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Gaufridi de Monemuta
VITA MERLINI

- Fatidici vatis rabiem musamque jocosam
Merlini cantare paro. Tu corrige carmen,
gloria pontificum calamos moderando Roberte.
Scimus enim quia te perfudit nectare sacro
5 Philosophia suo fecitque per omnia doctum
ut documenta dares dux et preceptor in orbe.
Ergo meis ceptis faveas vatemque tueri
auspicio meliore velis quam fecerit alter
cui modo succedis merito promotus honori.
10 Sic etenim mores sic vita probata genusque
utilitasque loci clerus populusque petebant,
unde modo felix Lincolnia fertur ad astra.
Ergo te cuperem complecti carmine digno,
sed non sufficio, licet Orpheus et Camerinus
15 et Macer et Marius magnique Rabirius oris
ore meo canerent Musis comitantibus omnes.
At vos consuete mecum cantare Camene
propositum cantemus opus cytharamque sonate.
Ergo peragratis sub multis regibus annis
20 clarus habebatur Merlinus in orbe Britannus.
Rex erat et vates Demetarumque superbis
jura dabat populis ducibusque futura canebat.
Contigit interea plures certamen habere
inter se regni procures belloque feroci
25 insontes populos devastavisse per urbes.
Dux Venedotorum Peredurus bella gerebat
contra Guennoloum Scocie qui regna regebat,
jamque dies aderat bello prefixa ducesque
astabant campo decertabantque caterve

(N.B. A bar over a letter or letters denotes expanded abbreviation.)

Headings H: Circa hec tempōra: floruit merlinūs siluestris. siue calidonūs. qui p̄phetauit in huic modum. No heading in R and J. T (not in a MS of the *Polychronicon*) has: ffata Mērlini Siluestre Sēzūndūm historiām policronicañ que contigebant añño gratie. 525.

Geoffrey of Monmouth
LIFE OF MERLIN

I set myself to sing of the madness of the bard of prophecy, an entertaining tale of Merlin.

Guide my pen, Robert, glory of the bishops; for we know that Philosophy has filled you with its holy nectar and made you universally learned, so that you might prove yourself the foremost teacher in the world.

Approve, then, my project, and be ready to be more indulgent to this poet than was that other whom you have just succeeded, attaining an honour well-deserved.

Everything conspired to win that honour for you—your principles, your upright way of life, your birth, your fitness for the place: clergy and people alike supported you. That is why lucky Lincoln is now in the seventh heaven.

Indeed, it might well have been yourself whom I would wish to embrace in a noble poem. But I am not the man for it: no, not even if Orpheus and Camerinus and Macer and Marius and Rabirius of the great voice were all to sing through my mouth and the Muses were my accompanists. But, Sisters, you are used to singing with me; so let us to the song before us. Sound the lyre!

- 19 Now, many years and many kings had come and gone. Merlin the Briton was famous throughout the world as king and prophet. He was law-giver to the proud South Welsh, and he foretold the future to their leaders.

A time came when it happened that a quarrel arose among several of the princes of the realm. In a savage war they had ravaged the unoffending populace in city after city.

Peredur, prince of the North Welsh, was campaigning against Gwenddolau, who ruled the kingdom of Scotland. The day fixed for battle had arrived, and the commanders had taken the field. Their

1 fastidici R, uatidici T.

2 Merlini cantare paro s H, which then stops until line 19.

14 Camerinus SM.

15 rabiruis CV, Rabiriūs R, J, T, B, Mi, JJP tr, F; orbis R, J, T.

