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Author
Hambridge, Roger A.

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SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, 1950 - 1972

By Roger A. Hambridge

The following bibliography lists the translations and editions of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and the articles and books treating the poem, that appeared from 1950 to 1972. The entries are numbered consecutively throughout and arranged alphabetically in each year by author, or by title in the case of editions and translations. An index of authors and translators follows the bibliographical entries.

Sources consulted in compiling this list include a bibliography of scholarship to 1966 prepared under the direction of Professor Francis Lee Utley and kindly supplied to me by Professor William Matthews; the *PMLA Annual Bibliography*; and the *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Societe internationale arthurienne*. The list which follows is not completely exhaustive – for instance, it does not reflect a systematic search of foreign language periodicals. Nevertheless, I feel confident that no major article or book has been omitted.

The annotations which follow each individual entry attempt to present its major thesis as succinctly and objectively as possible (for fuller synopses cf. the *Bulletin Bibliographique* referred to above). Book-length studies are not annotated, but reviews are cited for them as well as, occasionally, for books containing substantial chapters dealing with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Analytic assessment of so large an amount of scholarship would be impossible in the space presently available. Morton W. Bloomfield’s “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: An Appraisal,*” provides an excellent
review of the scholarship to 1960, and William Ackerman’s “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and its Interpreters,” an account of the major studies and trends from 1961 to 1968. The critical tension between those who have seen the poem largely as an historic artifact (with a resultant emphasis upon its dialect, sources and analogues, and relation to Arthurian tradition) and those who have seen it more as an individual literary object, emphasizing the nature of the poet’s use of traditional material, has been discussed in articles such as Philippa Moody’s “The Problems of Medieval Criticism,” C.S. Lewis’ “The Anthropological Approach,” and John Halverson’s, “Template Criticism: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.”

Roger Hambridge, a graduate student in the UCLA Department of English, has concentrated on literature of the Middle Ages and 18th Century. He has worked as a bibliographer and researcher for the Iowa Bicentennial Edition of the Works of Tobias Smollett and is preparing a scholarly edition of Smollett’s Sir Lancelot Greaves for his doctoral dissertation.

NOTES


LIST OF ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

AnM: Annuale Mediaevale
DA: Dissertation Abstracts
DAI: Dissertation Abstracts International
EIC: Essays in Criticism
ELH: ELH: a Journal of English Literary History
ELN: English Language Notes
ES: English Studies
Expl: Explicator
GGK: [Sir] Gawain and the Green Knight
JEGP: Journal of English and German Philology
Med.Aev.: Medium Aevum
MLN: Modern Language Notes
MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly
MLR: Modern Language Review
MP: Modern Philology
MS: Mediaeval Studies
N&Q: Notes and Queries
Neophil: Neophilologus
NM: Neuphilologische Mitteilungen
PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
PQ: Philological Quarterly
RES: Review of English Studies
SGGK: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
SN: Studia Neophilologica
SP: Studies in Philology
   Asserts Morgain la Fée’s test is benevolent in intention and of a moral nature and sets Gawain the task of purging the court of its moral corruption.

   Comments on various passages; praises poet’s combining of Anglo-Saxon, French Courtly, and Celtic (Welsh) poetic traditions, and his melding of Catholic doctrine and pagan myth. Also lauds poet’s wedding of theme and verse form and his handling of characterization.

   Points out that study of the poet’s use of the substantival adjective weakens rather than strengthens the assumption that Patience, Purity, Gawain, Pearl, and Erkenwald are by a single author.

   Argues, based upon frequency of such paraphrases in the five poems, that multiple authorship and imitation are more plausible than the single author hypothesis.

   Asserts that “fade” is a Breton word (from Fata and Fat = fee).

   Emphasizes the poet’s citation of detail in his hunting scenes.

   Presents a biographical account of Humfrey Newton, minor late-15th century poet, the text of whose commonplace book (the Capesthorne MS., now Bodleian MS. Lat. misc. c66) is printed on pp. 259-79. Contains one poem (No. XXII) which, Robbins argues, indicates that either Newton himself or some professional minstrel had an intimate acquaintance with SGK, and that the alliterative tradition survived in the general area of the Gawain-poet into the 15th century. For fuller discussion see Robin’s “A Gawain Epigone,” _MLN_, LVIII (1943), 361-6.

   Presents a fuller discussion of Isaac Jackson’s note (cf. 5 above), supporting his assertion from Gervase of Tilbury’s _Otia Imperialia_ (12th century).
   Reply to 5 and 8 above. Argues there is no evidence (aside from Smither's 
   single example) that poet or audience were necessarily aware of the form 
   proposed.

10. The Story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight in Modern English, trans. 
    Not seen.

1951

11. Bonjour, Adrien, "'werre, and wrake, and wonder' (Sir Gawain, 1. 16)," ES, 
    XXXII (1951), 70-2. 
    Contends that "wonder" has the sense of "marvel" in contrast to "werre" 
    and "wrake" on the basis of the poet's contrasts of good and evil things in 
    the first stanza.

12. Chapman C.O., An Index of Names in "Pearl," "Purity," "Patience" and 
    Press, 1951.

13. Clark, John W., "On Certain 'Alliterative' and 'Poetic' Words in the Poems 
    Attributed to 'The Gawain-Poet,'" MLQ, XII (1951), 387-98. 
    See 3 and 4 above. Casts further doubt on the hypothesis of common 
    authorship.

