creatour*, byfore that a siluerne roop be brokun, and a
goldun lace renne aȝen, and a watir pot be al to-brokun
on the welle, and a wheele be brokun togidere on the
cisterne; and dust turne aȝen in to his erthe, wherof it
was, and the spirit turne aȝen to God, that ȝaf it. The
vanyte of vanytees, seide Ecclesiastes, the vanyte of vanytees,
and alle thingis *ben* vanyte.

REMEMBER now thy Creator in
the days of thy youth, while the
evil days come not, nor the years
draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I
have no pleasure in them:
2 While the sun, or the light, or the
moon, or the stars, be not darkened,
nor the clouds return after the rain:
3 In the day when the keepers of the
house shall tremble, and the strong
men shall bow themselves, and the
grinders cease because they are few,
and those that look out of the windows
be darkened,
4 And the doors shall be shut in the
streets, when the sound of the grind-
ing is low, and he shall rise up at the
voice of the bird, and all the daugh-

ters of musick shall be brought low;
5 Also when they shall be afraid of
that which is high, and fears shall be
in the way, and the almond tree shall
flourish, and the grasshopper shall
be a burden, and desire shall fail: be-
cause man goeth to his long home,
and the mourners go about the streets:
6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed,
or the golden bowl be broken, or the
pitcher be broken at the fountain, or
the wheel broken at the cistern.
7 Then shall the dust return to the
earth as it was: and the spirit shall
return unto God who gave it.
8 * Vanity of vanities, saith the
preacher; all is vanity.

SIDE I, Band 19: (Modern English)

This is the text of the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament published in 1952 for the purpose of changing the Authorized Version wherever the meaning would be misunderstood by modern readers or was inconsistent with the interpretation of the original reached by modern scholarship.

Text: The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version
(Thomas Nelson & Sons, Old Testament, 1952;
New Testament, 1946).

12 Remember also your Creator in the days of your
youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw
nigh, when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";² before
the sun and the light, and the moon, and the stars are darkened
and the clouds return after the rain; ³ in the day when the
keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and
the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look
through the windows are dimmed, ⁴ and the doors on the street
are shut; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises
up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of song are
brought low; ⁵ they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors
are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper

drags itself along⁹ and desire fails; because man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets; ⁶before the silver cord is snapped,⁷ or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern,⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. ⁸Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

CAXTON ON CHANGE

SIDE I, Band 20: (Early Modern English)

William Caxton (1422-91) makes this comment on the variations of dialects and changes in language which he had noticed during his own lifetime. It appears in the preface to his *Eneydos* (1490), a translation of a French prose romance. His specific example arises from the fact that the native English word *ey*, which was still preserved in some dialects, was being replaced by the borrowed Norse word *egg*, another form of the same Germanic root. In perspective, we can now add that the language was undergoing considerable changes in the pronunciation of all long stressed vowels and in the silencing of all final unstressed vowels, and that the London dialect was beginning to emerge as a model of cultured speech.

Text: *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse*, ed. A. W. Pollard (Westminster, 1903), pp. 239-40.

some gentlemen which late blamed me, saying that in my translations I had over curious terms, which could not be understood of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations. And fain would I satisfy every man, and so to do took an old book and read therein, and certainly the English was so rude and broad that I could not well understand it. And also my Lord Abbot of Westminster did do show to me lately certain evidences written in old English, for to reduce it into our English now used. And certainly it was written in such wise that it was more like to Dutch than English, I could not reduce ne bring it to be understood. And certainly our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born. For we Englishmen be born under the domination of the moon, which is never steadfast but ever wavering, waxing one season and waneth and decreaseth another season. And that common English that is spoken in one shire varieth from another, insomuch that in my days happened that certain merchants were in a ship in Thames for to have sailed over the sea into Zealand, and for lack of wind they tarried at Foreland, and went to land for to refresh them. And one of them named Sheffield, a mercer, came into a house and asked for meat, and especially he asked after eggs; and the goodwife answered that she could speak no French, and the merchant was angry, for he also could speak no French, but would have had eggs, and she understood him not. And then at last another said, that he would have "eyren"; then the goodwife said that she understood him well. Lo, what should a man in these days now write, eggs or eyren? Certainly it is hard to

please every man because of diversity and change of language. For in these days every man that is in any reputation in his country will utter his communication and matters in such manners and terms that few men shall understand them. And some honest and great clerks have been with me and desired me to write the most curious terms that I could find; and thus between plain, rude and curious I stand abashed. But in my judgment the common terms that be daily used be lighter to be understood than the old and ancient English.