17 Ad CV, At R, J, T, B, Mi, SM, JJP tr, F.

- 30 amborum pariter miseranda cede ruentes.
Venerat ad bellum Merlinus cum Pereduro
rex quoque Cumbriorum Rodarcus sevus uterque.
Cedunt obstantes invisis ensibus hostes,
tresque ducis fratres fratrem per bella secuti
35 usque rebellantes cedunt perimuntque phalanges.
Inde per infestas cum tali munere turmas
acriter irruerant subito cecidere perempti.
Hoc viso, Merline, doles tristesque per agmen
commisces planctus tali quoque voce remugis.
40 'Ergo ne sic potuit sors importuna nocere
ut michi surriperet tantos talesque sodales
quos modo tot reges tot regna remota timebant?
O dubios hominum casus mortemque propinquam
que penes est illos semper stimuloque latenti
45 percutit et miseram pellit de corpore vitam!
O juvenile decus, quis nunc astitit in armis
nunc michi pone latus mecumque repellit euntes
in mea dampna duces incumbentesque catervas?
Audaces juvenes, vobis audacia vestra
50 eripuit dulces annos dulcemque juventam.
Qui modo per cuneos discurrebatis in armis
obstantesque viros prosternebatis ubique
nunc pulsatis humum rubeoque cruore rubetis!'
Sic inter turmas lacrimis plangebatur abortis
55 deflebatque viros. Nec cessant prelia dira,
concurrunt acies, sternuntur ab hostibus hostes.
Sanguis ubique fluit, populi moriuntur utrinque.
At tandem Britones revocatis undique turmis
conveniunt pariter pariterque per arma ruentes
60 invadunt Scotos prosternunt vulnera dantes,
nec requieverunt donec sua terga dederunt
hostiles turme per devia diffugientes.
Evocat e bello socios Merlinus et illis
precipit in varia fratres sepelire capella,
65 deplangitque viros nec cessat fundere fletus.
Pulveribus crines spargit vestesque rescindit

32 quorūm T; cumbriorum CV, cūmbriorūm H, J, T, B, Mi, JJP tr, F; rodarthus PP.

46 qui CV, quis PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

47 metuūqūē CV, mecuūqūē PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

50 annos, CV, F, animos B, Mi.

54 abortis CV, obortis Mi, JJP tr, F.

- 30 troops had begun the struggle, and on both sides alike men fell in the tragic slaughter.

Merlin had come to the war with Peredur, and so, too, had Rodarch, king of the Cumbrians, fierce fighters both. They killed the enemy before them with their dread swords; and three brothers of the prince, who had followed him to the wars, were everywhere in the fight, killing, and destroying the battle lines. So fiercely and impetuously did they rush through the dense ranks that they were soon struck down and killed.

Merlin, you grieved at that sight, and your sad lament was heard throughout the army, as you lifted up your voice in these words:

- 40 'Surely a malignant fate cannot have been so vindictive as to take from me all these my companions, men such that many a king and many a distant kingdom have stood in fear of them till now?
43 'O man's uncertain fate, death ever near, ever with power to strike him with its hidden lance and drive the poor life from his body!

'O glory of youth, who will now stand by my side in battle to turn back the princes who come to do me ill and their hordes that press upon me?

- 50 'Brave youths, your very bravery has taken from you your sweet years, your sweet youth itself. A moment back, and you were tearing through the formations in battle array, striking down all opposition. Now you lie heavy on the earth, red with fresh blood.'

So with fast-running tears he mourned amid the strife and wept for his heroes. The terrible fighting ceased not, the lines of battle clashed, foe fell to foe. Blood flowed on every side, and the people of both nations died.

At last the Britons rallied their scattered forces and drew together.

- 60 Together they made an armed rush across the field, attacked the Scots, dealt wounds and laid them low. They did not slacken until the enemy battalions turned away and fled among the by-ways.

Merlin called his companions from the battle-field and instructed them to bury the brothers in a richly decorated chapel.

He mourned for his heroes; his flooding tears had no end. He

57 plurimi CV, F, populi PP, B, Mi, JJP tr.

Parry: 'plurimi of C. fits the sense but not the metre'. Perhaps it did fit the metre as Geoffrey spoke it.

66 comas T; sparsit CV, spargit PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F; rescidit CV, rescindit R, JJP tr, rescindit (or) recidit Mi, recidit F.

et prostratus humi nunc hac illacque volutat.
Solatur Peredurus eum proceresque ducesque,
nec vult solari nec verba precantia ferre.

70 Jam tribus emensis defleuerat ille diebus
respueratque cibos, tantus dolor usserat illum.

Inde novas furias cum tot tantisque querelis
aera complesset cepit furtimque recedit
et fugit ad silvas nec vult fugiendo videri,
75 ingrediturque nemus gaudetque latere sub ornis
miraturque feras pascentes gramina saltus.
Nunc has insequitur, nunc cursu preterit illas.
Utitur herbarum radicibus, utitur herbis,
Utitur arboreo fructu morisque rubeti.