1952

14. Bazire, Joyce, "ME. ᥀ and ᥐ in the Rhymes of GGK," JEGP, LI (1952), 
    234-5. 
    Studies poet's ME. ᥀ rhymes and finds he merits the epithet "careful."

15. Braddy, Haldeen, "Sir Gawain and Ralph Holmes the Green Knight," MLN, 
    LXVII (1952), 240-2. 
    Proposes Sir Ralph Holmes (d. 1369) as the original for the Green Knight.

16. Cutler, John L., "The Versification of the 'Gawain Epigone' in Humfrey 
    Cf. 7 above. Disagrees with Robbins's description of the stanzaic 
    organization of the "Gawain Epigone."

    Argues from historical and textual evidence that the service which Camelot 
    celebrates in ll. 63-5, is the Feast of Fools (Festum Follorum), appropriate 
    to the first day of the New Year.
Not seen.

1953

Attacks the gloss of *thereouthe* in ll. 518, 2000, and 2481 of Tolkien and Gordon's edition of *SGGBK*.

Suggests possible influence of *SGGBK* on Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*.

Suggests that Simon Newton, known in the late 14th century as 'scutifer viridis' (the green squire), may have been the historical original of the Green Knight. Provides details of Newton's life, his family and friends from contemporary historical materials.

Mentions in passing that the poet's characterization of Gawain was inspired by the character created by Chretien.

See especially pp. 89-92. Argues from the form of *SGGBK*, from the character of its analogues, and from the poet's identification of the poem as a "laye" (1. 30) that the immediate antecedent of *SGGBK* was a literary Breton lay in OF or ME.

Suggests (pp. 114-5) "barley" (1. 295) is a cry for truce.

1954

Not seen.

Suggests the phrase "wyth no wy3 elle3 on lyue" (11. 384-5) is merely a re-statement of the bargain in which Gawain assures the Green Knight he will be present for the return blow, and insists that the Green Knight must also be present in person.
Acknowledges that the Green Knight is not quite comparable to a green devil, but points out that the 14th-century humanist Pierre Bersuire included a passage in his encyclopedia which makes it explicit that green, being a hunter's color, is well suited to the devil while stalking human prey.

1955

Argues from historical and literary evidence that "scholes" (I. 160) should be interpreted as "shoeless."

Argues that although Gawain successfully confronts a number of predicaments (e.g., to fulfill his covenant yet escape unslain with honor; to be a devoted servant of the Lady and of Mary; and to reject as sinful the Lady's love but to do so courteously), when he accepts the garter he places himself in a worse one which makes him ungenerous (and therefore discourteous) to Bercilak, impious in his transfer of trust from Mary to the girdle, and unvalorous — when he flinches.

Cf. pp. 75-85. Discusses poet's virtuosity in poetic technique, structural archetectonics, descriptive techniques and characterization of Gawain. Offers no interpretation per se, but asserts that poet's first concern is with morality and implies that the judgment of the Green Knight and the Court is that which the poet wants the reader to accept.

Attacks criticism based on the study of the use of myth in literature. Speirs's article (cf. 50 below) mentioned in a brief paragraph on pp. 116-7.


33. Pearsall, Derek A., "Rhetorical 'Descripicio' in *SGGK*," *MLR*, L (1955), 129-34.
Examines the precepts and observations of rhetoricians such as Matthew of Vendome concerning description in poetry and discusses the relations of rhetorical theory and actual poetic practice — regardless of whether the poet derived his knowledge of rhetoric directly or through the example of the French literature.
Points out the poet’s patterns of three’s in the overall structure and in the
details within the poem.

Suggests that the poet’s geographical knowledge indicates he once resided in
Whalley Abbey near Clitheroe in Lancashire.

36. **Kelley, Gerald Baptiste,** “Graphemic Theory and its Application to a
Middle-English Text: *SGGK,*” *Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations,
University of Wisconsin* . . . , XVI (1954-55), 542-3.
Asserts that analysis of the graphemes of *SGGK* “shows a structure of
oppositions in which important features, such as vocalic length, are not
accounted for . . . [but] does show systematically maintained oppositions
indicated either by physical differences between letters or by limitations in
their distribution.”

of material presented in “More Celtic Elements in *GGK,*” *JEGP*, XLII
(1943), 149-84.

II,” *Neophil*, XL (1956), 290-301.
Continuation of 32 above.

39. **Markman, Alan M.,** “Sir Gawain of Britain: A Study of the Romance
Elements in the British Gawain Literature,” *DA*, XV (1955), 1613
(Michigan).
Finds that in 14th-15th century romances Gawain is a representation of the
ideal courtly knight who, though his knightly qualities are exaggerated, is
nonetheless presented as a probable human being – an actual man to whom
supernatural or superhuman characteristics are never ascribed and who
appears in stories in which the marvelous plays a very small role.

40. **Moorman, Charles,** “Myth and Mediaeval Literature: *SGGK,*” *MS*, XVIII
(1956), 158-72.
Argues that the poem is a *rite de passage* which serves to test the whole court
(of which Gawain is the representative) and to teach them the value of
chastity and loyalty. Stresses the Christian element in the poet’s handling of
myth.

173-4.
Offers support from two passages in late 12th-century French romances for
argument advanced in 28 above.

43. **Shields, Ellis Gale, “Rhetoric and the Gawain-Poet,” University of Southern California Abstracts of Dissertations, 1956, 35-7.** Attempts to demonstrate poet's debt to the Latin rhetorical tradition, particularly the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* attributed to Cicero.