SIDE II - CHANGING LITERARY STYLE

Literary style alters independently of linguistic change, for the style of any important writer is determined by his individual personality and his attitude towards his materials. The many treatments of the perennially attractive legend of King Arthur offer excellent examples.

Arthur, who historically may have been a sixth-century war-leader of Romano-British stock, was first raised to the rank of a legendary hero by the Celtic-speaking inhabitants of Britain, not by the English-speaking invaders, whose enemy he would have been. After the further invasion of Britain by the Normans in 1066, however, he gradually became the national hero of the entire country, and each age has reinterpreted his significance afresh.

ARTHUR'S FEAST AT CAERLEON

SIDE II, Band 1: (Twelfth-century Latin, translated)

The earliest detailed literary elaboration of Arthur's conquests now extant is Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, written in Latin prose about 1138-39. Geoffrey facetiously offers to supplement the histories of the kings of England, which were being conscientiously compiled in his age, by providing a history of the British (that is, non-Roman, non-English) realm from its foundation by the entirely legendary Brute down to the seventh century.

Text: Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. S. Evans, rev. C. W. Dunn (E. P. Dutton & Co., 1958), Book IX, ch. 12-13. (Texts of the Latin here quoted briefly, in twelfth-century pronunciation, are listed in bibliography).

WHEN the high festival of Whitsuntide began to draw nigh, Arthur, filled with exceeding great joy at having achieved so great success, was fain to hold high court, and to set the crown of the kingdom upon his head, to

convene the Kings and Dukes that were his vassals to the festival so that he might the more worshipfully celebrate the same, and renew his peace more firmly amongst his barons. Howbeit, when he made known his desire unto his familiars, he, by their counsel, made choice of Caerleon wherein to fulfil his design. For, situate in a passing pleasant position on the river Usk in Glamorgan, not far from the Severn sea, and abounding in wealth above all other cities, it was the place most meet for so high a solemnity. For on the one side thereof flowed the noble river aforesaid whereby the Kings and Princes that should come from oversea might be borne thither in their ships; and on the other side, girdled about with meadows and woods, passing fair was the magnificence of the kingly palaces thereof with the gilded verges of the roofs that imitated Rome. Howbeit, the chiefest glories thereof were the two churches, one raised in honour of the Martyr Julius, that was right fair graced by a convent of virgins that had dedicated them unto God, and the second, founded in the name of the blessed Aaron, his companion, the main pillars whereof were a brotherhood of canons regular, and this was the cathedral church of the third Metropolitan See of Britain. It had, moreover, a school of two hundred philosophers learned in astronomy and in the other arts, that did diligently observe the courses of the stars, and did by true inferences foretell the prodigies which at that time were about to befall unto King Arthur. Such was the city, famed for such abundance of things delightful, that was now busking her for the festival that had been proclaimed. Messengers were sent forth into the divers kingdoms, and all that owed allegiance throughout the Gauls and the neighbour islands were invited unto the court.

For at that time was Britain exalted unto so high a pitch of dignity as that it did surpass all other kingdoms in plenty of riches, in luxury of adornment, and in the courteous wit of them that dwelt therein. Whatsoever knight in the land was of renown for his prowess did wear his clothes and his arms all of one same colour. And the dames, no less witty, would apparel them in like manner in a single colour, nor would they deign have the love of none save he had thrice approved him in the wars. Wherefore at that time did dames wax chaste and knights the nobler for their love.

THE ROUND TABLE

SIDE II, Band 2: (Middle English)

Geoffrey's *History* was retold in Anglo-Norman verse for an aristocratic but less learned audience by the poet Wace, and this version was in turn reworked for the native English audience at the end of the twelfth century by Layamon, a parish priest in Worcester-shire. The legend of the Round Table is not mentioned by Geoffrey and is only briefly outlined by Wace. Layamon amplifies it considerably, perhaps with the help of traditions collected in near-by Wales. His verse-form represents a partial transition from

the alliterative measures of pre-Conquest Old English poetry to the new riming verse adopted in the Middle English period through imitation of French and Anglo-Norman poetry.

Text: Layamons Brut, ed. trans. Sir F. Madden (London, 1847), lines 22889 ff. Translation: C. W. Dunn.