80 Fit silvester homo quasi silvis deditus esset.
Inde per estatem totam nullique repertus
oblitusque sui cognatorumque suorum
delituit silvis obductus more ferino.

At cum venit yems herbasque tulisset et omnes
85 arboreos fructus nec quo frueretur haberet,
diffudit tales miseranda voce querelas.

¶ 'Celi Christe deus, quid agam? Qua parte morari
terrarum potero cum nil quo vescar adesse
inspicio, nec gramen humi nec in arbore glandes.

90 Tres quater et juges septene poma ferentes
hic steterant mali, nunc non stant. Ergo quis illas
quis michi surripuit, quo devenere repente?
Nunc illas video, nunc non. Sic fata repugnant
sic quoque concordant cum dant prohibentque videre.

95 Deficiunt nunc poma michi nunc cetera queque.
Stat sine fronde nemus sine fructu, plector utroque
cum neque fronde tegi valeo neque fructibus uti.
Singula bruma tulit pluviisque cadentibus auster.

Invenio si forte napes tellure sub ima,
100 concurrunt avideque sues aprique voraces
eripiuntque napes michi quas de cespite vello.

93 nec non CV, T, ?nec/?nunc non H, R, J, nunc non B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

99 napes CV, F, vapores R, T, napes B, Mi, JJP tr.

101 napes CV, F, vapores R, T, ?J, napes B, Mi, JJP tr. In line 101 Black suggested *napos* and he and Michel printed *napos... quas*; Parry also accepted *napos* and did not alter *quas*. The objections to *nāpos* are the long first syllable and gender; to *napes*, its being apparently a nonce-word. In view of *quas* and the MSS readings, it is simpler to retain *napes* and assume it is a slightly variant word for turnips. Faral leaves *napes... quas*, rejecting *napos* for the metre, but adds with little regard

threw dust upon his hair, tore his clothes and lay prostrate on the ground, rolling to and fro. Peredur and the other princes and commanders offered comfort. He would not take their comfort and rejected their entreaties. So for three long days he wept, refusing food, so great the grief that consumed him.

Then, when the air was full with these repeated loud complainings, a strange madness came upon him.

73 He crept away and fled to the woods, unwilling that any should see his going. Into the forest he went, glad to lie hidden beneath the ash trees. He watched the wild creatures grazing on the pasture of the glades. Sometimes he would follow them, sometimes pass them in his course. He made use of the roots of plants and of grasses, of fruit from trees and of the blackberries in the thicket. He became a
80 Man of the Woods, as if dedicated to the woods. So for a whole summer he stayed hidden in the woods, discovered by none, forgetful of himself and of his own, lurking like a wild thing.

But when winter came and took all the plants and the fruit on the trees, and left him nothing to live upon, he poured out these complaints in a pitiful voice:

'O Christ, God of heaven, what shall I do? What place is there on earth where I can live? I see there is nothing here to eat—no grass on the ground, no acorns on the tree.

90 'Nineteen were the apple trees which once stood here with their fruit: they stand so no longer. Who, who has stolen them from me? Where have they gone so suddenly? Now I see them, now not. So Fate both supports and opposes me, letting me see and preventing me from seeing.

'Now the apples fail me, and all else besides. The forest stands leafless, fruitless. It is a double affliction: I can get no cover from the leaves or nourishment from the fruit. Winter and the rainstorms borne on the south wind have taken them, every one. If I
100 happen to find turnips deep in the ground, hungry swine and greedy boars rush up and snatch the turnips from me as I pull them up out of the soil.

for the context, 'Il faut sans doute lire *dāpēs*'. (*nāpaeus* ('woodland', adj.) can be mentioned for its form at least. *Nāpaeae* were woodland deities (Virgil, *Georgics*, 4. 535, etc.) and occur in the twelfth century in the *De planctu Naturae* of Alanus de Insulis, commentator on Geoffrey (Wright, 1872, 2, 447; *Nāpae* in the Migne text of *De planctu* may be a misprint). *Nape* as a name occurred c. 1181 in the archives of the church at Dol, which had Monmouth connections. Probably none of this is relevant, though they were *woodland* roots.)