1957

45. **Ackerman, Robert W., “‘Pared out of Paper’: Gawain 802 and Purity 1408,” *JEGP*, LVI (1957), 410-7.** Corrects the notion that the objects referred to in these lines are “subtleties” (which were not made of paper but sugar). Shows from parallels in Chaucer, Lydgate and certain other Middle English works that these lines refer to the custom of serving food on festive occasions covered or crowned with paper decorations in shapes such as that of a castle.

46. **Conley, John, “The Meaning of ‘fare’ in *GGK*, 694,” *N&Q*, CCII (1957), 2.** Argues that fare “means not *food* but *going*, *way*, or something of the sort.”

47. **Markman, Alan M., “The Meaning of *SGGK*,” *PMLA*, LXXII (1957), 574-86.** Asserts that Gawain possesses the physical and non-physical qualities of the ideal knight and argues that despite the exaggerations of his qualities, Gawain is presented as a human hero whose behavior in the face of an unreal magical situation (Beheading Test) and a very real natural situation (Temptations) serves as a model for the best human conduct to show us our human capability for right and good action.

49. **Randall, Dale B.J.,** "A Note on Structure in *SGGK,*" *MLN,* LXXII (1957), 161-3;
Outlines poem’s structure and points out similarities to techniques in *Pearl.*

London: Faber and Faber, 1957.
Cf. pp. 215-51. Slight revision of material originally published as "*SGGK*" in *Scrutiny,* XVI (1949), 274-300. Asserts critic’s job is to show how the poet works artistically with the ritual and mythic elements discovered by anthropological study. Argues that the imagery and rhythm of the poem is an assertion of belief in life as contrasted with winter deprivation and death which artistically exhibits the internal harmony between seemingly contrary forces. States poet was conscious of what he was doing with regard to ritual and mythic elements in poem.

1958

Argues that poet’s reference to the five wits in his explanation of the meaning of the pentangle consciously alludes to vernacular literature dealing with penitential doctrine and that the poem is about Gawain’s need for penance after he falls away from the pentangle by accepting and keeping the girdle.

Presents stylistic evidence in support of the theory of common authorship of *Patience, Purity, Pearl* and *SGGK.*

Argues that the poem is a study of the contrast between two aspects of life in Gawain’s struggle against the tendencies which would draw him from the comforts and codes of civilization back to the state of nature. States that gold symbolizes the refined, sophisticated values and actions of man contrasted with green, suggestive of man’s primitive, sensual and emotional side.

Suggests on logical grounds that “more” be emended to “innore.”

55. **Renoir, Alain,** "Descriptive Technique in *SGGK,*" *Orbis Litterarum,* XIII (1958), 126-32.
Describes poet’s descriptive techniques as analogous to that of a camera lens equally able to present a wide angle shot of an entire scene and to zoom in upon a single detail, then at the appropriate moment pan back towards a larger view or cut from close-up to close-up.
   Presents historical evidence in support of his theory that the Green Knight was drawn from Amadeus VI (1334-83), Count of Savoy, a contemporary of the poet.

   Compares Gawain’s two confessions (11. 1876-84 and 2379-94) and argues that the poet achieves a delicate equilibrium between his traditional Arthurian setting and the poem’s penitential theme.

   Seen but not read.

   Not seen, but Renoir (cf. 89 below) states he shows that “the descriptive technique of certain passages [of SGGK] is comparable to that of the painter Giotto” (p. 9).

   Supplement to 53. States that green and gold symbolize vanishing youth, and that the Green Knight’s appearance suggests the transitoriness of life.

   Reviews existing knowledge of MS., poet, and sources and analogues of the poem, and presents a brief appreciation of poet’s descriptive techniques and archetectonics.

   Points out the high degree of similarity between ll. 740-62 and a passage in Book IX of Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Parzival. States there is a remote possibility that the Gawain-Poet knew Wolfram’s poem, but a less remote possibility might be a lost MS tradition of Chretien’s Perceval known to both Wolfram and the author of the so-called French Gawain.

   Argues that poet rebukes Arthur as an immature king who willfully deviates from the path of a responsible ruler. Also points out the “spiritual resemblance” of Arthur’s celebration to Belshazzar’s feast in Purity.


1960

66. Friedman, Albert B., "Morgan le Fay in *SGGK*," *Speculum*, XXXV (1960), 260-74. Argues against Baughan (cf. 1 above) and Kittredge about Morgain la Fee's role in *SGGK*, claiming that a lack of evidence within the poem and in its possible analogues denies her integration. Believes she is *deus ex machina* chosen because of her traditional role in Arthurian legend.

67. Moody, Philippa, "The Problems of Medieval Criticism," *Melbourne Critical Review*, No. 3 (1960), 94-103. Laments the emphasis on historical and philological aspects of the poem seen in recent criticism (particularly 30, 50, and 61 above) which results in a confusion of critical attitudes. Presents commentary on several passages illustrating her position and offers interpretations of her own based upon what she believes to be a more balanced critical stance.


69. Randall, Dale B.J., "Was the Green Knight a Fiend?" *SP*, LVII (1960), 479-91. Investigates significance of the poem's symbols and concludes that although it would weaken the story's suggestiveness to equate Bercilak with the devil, "there is considerable evidence that Bercilak functions as a fiendish tempter."