Seoththen hit seith in there tale, the king ferde to
Cornwale.

Ther him com to anan that waes a crafti weorc-
man,
And thene king imette, and feiere hine graette.

"Hail seo thu, Arthur, athelest kinge.
Ich aem thin aghe mon. Moni lond ich habbe
thurh-gan.

Ich con of treo-werkes wunder feole craftes.
Ich iherde suggen bi-yeonde sae neowe tidende,
That thine cnihtes at thine borde gunnen fihte
A midwinteres daei; moni ther feollen;
For heore muchele mode morth-gomenn wrohten;
And for heore hehghe cunne aelc wolde beon
withinne.

Ah ich the wulle wurche a bord swithe hende
That ther maghen setten to sixtene hundred and
ma,

Al turn abuten, that nan ne beon withuten,
Withuten and withinne, mon to-yaenes monne.
Whenne thu wult riden, with the thu miht hit leden,
And setten hit whar thu wulle after thine iwille;
And ne dert thu navere adrede to there worlde longen,
That aevere aeine modi cniht at thine borde makie
fiht,

For ther scal the hehghe beon aefne than loghe.
Timber me lete biwinnen and that beord biginnen."

To feouwer wikene virste that werc wes ivorthed.
To ane heghe daeie that hired wes isomned,
And Arthur himseolf beh sone to than borde,
And hehte alle his cnihtes to than borde forth rihtes.
Tho alle weoren iseten cnihtes to heore mete,
Tha spaec aelc with other else hit weore his brother.
Alle heo seten abuten; nes ther nen withuten.
Aevereaelches cunnes cniht there wes swithe wel
idiht.

Alle heo weoren bi ane, the hehghe and tha laghe;
Ne mihten ther nan yelpen for othere kunnes scenchen,
Other his iveren the at than beord weoren.

This wes that ilke bord that Bruttes of yelpeth
And sugeth feole cunne lesinge bi Arthure than kinge.
Swa deth aver alc mon the other luvien con;
Yif he is him to leof thenne wule he lighen,

And suggen on him wurthscipe mare thenne he beon
wurthe;

Ne beo he no swa luther mon that his freond him wel
ne on.

Aeft, yif on volke feondscipe arereth
An aever aei time betweone twon monnen,
Me con bi than laethe lasinge suggen.
Theh he weore the bezste mon the aevere aet
at borde,

The mon the him weore lath, him cuthe last finden.
Ne al soh ne al les that leod-scopes singeth;
Ah this is that soththe bi Arthure than kinge;
Nes naever ar swulc king, swa duhti thurh alle thing.
For that sothe stonda than writen hu hit is iwurthen,
Ord from than aenden, of Arthure than kinge,
No mare no lasse buten else his laghen weoren.

Afterwards, it says in the tale, the king fared to
Cornwall. There came one to him then who was a
skilful carpenter, and met the king and greeted
him graciously.

"Hail to you, Arthur, noblest king. I am your own
man. Many a land have I traveled through. In
woodwork I am master of skills wondrous many.
I have heard tell over the seas new tidings, that
your knights at your table began to fight on a mid-
winter's day. Many fell there; out of their high
pride they wrought deadly sport; and because of
their high lineage each wished to be on the inside.
But I will construct for you a most convenient
table, at which sixteen hundred men and more may
sit, all in turn, so that none will be on the outside--
outside and inside, man opposite man. When you
wish to ride out, you can bring it with you, and
set it up where you will according to your wish;
and you need never dread, to the length of the world,
that any proud knight will ever make strife at your
table, for there the high shall be equal with the low.
Allow me to gather the lumber and begin the table."

By the end of four weeks the work was completed.
On a festival day the people were summoned, and
Arthur himself came at once to the table, and
ordered all his knights to the table forthwith.
When the knights were all seated for their meal,
then each spoke to the other as if it were his
brother. They were all seated around, nor was
any outside. Every rank of knight was very well
treated. They were all as one, the high and the low;
nor could any there boast of a special serving of
drinks different from that given his companions who
were at the table.

This was the same table that the Bretons boast of
and tell many kinds of lies about Arthur the king.
Thus does everyone who loves another; if he is too
dear to him, then he will lie and grant him more
honor than he is worth; nor is there any man so base
that his friend will not wish him well. Again, among
people if enmity arises at any time between two men,
they will tell lies about the one who is loathed.
Though he were the best man that ever ate at table,
the man who is loath to them, they could find
objection to. What the people's poets sing is neither
all truth nor all lies. But this is the truth about
Arthur the king: there was never before such a king,
in all things so mighty. For the truth stands in writ-
ing how events came to pass, from beginning to end,
with Arthur the king, no more and no less but as his
deeds were.