- ¶ Tu lupe care comes, nemorum qui devia mecum
et saltus peragrarare soles vix preteris arva,
et te dura fames et me languere coegit.
- 105 Tu prior has silvas coluisti, te prior etas
protulit in canos, nec habes nec scis quid in ore
projicias, quod miror ego cum saltus habundet
tot capreis aliisque feris quas prendere posses.
Forsitan ipsa tibi tua detestanda senectus
110 eripuit nervos cursumque negavit habendum.
Quod solum superest, complexus ululatibus auras
at resupinus humi consumptos deicis artus.¹¹²
Hec inter frutices coriletaque densa canebat
cum sonus ad quemdam pervenit pretereuntem,
115 qui direxit iter quo sermo loquentis in auras
exierat reperitque locum reperitque loquentem.
Quo viso Merlinus abit sequiturque viator
nec retinere virum potuit sic diffugientem.
Inde viator iter repetit quo ceperat ire
120 propositumque tenet casu commotus euntis.
Ecce viatori venit obuius alter ab aula
Rodarchi regis Cumbrorum qui Ganiedam
duxerat uxorem formosa conjuge felix.
Merlini soror ista fuit casumque dolebat
125 fratris et ad silvas at ad arva remota clientes
miserat ut fratrem revocarent, ex quibus unus
obuius huic ibat set et hic sibi protinus ergo.
Convenere simul commiscent mutua verba,
at qui missus erat Merlinum querere querit
130 si vidisset eum silvis aut saltibus alter.
Ille virum talem se conspexisse fatetur
inter dumosos saltus nemoris Calidonis
dumque loqui vellet secum secumque sedere
diffugisse virum celeri per robora cursu.
135 Hec ait, alter abit silvasque subintrat et imas
scrutatur valles montes quoque preterit altos,
querit ubique virum gradiens per opaca locorum.
¶ Fons erat in summo cuiusdam vertice montis
undique precinctus corulis densisque frutectis.
140 Illic Merlinus consederat, inde per omnes
spectabat silvas cursusque jocosque ferarum.

¹¹² dehicis T, *dejicis* B, *Mi*; arctus CV, artus PP (T, corrected from artos),
B, *Mi*, *JJP tr*, F.

¹³⁹ densisquē CV (Parry: densaquē).

- ‘Wolf, dear companion, you used to wander along the byways of
the forest and through the glades with me: you scarcely get across
105 the field. Harsh hunger has weakened both you and me. You lived
in these woods before me, and age has turned you grey first. You
have nothing, know not your next meal. I wonder at it, for the
forest pastures abound in goats and other creatures you might take.
110 Perhaps it is just that your hateful burden of years has deprived you
of strength and prevented you hunting. All that is left to you is to
fill the air with howling, your wasted frame sprawled flat on earth.’

So he continued aloud as he went about among the undergrowth
and dense hazels. The sound reached a passer-by, who turned aside
towards the source of the speech he heard. He found the place and
he found the speaker. But Merlin saw him, and was off. The traveller
followed, but could not keep up with the fugitive. So he returned to
120 his route and continued on his business; but he was touched by the
plight of the man who had fled.

- 121 Then this traveller fell in with another man, who was from the
court of Rodarch, king of Cumbria. Rodarch’s wife was Ganieda, a
beautiful woman with whom he lived most happily: she was Merlin’s
sister. Distressed by what had happened to her brother, she had sent
retainers to the woods and the depths of the countryside to bring
him back. It was one of these who came upon the traveller. The
traveller at once went up to him, and as soon as they met they began
130 to talk. The man sent to look for Merlin asked if the other had seen
him in the woodlands and valleys. The traveller said, yes, he had
seen such a man among the dense-wooded valleys of the Forest of
Calidon; but when he had tried to sit and talk with him, he had
rushed off among the oak trees.

As the traveller finished this tale, the messenger set off into the
woods. He searched the deepest valleys, he crossed high mountains,
he penetrated the most secluded places, seeking his man everywhere.