70. Renoir, Alain, "A Minor Analogue of *SGGK*," *Neophil*, XLIV (1960), 37-8. Conjectures that the 12th century Latin *Miles Gloriosus* often attributed to Matthew of Vendome contains elements analogous to the Imperious Host theme in the 3rd fit of *SGGK*, (although the similarity is probably coincidental).

71. "The Progressive Magnification: an Instance of Psychological Description in *SGGK*," *Moderne Språk*, LIV (1960), 245-53. Argues from textual evidence that the magnitude of the physical surroundings in the poem seems to increase progressively in relation to the stature of Gawain as the time approaches when he expects to lose his life.


1961


76. Frankis, P.J., “SGGK, line 35: with lel letteres loken,” N&Q, CCVI (1961), 329-30. Disputes the theory that the line refers to alliterative technique arguing that it probably means “embodied in truthful words.”


78. Kiteley, J.F., “The De Arte Honeste Amandi of Andreas Capellanus and the Concept ofCourtesy in SGGK,” Anglia, LXXIX (1961), 7-16. Examines temptation scenes and notes parallels and correspondences to Courtly Love motifs seen in Capellanus. Argues that poet makes an implied criticism of Lady’s conception of Courtesy which is a corruption of the essentially Christian virtues of Courtesy expressed in the character of Gawain. Acknowledges lack of definite evidence that poet had access to Capellanus.


1962


82. **Carson, Mother Angela, O.S.U., “Morgain La Fée as the Principle of Unity in SGGK.” MLQ, XXIII (1962).** Argues Bercilak's explanation of Morgain's role in poem's action must be a survival from some earlier, probably Celtic, version of the story in which Morgain played the leading part, and that, properly read, Morgain can still be seen as a dominating figure throughout SGGK. Identifies both old and young woman as Morgain.

83. **Green, Richard Hamilton, “Gawain’s Shield and the Quest for Perfection,” ELH, XXIX (1962), 121-39.** Asserts that the pentangle on Gawain's shield represents the moral perfection to which Gawain aspires although he falls short of it.

84. **Kiteley, J.F., “The Knight who Cared for His Life,” Anglia, LXXIX (1962), 131-7.** Traces Gawain's 'care for his life' in other Gawain romances and finds that in lengthy or unequal battles Gawain often seems more than willing to settle for an honorable draw and that this 'care' rarely owes anything to Gawain's traditional courtesy. Points to various references to Gawain as former sun hero whose strength waxes and wanes with the sun as possible explanation for Gawain's 'care.'


90. Renoir, Alain, "An Echo to the Sense: The Patterns of Sound in SGGK," English Miscellany, XIII (1962), 9-23. Theorizes from textual evidence that the sounds of silences in the poem during key scenes represent and recapitulate Gawain's state of mind.


92. Taylor, Andrew, "SGGK," Melbourne Critical Review, No. 5 (1962), 66-75. Reads the poem as a dramatization of the relation between the moral world of man and the amoral vitality of Nature; an explanation of the qualities by which man may control the energy of Nature which can both create and destroy.

93. Waldron, R.A., "SGGK, 1046-51," N&Q, CCVII (1962), 366-7. Asserts that "dede" (1. 1047) may more naturally mean "act committed" than "act in view" and that Bercilak pokes ironic fun at Gawain since his reference to the "derue dede" is to Gawain's prior beheading of the Green Knight.

1963

94. Bowers, R.H., "GGK as Entertainment," MLQ, XXIV (1963), 333-41. Considers the interpretations of Markham, Moorman, and Burrow (see 47, 40, and 57 above) all of whom try to show that the poem is a highly moral didactic tale, and argues that instead the poem is a secular tale full of laughter and fun, intended as entertainment.

95. Carson, Mother Angela, O.S.U., "The Green Knight's Name," ELN, I (1963-64), 84-90. Suggests that the name "Bercilak de Hautdesert" was an invention of the poet composed of words from OF and ME that signify his roles as challenger, host and antagonist. Argues that her view lays stress on Morgain's role as manipulator of the action.
   Argues that chapel is a dialectal vestige of OF chapel – "combat entre deux
   ou plusiers chevaliers," – and that the sense of the word in the poem is the
   place where such a combat takes place. Asserts that poet uses the word as a
   pun to produce irony.

97. Cook, Robert G., "The Play-Element in SGGK," Tulane Studies in English,
   XIII (1963), 5-31.
   Presents analysis of the poem in terms of its play-elements (roles, rules, etc.)
   based upon Huizinga's Homo Ludens. Argues that such analysis accounts for
   the poem's vein of humor and gaiety and also for its seriousness.

98. Dodgson, John McNeal, "Sir Gawain's Arrival in Wirral," in Early English and
   Norse Studies: Presented to Hugh Smith in Honour of His Sixtieth Birthday,
   Not seen.

99. Hills, David Farley, "Gawain's Fault in SGGK," RES, N.S., XIV (1963),
   124-31.
   Argues that Gawain's judgment of himself, although severe, is not unfair,
   that his analysis of his crime is accurately "Augustinian," and that his listing
   of covetousness among his faults is not excessive when covetousness (avarice)
   is understood in its general sense of any turning away from God's love.

100. McLaughlin, J.C., A Graphemic-Phonemic Study of a Middle English
      Not seen.

      (1962-63), 70-1.
      Suggests poet's indebtedness to Guilielmus Peraldus's "Treatise on the
      Vices" for certain phrases in Temptation scenes. Suggests poet knew the
      Duke of Lancaster's Bestiary.