ARTHUR'S FAREWELL TO GUENEVERE

SIDE II, Band 3: (Middle English)

The Alliterative Morte Arthure, from which the read-
ing is taken, was composed about 1350 to 1360 by an
anonymous poet writing in the Northwest Midland dia-
lect of Middle English. It tells how Arthur's attempt
at world supremacy through the conquest of Rome
was frustrated by the treachery of Mordred. His
meter is a skillful revival of the alliterative measures
of Old English poetry. Malory pays compliment to the
unknown author's narrative power by converting the
romance into prose in Book V of his own Morte
Darthur.

Text: F. Mossé, A Handbook of Middle English,
pp. 253-4. Translation: A. Boyle, Morte Arthur
(E. P. Dutton, 1912).

1. Arthur's Farewell to Guenevere

Nowe he takez hys leve (and lengez no langere)
At lordez, at lege-men þat leves hym b; 'lynden.
And seyne þat worthilyche wy went unto chambyre
For to comfurthe þe qwene þat in care lenges;
Waynour waykly wepande hym kyssiz,
Talkez to hym tenderly with teres y-newe:
'I may wery the wye thatt this werre movede,
That warnes me wyrchippe of my wedde lorde;
All my lykyng of lyfe owt of lande wendez,
And I in langour am lefte, leve 3e, for evere!
Why ne myghte I, dere lufe, dye in 3our armes,
Are I þis destanye of dule sulde drye by myne one?'

'Grefe þe noghte, Gaynour, fore Goddes lufe of hewen,
 Ne gruche noghte my ganggyng: it sall to gude turne.
 Thy wonrydez and thy wepyng woundez myn herte,
 I may noghte wit of þis woo, for all þis werlde ryche;
 I have made a kepare, a knyghte of thyn awen,
 Overlynge of Ynglande undyre thyselfen,
 And that es sir Mordrede þat þow has mekyll praysede,
 Sall be thy dictour, my dere, to doo whatt the lyketh.'

Thane he takes hys leve at ladys in chambyre,
 Kyside them kyndlyche and to Criste beteches, [aschede,
 And then cho swounes full swythe, whe<n> he hys swerde
 Sweyes in a swounyng, swelte as cho walde.
 He pressed to his palfray in presance of lordes,
 Prekys of the palez with his prys knyghtes,
 Wyth a reall rowte of þe rounde table,
 Soughte towarde Sandwyche: cho sees hym no more!

Now he takes his leave and abideth no longer, bidding
 farewell to his lords and liegemen that he leaves behind him.
 And then that worthy man went to his chamber to comfort
 the queen that was in great distress: Gaynour weakly
 weeping kisses him, talks to him tenderly with many tears.

"I may curse the man that caused this war that deprives
 me of the honour of my wedded lord, all that I love in life
 now leaves the land and I am left in languor believe me for
 ever! Why might I not, dear love, die in thy arms, am I
 thus to endure this destiny of dole by myself?"

"Grieve thee not, Gaynour, for God's love of heaven, nor
 grudge my going for it shall turn to good. Thy distress and
 weeping wound my heart, I had rather not know of this grief
 for all the rich world: I have made a keeper, a knight of thy
 own, overlord of England under thyself, and that is Sir
 Mordred whom thou hast much praised, he shall be thy
 dictator to do what thou desirest." Then he took leave of his
 ladies in waiting, kissing them kindly and commends them
 to Christ, and then she swoons full length when he asked
 for his sword, twice in a swoon as if she would faint. He
 hastened to his palfrey in the presence of his lords, and spurs
 his horse away from the palace with his valiant knights, with
 a royal troop from the Round Table, and made way to
 Sandwich; she sees him no more!

ARTHUR'S BETRAYAL

SIDE II, Band 4: (Early Modern English)

Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur* consists of a dramatic reworking of a mass of French and English treatments of the Arthurian legend. It was completed between 1469 and 1470 and was given wider circulation than manuscript copying would have allowed, by Caxton's printing of it in 1485. Malory's anachronistic reference in the present excerpt to the shooting of "great guns" marks the end of the era of armored knights on horseback and of the chivalric code. (The reading attempts to suggest only some features of the pronunciation of the period).

