

AUBURN UNIVERSITY MONTGOMERY

SETTING, LANDSCAPE, AND MOVEMENT:

THE GREENWOOD TRADITION OF THE EARLY ROBIN HOOD POEMS

A MASTER'S THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBERAL ARTS
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS

BY

THOMAS W. THOMPSON

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

NOVEMBER 2015

Approved By:



Dr. Alexander L. Kaufman
Thesis Director



Dr. Michel Aaij
Second Reader



Dr. Matthew Ragland
Associate Provost

AUBURN UNIVERSITY MONTGOMERY

SETTING, LANDSCAPE, AND MOVEMENT:
THE GREENWOOD TRADITION OF THE EARLY ROBIN HOOD POEMS

A MASTER'S THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBERAL ARTS
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS

BY
THOMAS W. THOMPSON

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA
NOVEMBER 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	4
List of Illustrations.....	6
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	7
Problem Statement.....	7
Background.....	10
Purpose of Thesis.....	16
Significance.....	16
Methodology.....	17
Hypothesis.....	17
Assumptions.....	18
Limitations/Scope.....	19
Procedure.....	20
Long-range Consequences.....	20
2. The Forest World of French and English Medieval Romance.....	21
The Outlaws of the English Wood.....	23
The Matter of the Greenwood.....	26
3. The Woodland Setting of <i>Robin Hood and the Monk</i>	31
Plot Summary.....	31
The Natural Opening of <i>Robin Hood and the Monk</i>	32
The Wooded Landscape and Character Movements in <i>Robin Hood and the Monk</i>	36
The Greenwood Tree and the Tristil-Tree.....	39

4. The Woodland Setting of <i>Robin Hood and the Potter</i>	49
Plot Summary	49
The Natural Opening of <i>Robin Hood and the Potter</i>	50
The Wooded Landscape and Character Movements in <i>Robin Hood and the Potter</i>	52
The Greenwood Tree and the Tristil-Tree	55
5. The Woodland Setting of <i>Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne</i>	60
Plot Summary	60
The Natural Opening of <i>Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne</i>	61
The Wooded Landscape and Character Movements in <i>Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne</i>	62
The Greenwood vs. The Forest: “There and Back Again”	65
The Greenwood and the Greenwood Tree	68
6. Conclusions	76
Bibliography	79

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is the product of my long-standing interest in pre-industrial societies. This interest began when I read Stephen R. Lawhead's *The Paradise War* (1991), a Celtic novel my first cousin, Stephen Breedlove, lent to my family. My older brother read it first, and I read it after him. I soon bought the second and third novels in the trilogy, but I never returned *The Paradise War*.

My newfound interest was nurtured by my grandmother, the late Caroline Owens Stuart, who bought me my first sword—a Japanese *katana*—when I was age eleven. Years later, my other grandmother, Lucy Margaret Bricken, kept my interest in mind on a visit to Africa: upon her return, she presented me with a Zulu short sword. It still sits on my mantle.

Seeing the joy my grandmothers' gifts brought me, my parents, Anne and Irby Thompson, began giving me swords every year for my birthday or Christmas. They also paid for book after book on knights, samurai, medieval history, and high-fantasy. Never was my desire to read about my pre-industrial heroes neglected. If I wanted a book, they bought it for me.

After I graduated high school and moved to college, all my swords came with me. My books stayed at home. Ten years later, when I returned to Montgomery, my books were still waiting for me at my parents' house. They are now in my attic, waiting on me to finish this thesis so that I can build the bookshelf to house them.

This thesis would have been much diminished in scope and focus without the excellent advice and extensive Robin Hood expertise of Dr. Alexander L. Kaufman, and the editorial and thematic suggestions of Dr. Michel Aaij. I am also indebted to the timely work of Auburn University Library's Interlibrary Loan department, and the direction and patience of Dr. Eric Sterling, head of AUM's MLA program.

But most importantly, this thesis would have been an impossibility were it not for the amazing capacities of my wife, Dr. Silvia Giagnoni, who has managed to bring our two beautiful girls into the world during my research and writing, while also balancing her own duties as an associate professor and the completion of her third book on Immigration. Silvia, our interests lie far afield, but our hearts are close together.

November 16, 2015

Montgomery, Alabama

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1: The Southern Magnesian Limestone Ridge: Nottingham to Doncaster.....	72
Illustration 2: The Southern Magnesian Limestone Ridge: Doncaster to Nipon.....	73

Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Problem Statement

Robin Hood, being—for this study—a figure described in certain fifteenth-century English texts, has proven elusive to those scholars wishing to pinpoint 1) a historical period from whence either his legend arose, or which he, as a historical figure, inhabited; 2) the social milieu that may have nurtured either his appreciation by audiences as a figure of legend, or as a flesh-and-blood outlaw or rebel; and 3) the precise relationship between the three or four earliest texts,¹ all in verse, in which his activities are described. These problems have been intensified by other, earlier references to Robin Hood, such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (B-text, ca. 1379),² which are clearly older than the earliest extant poems, as well as from the chroniclers and clerical opinions of him from time periods either prior to, or immediately following, the generally accepted composition dates of those same poems. The most troubling set of problems for scholars using *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and *A Gest of Robyn Hode* to investigate historical and/or legendary “origin” theories is the seeming lack of coherence in the physical settings, social settings, and narrative tone. Further, though its earliest extant copy

1. *Robin Hood and the Monk* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.5.), *Robin Hood and the Potter* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS E.e.4.35), *A Gest of Robyn Hode*, and—though its earliest contextual provenance will be marginally addressed in this thesis—*Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* (Thomas Percy, ed. *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. 3 vol. London: J. Dodsley, 1765). All versions of the Robin Hood poems used in this thesis will be from Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, eds., *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000). For a brief textual provenance of the *Gest*, see Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 80. For more detailed information on the manuscript and early printed book traditions, see A. J. Pollard, *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late Medieval Stories in Historical Context* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 4-13; Thomas H. Ohlgren, *Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465-1560: Texts, Contexts, and Ideology. With an Appendix on Dialects and Language by Lister M. Matheson* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007); and Thomas Ohlgren and Lister M. Matheson, eds., *Early Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Edition of the Texts, ca. 1425 to ca. 1600*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 428 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2013).

2. *Piers Plowman* contains the universally accepted earliest literary reference to Robin Hood. See *Outlaw Tales*, 1.

appears much later, *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* has often also been included in analysis of these problems.³ Some scholars have argued that these discrepancies can be, and may have been intended to be, rectified and reconciled by the longest of these poems, *A Gest of Robyn Hode*.⁴ The *Gest* survives in seven printed editions dating from the late-fifteenth to the early-sixteenth centuries. Thomas Ohlgren has shown that the *Gest* may have even been created to serve as entertainment at a guild meeting,⁵ satisfying a need for the yeomen of that guild, whose station in medieval society as freemen with relative wealth and power was something of a novelty, and their need to mimic the leisure pastimes of the aristocracy.⁶

A. J. Pollard believes that by the time of the publication of the *Gest*, there existed “as many as eight surviving stories,” mini-tales, or “episodes,”⁷ and he argues these represent plausible blocks of narrative that, in some cases, mimic parts or the whole of the basic structures of both *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*, while other “mini-tales” embedded in the *Gest* seem to be expressions of self-contained but otherwise unknown “rymes.”⁸ However, although his arguments do help scholars understand the relationship of the larger, slightly older conglomerate poem (the *Gest*) with two of the earlier, shorter poems (*Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*), they fail to address several problems. The first

3. More than any other story—though not withstanding other candidates like *Robin Hood and the King* or *The Death of Robin Hood* (both of which appear in Thomas Percy’s collection of “old” ballads; and *The Forresters Manuscript*, British Library Additional MS 71158)—*Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* (c. 1750) has been most often suspected of being contextually contemporaneous with the other three early Robin Hood poems. For the most recent suggestion of this, see Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 16. For further information on *The Forresters Manuscript*, see Stephen Knight, ed., *Robin Hood: The Forresters Manuscript (British Library Additional MS 71158), with a Manuscript Description by Hilton Kelliher, Curator of Western Manuscripts at the British Library* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998).

4. For a brief history of the “compilation” theories of the *Gest*, see Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 82.

5. Ohlgren, *Early Poems*, 25, comment thus: “[The *Gest* was] commissioned in the mid-to-late fifteenth century to be recited by minstrels or players at the annual election dinner of one of London’s major cloth guilds, possibly the Drapers’ Company, or at a mayoral inauguration.”

6. *Ibid.*, 26

7. Pollard, *Imagining*, 3.

8. *Ibid.*

issue arises from the absence of the storyline found in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*⁹—in a text which may have been constructed from preexisting stories. On a similar note, *The Death of Robin Hood*, which appears alongside *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* in the Percy Folio, is a poem whose plot resembles the final fyfte of the *Gest*. The second problem with Pollard’s hypothesis is that it fails to address the strikingly similar settings between *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, *Robin Hood and the Monk*, and *Robin Hood and the Potter*. And, lastly, Pollard does not address the inescapable conclusion that, if the *Gest* is largely a concerted effort to rectify, justify, or streamline an already existing plenitude of Robin Hood literature, then it cannot be claimed to be truly part of the early tradition of that literature; rather, it is its most prominent first metamorphosis. As has been noted, parts of the *Gest* seem to deliberately reframe the earlier narratives in order to emphasize Robin as a character who is cut from a more knightly cloth than is readily apparent in the shorter fifteenth-century poems.¹⁰ Consequently, the *Gest* will be only be used for comparison only, and will not be examined in detail. Deference in all “origin” inquiries must instead be given to the earlier stories, which represent the least adulterated extant narrative depictions of either a legendary or historical Robin Hood.¹¹

9. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* also seems to have a dramatic analogue in *Robyn Hod and the Shryff off Notyngham* (Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS r.2.64). This document is a late-fifteenth (ca. 1475) fragmentary play script or mnemonic that has been widely suggested to have been based upon *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, however, suggest that the two stories share a distant source; see *Outlaw Tales*, 271: “Much of the critical commentary has attempted to link the play to the ballad *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. While there are similarities . . . the major differences suggest instead that the play and the ballad share a common but distant source.”

10. Pollard, *Imagining*, 8.

11. Although both Andrew of Wyntoun’s *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* (ca. 1420—see *Outlaw Tales*, 24.) and Walter Bower’s *Continuation of John of Fordun’s Scotichronicon* (ca. 1440—see *Outlaw Tales*, 25-26.) both speak of Robin Hood (the former in verse and the latter in prose) before the publication of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, the former is a mere four lines, and thus too sparse in detail to be considered a narrative. Fordun’s mention, though it can be considered a narrative, purports to tell only one tale that existed in what is apparently a thriving ballad market. See Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 26: “Robert Hood, as well as Little John . . . whom the foolish populace are so inordinately fond of celebrating both in tragedies and comedies, and about whom they are delighted to hear the jesters and minstrels sing above all other ballads.” When coupled with the very fact that Fordun’s account is a prose account of a verse story in a market that he viciously derides, and that, strangely, the story has certain elements similar to those found in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, it can be concluded Fordun’s account is, at the very least, less than reliable in its details, if not explicitly prejudiced and sensational.

If it can be shown that these earlier poems do exhibit remarkable similarities in setting, then the relationships that these earlier poems might have already shared, as that of various manifestations of a singular tradition, might serve as fruitful grounds for considering the likelihood that the earliest Robin Hood stories were based on a single source story, either legendary or historical. Therefore, the setting of the three shorter poems must be rigorously analyzed, for if these poems are not compatible in these areas, then one can expect at least three separate traditions—unknown to each other, or showing little concern with conflicting accounts about the same character—upon which the legend of Robin Hood is based. If this is the case, then a search for a probable *Ur*-Robin would be highly unlikely as the plurality of lore in the earliest narrative materials would sully the validity of any unification theory. One could only conclude that Robin is merely a composite figure, made up of the vestiges of literary and folkloric traditions. If, however, two or more of these three poems can be shown to have coherency in setting, then they can be understood as embodying a stronger, more unified tradition. This tradition could be relied upon as exhibiting the traits of how audiences earlier than those of the earliest extant poems would have known and related to the figure and legend of Robin Hood.

II. Background

For more than half a century, a lively debate existed in the academic community over whether Robin Hood could have been a historical figure and, regardless of whether he was, what class or classes' interests and values he exhibited and supported.

R. H. Hilton opened the debate in his 1958 article "The Origins of Robin Hood," where he formulated the novel idea that Robin Hood was a peasant's hero whose origins date to the

thirteenth or fourteenth century.¹² Hilton deliberately avoided the question whether Robin Hood was an actual historical figure, but instead insisted that Robin Hood, above all else, represented “a man whose most endearing activities to his public were the robbery and killing of landowners, in particular church landowners, and the maintenance of guerilla warfare against established authority represented by the sheriff.”¹³ Further, Hilton roundly challenged the nineteenth-century notion that Robin may have been a Saxon rebel, similar to Hereward the Wake (ca. 1035-72). Hilton argued that “the ballads show no trace of this animosity.”¹⁴ However, most (if not all) of Hilton’s assertions concerning Robin’s most “endearing activities” are absent from *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. In this poem, Robin is not waging guerilla warfare, nor is he robbing or killing landowners, nor is he in any way at odds with the church. These activities do exist, in part, in *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*, but in the former the “guerilla warfare” seems to be a response to Robin’s capture,¹⁵ and it is arguable that he is not “at odds with the church” in any systematic sense. Only once is he accused of robbing a member of the clergy.¹⁶ Only in the *Gest*, which itself seems to be systematic treatment of Robin Hood tales, is Robin’s robbery of church officials systematized.¹⁷ Moreover, the explicit robbery of landowners only occurs in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, though it is remarkable that Robin’s first target of robbery was a yeoman potter, not a landowner. As for *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, Hilton explained that the social conditions behind the creation of this poem may be found in thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century agrarian discontent expressed by peasants, serfs, and freemen, against their landlords,¹⁸ yet this does not explain why Robin’s “most endearing activities” appear to be

12. R.H. Hilton, “The Origins of Robin Hood,” *Past and Present* 14 (1958): 30-44.

13. *Ibid.*, 30.

14. *Ibid.*, 32.

15. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 44-45, lines 243-50.

16. *Ibid.*, 40, lines 91-94.

17. *A Gest of Robin Hood*, 92, 57-58.

18. Hilton, “Origins,” 41. Hilton also addresses here the possibility of connections with the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381.

absent from this poem.

When Hilton's article was published, it was generally agreed that the four earliest poems concerning Robin Hood were *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, *A Gest of Robyn Hode*, and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*.¹⁹ Indeed, earlier that same year W. E. Simeone published an article that declared that Robin's character in these four stories was "cut from the same cloth."²⁰ He suggests that the tone, settings, costumes, and recurrent motifs, such as the bow and Robin's enemy the sheriff, provide sufficient grounds to conclude that these four texts constitute a coherent understanding of Robin Hood's origins as that of a "modest deer poacher" who was born from the same outlaw literature as "Johnie Cock, Robyn and Gandelyn, and Adam Bell and his friends."²¹ Eric Hobsbawm further refined these emerging ideas regarding outlaw legends in his 1959 work *Primitive Rebels*, in which he coined the term "social bandit."²²

Defying Hilton, J. C. Holt, in his 1960 article "The Origins and the Audience of the Ballads of Robin Hood," dismissed the idea that Robin was a member of or hero to the peasantry. Instead, he suggested that Robin may have belonged to, or appealed to, the gentry.²³ Holt also guessed at an acceptable date for a historical Robin Hood. Citing William Langland's B-text of *Piers Plowman*, Holt points out that Robin Hood is introduced in conjunction with Ranulf de Blundeville, Earl of Chester. Ranulf died in 1232, and thus Holt contends that any search for a

19. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, though suspected in the mid-to-late twentieth-century as being contemporaneous with *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*, has been of late excluded from any definite contemporaneity with the other three, mostly due to the impossibility of examining the text with any etymological surety. See Stephen Knight, "Alterity, Parody, Habitus: The Formation of the Early Literary Tradition of Robin Hood," in *Robin Hood in Greenwood Stood: Alterity and Context in the English Outlaw Tradition*, ed. Stephen Knight, Medieval Identities: Socio-Cultural Spaces 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 1-30.

20. W. E. Simeone, "Robin Hood and Some Other Outlaws," *The Journal of American Folklore* 71 (1958): 2.

21. *Ibid.*, 28.

22. Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebel: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (New York: Norton, 1965), 4.

23. J. C. Holt, "The Origins and the Audience of the Ballads of Robin Hood," *Past and Present* 18 (1960): 89-90.

historical Robin should begin in the same time period.²⁴ Although Holt does not (perhaps to the detriment of his argument) consider *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* in his inquiry, he contends that Robin was likely of the knightly class since his association with Ranulf, a knight, would lead one to believe he was one as well,²⁵ and that Robin seems to hunt, or “poach,” in the way that a knight or gentleman would.²⁶

After Holt’s article was published, a dividing line emerged in the world of medievalists concerning whether Robin Hood’s origins and sympathies lay with the peasantry, the knightly class, or even the gentry. Maurice Keen joined the discussion in 1961, siding primarily with Hilton. Keen dismissed Holt’s argument that Robin Hood hunted in the way a gentleman would and concluded that Robin Hood was a yeoman, and that “the outlaw hero of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century stories is the friend of the poor: he is not consistently the friend of the knight.”²⁷ Keen, however, also does not incorporate *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* into his argument, preferring to emphasize Robin’s actions in the *Gest*.