- 140 There was a spring on the very top of a certain mountain,
surrounded on all sides by hazels and dense thorns. Merlin had
settled there, and from that place he could watch the whole wood-
land and the running and gambolling of the creatures of the wild.

- Nuntius hunc scandit tacitoque per ardua gressu
 incedit querendo virum, tum denique fontem
 Merlinumque videt super herbas pone sedentem
 145 dicentemque suas tali sermone querelas.
 ¶ 'O qui cuncta regis, quid est cur contigit ut non
 tempora sint eadem numeris distincta quaternis?
 Nunc ver jure suo flores frondesque ministrat,
 dat fruges estas autumpnus micia poma.
 150 Consequitur glacialis yemps et cetera queque
 devorat et vastat pluviasque nivesque reportat.
 Singula queque suis arcet leditque procellis
 nec permittit humum varios producere flores
 aut quercus glandes aut malos punica mala.
 155 O utinam non esset hiems aut cana pruina!
 Ver foret aut estas, cuculusque canendo rediret
 et Philomela pio que tristia pectora cantu
 mitigat et turtur conservans federa casta
 frondibus inque novis concordii voce volucres
 160 cantarent alie que me modulando foverent,
 dum nova flore novo tellus spiraret odorem
 gramine sub viridi levi quoque murmure fontes
 diffuerent iuxtaque daret sub fronde columba
 sompniferos gemitus irritaretque soporem.'
 165 ¶ Nuntius audierat vatem rupitque querelas
 cum modulis cithare quam secum gesserat ultro
 ut sic deciperet demulceretque furentem.
 Ergo movens querulas digitis et in ordine cordas
 talia pone latens dimissa voce canebat.
 170 ¶ 'O diros gemitus lugubris Guendoloene,
 O miseras lacrimas lacrimantis Guendoloene!
 Me miseret misere morientis Guendoloene!
 Non erat in Waliis mulier formosior illa.
 Vincebat candore deas foliumque ligustri
 175 vernantesque rosas et olentia lilia prati.
 Gloria vernalis sola radiebat in illa
 sidereumque decus geminis gestabat ocellis
 insignesque comas auri fulgore nitentes.
 Hoc totum periit, periit decor omnis in illa
 180 et color et facies nivee quoque gloria carnis.
 Non est quod fuerat multis meroribus acta,

157 philomena CV, F, *Philomela* JJP tr.

168 monens CV, mouens PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

The messenger climbed up and quietly reached the summit, in search of his man. At length he saw the spring and Merlin sitting on the grass beyond it, complaining in this manner:

- 'O ruler of all, how happens it that all the seasons are not the same, distinguished only by their four numbers? As things are, the spring is bound by its own laws to provide the leaves and flowers;
 150 summer gives us the crops and autumn the ripe fruit. Then follows icy winter, which devours and lays waste all the others and brings again the rain and snow. It suppresses everything and causes damage with its storms. It will not let the earth produce its multi-coloured flowers, nor the oaks their acorns, nor the apple trees their russet apples. Would there were no winter, no white frost! Would it were spring or summer—and the cuckoo back in song, and the night-
 160 ingale, who softens sadness with her tender air, and the turtle dove keeping her chaste devotion. Would that the other birds, too, were singing their harmonies in the fresh foliage to delight me with their warbling, while the earth refreshed, with flowers fresh, breathed out its scent from under the green turf, and springs ran babbling all around, and the pigeon among the leaves nearby kept up its drowsy cooing and brought sleep.'

The messenger, who had been listening to the prophet, here interrupted his lament by strumming on the guitar he had thought to bring with him in order to catch the madman's attention and calm him. So his fingers sounded a plaintive strain, plucking out the measure on the strings, while he lay hidden behind the prophet and sang softly:

- 170 'O the deep moan of mourning Guendoloena, the piteous tears of weeping Guendoloena! I grieve for Guendoloena dying in despair. No woman in Wales more beautiful—beyond goddesses in fairness, beyond the privet petal, the rose in bloom, beyond the lilies of the field! The splendour of spring shone in her alone, the beauty of the stars was held in her two eyes, gold glittered in her glorious hair.
 180 'All this has gone: gone the grace, the delicate bloom, the snowy splendour of her flesh. She is not what once she was, but worn with weeping. She knows not where the prince has gone, whether living