Text: *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. E. Vinaver (Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 860-3, 867-8 (Bk. XXI).

IV. *The Day of Destiny*

As sir Mordred was ruler of all Inglonde, he lete make lettirs as thoughe that they had com from beyonde the see, and the lettirs specified that kynge Arthur was slayne in batayle with sir Launcelot. Wherefore sir Mordred made a parlemente, and called the lordys togydir, and there he made them to chose 'hym' kynge. And so was he crowned at Caunturbury, and hyde a feste there fiftene dayes.

And aftirwarde he drew hym unto Wynchester, and there he toke queene Gwenyver, and seyde playnly that he wolde wedde her (which was hys unclis wyff and hys fadiris wyff.) And so he made redy for the feste, and a day prefixte that they shulde be wedded; wherefore queene Gwenyver was passyng hevvy. But she durst nat discover her harte, but spake fayre, and agreed to sir Mordredys wyll.

And anone she desyred of sir Mordred to go to London to byghe all maner thynges that longed to the brydale. And bycause of her fayre speche sir Mordred trusted her and gaff her leve; and so whan she cam to London she toke the Towre of London, and suddeynly in all haste possyble she stuffed hit with all maner of vytayle, and well garnysshed hit with men, and so kepte hit.

And whan sir Mordred wist thys he was passyng wrothe oute of mesure. And shorte tale to make, he layde a myghty syge aboute the Towre and made many assautis, and threw engynnes unto them, and shotte grete gunnes. But all myght nat prevayle, for queene Gwenyver wolde never, for fayre speache nother for foule, never to truste unto sir Mordred to com in hys hondis agayne.

Than cam the Bysshop of Caunturbury, which was a noble clerke and an holy man, and thus he seyde unto sir Mordred:

'Sir, what woll ye do? Woll ye firste displease God and sythyn shame youreself and all knyghthode? For ys nat kynge Arthur youre uncle, and no farther but youre modirs brothir, and uppon her he hymselfe begate you, uppon hys owne syster? Therefore how may ye wed youre owne fadiris wyff? And therefor, sir,' seyde the Bysshop, 'leve thys opynyon, other ellis I shall curse you with booke, belle and candyll.'

'Do thou thy warste,' seyde sir Mordred, 'and I defyge the!'

'Sir,' seyde the Bysshop, 'wyte you well I shall nat feare me to do that me ought to do. And also ye noyse that my lorde Arthur ys slayne, and that ys nat so, and therefore ye woll make a foule warke in thys londe!'

'Peas, thou false pryste!' seyde sir Mordred, 'for and thou chauffe me ony more, I shall stryke of thy hede!'

So the Bysshop departed, and ded the cursyng in the moste orguluste wyse that myght be done. And than sir Mordred sought the Bysshop off Caunturbury for to have slayne hym. Than the Bysshop fledde, and tooke parte of hys good with hym, and wente nyghe unto Glassyngbyry. And there he was a preste-ermyte in a chapel, and lyved in poverté and in holy prayers; for well he undirstood that myschevous warre was at honde.

Than sir Mordred soughte uppon queene Gwenyver by lettirs and sondis, and by fayre meanys and foule meanys, to have her to com oute of the Towre of London; but all thys avayled nought, for she answerd hym shortely, opynly and pryvayly, that she had levir sle herself than to be maryed with hym.

Than cam there worde unto sir Mordred that kynge Arthure had areysed the syge frome sir Launcelot and was comyng homwarde wyth a greate oste to be avenged uppon sir Mordred, wherefore sir Mordred made wryttes unto all the baronny of thys londe. And muche people drew unto hym; for than was the comyn voyce amonge them that with kynge Arthur was never othir lyff but warre and stryff, and with sir Mordrede was grete joy and blysse. Thus was kynge Arthur depraved, and evyll seyde off; and many there were that kynge Arthur had brought to of nought, and gyffyn them londis, that myght nat than say hym a good worde.

Lo, ye all Englysshemen, se ye nat what a myschyff here was? For he that was the moste kynge and nobelyst knyght of the worlde, and moste loved the felyshyp of noble knyghtes, and by hym they all were upholdyn, and yet myght nat thes Englysshemen holde them contente with hym. Lo thus was the olde custom and usayges of thys

londe, and men say that we of thys londe have nat yet loste that custom. Alas! thys ys a greate defaughte of us Englysshemen, for there may no thyng us please no terme.