A decade later, R. B. Dobson and J. Taylor reexamined the question of whether Robin Hood was a hero of the lower or the upper classes. Primarily, they reject the idea that the original Robin Hood was a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century creation, arguing that these stories represent “yeoman minstrelsy” in which the “legend was already being exploited for financial gain.”²⁸ But Dobson and Taylor also speculate that *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* may contain clues to the true origins of Robin Hood. They do suggest, however, that before any serious conclusions are reached regarding the apparent antiquity of all the early stories, the texts themselves (and, particularly and

24. Ibid., 103.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 96.

27. Maurice Keen, “Robin Hood—Peasant or Gentleman,” *Past and Present* 19 (1961): 7-15.

28. R. B. Dobson and J. Taylor, “The Medieval Origins of the Robin Hood Legend: A Reassessment,” *Northern History* 7 (1972), 6.

most problematically, *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*) need to be subjected to further linguistic scrutiny.²⁹ Lacking this research, they then continued on in the vein of their predecessors by attempting to winnow out whether Robin, in the fifteenth century, was a hero of the peasantry, the knightly class, or the gentry.

Aside from suggesting that the earliest extant copy of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* might be the oldest Robin Hood story, Dobson and Taylor's most significant contribution to the debate started by Hilton was to investigate the meanings of "yeoman" in the late Middle Ages. Eight years later, Joseph F. Nagy picked up their line of argument and suggested that Robin as a yeoman was a liminal figure who did not represent the essence of either the peasant or the knightly class, but he was rather a foil in which social values and social mobility could be explored.³⁰ He, like many before him, gives *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* little thought. Then, in 2001, Richard Almond and A. J. Pollard embarked upon a comprehensive inquiry into the nature of yeomanry itself in the fifteenth-century, and concluded that Robin was:

familiar to both gentle and common audiences who practises a skill, shooting, which is admired by both and sustains himself by an activity, hunting, which is exercised by both. . . He is both of intermediary rank and of intermediary status. The liminal character of this situation means that Robin Hood is a hero cut for all. As a fifteenth-century literary figure, therefore, Robin need neither be seen exclusively as belonging to the milieu of the aristocratic household, nor solely as a representative of a new middling sort. He reaches out beyond precise social categories.³¹

29. Ibid. For Lister M. Matheson's linguistic analysis of *Robin Hood and the Potter*, *Robin Hood and the Monk*, and *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode* (in two early printed editions), see Ohlgren, *Early Poems*, 189-210.

30. Joseph F. Nagy, "The Paradoxes of Robin Hood," *Folklore* 91.2 (1980): 198-210.

31. Richard Almond and A. J. Pollard, "The Yeomanry of Robin Hood and Social Terminology in Fifteenth-Century

Again, in this inquiry, *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* receives no attention. Three years later, building on his previous idea that Robin, in his earliest depictions, was a “yeoman of the forest,” Pollard revisits Robin and concludes that he was not only a yeoman of the forest, but also a master huntsman, and unequivocally “of both intermediary rank of intermediary status,” reiterating his previous contention that Robin Hood “reaches out beyond precise social categories.”³² This conclusion has yet to be convincingly challenged.

As these debates progressed, Robin Hood scholarship addressed and eventually abandoned inquiries (which were so popular during the nineteenth century) involving the possible historical personages behind the legend, as well as attempts to define class-specific social contexts portrayed in the stories. A number of the later scholars concluded more or less as Pollard does that the origins of the man or the legend were beyond the reach of scholarship. This conclusion is merited, due to the evidence marshaled by several of the earlier scholars regarding the various types and degrees of yeomanry from the fourteenth through the fifteenth centuries, and in light of the lack of any definitive court cases or other “official” records which specifically bring charges against or describe the activities of a “Robin Hood.” Robin, though without question a “yeoman” in some sense, was primarily appreciated as a liminal figure, one whose legendary appeal could have sated the social interests of a wide-range of fifteenth-century English society. Guildsmen, freemen, disenfranchised knights, foresters, craftsmen, “yeoman of the chamber,” and a bevy of other social strata and niches were found lurking in the margins of the texts as Robin Hood’s real-life “fellows.” Consequently, the origins of his enduring appeal should be that Robin Hood himself seems beyond categorization. He *is* the everyman. Thus, this conclusion left little room for further discussion of

England,” *Past and Present* 170 (2001): 77. See also A. J. Pollard, “The Yeoman,” in *Historians on Chaucer: The “General Prologue” to the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Stephen H. Rigby, with Alastair J. Minnis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 77-93.

32. Pollard, *Imagining*, 42-47.

Robin Hood's origins, and scholarship turned to more formal methods; the first anthology of original essays treated Robin Hood solely within the confines of certain literary frameworks appeared at the beginning of the twenty-first century.³³

III. Purpose of Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to present evidence that suggests that *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* provides many more clues to the origin of the Robin Hood tradition than has been observed by Robin Hood scholars. Though its earliest extant copy dates only to the mid-seventeenth century and it was edited by its compiler,³⁴ *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* is aesthetically similar to both of the earliest extant poems. This study will attempt to demonstrate that *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* complement each other in their settings to such a degree that one can assume they were sourced from the same tradition or story.

IV. Significance

If these arguments can be demonstrated to be sound and valid, then Robin Hood scholars would have to consider the possibility that the early poems contained uniform ideas about the woodland setting in which Robin Hood and his men operated. If this argument can be supported, then the idea that the Robin Hood tradition grew as much out of the very landscape of late-medieval England, as much as it did tangentially out of the French *Robin et Marion* and other *pastourelles*,³⁵

33. Thomas G. Hahn, ed., *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justice* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000).

34. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 169, note how “[Thomas Percy] edited the manuscript version considerably for meter and comprehension ...”

35. Stephen Knight, “Robin Hood: The Earliest Contexts,” in *Images of Robin Hood: Medieval to Modern*, eds. Lois Potter and Joshua Calhoun, (Newark: University of Delaware, 2008), 21-40 at 30-33.

localized angst over British land enclosures³⁶ or the paradigm-shifting effects of increased economic opportunity and social mobility,³⁷ or as literary manifestations of the “Summer Lord” in the carnivalesque medieval May games and plays.³⁸ Instead, Robin Hood scholars will have to consider the idea that the legend was constructed in a more linear fashion, perhaps from a single source story or historical action,³⁹ albeit with certain debts to the literary and linguistic traditions of popular English outlaws.⁴⁰

V. Methodology

This study will qualitatively analyze the words, terms, and phrases used to describe the forest setting of three Robin Hood poems. These tales will be compared regarding how that forest imagery is used to indicate place and movement within the story, particularly with regards to the importance of the “natural” forest openings. These opening settings will be defined as “natural” because they are set in nature (a forest) and they include natural occurrences (usually, the effect of the season on the flora and fauna).

VI. Hypotheses

I expect that this study will provide tentative grounds for validating *Robin Hood and Guy*

36. Pollard, *Imagining*, 20.

37. Almond and Pollard, “Yeomanry,” 52-77.

38. David Wiles, “Robin Hood as Summer Lord,” in *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*, ed. Stephen Thomas Knight, 77-98 (Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 1999).

39. Though, as has been noted, there are few court or ecclesiastical records chronicling the existence of a possible “Robin Hood,” the possibility that literature about him could be based on historical occurrences is supported by the existence of three “outlaw” tales—*Hereward the Wake*, *Fouke Fitz Waryn*, and *Eustace the Monk*—all of which are based upon one or more historical occurrences regarding their protagonists. For explanation of the historical accuracies in the two later tales, see Glyn S. Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws: Eustace the Monk and Fouke Fitz Waryn*, Rev. ed., (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009). For information on the historical accuracy of *Hereward the Wake*, see John Earle and Charles Plummer, ed. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from Others*. 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892-99). See also W.T. Mellows, ed., *The Chronicle of Hugh Candidus, a Monk of Peterborough*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).

40. Maurice Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, rev. ed., (1987; repr., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2000).

of *Gisborne*'s contemporaneity with *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and The Potter*. I also expect that this study will suggest that these three poems all contain a realistic, late-medieval wooded landscape, which may correspond to actual geographic features in the Nottingham/Yorkshire district and the surrounding counties. Further, I believe that this study will reveal intention of the part of the composers to maintain a realistic depiction of the movement of the characters through those wooded landscapes, and that that movement is defined by the repetition of a shared set of certain forest-related words. Both of these hypotheses, if proven to a reasonable extent, will suggest that the composers of these stories were either aware of one or two of the others, or that they drew from the same source story or tradition.

VII. Assumptions

This study will assume that, on some level, the audiences of the Robin Hood stories related to descriptions of the forest in the stories as much as they might have to the other themes.⁴¹ This assumptions, however, are not singular to this study: as the twentieth-century debate progressed over Robin Hood's origins, one of the primary foci returned to in many essays was the effectiveness of professional minstrelsy in catering to the needs and understandings of its audience.⁴² Ohlgren and Matheson identified the owner of the extant copy of *Robin Hood and the Monk* as Gilbert Pilkington, a priest, and also found significant didactic reasons why a priest and his parishioners would be interested in this tale.⁴³ These scholars also identified the owner of the extant copy of *Robin Hood and the Potter* as Richard Call, a clerk in the Paston household (a gentry family from Norfolk). Further, they identified reasons why Call and other men rising in

41. For manuscript analysis of the early poems as texts which would have been pertinent to their owners, see Ohlgren, *Early Poems*. See also Ohlgren and Matheson, *Early Rymes*, xiii-xxiii.

42. Dobson and Taylor, "Medieval Origins," 6.

43. Ohlgren, *Early Poems*, 36-38.

social standing might be interested in this tale.⁴⁴ Adding to these apparent discrepancies in the audience is the West Derbyshire dialectical provenance of *Robin Hood and the Monk*,⁴⁵ and the East Anglian dialectical provenance of *Robin Hood and the Potter*.⁴⁶ Although it could be argued that these disparities in the socioeconomic positions of the owners and geographical location of the written dialects indicate disparate audiences for the stories and not a widespread appeal, it may be more convincing to assume that different episodes of a coherent Robin Hood corpus could have different appeals for different audiences, while still presenting the same protagonist operating in the same landscape.

VIII. Limitations/Scope

This inquiry will be limited in that it will only address the setting and landscapes of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. Further, as *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* does not exist in a contemporaneous extant copy alongside *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*, no exhaustive etymological study can be included. Thirdly, as all of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English outlaw poems or ballads either exist in several copies or have some suspected textual flaw (missing stanzas, editorial blunders), a quantitative content analysis of forest-related word forms and frequencies is beyond the scope of this study. This is regrettable, since we would be much more justified in analyzing only *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* if we could prove that they are more invested in depicting the forest landscape than the other woodland outlaw stories.

44. *Ibid.*, 72.

45. *Ibid.*, 41.

46. *Ibid.*, 76.

IX. Procedure

This study will begin with a brief overview of the forest in medieval narrative and the characters that moved through it. It will continue by examining congruencies in how the poems *Robin Hood and The Monk*, *Robin Hood and The Potter*, and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* incorporate into their narrative landscape the seemingly traditional forest found in their opening settings. These arguments will detail the repetition of certain forest-related words the texts have in common, and then attempt to analyze how those terms are used to indicate specific locations in each story's setting and, more broadly, in the great landscape of Nottinghamshire/Yorkshire.

X. Long-Range Consequences

Primarily, this study should suggest that the “natural” openings of these tales are integral to the fabric of each narrative's landscape, and should not be lightly overlooked.⁴⁷ Secondly, this study should suggest that the wooded landscape in which Robin and his men operated was a *realistic* space, meaning that its description matches what a fifteenth-century listener or reader would have experienced in his/her own time. And lastly, study should suggest—though it cannot ever be said with absolute certainty—that *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* is a story contemporaneous with *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*

47. In 1961, Maurice Keen suggested that the natural openings to the Robin poems represented the final “stylizing” of the long-standing greenwood motif. See Keen, *Outlaws*, 97. In 2004, A. J. Pollard summed up the attitude of nearly fifty years of Robin Hood scholarship towards these opening settings with “the audience willingly suspended belief when they were called upon by the storyteller to imagine the greenwood in the merry month of May.” See Pollard, *Imagining*, 71-72.

Chapter 2

The Forest World of French and English Medieval Romance

Generally speaking, the wooded places appearing in medieval French and English romance literature were fantastic. These spaces were pathless labyrinths, filled, as Maurice Keen noted, “with all sort of marvelous beings. Saxon saints. . .elves and nicers. . .[and] mysterious knights, riding in torchlight procession.”⁴⁸ Even not-so-mysterious knights like Arthur’s Yvain, Tristan, Gawain, and Lancelot found their way to the remote recesses of the old-growth woodland, and there they found strange creatures, wild men and hermits,⁴⁹ and debilitating madness.⁵⁰ For Arthur’s knights, to enter woodland—especially alone, as they often do—is to enter a place of great peril. This peril encompasses every aspect of their being, spiritually, socially, and physically, through it is often an extension of preexisting social, spiritual, or physical peril that drives the knight there in the first place. Only during a hunt, like those in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, is the peril ameliorated, though even then it is not always extinguished.⁵¹

Conversely, in French and English romance, to leave the forest was to be restored to the order of proper courtly society, and proper (knightly) Christian spirituality. This process of restoration was sometimes accomplished by using the same brutish, martial prowess, which had

48. Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, 1. For more on the forest as a place of fantasy, see Rosa A. Perez, "The Forest as Locus of Transition and Transformation in the Epic Romance *Berte as grans pies*," *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Classen, Albrecht, *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture* 9 (Berlin, Germany: de Gruyter, 2012), 433-450 at 439.

49. William D. Cole, "Purgatory vs. Eden: Bérout's Forest and Gottfried's Cave," *The Germanic Review* 70.1 (1995), 3.

50. Keen, 2000, 2.

51. Cole, "Purgatory," 3. "Carneval encounters one of the wicked barons, who has entered the Morrois to hunt. . .The barons know their limits. Earlier on, when they released Tristan's dog, Husdant, and watched him trace his master's escape route, they stopped at the edge of the forest with an ironically humorous excuse: "Let's give up trailing this hound: /He might lead us to a place /From which it would be hard to return."

once so distinguished them in their places of honor at the Round Table, but which during their time of madness served only for killing and consuming raw the beasts of the forest, or, as with Tristan, providing for his lover (as best he can).⁵²

In 1993, Corinne Saunders wrote that “Chivalric romances such as those of Chrétien are characterized by the recurring pattern of the quest, the departure of the knight from the court, to seek adventure in an unknown outside world.”⁵³ In this light, the forest becomes defined by everything it is *not*. Primarily, since it is “unknown,” it is not “Christendom,” and as such it is (theoretically) not under the laws/protection of the Christian deity or the king. Second, if it is not (theoretically) not under the laws/protection of the Christian deity or king, the very act of adventuring there is to be, in effect, a bringer of Christendom to a pagan place. This and this alone, perhaps, is the only reason that gaining acclaim by venturing into its depths could be more rewarding, more worthy of recounting, than those “natural” adventures such as participating in the king’s hunt, the court’s pleasures, or the Church’s rites. However, Saunders understood that it was not only a place of physical and spiritual danger (or, one might say, opportunity), but, even more intrinsically, a place for “the focus of narrative resolution.”⁵⁴ This suggests that no matter how much it appears in the stories as a place of “alien wilderness,”⁵⁵ the forest is integral to the didactic purpose of these knightly romances. In short, without the forest to lure the knight away from the court, the problems in these romances might never come to an acceptable resolution where God, king, and Christian law prevail. However, Saunders also notes that, in some sense, the forest is “also a ‘real’ landscape, linked to the geographic, economic and legal concepts of the

52. Cole, “Purgatory,” 2 and 6. See also Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 67.

53. Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993), ix.

54. *Ibid.*, x.

55. Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons in the Medieval World* (London: Paul Elek, 1973) 52-53.

forest in the Middle Ages.”⁵⁶ Gawain’s adventures in the “wyldrenesse of Wyrle,”⁵⁷ for example, were set in a real, historical forest.⁵⁸

In stark contrast to these godless, lawless wildernesses that the knights of medieval romance journey (or suffer) through, the real-world laws governing what was “forest” emerged in the ninth-century France. Dolly Jørgensen has traced the roots of the “royal forest” to Charlemagne's *Capitulare de Villis*, which included a provision for the protection of wild animals in the forest.⁵⁹ Most likely derived from the Latin *foris*, meaning “outside,” “forest” originally had no sense of this royal protection.⁶⁰ Indeed, before the Norman Conquest (and the advent of Merovingian law), there was no such thing as a “royal” forest in England.⁶¹ The pre-Conquest legal designation of English forest implied a piece of land that could be and was owned and hunted, but there was also a legal designation known as *silvae*, or “woods.”⁶² Jørgensen believes that in pre-Conquest England hunting was more common in *silvae*.⁶³ English woodlands, however, were not only apparently small in area by the eleventh century, but were also intrinsically connected with economic activity: “in the *Domesday Book*, the size of a wood is measured by the number of pigs which it supports.”⁶⁴ All this should allow for a fairly simple conclusion: elves and nicers aside, in the medieval knightly romances depicting English woodland, the forest world found in the text and the forest world found in the actual landscape and court records were two strikingly different places.