- nescit enim quo dux abiit vita ne fruatur
 an sit defunctus. Languet miserabilis inde
 totaque deperiit longo liquefacta dolore.
- 185 Collacrimatur ei paribus Ganieda querelis
 amissumque dolet sine consolamine fratrem.
 Hec fratrem flet et illa virum. Communiter ambe
 fletibus incumbunt et tristia tempora ducunt.
 Non cibus ullus eis nec sompnus nocte vagantes
- 190 sub virgulta foveat, tantus dolor arcet utramque.
 Non secus indoluit Sidonia Dido solutis
 classibus Enee tunc cum properaret abire.
 Cum non Demophoon per tempora pacta rediret
 taliter ingemuit flevitque miserrima Phillis.
- 195 Briseis absentem sic deploravit Achillem.
 Sic soror et conjux collamentantur et ardent
 funditus internis cruciatibus usque dolendo.
 In fidibus querulis dicebat talia cantans
 nuntius et modulo vatis demulserat aures
- 200 micior ut fieret congauderetque canenti.
 Ocius assurgit vates juvenemque jocosus
 affatur verbis iterumque movere precatur
 cum digitis cordas elegosque sonare priores.
 Admovet ille lire digitos jussumque reformat
- 205 carmen item cogitque virum modulando furorem
 ponere paulatim cithare dulcedine captum.
 Fit memor ergo sui recollitque quod esse solebat
 Merlinus furiasque suas miratur et odit.
 Pristina mens rediit, rediit quoque sensus in illo
- 210 et gemit ad nomen motus pietate sororis
 uxorisque simul mentis ratione recepta
 conducique petit Rodarchi regis ad aulam.
 Paruit alter ei silvasque subinde relinquunt
 et veniunt pariter letantes regis in urbem.
- 215¶ Ergo fratre suo gaudet regina recepto
 proque sui reditu fit conjunx leta mariti.
 Oscula certatim geminant et brachia circum
 colla viri flectunt tanta pietate moventur.
 Rex quoque quo decuit reducem suscepit honore,
- 220 totaque turba domus procures letantur in urbe.

190 arcet CV, ardet T, JJP tr, F.

193 demophon CV, F, demophoon H, T, demophoon R, demophoon J, B, Mi, JJP tr.

198 gfauibūs CV, fidibūs PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

still or dead. She lies sick with sorrow, faded utterly in the dissolution of long grief.

'Ganieda is in tears by her side, complaining no less, mourning her lost brother, comfortless. One for a brother, one for a husband weeps. Their tears together flow, and time in sadness passes. They eat not, sleep not, wander unrefreshed by night through thorny ways, so great is the grief which grips them.'

190 'So once Sidonian Dido mourned, when the fleet weighed anchor and Aeneas hastened on his way. So once poor Phyllis sighed and wept when Demophoon failed his appointed hour. So Briseis cried, Achilles lost.

'Now wife's and sister's tears together fall, and grief burns ever deep within their tortured hearts.'

198 This was the song the messenger sang to his plaintive strings; and with his air he soothed the listening prophet to calmness and to sympathy with the singer.

200 Suddenly the prophet sprang up, accosted the young man with a lively greeting and begged him to sound his instrument once more and play again the lament he had just played. So the singer plucked at the strings of his instrument and picked out the song, as he was asked, a second time. Little by little, as he played, he coaxed the madman to put by his wild mood under the sweet spell of the guitar.

So Merlin came to himself, recollected what he had been, and thought of his madness with astonishment and loathing. His normal state of mind returned, and his power of feeling, too. His reason thus restored, he could sigh aloud at the names of his sister and his wife and be moved by their devotion. He begged to be taken back to the court of King Rodarch. His companion agreed. They set off at once from the woods and came in cheerful company together to the city of the king.

Then the queen was glad to have her brother again, and his wife overjoyed at her husband's home-coming. They vied in kissing him, flinging their arms about his neck in deep affection. The king, too, welcomed the returned wanderer with every due honour; and all the nobles who thronged the palace celebrated in the city.