And so fared the peple at that tyme: they were better pleased with sir Mordred than they were with the noble kynge Arthur, and muche people drew unto sir Mordred and seyde they wold abyde wyth hym for bettir and for wars. And so sir Mordred drew with a greate oste to Dovir, for there he harde sey that kyng Arthur wolde aryve, and so he thought to beate hys owne fadir fro hys owne londys. And the moste party of all Inglonde hylde wyth sir Mordred, for the peple were so new-fangill.

And so as sir Mordred was at Dovir with hys oste, so cam kyng Arthur wyth a greate navy of shypis and galyes and carykes, and there was sir Mordred redy awaytyng uppon hys lonyng, to lette hys owne fadir to londe uppon the londe that he was kynge over.

Than there was launching of greate botis and smale, and full of noble men of armys; and there was muche slaughtir of jantyll knyghtes, and many a full bolde barown was layde full lowe, on bothe partyes. But kynge Arthur was so currageous that there myght no maner of knyght lette hym to lande, and hys knyghtes fyersely folowed hym. And so they loded magré sir Mordredis hede and all hys powere, and put sir Mordred abak, 'that he fledde' and all hys peple.

So whan thys batayle was done, kynge Arthure let serche hys peple that were hurte and dede. And than was noble sir Gawayne founde in a greate boote, liyng more than halff dede. Whan kyng Arthur knew that he was layde so low he wente unto hym and so fownde hym. And there the kynge made greate sorow oute of mesure, and toke sir Gawayne in hys armys, and thryse he there sowned. And than whan he was waked, kyng Arthur seyde,

'Alas! sir Gawayne, my syster son, here now thou lyggest, the man in the worlde that I loved moste. And now ys my joy gone! For now, my newew, sir Gawayne, I woll discover me unto you, tha(t) in youre person and in sir Launcelot I moste had my joy and myne affyaunce. And now have I loste my joy of you bothe, wherefore all myne ertely joy ys gone fro me!'

A, myn uncle,' seyde sir Gawayne, now I woll that ye wyte that my deth-dayes be com! And all, I may wyte, myne owne hastynes and my wy[l]fulnesse, for thorow my wylfulnes I was causer of myne owne dethe; for I was thys day hurte and smytten uppon myne olde wounde that sir Launcelot gaff me, and I fele myself that I muste nedis be dede by the owre of noone. And thorow me and <my> pryde ye have all thys shame and disease, for had that noble knyght, sir Launcelot, ben with you, as he was and wolde have ben, thys unhappy warre had never ben begunne; for he, thorow hys noble knyghthode and hys noble bloode, hyde all youre cankyrde enemyes in subjeccion and daungere. And now,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'ye shall mysse sir Launcelot. But alas that I wolde nat accorde with hym!'

And never syns was there never seyne a more dolefuller batayle in no Crysten londe, for there was but russhyng and rydyng, foynyng and strykyng, and many a grym worde was there spokyn of aythir to othir, and many a dedely stroke. But ever kynge Arthure rode thorowoute the bat[a]yle of sir Mordred many tymys and ded full nobely, as a noble kynge shulde do, and at all tymes he faynted never. And sir Mordred ded hys devoure that day and put hymselfe in grete perell.

And thus they fought all the longe day, and never stynted tylle the noble knyghtes were layde to the colde erthe. And ever they fought styll tylle hit was nere [ny]ght, and by than was there an hondred thousand leyde dede uppon the erthe. Than was kynge Arthure wode wrothe oute of mesure, whan he saw hys peple so slayne frome hym.

And so he loked aboute hym and cowde se no mo of all hys oste and good knyghtes leftte, no mo on lyve but two knyghtes: the tone was sir Lucan de Buttler and hys brother, sir Bedwere; and yette they were full sore wounded.

'Jesu mercy! scyde the kynge, where ar all my noble knyghtes
becom? Alas, that ever I shulde se this doleful day! For now, scyde
kynge Arthur, I am com to myne ende. But wolde to God, scyde he,
that I wysse now where were that traytoure sir Mordred that hath
caused all this myschance.'

Than kynge Arthur loked aboute and was wate where stode sir
Mordred leanyng upon hys swerde amonge a grece hepe of dede
men.

'Now, gyff me my speare,' seyde kynge Arthur unto sir Lucan,
for yondir I have aspyed the traytoure that all this woo hath
wroughte.'