      Explores the poet's possible indebtedness to La Queste del saint Graal and
      other analogues with reference to Bercilak's name and role, the
      confrontation between knightly and Christian ideals, and the poet's
      treatment of the poem's climax. Concludes that the combination of
      Beheading Game and Temptation pre-dates composition of SGGK, and that
      Bercilak's explanation of Morgain's role was a secondary addition to that
      source.

103. Soloman, Jan, "The Lesson of Sir Gawain," Papers of the Michigan Academy
      of Science, Arts, and Letters, XLVIII (1963), 599-608.
      Argues that the lesson Gawain learns – excess of self-assurance – is the
      central concept of the poem, supported by the structure and by the constant
      ironic tensions the hero suffers as he is caught between two courses of
      equally honorable action.
Discusses the description of the Green Knight, his function, the Challenge itself, the role of Morgain le Fée, the goodness or evil of Bercilak’s castle, the confessions, and the theories of the derivation of Bercilak’s name as some of the ways in which the Green Knight’s complex significance is developed and controlled in the poem.

Reply to Hills (cf. 98 above). Argues that the context of Gawain’s reference to “covetise” requires it to be understood in the specific sense of “love of riches.”

Argues that the Green Knight’s carefree vaulting of the stream provides ironic contrast to Gawain’s apprehension and reminds us of Bercilak’s supernatural affiliation.

Asserts that Gawain’s actions are psychologically believable despite the story’s melodramatic framework and its use of the supernatural and magical – that in fact the marvelous elements serve to make the truths of human experience more vivid.


Assumes the symbolism of the pentangle shield and the girdle “initiate two sequences which form a major structural parallel in the poem.” Argues that the two sequences are Fits 2 and 3 (taken together) and Fit 4, and that in both these sequences the poet balances descriptions of Gawain’s arming, the journey itself, and the castle and chapel as Gawain approaches them. Also notes that the poet parallels the 3 temptations and the 3 strokes of the ax as well as the 2 confessions. Concludes that only the 4 traditional divisions correspond to narrative units and that the 5 small capitals seem to serve only for emphasis.

Asserts that “there appears to be ample justification for reading the ‘lacepat lemed ful bryȝt’ as the lady’s girdle which, wound around Gawain’s waist on the outside, is gleaming in full view as he awaits the Green Knight,” and that this reading resolves the crux in 1. 2226.
   Presents a Jungian interpretation of the poem showing that each character
   represents a part of the mind: e.g., Gawain=conscious mind; Green
   Knight=unconscious mind.

112. Silverstein, Theodore, “The Art of SGGK,” University of Toronto Quarterly,
   XXXIII (1963-64), 258-78.
   Demonstrates by extensive rhetorical analysis and from historical analogues
   that the passage of the seasons which bridges the first two parts of the poem
   is integral to the plot and to an understanding of Gawain’s mental conflicts.

113. Spearing, A.C. Criticism and Medieval Poetry. London: Edward Arnold,
   1964.
   below as “Gawain’s Speeches and the Poetry of ‘Cortaysye’.” Not seen.

1965

114. Benson, Larry D. Art and Tradition in SGGK. New Brunswick,
   Reviews: J.A. Burrow, N&Q, CCXI (1966), 191-3; John Gardner, JEGP,
   below.

115. __________, “The Authorship of St. Erkenwald,” JEGP, LXIV
   (1965), 393-405.
   Examines and dismisses evidence for common authorship based upon
   common vocabulary, verbal echoes, stylistic and metrical similarity and
   attempts to demonstrate that “the style of St. Erkenwald is basically
   different from that of the Cotton Nero poems.” Offers no candidate for
   authorship.

   (1965), 30-7.
   Presents the theory that while the poem is a romance, all romance elements
   are satirized throughout, and that Gawain is humanized by this constant
   belittling and so kept from being simply an idealized romance protagonist.

117. Broes, Arthur T., “SGGK: Romance as Comedy,” Xavier University Studies,
   IV (1965), 35-54.
   Not seen.

   Reviews: Rosemary Woolf, Critical Quarterly, VIII (1966), 383-4; T.P.
   Dunning, RES, N.S., XVIII (1967), 58-60; Donald R. Howard, Speculum,
   XLI (1967), 518-21; G.M. Shedd, MLR, LXIII (1968), 932-3. Cf. 133
   below.

Discusses the guide’s relationship to the themes of the poem and evaluates Gawain’s performance in the temptation the guide offers him.

Asserts that the poet conveys a sophisticated conception of reality through the medium of Gawain’s ability to adopt the tone and manner best suited to the situation.

Attempts to show, by study of patristical and medieval theological and mystical writings, that the poem presents Gawain’s adventure toward Christian perfection and away from the limited consciousness of Arthur’s court.

Not seen.

Cf. especially pp. 330-2. Argues that the game motif which underlines the poem should be connected with the cruel and mocking comedy of the demonic characters of religious legend and drama.

Outlines historical background of the introduction or intrusion of the “fairy element” into medieval romance and points out its advantages to the writer since invoking it invoked imaginative and moral freedom. Lists and illustrates the principal elements of the whole tradition of Christian hero and magical (demonic) adversary and argues that *SGGK*’s structure, meaning, and charaterization are indebted to this tradition.
Comparing *SGGK* to earlier tales of Gawain and argues that the poet uses Gawain's traditional reputation as a womanizer to complicate the temptations and resistance. Asserts that the poet uses exegesis rather than strict allegory to point the reader to a recognition of the value of Christian morality.