200 fleret CV, fieret PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

205 ita T, idem (or) iterum Mi.

212 rodarthi R, J, T.

217 geminans CV, geminiant PP, B, Mi, JJP tr.

- ¶ At postquam tantas hominum Merlinus adesse
inspexit turmas, nec eas perferre valeret.
Cepit enim furias iterumque furore repletus
ad nemus ire cupit furtimque recedere querit.
225 Tunc precepit eum posito custode teneri
Rodarchus citharaque suos mulcere furores,
astabatque dolens verbisque precantibus illum
orabat ratione frui secumque manere
nec captare nemus nec vivere more ferino
230 velle sub arboribus dum regia sceptrum tenere
posset et in populos jus exercere feroces.
Hinc promittit ei se plurima dona daturum,
afferique jubet vestes volucresque canesque
quadrupedesque citos aurum gemmasque micantes
235 pocula que sculpsit Guelandus in urbe Sigeni.
Singula pretendit vati Rodarchus et offert
et monet ut maneat secum silvasque relinquat.
Talia respondens spernebat munera vates.
'Ista duces habeant sua quos confundit egestas
240 nec sunt contenti modico set maxima captant.
Hiis nemus et patulas Calidonis prefero quercus
et montes celsos subtus virentia prata.
Illa michi non ista placent. Tu talia tecum
rex Rodarche feras. Mea me Calidonis habebit
245 silva ferax nucibus quam cunctis prefero rebus.
Denique cum nullo potuisset munere tristem
rex retinere virum, forti vincire cathena
jussit ne peterit nemorum deserta solutus.
Ergo cum sensit circum se vincula vates
250 nec liber poterat silvas Calidonis adire,
protinus indoluit tristisque tacensque remansit
leticiamque suis subtraxit vultibus omnem
ut non proferret verbum risumque moveret.
¶ Interea visura duces regina per aulam
255 ibat, et ut decuit rex applaudebat eunti
perque manum suscepit eam jussitque sedere
et dabat amplexus et ad oscula labra premebat,
convertensque suos in eam per talia vultus
vidit in illius folium pendere capellis.
260 Ergo suos digitos admovit et abstulit illud

226 Rodarthus PP; cytheraqūē R.

234 quadrupedes multos PP.

235 om. PP.

- 221 But when Merlin saw such crowds of people there, he could not
bear them. He went mad; and once more his derangement filled him
with a desire to go off to the forest, and he longed to slip away. At
that, Rodarch ordered him to be held under guard and music to be
played on the guitar to calm his madness. He went sadly to him and
begged and prayed him to be reasonable, to stay with him and not
230 hanker after the forest and an animal life under the trees, when he
might wield a royal sceptre and rule a nation of warriors.

The king promised, besides, that he would make him many gifts.
He ordered clothes to be brought, and hunting birds, and dogs and
fast horses; gold, glittering gems and cups wrought by Wayland in
the city of Segontium. All this Rodarch brought to the prophet,
urging him to stay and forget the woods.

- But the prophet rejected the presents in these words: 'Let these
240 things go to lords hard-pressed by poverty, such as are not content
with modest living but covet everything. But I put above these
things the woodland and spreading oaks of Calidon, the high hills,
the green meadows at their foot—those are for me, not these things.
Take back such goods, King Rodarch. My nut-rich forest of Calidon
shall have me: I desire it above all else.'

- At last, finding that no gift would detain this sullen man, the king
ordered him to be stoutly chained to prevent him setting off for the
forest wilderness, if freed. The prophet felt the chains about him,
250 and saw no way to be free to get to the woods of Calidon. He
immediately fell into a gloom and stayed silent. His face lost its
liveliness: not a word, not a smile would he vouchsafe.

Just then the queen was walking through the hall looking for the
king. He greeted her graciously as she approached, took her by the
hand and begged her to sit down. He put his arm about her and
kissed her; and in doing so he turned his head and saw a leaf hanging

236 rodarthus R, J, T.

237 relinquet CV, relinquat PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

244 rodarthe R, J, T.

