

Minor Notes on "Havelok the Dane"

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minutes sufficed for our audience; but he was very courteous at parting, and said he should rejoice to hear that I could meet with an abode at Weimar suitable to my finances and views.

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LONDON.

MINOR NOTES ON 'HAVELOK THE DANE.'

l. 421. *Ne hem ne dede richelike bebedde*. There is no need, with Skeat, to omit the second *ne*; still less, with Holthausen, to change the word-order. *bebedde* is simply miswritten for *bedde* which occurs in three other places in the poem. There is no irregularity in the metre: *e* is syncopated often enough between chief and secondary stress.

l. 722. *Ne were neuere but ane hwile*. Skeat supplies *it* before *neuere*. Holthausen emends correctly to *fere[d]* but unnecessarily cuts away the *ne* and supplies *pei*. Read *ne were ne fered*.

ll. 808, 1026. *also heui als a neth*. Is Hupe's interpretation 'neat, young ox' certain? 'Heavy as a net' seems to me not improbable. The rime proves nothing, of course: we are justified in assuming the vowel in *gret* to be short through analogy with the comparative form. Cf. Morsbach, *Mittelengl. Gram.*, 54a 2.

l. 1129. *Goldebrow gret and yas hire ille*. Skeat here reads *was*, translating 'it was ill for her.' The correct reading is Stratmann's: *gaf*. Cf. l. 164, *He greten and gouleden and gouen hem ille*; cf. also *Isumbras*, l. 315, *þe ladi gret and gaf hire ille*. But the meaning is not so much 'to give oneself up to grief' (Skeat, p. 168) as 'to shew or put forward one's grief.' I am informed by my friend, Mr H. W. Ealwarda, Secretary of the Frisian Society of London, that the expression is still in common use in West-Frisian. Of a malingering soldier, for instance, is said *Hi yout him siik (oan)*, and the expression *Hia yoech hiar siik* is used frequently of one of the fair sex.

l. 1287. *But on on þe moste hil*. Holthausen changes the first *on* to *one*, translating 'ganz allein': Skeat keeps the MS. reading, but gives no note on the syntax. The construction, after all, is common enough, particularly in the phrase *oon the beste*. Cf. also *preo þa betstan ele* in the *Blickling Homilies* (E.E.T.S., p. 73). But the well-known line *si muose toten sehn einen den liebsten man* ought to have warned Holthausen.

l. 1380. *Ne forfaren for no sinne*. I am unable to understand on what grounds Holthausen turns the pret. partic. into an indic. and Skeat inserts *may*. Is it possible that the latter scholar is here polish-

ing the metre again? In ll. 1284, 1304, 1376 he does not hesitate to change the word-order for this purpose, and the number of small words he has to insert in his attempt to make the metre of *Havelok* more regular than that of Chaucer's *Prologue*, is legion.

l. 1430. *Hauede go for him gold ne fe*. Here it is Holthausen that 'improves' the metre, by inserting *no* before *gold*. Skeat's emendation to *go[n]* is quite unnecessary. Cf. *Mi gamun is al go* (*Die engl. Gregorlegende*, l. 104; ed. Schulz, Königsberg, 1876). Cf. also *haue do* in l. 1805 of *Havelok*, where the form is fixed by the rime *two*.

l. 2333. *per mouhte men se hw grim greu* has caused unnecessary trouble to the editors. Skeat will read *Grim* and gives a long note on 'scenic representation': does he mean that at Havelok's court there is presented a kind of play of Grim's life-history? Holthausen emends violently to *glam*. There is really nothing against a simple interpretation of the MS. reading. *grim* with the meaning anger, strife, is common enough. Cf. *Sir Bevis*: 'Thus beginneth *grim* to grow,' *Alexander and Dindimus*: 'þei were agrisen of his *grym* and *wende gref þolie*,' *Ywaine and Gawin*: 'To him *he stirt* with birful *grim*.' The line refers, of course, to the bull and boar-baiting just above.

Here let me call attention to the word *mike*, a parallel form to *mikel*. Although this word, as far as I know, has not got into the dictionaries, it is of too frequent occurrence to be set aside as a scribal error or as a 'ghost-word.' *mike* occurs four times, *mik* once, in *Havelok*: in every case the editors emend to *mikel*. The word *mike* occurs too in *Genesis and Exodus*, l. 292, where Morris supplies an *l*. A good instance is to be found in *Cursor Mundi*, l. 26113, where in place of *and is als mikil for to say* the Cotton MS. reads *and es als mikes al for to say*. A search, which I have not undertaken, would doubtless reveal other examples.

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