56. Saunders, xi.

57. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, 2nd ed., rev. and ed. Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 20, line 701.

58. Saunders, 2.

59. Dolly Jørgensen, “The Roots of the English Royal Forest,” *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, 2009, ed. C. P. Lewis (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2010), 114-128 at domes119.

60. Saunders, 1.

61. Jørgensen, “Roots”, 120.

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*, 120-121

64. Saunders, 3.

The Outlaws of the English Wood

It is understandable given this discrepancy between the imagined woodland and the real woodland that the forest would begin to find more realistic treatment in contemporary literature. Less than a century after the publication of the *Domesday Book* (1086), the *Gesta Herewardi* (c. 1100-25) tells of a Saxon-hero-turned-outlaw who must escape to the woods, not for adventure (though Hereward is a knight in the romance) but to hide from his enemies and protect his men and his allies.⁶⁵ Although some elements of the fantastic still remain,⁶⁶ *Hereward* is filled with much practical information, such as the movements of troops over land and road. This includes how Hereward's enemies go about attacking his castle in the forest at the Isle of Ely⁶⁷ and how he goes about attacking them, which includes how he used the natural cover of trees and branches to conceal his archers.⁶⁸ Though this treatment of the forest as a real, historical place where real, historical things happen occurred and appeared approximately fifty years before the fantastic forest in the Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes (1170-81), it nevertheless sets precedent for depicting realistic forests that serve as settings for stories about real people who accomplished real acts of valor in the woodland.

Two more hero-turned-forest-outlaw characters are found in the stories *Eustache the Monk* (1284) and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* (1325-40). After his betrayal, the France-based Eustache

65. Hereward does not actually "flee" into the forest, though that is essentially what he does. His escape to the Isle of Ely was, according to the author, only at the insistence of the abbot of the church at Ely. See *Hereward the Wake*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 638-67 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 647.

66. Although she is not said to be from the woodlands, a witch is employed by Hereward's enemies. He also has a legendary encounter with a wolf, the aid of will-o-the-wisps, and a vision of a "man of indescribable appearance, in old age, fearsome of countenance, and more remarkable in all his clothing than anything he had ever seen or imagined. . .now menacing him with a great key which he brandished in his hand." See *Hereward the Wake*, 654, 656, 661.

67. *Hereward the Wake*, 656-657, in particular, gives a fairly detailed description

68. *Hereward the Wake*, 659.

flees, for a time, into the “forest of Hardelot.”⁶⁹ Fouke, however, spends the majority of his time as an outlaw in forests.⁷⁰ While neither *Eustache the Monk* nor *Fouke Fitz Waryn* give nearly as much forest detail as *Hereward the Wake*,⁷¹ the forest landscape still figured prominently in the English imagination in these stories.

The next major work to treat an outlaw in the forest is *The Tale of Gamelyn* (c. 1350), and it is here that the examination of exactly how the forest is described in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries will begin.⁷² *Gamelyn* never gives a proper name for a forest, but the protagonist does flee to one to escape the wrath of his brother the sheriff, who has wrongfully dispossessed him of his lands. It is noteworthy, however, that Gamelyn meets and later replaces the King of the Outlaws during the course of the narrative, showing that, at least for a time, Gamelyn thrives in the woodland. Certainly, by the fourteenth century, to imagine an outlaw “king” who rules in the depths of the forest was nothing out of the ordinary. Though Fouke lived in the time period close to 1200, written accounts of Fouke’s forest outlawry emerged during the same time period as *Gamelyn*, though E. J. Hathaway has suggested there is evidence that the original *Fouke* manuscript was “based on a lost late-thirteenth-century verse romance.”⁷³ This

69. *Eustache the Monk*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 668-686 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 677. Eustache did flee to the forest surrounding Boulogne in 1203, following accusations that he was mismanaging the Count’s financial affairs. For historical veracity of *Eustache the Monk*, see *Li Romans de Witasse Le Moine: Roman de treizième siècle*. Édité d’après le manuscrit, ed. Denis Joseph Conlon, Fonds Français 1553, de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. University of North Carolina Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 126 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 14-19.

70. *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 695-713 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000). Although they are not always given proper names, Fouke hides in the real-world forests of Babbins Wood (695), and the Forest of Braydon (696). At one point, the forest is simply called “the forest of Kent” (697).

71. At one point in *Hereward*, the author even goes so far as to explain how Hereward and his men sustain themselves from a variety of forest and water creatures. See *Hereward the Wake*, 651.

72. The version used will be *The Tale of Gamelyn*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 194-226. The editors credit Maurice Keen, J. C. Holt, and C. W. Dunn with calculating *Gamelyn*’s composition date. See Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 185.

73. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 687.

continued popularity Fouke's story decades after the composition of the tale off which it was based suggests that there is a strong tradition in medieval English literature and history of the outcast hero escaping to England's woods to live as he may until his fortunes change. Further, this strong tradition and its implied popularity⁷⁴ is almost certainly one of the reasons that *Gamelyn* survives in "twenty-five early manuscripts," all of which are manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*.⁷⁵

The next popular extant greenwood-outlaw stories are the fifteenth-century "rymes" of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and the longer *A Gest of Robyn Hode*. They are followed by the sixteenth-century versions of *Adam Bell*, *Clim of the Clough*, and *William of Cloudesley*, and a mass of other Robin Hood stories, none of which will be examined in this study. Regardless, the greenwood outlaw is always the seeker of some sort of justice (even if that means escaping official justice, as it often does), but the wooded landscape found in these tales is not all the same. *The Tale of Gamelyn*, for instance, does not contain the word "greenwood" at all, and *Adam Bell* has it only once.⁷⁶ In the much shorter stories, *Robin Hood and the Monk* has four occurrences of the word "greenwood,"⁷⁷ *Robin Hood and the Potter* has three,⁷⁸ and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* has four.⁷⁹ The *Gest*, the least "original" of all these stories, is replete with the term. So why does this tradition of a "Greenwood" outlaw actually seem to be literally manifest in the Robin Hood stories? What is it about the emergence of these stories that became so centered on actually using the term "greenwood"?

74. Knight and Ohlgren suggested *Gamelyn*'s numerous extant copies do not necessarily mean it was popular, but they did not provide an argument for this assertion. It seems much more likely that it was popular simply because stories about outlaws were popular. See *Outlaw Tales*, 184.

75. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 184.

76. *Adam Bell*, line 405.

77. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, lines 8, 42, 92, 309.

78. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, lines 298, 318, 321.

79. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, lines 20, 23, 73, 86.

The Matter of the Greenwood

Since the outlaw theme is the primary binding factor in considering this aforementioned set of tales, the other connection, the “matter of the Greenwood,” must also be understood. Keen argued that the greenwood represented one of “matters. . .worth a poet’s consideration [in medieval romance],” and he created the idea of the “matter of the Greenwood” for inclusion alongside “the matter of Britain, the matter of France, and the matter of Rome the Great.”⁸⁰ This was a revolutionary idea. It implied that stories about marginalized figures (such as forest outlaws) were worthy of the same scholarly interest visited upon “King Arthur and Merlin [the matter of Britain]. . .Roland and Oliver [the matter of France]. . .[and] Brut the Trojan [the matter of Rome].” Perhaps Keen justified this idea, in part, by tracing the roots of the Greenwood to the already established matter of Britain, particularly in the adventures of Arthur and his knights.⁸¹

In making his argument for the “greenwood” being worthy of inclusion among the “matters. . .worth a poet’s consideration [in medieval romance],”⁸² Keen locates the historical origin of the “Greenwood’s” popularity in “an age when thick forests clothed wide tracts of the country.”⁸³ There, he believes, the greenwood originally served as an “unhallowed waste,” and “was little more than a useful and engaging stage-prop.”⁸⁴ He even suggests that it was the very “shade,” the lack of light, in these forests which created an atmosphere ripe for adventure.⁸⁵

But there are two types of greenwoods, as it turns out. In addition to this mythical place where unknown danger awaited chivalric knights, there also exists the greenwood of the outlaw

80. Keen, *Outlaws*, 1.

81. *Ibid.*

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Ibid.*, 2.

85. *Ibid.*, 1.

tales. Keen summarizes the characteristics of the greenwood found in the outlaw tales:

the forest background was essential. The forest was their home; its beasts were their food; its peasantry their allies. Within its bounds their whole drama was enacted. If they ventured outside it, it would be only on some brief expedition to avenge wrong done, and to return to it, when right had been restored and whatever sheriff or abbot was the villain of the piece had been brought low. If they left it, it would be with the king's final pardon, and their tale would be thereby ended. For once they had come again within the law's protection, men had no more to tell of them: their fame was as outlaws of the wild.⁸⁶

Of course, this is a general summary, and all its parts do not apply to all the outlaw tales. Keen's stress, though, lies on the underlying idea that outlaws identify with the forest world in a way strikingly different from the knights of medieval romance. In the latter, the greenwood is no longer the "Other," at least not to the outlaws. The outlaw tales contain a greenwood that provides the same framework in which the duality of life in cultivated spaces and uncultivated spaces is imagined, but inverts the hierarchy of that duality: in tales of the greenwood outlaw, adventure is found by entering cultivated space—the city, the town—where danger awaits.

After identifying this changing relationship between the greenwood and the man venturing in its midst, Keen explores a narrow selection of the greenwood outlaw's activities, the narrational mood in which these activities are related, and the thematic relationships between real-world outlaws and literary outlaws. He concludes that, though the outlaw ballads can be gruesome and callously narrated,⁸⁷ the violence was "true to life."⁸⁸ This connection, Keen states,

86. *Ibid.*, 2.

87. *Ibid.*, 3-6.

88. *Ibid.*, 6

“reveals their authors as realists: their forests are peopled with brigands who really did exist.”⁸⁹

Keen concludes his assessment of what the greenwood meant in medieval and late-medieval narratives by admitting that though the outlaw was a character certainly to be found living a violent and liminal life, the “theme of the righting of wrong done, of the lightening of the load of the peasant and the defeat of social injustice. . . does not really belong to the history of highway robbery.”⁹⁰ Keen gives no substantial substantive evidence for this,⁹¹ but he implies that because there are no records of outlaws acting altruistically or benevolently then the chivalric greenwood outlaw—in particular, Robin Hood—is an “ideal, not an actual figure.”⁹² By extension, Keen continues, the greenwood as idealized sanctuary instead of fantastic labyrinth reveals that both types should be relegated to the same “imagined never-never land of legend.”⁹³ This conclusion, however, is premised on the assumption that there was a universal progression in medieval England from in-law to outlaw, then from cultivated space to uncultivated space, and finally from desperate man to ruthless brigand. That requires a great deal of faith to believe. It also assumes a liberal code of ethics in which popular opinion held that perpetrators of violence always did so wrongfully. And lastly, it assumes that only popular disgruntlement at perceived misuse of authority or some other social grievance, in an age that “had as great a respect for law as any period before or since,”⁹⁴ could produce a popular hero whose anti-authoritarian violence is justified. If any three of these proved to not be true of medieval life, then Keen’s conclusion that the chivalric greenwood outlaw represented only an idealized character would begin to

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. For detailed evidence, see Jennifer Brewer’s and Barbara Hanawalt’s essays “Let Her Be Waived: Outlawing Women in Yorkshire, 1293-1294” and “Portraits of Outlaws, Felons, and Rebels in Late Medieval England,” in Alex L. Kaufman, ed., *British Outlaws of Literature and History: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Figures from Robin Hood to Twm Shon Catty* (Jefferson, N.C.:McFarland and Co., 2011), 28-44, and 45-64.

92. Keen, *Outlaws*, 6.

93. Ibid., 7.

94. Ibid., 8.

unravel.

Given the fact that harboring an outlaw was itself a felony punishable by the same fate assigned to the outlaw,⁹⁵ scholars cannot expect a change in the current absence of court records or witness statements praising the chivalry or courtesy of a greenwood outlaw. Similarly, since nearly three-quarters of a century's worth of scholarship on the Robin Hood tales has failed to provide any sort of definitive evidence over what sort of socio-cultural unrest gave birth to the popularity of this greenwood hero, one cannot hope to locate with any certainty a specific time period in which the legend would have first been imagined and/or idealized. However, the real-life transition from in-law to outlaw may not have been as stark and drastic as Keen assumed. It might not have forced someone to plunge into a life of ruthless lawlessness and a life deep in the greenwood. As Jennifer Brewer notes, "one's ties to the community and to one's family did not automatically dissipate once a sentence had been passed,"⁹⁶ and she proves this, in part, by demonstrating several cases where the accused were family members.⁹⁷

This historical reality suggests that even though the greenwood outlaw seldom runs into family, scholars cannot assume that Keen's premise is valid "if real-life outlaw = violent brigand, then chivalric greenwood outlaw = non-realistic character." And if real-life outlaw does not necessarily equal violent brigand, then one can suspect that the greenwood of the outlaw tales is not nearly so far away in an "imagined never-never land of legend" as the greenwood of knightly romance. In short, there is something substantially more realistic about the depictions of the greenwood outlaw in the outlaw tales than about the knight wandering into a mythic realm.

Because the greenwood of the outlaw tales harbors more realistic depictions of the real-

95. Jennifer Brewer, "Let Her Be Waived," 35.

96. *Ibid.*

97. *Ibid.*, 28, 31, 33.

life forest world than the greenwood of courtly romance, the next chapters will focus on how the greenwood is described in the outlaw tales, beginning with *Robin Hood and the Monk*, and which of these stories make the most use of forest-related terminology to create a realistic wooded setting and landscape. Particular attention will be given to actual uses of the term “greenwood,” which does not appear until relatively late in the time-period Keen assigns to the “Matter of the Greenwood,”⁹⁸ and “tristil-tree,” which appears to be intimately linked with the greenwood in the Robin Hood tales.

98. See “greenwood, n.”, *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, November 2015, Oxford University.

Chapter 3:

The Woodland Setting of *Robin Hood and the Monk*

Plot Summary

Of all three stories to be discussed in the next three chapters, *Robin Hood and the Monk* has the most complex plot, but it breaks down into three major sections: 1) Robin's ill-fated journey to Whitsun mass in Nottingham; 2) Little John and Much's efforts to rescue Robin from prison; and 3) Robin's rescue and return to the forest.

The story opens with the problem that Robin Hood cannot be merry with his men in the forest because he needs to attend mass. Robin's men warn him that going to Nottingham to attend mass is a dangerous undertaking, but he does not heed their advice. He commands that only Little John accompany him, and the two set off towards the road to Nottingham. On their walk, Robin's sour attitude leads to an argument with Little John over a shooting wager they had made: Robin owes Little John money, but he refuses to pay. This argument becomes heated, and Little John abandons Robin. Robin Hood presses on and, shortly after arriving at St. Mary's church in Nottingham, he is recognized by a monk. The monk runs to notify the sheriff, and the sheriff calls out the town posse. Although Robin fights masterfully and kills twelve men, his sword breaks when he strikes the sheriff, and he is subsequently captured (although the text relating the moment of his capture is missing).

The second part of the tale opens with Little John, who has returned to the forest, encouraging Robin's forlorn men to take heart. Little John orchestrates a plan for Robin's rescue: he and Much will leave the rest of the merry men to go set an ambush for the monk, who apparently will be taking word to the king that Robin Hood has been captured. Little John and

Much trick the monk into thinking that they will protect him along his way, and then they kill him and his page and steal the document detailing Robin's capture. Afterwards, they journey to the king and report exactly what the monk was to report, lie about the monk's whereabouts, get promoted to "yeomen of the crown," and are sent to Nottingham with instructions to deliver Robin unharmed to the king.

The third part of *Robin Hood and the Monk* relates how Little John and Much return to Nottingham and find that the city is living in fear of attacks by Robin Hood's men. The papers given them by the king secure them access to the city, and then they immediately seek out the sheriff to report the king's command. The sheriff is overjoyed and celebrates with a night of drinking. While he sleeps, Little John and Much sneak into the jail, kill the porter, steal his keys, and unlock Robin's cell. They then walk along the battlements to where the walls are shortest, jump down, and escape into the forest. The sheriff wakes the next morning to find Robin missing, and he calls for a search, but it is too late. Robin Hood and Little John are reconciled in the forest, and Robin's return is celebrated with a feast.

The poem ends with a scene shift to the king who has received word that Robin Hood has escaped. The king expresses his chagrin that he has been duped, and laments that Robin Hood is able to command such loyalty from his men. The narrative ends with the king declaring that they will not speak of this incident again.