260 suos passūs R; abstīāit CV, admouit ēī abstulit H, B, amouit ēī abstulit R, J,
affmouit ēī obtulit T, abstrahit Gfr, F, ('took (it)'), JJP tr.

- qui ratione carens miscet mendacia veris?
Multociens qui credit ei fit stulcius illo.
Excipe nunc igitur ne sim decepta, probabo
quod sit delirus, quod non sit vera locutus.'
- 305 Ut plures alii fuerat puer unus in aula.
Hunc cum prospiceret convolvit protinus artem
ingeniosa novam qua vult convincere fratrem.
Inde venire jubet puerum, fratremque precatur
qua moriturus erit pueri predicere mortem.
- 310¶ Ergo frater ei, 'Soror o carissima', dixit,
'hic morietur homo de celsa rupe ruendo.'
Illa sub hec ridens puero precepit abire
et quibus indutus fuerat deponere vestes
et vestire novas longosque recidere crines,
- 315 sicque redire jubet ut eis appareat alter.
Paruit ergo puer, rediit nam talis ad illos
qualis erat jussus mutata veste redire.
Mox iterum fratrem regina precatur et inquit,
'Que mors huius erit narra, dilecte, sorori.'
- 320 Tunc Merlinus ait, 'Puer hic cum venerit etas
mente vagans forti succumbet in arbore morti.'
Dixerat illa suum sic est affata maritum,
'Siccine te potuit falsus pervertere vates
ut crimen tantum me commisisse putares?'
- 325 Ac si scire velis qua sit ratione locutus,
hoc nunc de puero censebis ficta fuisse
que de me dixit dum silvas possit adire.
Absit ut hoc faciam! Castum servabo cubile
castaque semper ero dum flabit spiritus in me.
- 330 Illum convici pueri de morte rogatum.
Nunc quoque convincam, tu sedulus arbiter esto.'
Hec ait et tacite puerum secedere jussit
vesteque feminea vestire sicque redire.
Mox puer abcessit jussumque subinde peregit,
- 335 et sub feminea rediit quasi femina veste
et stetit ante virum, cui sic regina jocando,
'Eya, frater,' ait, 'dic mortem virginis huius'.
'Hec virgo nec ne,' dixit, 'morietur in ampne',
frater ei, movitque sua ratione cachinnum
- 340 regi Rodarcho, quoniam de morte rogatus

319 uaria CV, narra PP, B, Mi, JJP tr, F.

340 rodarcho R, J, T.

lies and truth together because he is out of his wits? Anyone who believes him becomes many times more fool than he. Now watch, and, if I am not mistaken, I shall prove that he is talking nonsense and has not told the truth.'

Among many others in the hall there was one particular boy. This clever woman noticed him and then and there thought of an ingenious trick to show up her brother. She called the boy over and asked her brother to predict the death the boy would die.

- 310 So her brother said to her: 'Dearest sister, when he is a man, this lad will die by falling from a high rock.'

The queen smiled at this, and then told the boy to go away, take off the clothes he was wearing and put on others, and cut off his long hair. She told him that he was then to come in again, looking like another person. The boy did what he was told, for he returned to them in different clothes, as instructed. After a little while, the queen once more appealed to her brother, saying, 'My dear, tell your sister what the death of this one will be.'

- 320 Merlin said, 'When this boy grows up, he will meet a violent death in a tree though misjudgment.'

So he spoke. The queen, addressing her husband, said, 'Has this false prophet been able to deceive you so far that you could think I had committed such a great crime as this? If you consider how much sense there is in what he has just said about this boy, you will realise that what he has said about me has been made up so that he can be off to the woods. As if I would do such a thing! I shall keep my bed chaste, and chaste shall I ever be while there is breath in me.

330 I showed him up in questioning him about the boy's death. I shall now show him up again: you must watch and judge.'

So saying, she whispered to the boy to go out, dress himself in woman's clothes and then come back. He soon after slipped away and quickly carried out her instructions. He returned dressed in woman's clothing, looking like a girl. He came and stood in front of Merlin, to whom the queen said jokingly, 'Well, brother, tell me of the death of this girl.'

- 340 'Girl or not,' said her brother to her, 'she will die in a river.'
- This made Rodarch laugh loudly at his powers of reasoning. For