Examines each appearance in the text of the mantle, the *capados*, the hood, and the *bleaunt*, and argues that in each instance the article of clothing reflects the moral position of the wearer.

Discusses and explicates the opening lines of the poem in light of medieval sources on the fall of Troy and the subsequent founding of Britain.

Argues that the poet's description of the Green Knight's severed head "derives stylistically from Ennius via Virgil, Ovid, Statius, and possibly Joseph of Exeter."

Provides illustrations from *SGGK* and other works of the period, which show that the Green Knight's eyes are a mark of courage, strength, and manliness.

Studies the poem "to show the effect of bilingualism at different levels and the merger of cultures in different contexts, insofar as linguistic evidence may support us in ascertaining factors of this kind." A highly specialized study.

1966

*SGGK* referred to passim, but cf. especially pp. 67-78. Asserts that Gawain is a living expression of the poet's conception of courtesy, that Morgain's plot is conceived "to show how Gawain's virtue of courtesy is to be used against him," and that Gawain does not abandon courtesy when he utters his "antifeminist" remarks.


138. **Lass**, Roger, "‘Man’s Heaven’: The Symbolism of Gawain’s Shield," *MS*, XXVIII (1966), 354-60. Presents a theological and numerological interpretation of the two images on Gawain’s shield and asserts that the two emblems represent “mannysh hevene”: Man perfected (the pentangle); and the flesh glorified and strengthened by the real presence of perfect God within it (the image of Mary).

139. **McIntosh**, Angus, “Middle English ‘upon shore’ and some Related Matters,” in *Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Margaret Schlauch*, ed. M. Brahmer, S. Helsztynski, and J. Krzyzanowski (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1966), pp. 255-60. Argues that the sense of “upon shore” (1. 2332) implies “deviation from the verticle (or horizontal).”

140. **Moon**, Douglas M., “The Role of Morgan la Fee in SGGK,” *NM*, LXVII (1966), 31-57. Examines the traditions regarding the characters of Gawain, Guinevere, and Morgain which would have been available to the poet. Proposes that Morgain mistakenly believed Gawain and Guinevere to be lovers and that her malignant designs on Arthur’s Court were contingent upon a successful seduction of Gawain and his resultant death; but since Gawain and Guinevere were not lovers Morgain succeeded only in increasing the Court’s glory.

142. Scott, P. G., "A Note on the Paper Castle in SGGK,” N&Q, CCXI (1966), 125-6. Argues that the paper castle (11. 800-2) is an instance of the court metaphor seen in Purity (1. 1407f.) and The Canterbury Tales [X(1), 445], and has moral significance, warning of the temptations to luxury and excess that will come to Gawain.


144. Tuttleton, James W., "The Manuscript Divisions of SGGK," Speculum, XLI (1966), 304-10. Argues that each section of the MS conforms to "a set of relatively fixed objective principles of narrative construction" and that the poem "reflects a division into major and minor parts resembling Acts and Scenes in a drama – each minor section functioning perfectly within the larger counterpart."

1967

145. Brewer, D. S., "The Gawain-Poet; A General Appreciation of Four Poems," EIC, XVII (1967), 130-42. Asserts Patience, Purity, Pearl and SGGK share a pattern of exhibiting a hero who must meet and control some passionate, selfish desire and that Gawain must keep a covenant with certain death and avoid temptation to pleasure. Concludes that the complex virtue of courtesy which Gawain embodies allows him to accept both the harsh and benevolent aspects of life. Cf. 173 below.

146. Champion, Larry S., "Grace Versus Merit in SGGK," MLQ, XXVIII (1967), 413-25. Asserts that everything we know about the Gawain-Poet and the theological emphasis of his other works supports the argument that the poem symbolically reflects the question of the Pelagian controversy: whether salvation is to be achieved by divine grace or human merit.


149. **Haworth, Paul.** "Warthe in SGGK," *N & Q*, CCXII (1967), 171-2. Suggests "warbe" (1.715) is most aptly glossed as "ford" or "passage."


153. **Pace, George B.** "Physiognomy and SGGK" *ELN*, IV (1966-67), 161-5. Suggests poet's reference to Morgain's black brows - which signify great promiscuous propensities in medieval physiognomy - may be a hint to the reader of the old lady's identity and of the nature of her relationship to Bercilak's wife.


155. **Shedd, Gordon M.** "Knight in Tarnished Armour: The meaning of 'SGGK'," *MLR*, LXII (1967), 3-13. Argues that Gawain, the perfect courtly knight, is drawn away from his enclosed courtly surroundings, his virtues are tested in both the Beheading Game and the Temptations and he is found lacking. Concludes that Gawain learns about himself but that the Court, having remained in its enclosed world, cannot understand. Asserts the poem is, like Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*, a criticism of romance.

Not seen.


Not seen.

Not seen.

1968

Comments on critical evaluations of the poem since 1961 and on the trends in interpretation.

Contains 61 and 132.

Contains 61, 75, 81 (excerpt), 84, 85, 90, 94, 96, 99, 103, 109, 110, 112, 113 (excerpt), 114 (2 excerpts), 116, 120, 126, and 130.

Maintains on linguistic and literary grounds that Aeneas is referred to in 1. 4.