The Natural Opening of *Robin Hood and the Monk*

In the introductory stanza of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, the composer describes what seems to be a deciduous forest in late spring or early summer:

In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,

And leves be large and long,
 Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
 To here the foulys song:
 To se the dere draw to the dale,
 And leve the hilles hee,
 And shadow hem in the leves grene,
 Under the grene-wode tre.⁹⁹

It has been roundly argued, most recently and perhaps most forcibly by A. J. Pollard, that because the “natural opening” is found across many literary works from the medieval period, the openings of the early Robin Hood poems are merely formulaic and, thus, meaningless in their specifics. Pollard sums up this sentiment by asserting that, as all the early Robin Hood stories are set in “perpetual early summer,” the forest setting is “unreal,” and thus it is not to be expected to depict or suggest a specific, physical place.¹⁰⁰ That a natural opening is common in medieval stories, however, does not equate to every natural opening being purposeless, unreal, or locationless. In other words, the recurrence of such introductions does not mean that the natural opening is categorically *not* part of the narrative, not part of the plot, or not part of a specific setting, simply because it adheres to a story-telling trend.

An argument could be made that many Middle English stories started in late-spring/early summer for realistic reasons. The most visible of late-medieval English literature, the *Canterbury Tales* offered spring as a plausible time period to set its stories (the season was a catalyst for pilgrimages).¹⁰¹ Traditional as it may be, there are realistic reasons for conflict, adventure, or war

99. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 37-56 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 37, lines 1-8.

100. Pollard, *Imagining*, 57-58.

101. *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 23, lines 1 and 12.

after the sowing of the fields. Further, not all the early Robin Hood stories have the late-spring/early-summer opening: *The Death of Robin Hood*, the basic story of which is found in the *Gest*, lacks it, and perhaps for good reason. The *Death* is a tragedy (the hero is betrayed and murdered), and the others—though they display comedic elements, yet are not “comedies,” *per se*—agree with the idea in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* that, though adverse conditions may bring a grimmer pall to the story, the hero and his named companions overcome.

In the opening of the *Monk*, the new grown foliage is still luminous with its bright color,¹⁰² though the individual leaves of that foliage are already full grown.¹⁰³ In other words, even though the time period of the setting is Whitsun,¹⁰⁴ and thus it is not “summer” in the modern parlance, the composer depicts a time period when spring has completely banished any trace of winter. During this transitory period, the chorus of the mating songbirds reaches a crescendo,¹⁰⁵ and the deer, who have spent the winter in the hills, come down (presumably) to graze in the low lands,¹⁰⁶ where the first new grasses would be lushest, and where they also find shelter in the shade of “the leves grene, /under the grene wode tre.”¹⁰⁷

The birds play a particularly important role in the natural opening. Three of the first twelve lines of the poem are dedicated to their singing.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, the actions of the deer receive prominent treatment and are described in four of the first twelve lines.¹⁰⁹ The summer

102. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 37, line 1.

103. *Ibid.*, line 2.

104. *Ibid.*, line 9. Knight and Ohlgren place Whitsun and the Robin Hood tradition firmly in late May, when flowers are in bloom, which they say is the reason for the name “white” Sunday. See *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 49, note 1.

105. *Ibid.*, lines 3-4.

106. *Ibid.*, lines 5-6.

107. *Ibid.*, lines 7-8.

108. *Ibid.*, lines 3-4, 12.

109. *Ibid.*, lines 5-8. Deer are also found in the opening of *Adam Bell* (see *Adam Bell*, 241, line 5). This sixteenth-century outlaw tale’s first written forms appear in manuscripts dating to at least 1536, but its main characters are mentioned as early as 1432 (235). In this tale, the deer appear in the exact same line as in *Robin Hood and the Monk* (line 5). However, as Knight and Ohlgren note “there seem to be verbal echoes with *Robin Hood and the Monk* . . . the latter seems likely to be the source, as it is sharper-focused in both language and imagery” (Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 235). The primary difference, however, is that *Adam Bell* does not actually open the setting, explicitly, in the green wood—rather,

sunshine also plays a lead role, being a part of three of the first twelve lines,¹¹⁰ and its rays contribute much to the tone of this initial setting: the tale is, at this point, filled with light. The only “shadows”¹¹¹ in sight are those created beneath “the leves grene” of the “grene wode tree.” It should be noted that Knight and Ohlgren, recognizing that here the word is used as a verb, gloss “shadow them” as meaning “shelter,” but there is for shadow being used as a verb meaning “to protect or shelter (a person or thing) from the sun; to shade.”¹¹² Considering that the extant copy of *Robin Hood and the Monk* was found in the collection of a priest,¹¹³ it also might have held the connotations of meaning “To shelter or protect as with covering winds; to enfold with a protecting and beneficent influence ... Chiefly in Biblical use.”¹¹⁴ In either sense, Knight and Ohlgren's gloss of “shelter” is valid, although the type of shelter available is more benign in one sense, and more in earnest in another.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, in a broad sense, birds (the loudest animals in the natural acoustic landscape), deer (the largest and most valuable animals in the natural visual landscape), and sunshine are the dominant motifs of the opening to *Robin Hood and the Monk*; but they are all secondary to the wooded landscape.

The Wooded Landscape and Character Movements in *Robin Hood and the Monk*

The woods in the opening setting of *Robin Hood and the Monk* serve as the visual and metaphorical boundary for all the other motifs: visually as the backdrop, foreground and horizon,

in the green forest.

110. Ibid., lines 1-2, 10.

111. Ibid., lines 7-8.

112. "shadow, v.," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. December 2014. Oxford University Press.

113. Ohlgren and Matheson, *Early Rymes*, 35-38.

114. “shadow v.,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

115. For further religious usage, see “shadwen (v.),” *Middle English Dictionary Online*. February 2015. University of Michigan.

and metaphorically as the “mery”¹¹⁶ and “feyre”¹¹⁷ light- and life-filled place of action. Tree imagery occurs in five of the first twelve lines,¹¹⁸ and six of the first fourteen.¹¹⁹ What is more, whereas the bird and deer motifs are always plural, the woodedness of the opening fourteen lines is twice used singularly.¹²⁰ The second use links the importance of the tree motif directly with Jesus Christ, certainly common enough in this time period,¹²¹ but perhaps the reference is of significance for Robin and his band. The only other mention of a tree in the singular is the place of shelter for the deer from the sun and, if from the sun, then from the light and, consequently, from the vision of predators, humans included.¹²² While this first use is the singular “grene wode tre,” and the second just “tre,” they are both associated with protection. There seems to be more to this “woodedness” than is superficially apparent: there are trees that offer safety and shelter, and some that even offer salvation. Though Robert Pogue Harrison has focused mostly on the negative aspects of Western Civilization’s attitudes towards the forest as a place “of opacity which has allowed the civilization to estrange itself, enchant itself, terrify itself, ironize itself, in short to project into the forest’s shadows its secret and innermost anxieties,”¹²³ the forest of Robin Hood is not a place of such dark reputation.

By way of comparison (the opening setting of the other poems will be explored more fully in Chapters 5 and 6), the introductory stanza of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, though only a third the length of the one in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, is completely dominated by the

116. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 37, line 3

117. *Ibid.*

118. *Ibid.*, lines 1-3, 6-7.

119. *Ibid.*, line 14. “By him who died on a tre.”

120. *Ibid.*, lines 8 and 14.

121. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 49, line 14 gloss. “The oath *Be hym that dyed on tre* is both an asservation and a line filler, often used to produce one of the *b* rhymes in a four-line stanza rhyming *abcb*.”

122. See note 115.

123. Harrison, *Forests*, “Introduction,” xi.

wooded landscape: three of its four lines speak almost exclusively of the trees,¹²⁴ with the only exceptions being the brightness of the sun on the leaves,¹²⁵ and the merriment the sound of the birdsong brings.¹²⁶ Only the deer are missing. In fact, the openings are so similar that Keen has suggested that the opening of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* was taken directly from the opening of *Robin Hood and the Monk*,¹²⁷ and Dobson and Taylor agree, though they believe abortively, due to some missing or illegible part of the original manuscript.¹²⁸ Knight and Ohlgren, however, suggest that there is “no need to assume ... that there is anything missing between lines 6 and 7 of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* ... the ballads characteristically slip very quickly into their action, often giving the impression that the audiences knew quite well who these people were and what they did, so that fussier introductions would be superfluous.”¹²⁹

Like *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, the natural opening of *Robin Hood and the Potter* is also shorter than *Robin Hood and the Monk*, consisting of only one stanza before the narrator switches to direct address of the audience, but even here the wooded landscape dominates the vision. Three of its first four lines deal with vegetation,¹³⁰ although a different perspective is introduced: here are trees that produce an abundance of flowers,¹³¹ a wholly new element which is not found in either *Robin Hood and the Monk* nor *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*.¹³² The

124. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 169-83 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 173, lines 1-3. “When shawes beene sheene and shradds full fayre, /And leeves both large and longe, /Itt is merry, walking in the fayre forrest,”

125. *Ibid.*, line 1. “Shawes beene sheene.” Although as an adjective, “sheene” has primarily carried the connotations of “beautiful,” the usage here appears to favor the second given definition, “Bright, shining, resplendent.” See “sheen, adj.,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

126. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, lines 3-4. “Itt is merry, walking in the fayre forrest, /To heare the small birds singe.”

127. Keen, *Outlaws*, 121.

128. Dobson and Taylor, *Rymes*, 140-41.

129. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 171.

130. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 59-79 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 62, lines 1-2, 4.

131. *Ibid.*, line 2. “bloschoms on every bowe”

132. Granted, “shradds full fair” (173, line 1) in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* could also be interpreted as signifying

presence of flowers may be indicative of what J.C. Holt believed to be the *Potter*'s parody of courtly love.¹³³ Regardless, the opening setting of *Robin Hood and the Potter* is not far afield from the other two poems: granted, the flower motif replaces the sunshine motif, and the deer motif disappears, but the birdsong and the wooded landscape motifs remain.

The Greenwood Tree and the Tristil-Tree

In reflection on this dominant motif of “woodedness,” it is useful to remember it has often been taken for granted that Robin Hood and his men live in the “greenwood.” This theme has grown to such prominent degree, and not just in its explicit appearance in the Robin Hood stories, that Maurice Keen has elevated it to represent one of the four dominant themes (or “matters”) of Old and Middle English literature (the other three being the “matter of Rome,” the “matter of the Britain,” and the “matter of France”).¹³⁴ Nevertheless, perhaps it is not so certain that these three early stories all place the abode of Robin and his men in some sort of generic “greenwood.” For starters, in *Robin Hood and the Monk* the first mention of the “greenwood” is not of a wood at all. Specifically, line eight depicts the “grene wode tre” as the sheltering place for the deer; this seems to be a singular tree or a certain *type* of tree. Later in the same tale, after Robin Hood has gone to Nottingham and suffered capture by the sheriff, the story shifts to the scene surrounding Little John and the merry men who, if one follows the prior affirmation by the composer that Little John went to “mery Scherwode”¹³⁵ after his quarrel with Robin, also seem to be gathered beneath a specific tree; Little John refers to it as their “tristel-tre.”¹³⁶ There is no

branches full of flowers.

133. Holt, J. C.. *Robin Hood*. 1982, 3rd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2011), 126.

134. For details on Keen's argument, see *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, 1-8.

135. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 39, line 65.

136. *Ibid.*, 41, line 143.

indication that the merry men have changed locations since Robin and Little John departed. It seems that, at this point in the narrative, the setting has returned to the same place where the story began. If this is the case, then the piece of ground occupied by Robin and his men in *Robin Hood and the Monk* is at the base of a particular tree, readily identifiable and found by the merry men (and thus, at least in its identifiableness and familiarity, by the audience), and clearly a place of meeting, redoubt, defense, or “shelter” for them. If the tristil-tree is intended to signify a return to the same place described at the beginning of the story, it could also be assumed to be the focus of the narrator’s opening comments on the story’s setting, as if he were putting himself, and by extension the audience, directly among Robin’s company.

These ideas are reinforced by Little John's command to the whole band, as he and Much are about leave to rescue Robin:

... kepe well owre tristil-tre,
 under the levys smale,
 and spare non of this venyson,
 that gose in thys vale.¹³⁷

This command will be examined in detail later in the chapter, but remember that the audience of this command is the whole of Robin's band, and the very presence of a “band” continues to define the story’s “tristil-tree” setting. It has been remarked that Robin does not seem to be the leader of a large group of men.¹³⁸ That may be valid, depending on one's perspective of the word “large,” but in order to imagine what sort of tree would serve as a redoubt or place of defense for the merry men, it would be worthwhile to imagine what size group they comprise.

The first indication of how many men are in Robin’s band occurs in the eighth stanza.

137. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 41, lines 143-146.

138. Pollard, *Imagining*, 1-2.

Much, upon hearing of Robin's intentions to go to mass in Nottingham, pleads with him:

Take twelve of thi wyght yemen,

Well weppynd, be thi side.

Such on wolde thi selfe slon,

That twelve dar not abyde.¹³⁹

Robin replies, “Of all my mery men ... /By my feith I wil non have.”¹⁴⁰ From this exchange, two things becomes readily apparent: primarily, at the very least, there are fourteen men in Robin's band, including himself. This conclusion can be reached by noting that if Robin would choose twelve of his men at Much's suggestion, there must be a remainder or else Much could not have said “take twelve *of* thi wyght yemen” [emphasis added]. At the very least, that remainder would be one man, but since Robin obviously cannot be one of the twelve he takes with him, a figure of fourteen merry men, minimum, seems appropriate. This is important for an accurate understanding of the audience's conception of Robin's band because, if a group of fourteen men is gathered underneath one tree, that tree would need to be noticeably large or wide. Further, if the tree or this kind of tree is sheltering them as it does the deer, it would need to have a number of low-hanging branches. Further, although other scholars may contend this lies heavily in the realm of speculation, it would seem appropriate that there are at least twice that number of men in the band, bringing the total number of merry men in *Robin Hood and the Monk* to twenty-five, including Robin. This seems likely since, given Little John's later direction for the merry men to “kepe well owre tristil-tre,”¹⁴¹ there is precedent (which is fleshed out much later in the story) that a contingent of men is always left behind to guard their redoubt. The *Middle English*

139. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 38, lines 31-34.

140. *Ibid.*, lines 35-36.

141. *Ibid.*, 41, line 143.

Dictionary gives the meanings of “trist(e)” as “*Hunt*. An appointed station where hunters await the game,” and “a place of concealment, a redoubt; also, *a staging area for military assault*” [emphasis added].¹⁴² It is also of note that in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* Robin similarly exhorts the contingent left behind to be prepared to guard their home base.¹⁴³

All of these things considered, if there is reason to believe that Robin's band holds at least a minimum of fourteen to twenty-five men, surely this would necessitate an understanding by the audience that the “tristil-tre” is quite large. This idea does not even include horses, which would need to be concealed too. In at least two of the stories, Robin and his men clearly have access to horses. In *Robin Hood and the Monk*, it is the murder of the monk and his page,¹⁴⁴ who are obviously on horseback,¹⁴⁵ which gives Little John and Much mounts to ride on the long road to London. In *Robin Hood and the Potter*, when Robin sends a white palfrey back to the sheriff's wife after he has robbed her husband,¹⁴⁶ it seems to be from some stock of horses that Robin's band has at its disposal. It can be assumed that the white palfrey was not the sheriff's to begin with, as Robin clearly states “Thereffore schall ye leffe yowre hors with hos.”¹⁴⁷ Further, it seems unlikely that Robin would give away his last horse, or that the only horse the band boasted would be one that could clearly serve as a gift for a noble woman. Therefore, it seems logical to assume that, at least in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, Robin's band has a personal stock.

Even without horses, however, a bare minimum number of merry men would still take up a substantial portion of ground; or if they sit to some extent *in* the tree, would still need a tree with a number of low-hanging, man-supporting branches.

142. See “trist(e), (n.),” *Middle English Dictionary Online*. March 2015. University of Michigan.

143. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, line 17. “Buske ye bowne ye, my mery men all”

144. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 43, lines 203-206.

145. *Ibid.*, 42-43, lines 157, 185, 186, 189.

146. *Ibid.*, 71, lines 286-289, 300.

147. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 71, line 278.

In returning to the observations on Little John's command to the merry men before he and Much go “forthe”¹⁴⁸ from the tristil-tre to rescue Robin, it is important that at the beginning of the story the deer come to a “dale,” where they “shadow ... in the leves grene, /under the grene wode tre.”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, Little John's command for the merry men to “spare non of this venyson, /that gose in thys vale,”¹⁵⁰ reinforces the idea that the opening setting and the place to which Little John returns after his quarrel with Robin are one and the same. “Vale” and “dale” are more than rhyming words: they signify the same place.¹⁵¹

But there is another correlation between the opening setting of *Robin Hood and the Monk* and the “tristil-tre” setting described upon Little John's return to the band. Little John commands the merry men to guard the “tristil-tre, /under the *levys smale*”¹⁵² [emphasis added]. On the other hand, in the opening setting, the deer shelter “in the *leves grene*, under the grene wode tre”¹⁵³ [emphasis added]. In both cases, the composer seems to imply that the leaves of these particular trees are worth mentioning; in the first instance the tree has small leaves, and in the latter, green leaves. Although it could be speculated that these adjectives were added simply for meter, it is most curious to find repetition like this, as the composers of these early stories rarely repeat the

148. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 41, lines 146-47.

149. *Ibid.*, 37, lines 7-8.

150. *Ibid.*, 41, lines 145-146.