'Sir, I amc hym be,' seyde sir Lucan, 'for he ys unhappy. And ye
passe this unhappy day y[e] shall be ryght well revenged. And,
[good lord, remembre ye of your nyghtes dreame and] what the
spyrite of sir Gawayne tolde you to-nyght, and yet God of Hys grece
goodnes hath preserced you hyddirre. And for Goddes sake, my
lord, leve of this, for, byssed be God, ye have won the fynde: for
yet we ben here thre on lyve, and with sir Mordred ys nat one of
lyve. And therefore if ye leve of now, this wycked day of Desceny
ys paste!'

'Now ryde me dede, ryde me lyff,' seyde the kynge, 'now I se hym
yondir alone, he shall never ascape myne hondes! For at a bettir
ayle shall I never have hym.'

'God spyde you well!' seyde sir Bedevere.
warder sir Mordred, cryng and sayng,

'Traytoure, now ys thy dede-day com!
And when sir Mordred saw kynge Arthur he ran untyll hym with
hys swerde drawn in hys hond, and there kynge Arthur smote sir
Mordred under the shyld, with a foynce of hys speare, thowrouwe
had hys dedys wounde he drece hymself with the myght that he
had upp to the burse of kynge Arthurs speare, and ryght so he smore
hys fadir, kynge Arthur, with hys swerde holdyng in both hys
hondys, upon the syde of the hedde, that the swerde perced the
helmet and the ray of the brayne. And therewith Mordred dassyded
downe starkle dede to the erthe.

And noble kynge Arthur felte in a swoughe to the erthe, and
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KING ARTHUR'S DEATH

SIDE II, Band 5: (Modern English)

Tennyson composed his *Morte d'Arthur* in 1835 under
the inspiration of Malory and later amplified his
treatment of Arthurian legend in the *Idylls of the King*.
Tennyson's achievement lies in the fact that he pre-
serves the charm of his source and at the same time
suggests in Arthur, to use his own phrase, "a modern
gentleman" facing contemporary problems.

Text: Tennyson, *Morte d'Arthur*, later embodied as
the *twelfth of the Idylls of the King* entitled
The Passing of Arthur, lines 394-440.

'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I
go? Where shall I hide my forehead and my
eyes? For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble
And every chance brought out a noble
Such times have been not since the light
that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh,
But now the whole round table is
dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the
years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the
barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place
to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the
world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I
have done
May He within Himself make pure! but
I thou shouldst never see my face again,
Fray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore
let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day
For what are men better than sheep or
goats

Both for themselves and those who call
prayer
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I
go? Where shall I hide my forehead and my
eyes? For now I see the true old times are dead,
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Chronological List of Excerpts

Old English	Middle English	Early Modern English
ca. 897	ca. 1200	ca. 1388-95
ca. 897-9	ca. 1350-60	ca. 1380
ca. 900	ca. 1380-95	ca. 1469
ca. 1000	ca. 1388-95	ca. 1490
ca. 1100	ca. 1388-95	ca. 1582
ca. 1200	ca. 1388-95	ca. 1593
ca. 1300	ca. 1388-95	ca. 1611
ca. 1400	ca. 1388-95	ca. 1650

Modern English

1835	Tennyson's <i>Morte d'Arthur</i>	II, 5
1909	Weymouth's <i>New Testament</i>	I, 1
1924	W. W. Smith (Braid Scots)	I, 2
1949	Bible in Basic English	I, 17
1952	Revised Standard Version	I, 19
1958	C. W. Dunn, <i>Boethius</i>	I, 7

Extensive passages of Old and Middle English may be
heard on Charles W. Dunn's *Early English Poetry*,
Folkways Records Album No. FL 9851.

Charles W. Dunn was born in Arbutnot, Scotland, and received his early schooling in Scotland, the United States and Canada. He has a B. A. from McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, and an A. M. and Ph. D. from Harvard. He is a specialist in medieval literature and became a professor of English and Celtic at New York University in 1956, after teaching at Harvard, Stephens College (Missouri), Cornell, and University College, Toronto. He has written *Highland Settle: A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia* (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1953) and *A Chaucer Reader* (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), among other works, and has published articles and reviews in various scholarly journals.

He is a member of the American Folklore Society, Comunn Gaidhealach (Scotland), Medieval Academy of America, Modern Language Association, and Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.