Argues that the Court represents a "real world" in which good and evil are ambiguous and that Gawain enters an ahistorical world in which good and evil are clear and moral choice unambiguous. Sees reference to Morgain as a signal of Gawain's release back to the "real world" and a reminder to the reader and audience that Arthur's Court, in the end, was unequal to the test.

Argues that correction of values is one of the poem's main intentions and that the poet sought to demonstrate how a man of courtesy ought to live and therefore replaced the usual emblem of Gawain—an eagle or gryphon—with a new badge of explicitly Christian significance.

168. Hussey, S. S., "Sir Gawain and Romance Writing," *SN*, XL (1968), 161-74. Points out poet’s sensitivity to, and artistic probing of, the nuances of the deliberately ambiguous conventional diction of romance and his tight hold upon his story: argues that through them he calls traditional assumptions of romance into question.


170. Lucas, Peter J., "Gawain's Anti-Feminism," *N&Q*, CCXIII (168), 324-5. Attributes intensity of Gawain’s expression to Bercilak’s mention of the Lady, and, since her persuasion produced Gawain’s fault, regards the speech as a balanced comment on the situation.

171. Mills, David, "An Analysis of the Temptation Scenes in SGGK," *JEGP*, LXVII (1968), 612-30. Demonstrates the poet’s craftsmanship by means of rhetorical analysis, isolating the sources of the comic effect and the steadily increasing moral tension in these scenes.

172. Pierle, Robert C., "SGGK: A Study in Moral Complexity," *Southern Quarterly*, VI (1967-68), 203-11. Discusses the poem with reference to the medieval view of man’s conflicting dual nature (e.g., spirit vs. flesh) as seen in such works as Ancrene Riwle, and argues that Gawain’s flawed performance in the tests should be judged according to this view. Asserts Gawain has come to terms with his dual nature but the Court remains ignorant.


175. Sklute, Larry M., "The Ethical Structure of Courtly Romance: Chretien de Troyes’ Yvain and SGGK," *DA*, XXVIII (1968), 3648A (Ind.). Examines and analyzes romance with respect to the way in which poets bring frequently incompatible ethical systems into conflict. Asserts Gawain-poet sets out to illustrate the impossibility of synthesizing disparate ethical elements.

Not seen.


1969

Not seen.


Not seen.

Not seen.


Argues against criticism of the poem that imposes a ready-made pattern upon the text (e.g., theological, anthropological) to determine the meaning and that demands everything be reduced to that single set of terms. Criticizes 40 and 102; praises 114 and 118.
   Argues Courtiers' laughter keeps Gawain's fault in comic perspective and
   indicates their sophisticated detachment and charitable identification with
   his human limitations in the face of the almost unattainable goal of knightly
   perfection.

   Suggests paper castle image is traditional, and is first ominous suggestion of
   Gawain's situation.

188. Mathewson, Jeanne T., "SGGK and the Medieval Comic Tradition," DA,
   Examines medieval comic theory and practice as it illuminates the
   relationship between the poem's form and meaning.

189. Nossel, Margaret A., "Christian Commitment and Romance Ideals in
   Argues that "the central adventure may be defined as a sort of almost
   typological game designed to show Gawain the necessity for a constantly
   renewed baptismal commitment to Christ by allowing him to repeat in his
   own experience the general pattern of salvation history."

   Considers the possibility that "Mezelmas mone" (1. 531) – a metonymy for
   Michaelmas – had the same connotations in the 14th century as it does at
   present: a day for settling accounts.

   "Examines the occurrences of [the] 'trawbe'-related words, showing how
   their meaning varies according to context and how they contribute to the
   development of the poem."

   Not seen.

   Language and Literature (Sendai, Japan), LV (1969), 63-80.
   In Japanese. Not seen.

194. , "The Temptation Episode in SGGK," Journal of the
   English Institute (Sendai, Japan), I (1969), 1-31.
   In Japanese. Not seen.

   Shows that the five saints mentioned in the poem are appropriately invoked
   and how each is related to the temptations and trials Gawain undergoes.


198. Ackerman, Robert W., "Castle Hautdesert in SGGK," in Melanges de langue et de litterature du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance offerts a Jean Frappier... par ses collegues, ses eleves et ses amis, 2 vols. (Geneve: Droz, 1970), I, 2-7. Asserts Gawain’s apprehension of and arrival at the castle is based on romance tradition founded, perhaps, on St. John’s vision of the heavenly city.

199. Barton, Robert J., "A Figural Reading of SGGK," DA, XXX (1970), 3423A (Stanford). Argues poem should not be read as a romance but as a type of Christian meditative poem, and that the poem’s form is not linear and episodic but figural and symmetrical.


202. Jacobs, Nicolas, "Gawain’s False Confession," ES, LI (1970), 433-5. Argues Gawain succeeded in reconciling Christian and courtly virtues until he was caught off guard and accepted the girdle. Asserts Gawain’s Christian duty of confession should then have taken precedence over his courtly duty of concealment and that his fault resulted from choosing the wrong course at this point.


204. Metcalf, Allan A., "Sir Gawain and You," The Chaucer Review, V (1970-71), 165-78. Attempts to account for and explain the implications of the poet’s frequent and skillful use of the formal, respectful “you” as opposed to the more usual second person singular pronoun of address, “thou.”
Examines the structure of the sequence of Gawain's reactions to Bercilak's explanation of the tests, and asserts that Gawain's attack on women "can be seen as a rhetorical element in a speech whose wider function is to balance, and compensate for, the serious emotional outburst" of his initial reaction to Bercilak's explanation.