151. The *Oxford English Dictionary* actually uses the word “dale” to define “vale.” See “vale, n.1”. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. September 2014. Oxford University Press. While “dale” is the older of the two from an etymological standpoint—its first recorded usage in c893 (“dale, n.1”. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. September 2014. Oxford University Press (accessed September 18, 2014).), versus c1400 for “vale”—and, as the definition for “dale” notes, “In literary English chiefly poetical, and in the phrases *hill and dale*, *dale and down*,” (as the latter is used in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 177, line 135). Conversely, The *Middle English Dictionary* uses “dale” to define “vale.” as “A defined area, often long and narrow, of lower elevation than the surrounding terrain, sometimes bisected by a stream or river, a dale, valley, ravine, river bottom. . . a valley conceived as a pleasant spot, a wooded retreat, dell. . . a hidden or remote place” See “vāle (n.)”. *Middle English Dictionary Online*. September 2015. University of Michigan. Further, the *Middle English Dictionary* uses the same word, “dell,” to define “dale” as well as “vale.” See “dāle (n.)”. *Middle English Dictionary Online*. September 2015. University of Michigan. It seems appropriate to assume that, at least in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, these two are used interchangeably by the composer to signify the same place.

152. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 41, 144-145.

153. See note 149.

same adjective in such close proximity,¹⁵⁴ regardless of whether the word is used to sustain the meter. When comparing the description of the leaves being small with the affirmation from the poem's second line that the leaves of the *forest* are "large and long," meaning they are already full-grown, it makes one wonder if the tree beneath which the deer shelter and the place where Robin's band shelters are unique to (or, at least, remarkable in) the wooded landscape. It is possible that the descriptions of "grene" leaves and "small" leaves are used to denote the foliage of evergreen tree.

This idea can be supported by the orientation of the leaves in the description given by the monk of Robin Hood's abode: "this traytur name is Robyn Hode, /under the grene wode lynde."¹⁵⁵ Knight and Ohlgren have glossed "lynde" as meaning "linden trees" in this instance, and also in an earlier instance in line forty-two.¹⁵⁶ The variation in spelling between these two seems nothing more than a desire by the scribe to produce a better rhyme for "mynde"¹⁵⁷ using "lynde."¹⁵⁸ Still, there is yet another instance of this spelling in line 309, yet here it is rhymed with "styne,"¹⁵⁹ and Knight and Ohlgren gloss the word as simply "tree." In the final instance of the word,¹⁶⁰ however, the scribe returns to the primary spelling from line forty-two ("lyne"). Knight and Ohlgren refrain from providing a gloss, perhaps because they felt the other three glosses should have proven sufficient for the reader to know this to mean the same as the near exact replication of the expression in line forty-two. But a problem arises soon thereafter that

154. The only exception is in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, when Guy of Gisborne commends Robin's skill with a bow: "Goode fellow, they shooting is goode". See 177, line 128.

155. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 40, lines 91-92.

156. *Ibid.*, 38, lines 41-42. "And we well shete a peny," seid Litull Jon, /under the grene wode lyne." We may have reason to suspect this gloss to be in error, as in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, Knight and Ohlgren gloss the word "lyne" as meaning "in a row." See *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, line 6.

157. *Ibid.*, 40, line 94.

158. *Ibid.*, 46, line 302. "as light as lef on lynde."

159. *Ibid.*, line 300.

160. *Ibid.*, line 309. "I have brought the under the grene-wode lyne."

may cast these glosses in doubt and validate the proposed conflation of the “grene wode tre” and the “tristil-tre.” A. J. Pollard has examined the use of the “tristil-tre” in early fifteenth-century hunting literature, most notably through the descriptions found in *The Master of Game* written by Edward of Norwich, Second Duke of York. Pollard notes that the “tryst,” where the chief huntsman would place the gentleman to await the driven deer, “was frequently placed beside or in front of a prominent tree.”¹⁶¹ This is useful for two reasons: 1) the larger the tree, the more cover will be given to the hunter, and, perhaps, 2) as a point of reference for the men who will be driving the deer. However, though these observations compliment the understanding that Robin as “an outlawed forester,”¹⁶² they do not seriously detract from the argument that the “tristil-tre” could be an evergreen.

After Little John and Robin make amends, which occurs “under the grene-wode lyne,”¹⁶³ and shortly *after* the narrator declares that Robin was “in mery Scherwode,”¹⁶⁴ Robin Hood and his men immediately celebrate his rescue and return: “they filled in wyne and made hem glad, under the levys smale.”¹⁶⁵ Once again, there remains the problem of how an audience is supposed to equate the description of small leaves with the large, long leaves of the deciduous trees described earlier in the introduction. Simply put, linden trees¹⁶⁶ of the *Tilia* family do not have diminutive leaves; that distinction belongs to evergreens, like the English yew tree. Nevertheless, one could argue that there are types of deciduous tree with smaller leaves, but it would certainly not be those from the *Tilia* family. Further, if the deer can shelter *in* the “leves grene,” *under* the “grene wode tre,” the leaves would need to be close to the ground. Mature English yew trees can

161. *Imagining*, 51.

162. *Ibid.*, 53.

163. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 46, line 309.

164. *Ibid.*, line 301.

165. *Ibid.*, 47, lines 323-25.

166. See note 156.

create a veritable skirt around their trunk with the low-hanging lower branches. The Royal Horticultural Society of England refers to their habit as “bushy,” which would provide excellent cover to the hunter.¹⁶⁷

But what is perhaps most compelling about this examination of the tristil-tree setting is that, given the setting and action of the opening stanza, Robin’s return to the tristil-tree celebration is complete with “pastes of venison.”¹⁶⁸ This may not seem a curious observation, nor one out of place at an outlaw feast,¹⁶⁹ but it may further illuminate my previous comments regarding Little John's command to the merry men before he and Much set out to rescue Robin.¹⁷⁰ Little John, who was the only one of the merry men at the tristil-tree to keep his “mynde” after Robin's capture,¹⁷¹ was very likely commanding them to prepare a grand feast¹⁷² for what he believed would be his triumphant return to their stronghold after he rescued Robin. That very feast, however, will feature the meat of the deer, which, in the opening setting, shelter beneath a specific type of tree. If the narrator's point of view is the same as that of Robin and his men at the story’s opening, and if these same men have not changed locations between Little John's departure with Robin and his return alone, then the presence of “pastes of venison” reinforces the argument that the deer in the opening and the deer being eaten at the end are the same deer, and that they populate the very same dale/vale wherein the “tristil-tre,” or tristil-trees, grow.

167. See “Taxus Baccata: English Yew,” *Royal Horticultural Society Online*, September 2015.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/Plants/18001/i-Taxus-baccata-i/Details>

¹⁶⁸ *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 47, line 325.

169. Adam Bell and his companions were all outlawed for poaching. See “Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley,” in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 235-67 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 241, line 13).

170. See note 162.

171. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 41, line 123-24.

172. Even though the interim period would have included the lengthy trip to London (*Robin Hood and the Monk*, 41-47, lines 147-320), the merry men did as he commanded and were ready to celebrate in their stronghold the moment their master returned safely.

In summation, the descriptions of the tristil-tree setting of *Robin Hood and the Monk* may not be, as A. J. Pollard believed, “unreal.”¹⁷³ The place descriptions given in the forest are not ephemeral, fantastic or generic locations,¹⁷⁴ although, certainly, they are hidden from modern, GPS-based desire to pinpoint an exact stretch of ground. In that sense, they are *un-named* places as far as townships go. However, that does not mean they are location-less. Robin and his band do live in a certain location, twice described as “under” certain leaves. They have a stronghold (or at least a redoubt or “staging area for military assault”¹⁷⁵), their “tristil-tre,” which, for the band, serves as well as any township’s name does in government writ. And, lastly, they live under the tristil-tree, in part, because they can sustain themselves on the deer that live within the line-of-sight of their lair.

It is also useful to remember that Robin’s men are not all “location-less”; Much, for one, is the “Miller’s son,”¹⁷⁶ and his uncle has a house on a roadway less than a day’s journey outside Nottingham where the outlaws can go (apparently) without fear of imminent capture.¹⁷⁷ Lastly, they are not nameless outlaws, neither in the minds of the audience nor in the minds of the characters who inhabit these tales; even the porter of the Nottingham gates knows the names of the outlaws who have, supposedly, been attacking Nottingham daily. Though in this case there is reason to believe the porter is being shown to be a buffoon or a great exaggerator, since Little John explicitly told the merry men to prepare for a return feast¹⁷⁸ and said nothing about assaulting Nottingham. Further, the porter lists Little John and Much—who have been absent from the area since the day after Robin Hood’s capture—as two of the three men who have been

173. See note 102.

174. Pollard, *Imagining*, 62. “The English forest had never been what forest was imagined to be, and in the fifteenth century, when the stories of Robin Hood were recorded, it was in the process of further contraction and change.”

175. See note 142.

176. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 38, line 29.

177. *Ibid.*, 41, 149.

178. See note 137.

attacking the town.¹⁷⁹ Obviously, Little John and Much have not been involved in this business.

The following chapter will apply the same sort of close reading of forest-related imagery to the opening setting and narrative landscape of *Robin Hood and the Potter*. As with *Robin Hood and the Monk*, the movement of the characters through the landscape and what words are used to describe it, and thus frame the movement from place to place, will be a primary concern. Special consideration will also be given to the tristil-tree motif and its association with the greenwood.

179. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 44, lines 245-46.

Chapter 3

The Woodland Setting of Robin Hood and the Potter

Plot Summary

Though it has been argued that *Robin Hood and the Potter* comes from a different tradition than the other early Robin Hood poems due to its more comedic or carnivalesque story,¹⁸⁰ it also demonstrates a considerable level of awareness by its composer to depict a realistic setting and landscape. The story begins with an encounter between Robin Hood and a potter traveling along a road to Nottingham. The potter is known to Little John, who once tried unsuccessfully to exact a road toll from him. Robin and Little John wager whether Robin can succeed where Little John failed, but the potter successfully resists Robin's advances. This scenario ends with an accord between Robin and the potter, where Robin will go to Nottingham to sell the potter's pots, and the potter will enjoy the company of Little John and the other merry men until his return.

The second part of the story is set entirely within the city of Nottingham, although it does contain references to the greenwood that set up the third part of the story. When Robin Hood arrives in Nottingham disguised as a potter, he attracts attention to himself by selling the potter's pots well below market value. This draws the interest of the sheriff's wife, to whom Robin makes a gift of five pots. In gratitude, the sheriff and his wife receive Robin into their home, dine with him, and then attend an archery contest that Robin wins. Robin's prowess with the bow

180. See Douglas Gray, "The Robin Hood Poems," in *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*, ed. Stephen Knight (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999), 3-38 at 20. Gray points out that the *Gest* is not as much of a straightforward "merry" tale as *Robin Hood and the Potter*. See also J. C. Holt, *Robin Hood*, 33. For more information on the carnivalesque treatment of fifteenth-century markets, see Thomas H. Ohlgren, "Merchant Adventure in 'Robin Hood and the Potter,'" in *Robin Hood: Medieval and Post-Medieval*, ed. Helen Phillips (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005) 69-78. See also Thomas H. Ohlgren and Lister M. Matheson, "'Pottys, gret!'" Marketplace Ideology in *Robin Hood and the Potter* and the Manuscript Context of Cambridge, University Library MS Ee.4.35," in *Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465-1560: Texts, Contexts, and Ideology* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 68-96.

piques the sheriff's interest, and Robin assures the sheriff that he can lead him to Robin's tristil-tree.

The third part of the story relates how Robin and his men humiliate the sheriff. The morning after the archery contest, Robin leads the sheriff to the greenwood and then calls his men with a horn-blast. His men appear, they assist Robin in robbing the sheriff all his gear, and then Robin sends the sheriff home with gifts of a white palfrey and a golden ring for his wife. There is a suggestion that Robin has cuckolded the sheriff. When the sheriff arrives home, he and his wife engage in a humorous exchange about how the sheriff has been duped, and the story leaves the sheriff bemoaning he ever ventured into the greenwood. It closes by revisiting the greenwood, where the potter and Robin amicably part ways with the understanding that the potter is now a *de facto* member of Robin's group.

The Natural Opening of *Robin Hood and the Potter*

The natural opening of *Robin Hood and the Potter*, which is so prominent and detailed at the beginning of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, is more cursory in this tale:

In schomer, when the leves spryng,
 The bloschoms on every bowe,
 So merey doyt the berdys sing
 Yn wodys merey now.¹⁸¹

Once again the story is set in summer, and once again in the transitory period between the end of spring and the fullness of summer. The "leves spryng," and the physicality of their new growth is reiterated by the description of flowers hanging on the branches. In their notes for *Robin Hood*

181. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 62, lines 1-4.

and the Monk, Knight and Ohlgren insist that Whitsun (“White Sunday”) is so called because “many wild flowers are in bloom,” and also that the holy day generally falls in late May.¹⁸² But is it a given that the time period is the same? Certainly, both poems begin by invoking a late-spring/summer atmosphere, but in *Robin Hood and the Potter* the “leves spryng,” and this seems more like the *revardie*, or late April time period, which Knight and Ohlgren dismissed as being part of the Robin Hood tradition.¹⁸³

Robin Hood and the Potter tells a story in which Robin attempts to exact a road toll on a passing potter, and then he is bested by the potter in a “Robin meets his match” scenario. Robin then assumes the potter’s identity, travels to Nottingham market, attracts the attention of the sheriff’s wife, and gets himself invited to dine and spend the night at the sheriff’s house. During his time at the sheriff’s house, Robin-as-the-potter impresses the sheriff with his shooting, and then he tricks the sheriff into thinking that the following day he will lead him to Robin Hood. The next day, when they reach the forest, Robin reveals himself, robs the sheriff of all of his belongings, and then sends him back to Nottingham with gifts for the sheriff’s wife.

Just as in the natural opening of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, in *Robin Hood and the Potter* there is a chorus of mating birds, and the composer makes a point of declaring the forest atmosphere to be “merry.” Helen Philips has called this particular attribution to the forest to be expressive of a “reversal of power which is typical, if temporary, in Robin Hood adventures,” and that its use is primary ironic in this story.¹⁸⁴ Phillips highlights how Robin remarks to the sheriff, upon his return to the greenwood, “Here het is merey ... /For a man that had hawt to

182. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 49, note 1 gloss.

183. *Ibid.*

184. Helen Philips, “Forest, Town, and Road: The Significance of Places and Names in Some Robin Hood Texts,” in *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justice*, ed. Thomas Hahn, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 210.

spend ...”¹⁸⁵ But, regardless of whether or not it is a “merry” outcome for the sheriff, it is clear that the natural openings of both *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter* are not stagnant or simply “filler.” Robin has a reason to be where he is because it is a place (and a time) where one can be happy. What is perhaps more ironic, however, is that the sheriff is *not* normally happy to go to the forest. When his wife says “[t]he screffes hart was never so leythe, /The feyre foreyst to se,” it is not, as Phillips notes, because the sheriff usually took pleasure in going to the forest.¹⁸⁶ Rather, it is that he is finally happy to go to the forest because he expects to ambush Robin Hood. At this point in the narrative, Robin and the sheriff’s wife are arguably deep in cahoots,¹⁸⁷ and in her thorough enjoyment of the sheriff’s humiliated return from the forest¹⁸⁸ and her response to his explanation, which reveals she knew Robin was the potter (though the sheriff does not mention this in his explanation).¹⁸⁹ Robin and the sheriff’s wife’s relationship is also insinuated in her condolence to the sheriff when he arrives empty-handed: at least in Nottingham, he can have plenty of property.¹⁹⁰ All these seem to reinforce the idea that the sheriff’s place to be merry is inside the town, surrounded by his possessions, while Robin’s place is in the forest, surrounded by nature.

The Woodland Landscape and Character Movements in *Robin Hood and the Potter*

The natural opening in *Robin Hood and the Potter* ends with the composer’s observation of the “merry” woods, which, though they are not named with a geographical location, are nonetheless within a day’s ride of Nottingham. The two following stanzas commend the

185. *Robin Hood and the Monk.*, 70, lines 250-51.

186. “Forest, Town, and Road,” 210. “We have also been shown the deluded victim’s pleasure in the forest.”

187. Robin has given the sheriff’s wife a gold ring, and she’s apparently having a private conversation with him.

188. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 72, lines 302-03.

189. *Ibid.*, lines 304-05.

190. *Ibid.*, lines 307 and gloss.

audience's class¹⁹¹ and the class of story's hero, which is exactly the same as the audience in all respects save that he was "on of the best that yever bare bowe,"¹⁹² and that he was "fre."¹⁹³

Just as in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, after the third stanza of *Robin Hood and the Potter*, the action begins: Robin Hood is standing "among hes mery maney."¹⁹⁴ Also, just as in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, in *Robin Hood and the Potter* Robin's band is not deep in the forest, but, rather, they are quite close to the open or cultivated land.¹⁹⁵ "Leye," according to the *Middle English Dictionary*, signifies "open land," "field, or "opening in the woods,"¹⁹⁶ and "dale" signifies "a valley, dell, glen; valley bottom."¹⁹⁷ Although this description of "open-land" in *Robin Hood and the Potter* is not a perfect match for the meanings of "vale"¹⁹⁸ and "dale," it is notable that in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* Sir Guy claims to live by "dale and downe."¹⁹⁹ This description seems diametrically opposed to Robin, who lives "in the wood."²⁰⁰ "Downe," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, can mean "An open expanse of elevated land; *spec.*, in *pl.*, the treeless undulating chalk uplands of the south and south-east of England, serving chiefly for pasturage; applied to similar tracts elsewhere."²⁰¹

In other words, the outlaws are not simply on the edge of the wild woods; they are also

191. *Ibid.*, 62, line 5-6. "god yemen, /comley, corteys, and god"

192. *Ibid.*, line 7.

193. *Ibid.*, line 10.

194. *Ibid.*, line 14. It is notable that the indication that Robin Hood is standing (possibly to imply watchfulness or a readiness for action) also agrees with the earliest extant example of Robin Hood in verse, found in Lincoln Cathedral Library 132. See Ohlgren and Matheson, *Early Poems*, 18. "Royn hod in scherewod stod, hodud and hathud, hosut and schod; Ffour and thuynti arowus he bar in hit hondus."

195. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 62, line 16.

196. "lei(e (n(3))," *Middle English Dictionary Online*. September 2015. University of Michigan. "A piece of open land; a field, meadow, lawn; an opening in the woods, a natural glade or a clearing."

197. "dāle, (n.)," *Middle English Dictionary Online*. September 2015. University of Michigan.

198. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 38, line 45.

199. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 177, line 135.

200. *Ibid.*, line 139.

201. See "down, n.1," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. September 2014. Oxford University Press. See also "dōun(e (n.)," *Middle English Dictionary Online*. University of Michigan. "A hill or elevation. . .grass-grown upland; open country."

already on, or within sight of, a road across open land. Robin, upon seeing the potter, remarks that the potter “long hayt hantyd this wey,”²⁰² and further that, as the potter was not “corteys”²⁰³ (in contrast to the descriptions of the audience and Robin Hood himself), he had always refused to pay “on peney of pawage.”²⁰⁴ Even though Knight and Ohlgren gloss “leye”²⁰⁵ as “open land,”²⁰⁶ it would be difficult to assess Robin's use of “wey” and “pawage” as characterizing anything other than a road. The *Middle English Dictionary* notes that usage of this word signifies “an established road, a main thoroughfare, highway; a principal road between cities,”²⁰⁷ and finds usage of “pawage” as meaning “a tax or toll towards the paving of highways or streets” beginning in the mid-fifteenth century.²⁰⁸ Lastly, of course the potter is traveling along a road: with a cart full of ceramic vessels, it would be hard to place this man's progress over rough or off-road terrain.

It comes as no surprise that the Robin Hood and his men not only operate in the woods and near the open countryside, but also in or near towns. Soon after Robin spies the potter, Little John claims that he tried to exact a road toll from the potter at Wentbridge, but the potter defeated him in single combat.²⁰⁹ Stephen Knight suggests that *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter* seem to offer different settings:

Robin Hood and the Monk is evidently set outside and inside Nottingham, and once names the forest as Sherwood. But though the potter visits the same town, the forest is never named as Sherwood and curiously Little John knew this potter

202. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 62, line 18.

203. *Ibid.*, line 19.

204. *Ibid.*, line 20.

205. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 62, line 16.

206. Knight and Ohlgren, *Outlaw Tales*, 62, line 16, gloss.

207. “wei, (n.1)”. *Middle English Dictionary Online*. September 2014. University of Michigan.

208. “pavage, n.1”. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

209. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 62, lines 21-24.

from Wentbridge, a town adjacent to Yorkshire Barnesdale, which would too far away for a potter to travel to Nottingham Market.²¹⁰

This reasoning, however, assumes that the market is not part of a feast day festival, which would have drawn people and artisans to the market and festivities (like an archery contest) from much further away. Also, the sheriff's wife uses a *modo di dire* that gives credence to the idea that it is unusual for the potter to be in Nottingham: she tells the potter that she will buy his pots when he comes "to thes contré ayen."²¹¹ Still, while *Robin Hood and the Monk* certainly places the story at Whitsun, there is nothing to suggest the *Potter* is set during the exact same liturgical time period. However, considering that there is also a shooting match set up in this story, a feast day festival is not to be ruled out.

There ends the opening setting of the *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and surely the most obvious remark that can be made as to the difference between this opening setting and the opening setting of *Robin Hood and the Monk* is that the latter lies fairly within the wilderness, though not deep in the forest, and the former in a more inhabited, cultivated or otherwise engineered area. Indeed, in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, it is not until much later that the composer even makes mention of the woodland again, but that this, as will be explained in more detail (and as has already been seen in *Robin Hood and the Monk*), helps to further define the location of the opening setting.

The Greenwood Tree and the Tristil-Tree

In line 222 of *Robin Hood and the Potter*, when the woodland setting is mentioned again, it is in the same specific setting for where Robin Hood and his men abide as is noted in *Robin*

210. Knight, *Mythic Biography*, 20.

211. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 67, line 147.

Hood and the Monk: “under hes tortyll-tre.”²¹² These words are put directly into Robin's mouth by the composer, and the fact that they are delivered into the Sheriff's ear by Robin-disguised-as-the-potter should signify two things: primarily, since this is (of course) a trap that the clever hero is laying for the sheriff, the sheriff must already know Robin abides beneath a particular tree. Why else would the sheriff or the audience get the significance of this comment? If the sheriff knows that Robin and the “tortyll-tree” are closely related, then the audience more than likely does too. And if the audience knows that, then that speaks volumes for the understanding that Robin was, as Stephen Knight believes, a “yeoman forester.”²¹³ However, in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, it becomes apparent that not all tristil-trees are the band's personal tristil-trees. In this story, Little John seems to refer to a random tree he and Robin come across as “this trusty tree.” This usage is starkly opposed to personal possessive “hes tortyll-tre” in *Robin Hood and the Potter* and “owre tristil-tre” in *Robin Hood and the Monk*. Robin's tristil-tree is his home base and his men would know it if they saw it. The one Little John mentions in line thirty-two of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* will be a temporary meeting tree, in case Little John is ambushed on his way to find out what Sir Guy is doing, or things go wrong in some other way.

As has been noted, just before Robin-as-the-potter and the sheriff leave Nottingham, there is an exchange between the sheriff's wife and Robin in which the sheriff's wife remarks “the screffes hart was never so leythe, /the feyre foreyst to se.”²¹⁴ Immediately following, the composer provides what amounts to a second natural opening. The shift in scenery from the town to the forest is introduced thusly:

And when he cam yn to the foreyst,

212. *Ibid.*, 69, lines 221-22. “A hundred torne y haffe schot with hem, /under hes tortyll-tre.”

213. Pollard, *Imagining*, 53. “The symbolism of the trystel tree depends on Robin being clearly identified by the audience. . . as an outlawed forester.”

214. *Robin Hood and the Potter*, 70, lines 244-45.

Under the leffe grene,
 Berdys there sange on bowhes prest,
 Het was great goy to se.²¹⁵

It may be remarked that “Under the leffes grene” seems to follow more of a general description of the “foreyst,” but there is evidence that this is not the case. First, at the beginning of this tale, Robin's band is grouped close enough to the edge of the forest to espy the “leye”; secondly, Robin-as-the-potter has already described *where* Robin passes his time;²¹⁶ and thirdly, after Robin-as-the-potter and the sheriff arrive “under the leffes grene,” Robin must call his men to the tristil-tre with a loud²¹⁷ horn blast because they are “fer down yn the wodde.”²¹⁸ The last observation by the composer seems to reinforce the idea that—much like in *Robin Hood and the Monk*—the story has returned to where it began: and by that, under the “tortyll-tree.”

This idea that Robin and the sheriff have returned to Robin's home base is further reinforced by the language used by the composer from this point on in the story. After the sheriff laments that he allowed Robin to leave Nottingham and “com yn feyre forest,”²¹⁹ Robin sends him back to Nottingham bereft of all his gear and his horse. Then, in her greeting to him, the sheriff's wife asks the sheriff how he “fared yn grene foreyst.”²²⁰ In his reply, the sheriff uses the term “grene wod.”²²¹ After their conversation, the composer once again employs direct address to shift the scene back to Robin and the potter, whom he states are “ondyr the grene bowhe.”²²² This progression of particularizing language is even further particularized a few lines later when the

215. *Ibid.*, lines 246-49.

216. *Ibid.*, 69, lines 221-22.

217. *Ibid.*, line 255. “foll god”

218. *Ibid.*, 257.

219. *Ibid.*, 71, line 274.

220. *Ibid.*, line 294.

221. *Ibid.*, line 298.

222. *Ibid.*, 72, line 309.

composer specifically states that Robin, the sheriff, and the potter all parted “ondenethe the grene wod tre.”²²³ And, finally, after their business is concluded, Robin makes a promise to the potter that whenever he comes to “grene wod,”²²⁴ (where the “grene wood tre” grows) he will be welcome. This also is particularizing. Obviously, Robin's men operate in many places, on and off-road (at least from Wentbridge to Nottingham), but the potter does not. The potter must stick to the road (and, so it often seems, do Robin Hood and his men!). This “grene wod tre” must have something particular about it for Robin to use it as a specific place where he can be found and which the potter will recognize as being part of Robin's domain.

In summation, these two earliest poems have similar modes of explaining how the opening setting figures into the story as a specific part of the landscape. Both have a sort of “there-and-back-again” approach to storytelling, and it is assumed that the audience knows that, when the natural opening ends, Robin Hood and his band are in a specific location, beneath the boughs of a certain type of tree: the greenwood tree. However, this often does not become apparent until after a character returns to the band. In both stories, after Robin Hood leaves the company of his men (or his men and the potter), he or Little John (or both) eventually return to their starting location. As such, it can realistically be supposed that this place is their normal “setting,” or abode. The composers establish the same the opening settings using recurrent, particularizing language that employs the same motifs of natural scenery to indicate a particular place. Therefore, even though the earliest extant copy of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* is clearly not contemporaneous with these earlier stories, it may be possible to compare it to them by using the same method of analysis of the motifs in the opening setting, (particularly greenwood tree or tristil-tree) and how they describe the setting surrounding Robin and his band

223. Ibid., 321.

224. Ibid., 318

to ascertain if their settings and landscapes are aesthetically and thematically coherent. The most valid objection to this idea is to say that the *tone* of *Robin Hood and the Potter* is so much different than that of *Robin Hood and the Monk* or *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* (the two latter seem more violent, and the former borderlines on being burlesque or silly) that they could not be considered similar enough to be part of the same tradition. However, since as early as the 1440s people enjoyed Robin Hood comedies *and* tragedies,²²⁵ one can assume that there were variations on the tradition that met the needs of certain audiences, while still being true to the motifs found in the original tradition. Nevertheless, the differences between the stories are bridged well enough by motifs such as these in the physical setting to give the feeling of an underlying skeleton of indelible trademarks which bind the early poems together into a coherent body. These trademarks demand they be treated, if not inter-textually coherent, then inter-textually cohesive beyond broad superficial strokes by the composers, and landing much closer to a canon of largely uncontradictory early stories, known far and wide.

The following chapter will carry these preceding arguments and analyses of forest-related terminology in the setting and landscape of *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter* and apply them to *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. Therein, the greenwood-tree/tristil-tree association will be examined to its fullest extent, including an exploration of the possibility that the audience of the early Robin Hood tales might have associated this motif with a particular type of tree that was particularly suited to the actual soil-types found in Nottinghamshire and south Yorkshire.

225. See note 11.

Chapter 4

The Woodland Setting of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*

Plot Summary

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne relates the tale of how Robin overcomes a man who wants to kill him, and how Little John kills the sheriff. At the beginning of the poem, Robin relates a premonition that he will be attacked, and then vows vengeance on his potential assailants. Little John dismisses Robin's premonition as a "dream,"²²⁶ but Robin insists they go find the would-be assailants. Robin Hood and Little John set off together, and when they arrive at the greenwood, they see a man dressed strangely hiding against a tree. An argument breaks out between Robin and Little John over who will approach this man, since Little John wants to protect his master from harm and Robin Hood does not want to look the coward. Little John grows angry when Robin belittles him and he leaves Robin. The narrative then follows Little John as he journeys to Barnesdale. There he finds two of "his men" lying dead in a clearing, and in the following stanzas Little John's bow breaks while he was trying to save Will Scarlett from the sheriff's posse. After being thus disarmed, he is captured by the sheriff. The sheriff promises him summary execution.

After Little John is captured, the story shifts back to Robin, who approaches the strangely dressed man. The man tells Robin he would rather meet with Robin Hood "then forty pound of golde."²²⁷ After an archery contest in which Robin proves to be an amazing shot, the man demands to know who he is. This is followed by a rather dramatic revelation of each person to the other, and sword fight ensues. Robin, perhaps with a little divine intervention, manages to kill

226. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, line 13. "Sweavens are swift, master."

227. *Ibid.*, 176, line 98.

Guy, and then he assumes his identity. He blows Guy's horn, and then follows (we assume) the direction of the responding horn which reveals the location of the sheriff and his men, who have Little John in custody. Robin's is able to trick the sheriff into believing that he is Guy, though instead of gold he requests the reward of being allowed to kill Little John too. The poem ends with Robin cutting Little John's bonds and then arming him with Guy's bow. The sheriff and all his men attempt to flee, but before they can get far enough away, Little John shoots the sheriff with the same hired bow meant to kill Robin. The story ends abruptly after the sheriff's death.

The Natural Opening of *Guy of Gisborne*

Like *Robin Hood and the Potter*, the opening setting of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* seems shortened, aborted or, perhaps, partially missing.²²⁸ There are six lines dedicated to the woodland setting:

When shawes beene sheene and shradds full fayre,
 And leeves both large and longe,
 Itt is merry, walking in the fayre forrest,
 To heare the small birds singe.

The woodweele sang, and wold not cease,
 Amongst the leaves a lyne.”²²⁹

228. In *Outlaw Tales*, Knight and Ohlgren take issue with this idea, stating that “. . . there is in fact no need to assume, as rationalists requiring the comfort of a blow-by-blow narrative have done, that there is anything missing between lines 6 and 7 of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. Rapid moving the text certainly is—but then John says in line 13 that *sweavens are swift*, and the ballads characteristically slip very quickly into their action, *often giving the impression that the audience knew quite well who these people were and what they did* [emphasis added]” (171). This chapter assumes that Knight and Ohlgren have the correct view, and that there is no information missing for the same reasons that Knight and Ohlgren proffer: because what seems to have have skipped was already in the minds of the audience. In other words, the audience already knew the basic structure of this tale.

229. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, lines 1-6.

This stanza-and-a-half accomplishes basically the same ends as the other two poem's openings, minus the deer in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, and the "open land" in both *Robin Hood and the Monk*²³⁰ and *Robin Hood and the Potter*. Just as in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, the first two lines of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* relate the temporal setting. Although there is no direct mention of summer, the "shawes" are "sheene," which indicates the vivid coloration of the new leaves, and the "shradds" are "full fayre," which indicates either the fullness of the new growth of leaves, or—as was described in *Robin Hood and the Potter*—branches covered in flowers. Just as in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, in the second line of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* the author focuses on the form of the leaves. The description of the deciduous leaves found in the second line of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* parallels almost exactly the terminology used in *Robin Hood and the Monk*. Likewise, there is fundamentally no difference between the third and fourth lines in the opening stanzas of these two poems, except the composer of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* specifically states that "itt is merry, walking in the fayre forrest, /to heare the small birds singe" [emphasis added]. This study's previous observations that the chorus of "mating" songbirds is what causes this crescendo of birdsong²³¹ seems to be further particularized in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*; one might well translate the addition of the adjective "small" as signifying the newly-hatched young. If so, this is yet another example of how the composers are creating believably realistic settings.

The Woodland Setting and Character Movements in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*

The opening of *Robin Hood and the Potter* also highlights the act of walking in the forest. Though this clearly is a common experience, and seemingly natural enough for Robin and his

230. See note 196.

231. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, 37, line 4.

men (who, as has been previously mentioned, are typically not on horseback) may actually be significant. The observations made about horses in *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter* reminds the reader that Robin Hood *could* have been mounted.²³² If it is true that the opening of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* was borrowed from or sourced from the same materials as *Robin Hood and the Monk*, then this seems to be another example of particularization on the part of the author. This insistence on using the word “walking” is ubiquitous in the Robin Hood tradition; one of the first recorded references is the phrase “robn hod in sherwod stod”;²³³ the second is what was mentioned in the previous chapter, that Robin Hood begins *Robin Hood and the Potter* standing among his merry men; and the third is found later in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, when the author is careful to explain that, upon encountering two of his “fellows” dead in a “slade,”²³⁴ Little John observes Scarlett fleeing the sheriff and his men and, in particular, that Scarlett was “a foote.”²³⁵ Whether or not Little John was afoot, or whether or not the sheriff and/or his men were afoot, is not explained, but here there seems to be at least one horse present; in the sheriff’s subsequent summary judgment of Little John, he states that Little John “shalt be drawn,”²³⁶ indicating that, at the very least, there is a horse somewhere nearby.²³⁷

These points on walking and horses are important to the setting and to the audience’s conception of the characters inhabiting that setting, for it has been noted that the “mercurial”²³⁸ movement of the characters in these early stories—particularly Little John’s—defies logical

232. See page 42.

233. Knight, “Alterity,” 3.

234. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, lines 49-50.