Not seen.


Suggests the poet's description of the foxhunt alludes to and is indebted to Henry's *Le Livre de Seyntz* (1354) - a devotional work concerned with penitential doctrine. Speculates the poem might constitute a gracious compliment to Henry or his memory, or to a member of this household, and that Henry may have been the model for the more humanly recognizable side of Bercilak.

1971


Discusses the poet's unconventional use of familiar contemporary conventions, and how such transformations express a new moral vision.

Not seen.

Examines poet's diction and asserts the poem was written for a small, attentive audience, not for a drinking, chattering crowd in a marketplace or hall.
Provides detailed analysis of temptation scenes to show how Gawain is manipulated, tricked, and finally defeated by a highly sophisticated opponent.

Shows that the Green Knight’s words of greeting to Gawain in the latter lines are “virtually identical” to those used by Arthur in greeting the Green Knight earlier in the poem.

Attacks 118 above. Asserts that penitential doctrine of contemporary theologians proves Gawain’s failure to surrender the girdle to Bercilak was not a mortal sin – as Burrow argues – but only a venial sin, that Gawain is never in a state of mortal sin, and that Gawain’s first confession was valid.

Not seen.

Not seen.

Argues the poet’s use of the imagery of artifice in his description of Arthur’s court indicates the inappropriateness of its purely temporal concerns and its unwillingness to acknowledge the physical world’s realities. Asserts “this imagery creates a consistent antithesis between the arbitrary customs which constitute Camelot’s values and Christian natural law.”

Not seen.

Argues poet stressed moral (rather than magical) signification of pentangle because it was less well-known, but that the magical signification underlines the poet’s attitude toward superstition and reliance upon aids other than those of Christian virtue.
Examines the two passages treating temporal and cyclical order of the world (i.e., ll. 491-531 and 1998-2008); argues they anticipate Gawain’s subsequent hardships and danger in their theme, mood, and imagery.

Not seen.

Points out Mary’s often overlooked part in bringing Gawain to Bercilak’s castle, and her role as Morgain’s foil.

Focuses on merriment and social conviviality in both poems and concludes both appear to have been written for young men and women.

Discusses the nature and amount of Gawain’s gift-giving and courtly debts as well as the extent to which the poet’s use of the theme of gift-giving shapes the poem’s structure and generates its sense. Concludes Gawain is in worldly and spiritual debt.

Argues for common authorship on the basis of similarities in theme, diction, and imagery.

1972

Concerning the interpretation of 11. 1303-4 and 2513-7.

Argues that poet subverts laughter to his own purposes by consistently and consciously undercutting the humour of an episode thus showing us the baseness of our laughter or causing us to feel remorse for having indulged in it.

Examines the apparent conflict between Gawain’s reputation as the exemplar of courtesy and his anti-courtly outburst in 11. 2414-28. Notes that he was known as both a famous lover and exemplary victim of women, and suggests that the poet, aware of both traditions, united them to form the pivot of a story containing within itself all manner of violent oppositions between the civilized and uncivilized world.

231. Halpern, R.A., "The Last Temptation of Gawain: 'Hony Soyt Qui Mal Pence'," American Benedictine Review, XXIII (1972), 353-84. Presents a detailed examination of the poem, isolating in particular on the significance of the girdle. Argues that the court at Camelot fails to perceive the girdle's significance as a token of penance and love of God and by so doing sets itself apart from Gawain and the company of the faithful. The poem's final line is appropriate to the way in which the court has misunderstood the girdle's significance.


233. Herzog, Michael Bernard, "The Development of Gawain as a Literary Figure in Medieval German and English Arthurian Romance," DAI, XXXII (1971-72), 6377A-6378A (Washington). Traces the gradual and consistent deterioration of the character of Gawain in French and German Arthurian literature. Argues that a similar deterioration in English Arthurian literature, though present, is less consistent due to the variety of sources available to English authors or because most English romance writers were inferior craftsmen.


236. Lasater, Alice Elizabeth, "Hispano-Arabic Relationships to the Works of the Gawain-Poet," DAI, XXXII (1971-72), 4570A-4571A (Tennessee). Traces the influence of Eastern (i.e., Spanish-Arab) literature upon Middle English literature. Shows that Gawain-poet worked with a mixture of not only Celtic, French, and Christian-ecclesiastical elements, but also with Islamic lore.

237. Levitsky, Steven Eric, "The Discovery of SGGK," DAI, XXXIII (1972-73), 1689A (John Hopkins). Details the history of the poem through the first hundred years from its physical discovery in the 1820's to its discovery as a significant work of art.
Not seen.

Performs a comparison of the narrative structures of the two poems to show how the Gawain-poet produced a more rounded characterization of his hero.

Review article on 207 above.

See pp. 219-33.


The Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture for 1970. Examines (briefly) the hunting episodes in *SGGK*.

Penguin English Poets. 
Contains brief introduction, a glossary and detailed notes on the text. Some obsolete usages are modernized and variant spellings of the same word are normalized.

245. **Stevens, Martin.** "Laughter and Game in SGGK," *Speculum*, XLVII (1972), 65-78. 
Argues that the artifice of play and the metaphor of game are essential elements of the poem which help determine its tone, unity, and artistic design. Asserts that close examination of the pervasive references to game, laughter and festival establish the poem's mood and define its structure.

Not seen.