235. *Ibid.*, line 51.

236. *Ibid.*, line 78.

237. Given that the sheriff is pronouncing summary judgment on Little John, it can assume that the best *Middle English Dictionary* definition for this word is “To punish (sb.) by dragging (behind a horse, on a cart or sledge, etc.). See “drauen (v).” *Middle English Dictionary Online*. February 2015. University of Michigan.

238. See Holt, *Robin Hood*, 16.

explanation. If true, this would support Pollard's earlier claims that the forest setting is "unreal."²³⁹ Pollard holds that "Robin Hood and his men moved ... in a manner that presupposes that no listener or reader had local knowledge, or, if they had, were not concerned about mere geographical accuracy."²⁴⁰ Stephen Knight explains this by arguing that *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* is a hybridized story that combines "two forests if not two ballads," and can thus account for how *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* appears to start "in Barnesdale, and Robin gives that as part of his identity. But at the end the sheriff runs for safety toward his house in Nottingham, an unlikely 60 miles away."²⁴¹ However, that begs the question: "Where else would the Sheriff of Nottingham try to run to?" Deeper into the forest? Surely not. The forest is Robin's domain, and the sheriff has obviously already gotten himself into trouble at this point. It is helpful to remember that, as Holt reassures us, these apparent discrepancies in location and distance travelled are not fantastic or unreal: "King John ... traveled from Rothwell, some 10 miles NW of Barnesdale, to Nottingham on 9 September, 1213."²⁴² When compared with Holt's earlier comments that "Sherwood was already well known as a haunt of robbers by the end of the twelfth century,"²⁴³ King John may have needed haste.

These scholars believe that the speed at which some characters move between Barnesdale, Sherwood, and Nottingham is nigh impossible for an outlaw who is chronically afoot. But that outlaws are chronically afoot also defies logical explanation: it would have been, certainly, a common enough occurrence for highway robbery to involve robbery, not by, but *of* those on horseback. This sort of robbery happens at least twice in the three early poems,²⁴⁴ and

239. See note 99.

240. Pollard, *Imagining*, 67.

241. Knight, *Mythic Biography*, 20.

242. Holt, *Robin Hood*, 90.

243. *Ibid.*

244. See page 42.

possibly three times. If the audience is to believe the sheriff was mounted when Little John was captured in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, he has, once again, lost his horse to the outlaws. In any case, it is unrealistic to assume that the original audience would have believed that these animals would have been squandered by Robin Hood or his men. It is difficult to believe that Little John and Much, considering the urgency of their mission, *walk* to London after murdering the monk and his page. They have need of haste; their master in grave danger. The modern, rationalistic desire to believe that the seeming inconsistencies in time-passage and distance traveled in these stories can be explained by a sense that medieval persons simply did not apply logical thinking to the physicality of the stories (or could not decide whether the distance between two places could be traversed in a day) is not only short-sighted, it is itself illogical. Given the obvious presence of horses in these stories (and their value in medieval life), it is unreasonable to expect that a medieval audience would have assumed that Robin Hood and his men were chronically afoot. Certainly, given their recurrent need to move stealthily and without leaving tracks, horses would have necessarily been carefully employed; but to envision Robin Hood and the whole of his band as existing without ever having the use of a horse is to be blind to the action of these stories. “Walking” in the forest is notable: it implies that there is no pressing need for a horse, that the walker is at his ease, and that he is secure in his surroundings. It does not imply that he could not be mounted.

The Greenwood vs The Forest: “There and Back Again”

In the last two lines of the natural opening of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, the opening setting begins to become more particularized. Here, almost as if the author was directing a movie, the narrator’s descriptions begin to zoom in on a particular place in the forest. In the

poem's fifth line, the cacophony of birdsong disappears and a "woodweele"²⁴⁵ cries out incessantly. If Knight and Ohlgren are correct in their gloss, the appearance of this bird is a striking motif, placing the story's action at dawn, and, at the earliest, in mid-May.²⁴⁶ The last line of the natural opening describes exactly where the oriole is singing: "amongst the leaves a lyne."²⁴⁷ In *Robin Hood and the Monk*, Knight and Ohlgren gloss this exact word as meaning "linden trees."²⁴⁸ However, in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, the gloss is "in a row."²⁴⁹ If the leaves among which the woodweele is singing grow in lines, then this may be a yew tree. Also, if the story begins at dawn, then it may be that Robin and his men spent the night outside the greenwood, and are being called back by a bird singing in one of its yews.

If this is the case, then even though *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* does not open in the greenwood—or underneath the greenwood tree—he certainly has an affection for it. In this tale, the greenwood remains Robin's particular locale where he is hurrying to "wrocken" himself on those who would defile it. It seems that there is something peculiar about the greenwood. For one reason or another, Robin Hood and his men (and, presumably, the audience) know when they are in the greenwood, and when they are not. Further, according to arguments made by Pollard, it is easy to understand that it is *because* the medieval woodland is so developed with townships and freeholdings that the greenwood becomes that much more distinguishable, and not visa-versa. With this in mind, it seems that the growing rarity of uncultivated forest makes it that much more identifiable by the audience. The stands of natural landscape are always striking in contrast to the human-wrought activities in the landscape surrounding it.

245. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, line 5 gloss. Knight and Olgren translate "woodweele" as "golden oriole."

246. The golden oriole, or "woodweele," "can be heard, most often at dawn," and "mainly arrives in mid-May and stays until August." See "Golden Oriole." *The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Online*. September 2015.

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/discoverandlearn/birdguide/name/g/goldenoriole/>

247. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, line 6.

248. See note 156.

249. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 173, line 6 note.

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne makes a clear distinction between the greenwood and other geographical locales. When John leaves Robin after their quarrel over who will approach Sir Guy, he leaves the greenwood and returns, specifically, to Barnesdale. This action by John, as has been noted,²⁵⁰ has been implicated as being indicative of the author's unfamiliarity with the geographical location of Nottingham and Barnesdale. Simply put, if Little John goes to Barnesdale²⁵¹ and then is captured, then how does the narrator then say that the sheriff of Nottingham flees at the end to his "house in Nottingham"²⁵² as if it could be reached in one day (or even a half day)? Holt contends that, perhaps, at times Robin and his men "move from Barnesdale to Sherwood at a speed beyond the fleetest of horses,"²⁵³ but he does not say when they do this. Since Barnesdale does not figure into the action of *Robin Hood and the Monk* or *Robin Hood and the Potter*, one can assume that Holt is referring to *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. At the longest, Little John had three hours to travel from where he and Robin first saw Guy, to Barnesdale;²⁵⁴ but that *assumes* Little John started off in Sherwood, which Holt contends is "less than thirty miles" south of Barnesdale."²⁵⁵

Regardless of how far away Barnesdale is from where John quarrels with Robin, it seems (following the "there and back again" protocol of the both *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*) that when he gets to back to Barnesdale and finds "two of his owne fellowes /were slain both in a slade,"²⁵⁶ he has returned to where story began. But, who killed

250. See note 238.

251. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 174, line 47.

252. *Ibid.*, 180, line 227.

253. Holt, *Robin Hood*, 85.

254. I include an hour for the greeting and archery competition between Guy and Robin, and then their two-hour sword fight. See "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne," 176-77, lines 85-150.

255. Holt., *Robin Hood*, 90.

256. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 174, lines 49-50. As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, this "slade" could be a man-made clearing of felled trees. If so, it could be a late reaction towards laws such as "The Forest Ordinance of 1306," which dealt heavily with offenses against the "vert." See Holt, *Robin Hood*, 81.

these yeomen remains a mystery at this point in the narrative. The first (and, seemingly, the most obvious option), would be “the sheriffe with seven score men,”²⁵⁷ who John sees chasing after Scarlett in the following stanza. But there is also, as the author later hints, a likelihood that they were murdered by Sir Guy. This seems the most plausible option, given that when Robin (who has presumably been wounded in his fight with Guy²⁵⁸) hands Guy's bow and arrows to Little John, the author draws the audience's attention to the fact that the “arrowes were rawsty by the roote.”²⁵⁹ Seeing as how there are, up to this point, only four dead men in this tale,²⁶⁰ the reason for author's lingering on Sir Guy's bloody arrows seems glaringly obvious: one can conclude that Little John's two dead “fellowes” were slain by Sir Guy *before* Little John and Robin came upon him in the forest. If this is the case, then how were these two men were killed? And how much time elapsed from their deaths to Little John's observation of Scarlett's flight?²⁶¹ And why it would be important that Sir Guy killed them, and not the sheriff with one-hundred-and-forty men? These answer to these problems may come from the mouth of Robin himself.

The Greenwood and the Greenwood Tree

Moments before he fights and kills Guy of Gisborne, Robin exclaims:

“My dwelling is in the wood,” sayes Robin

“By thee I set right nought;

My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale

257. *Ibid.*, line 53.

258. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 178, line 154.

259. *Ibid.*, 180, line 224.

260. The four dead men are: “Good William a Trent,” who Little John accidentally kills (see 175, line 70); Sir Guy, who Robin kills; and John's two dead men.

261. And even then, how long elapses between the “[g]reat heaviness” (48) Little John experiences upon finding the two dead men, and when he finds Scarlett running from the sheriff.

A fellow thou has long sought."²⁶²

Although it might be supposed that Robin's declaration that he is from Barnesdale is enough to call into doubt the legitimacy of a traditional setting and landscape, one should remember that Robin is never said to call himself "Robin Hood of Sherwood." Nevertheless, Robin's declaration does not imply that the wood is always within the confines of Barnesdale.²⁶³ Also, as has already been suggested, sleeping in Barnesdale does not necessarily equate with sleeping *in* the greenwood, though Robin Hood and his men seem to in *Robin Hood and the Monk*.²⁶⁴ Regardless of exactly where these woods are, the words "long sought" reinforce the idea, often taken for granted, that Robin can usually successfully hide from anyone. This is likely because he lives at the base of a tree in a wood, and does not abide in locations that cannot be found on a political or road map. As such, it would be impossible to give directions to it using common place names (like Barnesdale or Sherwood). So, how does Sir Guy finally locate Robin's sanctum greenwood sanctum, when all others, including the sheriff of Nottingham, have failed? The answer may very well lie with the John's two dead men, slain by Guy's own hand, whom Robin suspected had betrayed the location of his tristil-tree. If this line of reasoning is sound, then it may be that the author of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* is the cleverest of all, and a master of intrigue, suspense, and subtle yet powerful narrative coherence.

As has been previously noted, in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, when the action begins with the appearance of a woodweele in the "leaves a lyne," it is in a *particular* location. However, whereas the woodweele is calling from the greenwood—and we assume that Robin

262. *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 177, lines 139-42.

263. It is useful to note that the Gest begins in "Bernesdale," and thus that—at least by the time the tales were woven into a larger story—Barnesdale was one of Robin's noted haunts. See *A Gest of Robyn Hode*, 90, line 9.

264. *Robin Hood and the Monk* opens at dawn. See 37, lines 10-11: "[e]rly in a May mornynge, /The son up feyre can shyne."

hears its call too—Robin Hood and his men are *not* in the greenwood. Robin specifically states “Ile goe seeke yond wight yeomen /in greenwood where the bee.”²⁶⁵ Robin then is not confined to the greenwood. He is not *always* found there. It is his place of choice²⁶⁶ and obviously where he spends most of his time,²⁶⁷ but his tales do not always begin in the confines of its branches. The greenwood seems to be more of a labyrinth where he and Little John have the advantage of knowing its “ways,”²⁶⁸ and not their perpetual locale.

So, where is the place at the opening of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, where a woodweele sings incessantly from amongst the “leaves a lyne?” Primarily, it is a place where the leaves are “in a row,”²⁶⁹ which could signify a large evergreen tree. Of course, this does not include all evergreens; all evergreens native to England do not have leaves which can be said to grow in rows. The English yew, *Taxus Baccata* is said to have “leaves in a row,”²⁷⁰ and it is probably also “the most long-lived tree in Northern Europe,”²⁷¹ meaning that they could become easily recognizable fixtures in the landscape for generations. Further, the peculiar deer at the beginning of *Robin Hood and the* may provide a large clue to where the action of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* begins. Deer have been proven to be particularly attracted to the English yew for food.²⁷² What is more, although the tree itself is attractive to the deer, it has also been observed to form “a wood.” The Wiltshire antiquarian John Aubrey noted in 1685 that “yew trees

265. *Ibid.*, 173, lines 19-20.

266. *Ibid.*, line 24. “Where they had gladdest bee”

267. How else could Robin recommend that the potter seek for his whenever he came to the greenwood? See page 58.

268. See “Robin Hood and the Monk,” 39, line 66. See also “Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne,” 174, line 46.

269. See note 249.

270. “*Taxus Baccata*: English Yew,” *Royal Horticultural Society Online*. “*T. baccata* is a medium-sized bushy evergreen with . . . very dark green leaves arranged in two rows on the shoots.”

271. “Yew (*Taxus baccata*),” *Woodland Trust Online*.

272. Gail Ruhl, Judy Loven, and Jeff Burbrink, “Deer Damage,” *Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory Online*, Purdue University. Michigan State University also lists *Taxus baccata* as one of the “Plants Frequently Damaged” by deer. See Jordan Pusateri Burroughs and Thomas A. Dudek, “Deer-Resistant” Plants for Homeowners,” *Extension Bulletin E-3042 Online* (July 2008), Michigan State University: Integrated Pest Management Online.

naturally grow in chalky countrys. The greatest plenty of them, as I believe in the west of England, is at Nunton Ewetreets. Between Knighton Ashes and Downton the ground produces them all along, but at Nunton they are a wood.”²⁷³

As it turns out, “chalky” soil, meaning that soil which is rich in limestone, is present in Nottinghamshire.²⁷⁴ According to H. H. Swinnerton, from his 1910 geological survey of Nottinghamshire, the “Lias” layer (meaning the youngest soil in the county) is “blue-grey limestone [a chalky soil] . . . found bordering the Keuper [the second oldest soil strata]; the remainder [of the lias] is occupied by clay.”²⁷⁵ Limestone—in this case, Magnesian limestone—makes up the Permian layer. So, there are two ideal candidates in Nottinghamshire for where the soil conditions are right to produce an abundance of yew trees: wherever the surface of the soil is either Lias or Permian.²⁷⁶

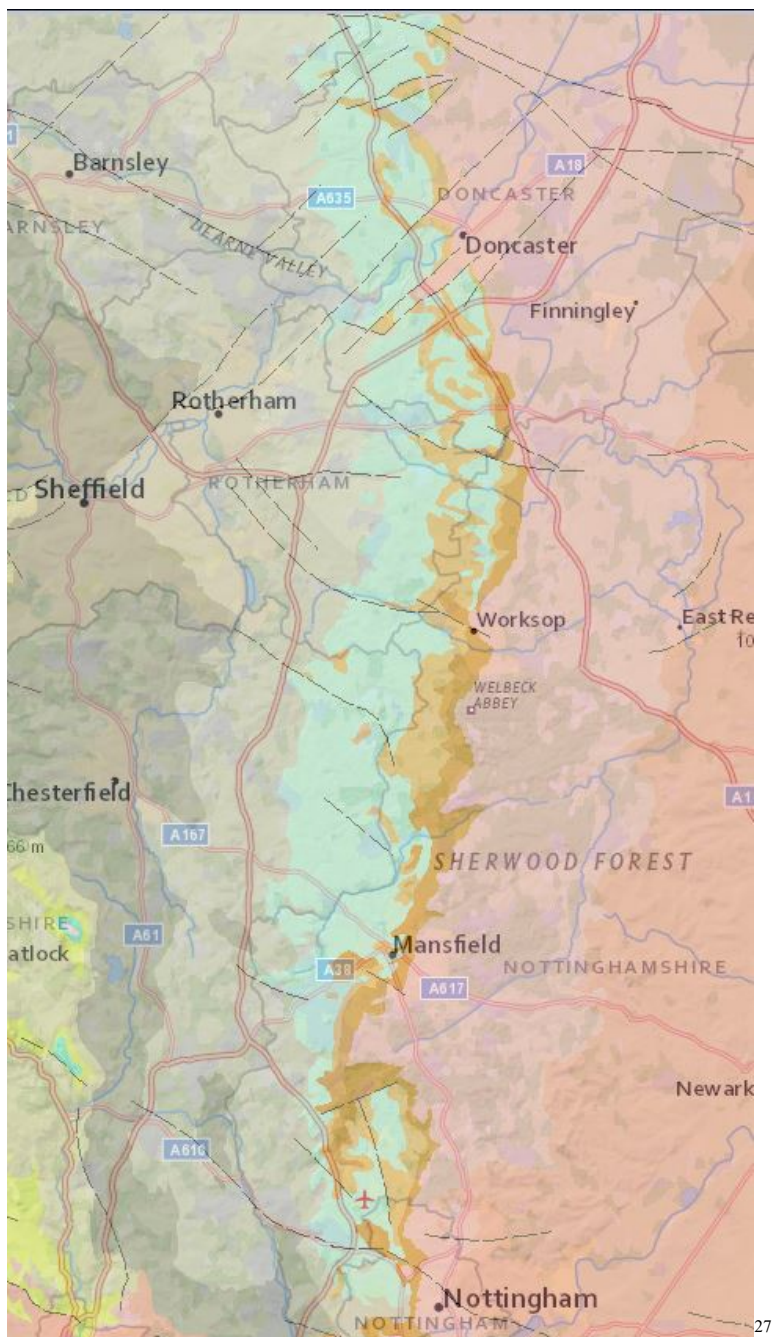
273. See John Aubrey, “Chapter IX. Of Plants,” in *The Natural History of Wiltshire*, (Project Gutenberg Ebook of the Natural History of Wiltshire, by John Aubrey), Project Gutenberg Online.

274. See H. H. Swinnerton, *Cambridge County Geographies: Nottinghamshire*. 1910. Repr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 20. “In other counties, as for instance Derbyshire, the layers have been folded into arches and troughs. When this folding started in Derbyshire the Permian, Bunter, and later rocks had not been formed, and the Carboniferous Limestone, which may be seen to-day in the beautiful dales of that county, was buried under a thick covering of grey clays, dark shales, and light-coloured sandstones with occasional coal seams. This covering, which is now spoken of as the coal-measures, then extended continuously from Lincolnshire to North Wales. When the folding began the coal-measures were swept off the tops of the arches by the action of the rain, frost, rivers, and streams. Thus the underlying limestone was exposed and raised to form the Derbyshire Pennines. Meanwhile the coal-measures were left in the saucer-like troughs on either side and were afterwards buried under the Permian and later rocks. The eastern saucer is still largely buried out of sight, but its western margin outcrops in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and West Nottinghamshire and assumes a south-easterly trend at Wollaton, where it disappears under the Bunter. This outcrop is the visible coalfield. The buried portion is the concealed coalfield.”

275. *Ibid.*

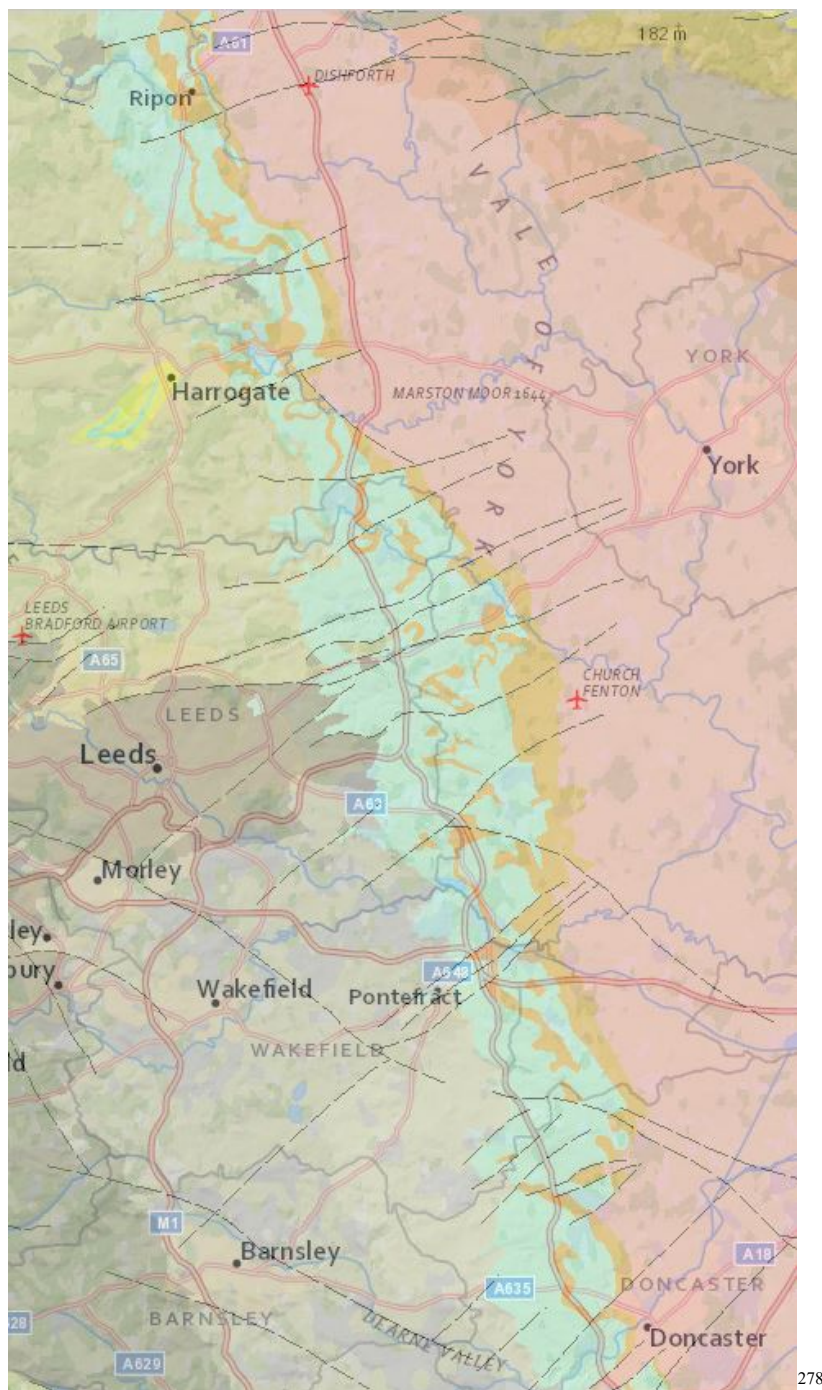
276. See “Durham Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Profile” *Natural England Online*, 17. “Yew *Taxus baccata* can also be abundant in [Magnesian limestone].” It should also be noted that the Royal Horticultural Society lists the growing soils for *Taxus baccata* as “Chalk, Clay, Sand or Loam”—in that order (*Taxus baccata: English Yew*, Royal Horticultural Society Online.)

Illustration 1:
 The Southern Magnesian Limestone Ridge: Nottingham to Doncaster
 (SMLR in Blue)



277. For map used to create image, see “William Smith’s Maps – Interactive,” ed. Peter Wigley, *UKOGL*, 2015. <http://www.stratasmith.com/map>. Select base-layer (upper right hand corner of map) “National Geographic,” and also select overlay “Modern BGS [British Geological Society] Geology (clickable)” from navigation bar on the left.

Illustration 2:
The Southern Magnesian Limestone Ridge: Doncaster to Ripon
(SMLR in Blue)



278

The Southern Magnesian Limestone National Character Area (NCA) is mainly defined by the underlying Permian Zechstein Group, formerly known as the Magnesian Limestone. It creates a very long and thin NCA that stretches from Thornborough in the north down through north Derbyshire to the outskirts of Nottingham further south. The limestone creates a ridge, or narrow belt of elevated land, running north-south through the NCA, forming a prominent landscape feature.²⁷⁹

As can be seen in Illustrations 1 and 2, these chalky layers first appear immediately north of Nottingham—indeed, though it is not marked on this map—they run through ancient Sherwood. The Magnesian Limestone is exposed in a thin, unbroken band from the landscape just west of Nottingham, through Mansfield, and then north through the far eastern corner of Derbyshire, to Ticklehill in east Yorkshire, and then veering NNW, passing west of Doncaster and then just east of Pontefract.

As a whole, these geographical observations should suggest to the Robin Hood scholar that parts of Sherwood Forest and the lands running immediately west and north of it (from Nottingham to Ticklehill, to Doncaster, to Wentbridge and Pontefract) have strikingly different soil types.²⁸⁰ These lands have soil rich in limestone and notable rises in elevation so striking that it provides “visual links to and from the lower-lying land to both the west and the east.”²⁸¹ In fact, the Magnesian Limestone of the Permian strata is so unique that Natural England has listed the Permian band as a “National Character Area.”²⁸² Granted, this landform also houses the few

279. See “NCA Profile: 30 Southern Magnesian Limestone (NE464), PDF, 4.4 MB” *Natural England Online*, July 18, 2013, page 3.

280. See “NCA Profile: 30 Southern Magnesian Limestone,” 7. Accessed October 29, 2015.

281. *Ibid.*

282. *Ibid.*, 1.

remnants of the nationally-scarce large-leaved lime,”²⁸³ which gives credence to Knight and Ohlgren’s placement of lime trees in these stories,²⁸⁴ but the evidence discussed heretofore gives more credence to the tristil-tree having small leaves or leaves in rows. Neither of these descriptions resemble a lime.

In summation, this examination of whether or not the greenwood tree/tristil-tree might have been a yew tree has revealed that Robin Hood’s traditional locales are in fact united by an unusual landscape. This landscape is the first rise of high ground out of the Trent river basin, it runs through Sherwood Forest and past other Robin Hood locales, and its soil is particularly suited for yews. This research stemmed from the idea that the greenwood tree/tristil-tree has small leaves that grow in rows, but its results were encouraging. If the term “greenwood” in the Robin Hood tales does indicate the presence of evergreen woods of *Taxus baccata*, then there is very good reason to suspect why the early Robin Hood stories seem to migrate from Nottingham to Yorkshire Barnesdale: this area was home to a long, particular stretch where yew trees grew. Indeed, though it is a question seldom considered by those who reject the possibility that Robin could have been a historical figure, this could explain why is he in the Nottinghamshire/South Yorkshire area to begin with: Robin not merely the hero of the greenwood. . .he is the hero of the evergreen yew wood.

283. Ibid., 7.

284. See page 42.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Although this study has laid further groundwork for comparing *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* to the other early Robin Hood poems, the terminology upon which this comparison was based was limited in scope. A concordance of terminology used in all greenwood outlaw tale manuscripts would be invaluable in validating what I have here proposed. These tales are replete not only with forest-related terms, but also with many common or closely-related expressions and landscape-related themes. I cannot be certain that a complete concordance would reveal substantially more evidence for considering *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* as textually and contextually independent from the other outlaw poems, but since the earliest Robin Hood poems seem to contain a tradition more steeped in a particular set of woodland terminology, it would be a worthwhile undertaking.

The primary idea this thesis has contributed to Robin Hood studies is that *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* appear to share a theme or schematic regarding the characters' and the narrative's movement to, from, and within the "greenwood." The authors achieved this by earmarking certain places in the landscape with certain terms or motifs, and then repeating these when the narrative or the characters return to those places. In particular, the "tristil-tree" and/or the "greenwood tree" under which Robin and his abide provides the setting from whence and to which the narratives move. The landscape of these tales revolve around this place, and it is not—as in earlier manifestations of the "greenwood"—in some remote, impenetrable, or fantastic forest. The outlaws live just beyond the edge of the forest, and often stay within sight of or within earshot of

the road.

Secondarily, this thesis has identified the likelihood that “greenwood tree” and “tristil-tree” were interchangeable terms in the Robin Hood tradition. The subsequent argument for the association of these with the English yew is plausible, but tenuous. Any contemporary reference to a yew wood or forest in Sherwood, Nottinghamshire, and/or Barnesdale would give this theory much more credence, but this is unlikely. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that in *Adam Bell* the connection between the tristil-tree and the yew seems to be made explicitly: “Cloudeslé bent a wel good bow,/That was of trusty tre.”²⁸⁵ Further, although it lies largely in the realm of speculation, since conifers are referred to as “evergreens” today, it does not seem too outlandish to suppose that the “greenwood tree” could also signify an evergreen: it stays “green” year round. I admit that without a text referring to yew groves in Nottingham, Barnesdale or Sherwood, or any archeological discoveries of petrified yew forests these same areas, this theory will remain doubtful. It seems that if Robin Hood made his abode and redoubts under yews, there may never be more convincing evidence than the arguments made in this thesis, and Cloudeslé’s “bow. . .of trusty tre.”

In closing, a few remarks on real-life outlaws seem in order. Jennifer Brewer and Barbara Hanawalt have compiled a number of case studies on real bandits in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁸⁶ Unfortunately for this study, the records they present do make use of forests in any of the accusations, indictments, or settings of the crimes listed. Because of this, their work was not treated in this study. I did, however, want to point out that Brewer pondered the assertion,

285. *Adam Bell*, 244, lines 101-02. Compare *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, 174, line 32.

286. See Jennifer Brewer, “Let Her Be Waived: Outlawing Women in Yorkshire, 1293-1294,” 28-44. See also Barbara A. Hanawalt, “Portraits of Outlaws, Felons, and Rebels in Late Medieval England,” in *British Outlaws of Literature and History: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Figures from Robin Hood to Twm Shon Catty*, ed. Alexander L. Kaufman, 45-64 (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2011).

first discussed by Sir Frederick Pollack and Frederic Maitland,²⁸⁷ that in medieval England “ten men were outlawed for every one hanged.”²⁸⁸ With such a low success rate of apprehending and executing outlaws, is it really so far-fetched to assume that Robin perpetually escaping his enemies in the early poems is unrealistic? It seems that medieval outlaws did not need deep, remote woods to elude pursuit. The natural network of roads, townships, and woodlands in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England provided enough to cover for them to escape capture. All that was needed was thorough knowledge of the landscape, meeting places not far from the road, and a few friends and family to serve in times of greatest need. All these necessities are contained in the early Robin Hood poems. As such, these tales would have provided contemporary audiences with realistic narratives about outlaw heroes living in the only place an English outlaw could: the surviving wooded spaces in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English landscape.

287. Sir Frederick Pollack and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, Vol 1, 2nd Ed., 1898 (repr. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1968) 503.

288. Brewer, 38.

Bibliography

- Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley.* In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 235-67. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.
- A Gest of Robin Hood.* In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. ed. Teams Middle English Texts Series, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 87-148. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.
- Almond, Richard and A. J. Pollard. "The Yeomanry of Robin Hood and Social Terminology in Fifteenth-Century England." *Past and Present* 170 (2001): 52-77.
- Andrew of Wyntoun. *The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*. Edited by David Laing. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Edmonton and Douglas, 1872-79.
- Aubrey, John. "Chapter IX. Of Plants," in *The Natural History of Wiltshire*, (Project Gutenberg Ebook of the Natural History of Wiltshire, by John Aubrey), Project Gutenberg Online, 2015.
- Bower, Walter. *Continuation of Fordun's Scotichronican*. Edited by T. Hearne. Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1722.
- Brewer, Jennifer. "Let Her Be Waived: Outlawing Women in Yorkshire, 1293-1294." In *British Outlaws of Literature and History: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Figures from Robin Hood to Twm Shon Catty*, edited by Alexander L. Kaufman, 28-44. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2011.
- Burgess, Glyn S., trans. *Two Medieval Outlaws: Eustace the Monk and Fouke Fitz Waryn*. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009.
- The Canterbury Tales*. Edited by Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Cole, William D. "Purgatory vs. Eden: Bérout's Forest and Gottfried's Cave." *The Germanic Review* 70.1 (1995), 2-8.

The Death of Robin Hood. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. edited Teams Middle English Texts Series, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 592-98. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

Dobson, R.B. and J. Taylor. "The Medieval Origins of the Robin Hood Legend: A Reassessment." *Northern History* 7 (1972). 1-30.

---. *The Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Introduction to the English Outlaw*.

Rev. ed. Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Pub., 1997.

"Durham Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Profile." *Natural England Online*. Accessed October 29, 2015.

<http://www.naturalareas.naturalengland.org.uk/Science/natural/profiles%5CnaProfile6.pdf>

Eustache the Monk. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 668-686. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

Fouke le Fitz Waryn. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, eds. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 695-713. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

Hahn, Thomas, ed. *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justice*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000.

Hanawalt, Barbara A. "Ballads and Bandits: Fourteenth-Century Outlaws and the Robin Hood Poems." In *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, edited by Barbara A.

- Hanawalt, 154-75. *Medieval Studies at Minnesota* 4. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- . "Portraits of Outlaws, Felons, and Rebels in Late Medieval England." In *British Outlaws of Literature and History: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Figures from Robin Hood to Twm Shon Catty*, ed. Alexander L. Kaufman, 45-64. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2011.
- Harrison, Robert Pogue. *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*. London: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hereward the Wake*. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, 638-67. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.
- Hilton, R.H. "The Origins of Robin Hood." *Past and Present* 14 (1958): 30-44.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *Primitive Rebel: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1965.
- Holt, J.C.. "The Origins and the Audience of the Ballads of Robin Hood." *Past and Present* 18 (1960): 89-110.
- . *Robin Hood*. 1982. 3rd ed., New York: Thames and Hudson, 2011.
- Jørgensen, Dolly. "The Roots of the English Royal Forest." *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 2009*, edited by C. P. Lewis, 114-128. Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2010.
- Kaufman, Alexander L., ed. *British Outlaws of Literature and History: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Figures from Robin Hood to Twm Shon Catty*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2011.

Keen, Maurice. *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend*. Rev. ed. 1987. Reprint, New York and London: Routledge, 2000.

---. "Robin Hood—Peasant or Gentleman." *Past and Present* 19 (1961): 7-15.

Knight, Stephen. "Alterity, Parody, Habitus: The Formation of the Early Literary Tradition of Robin Hood." In *Robin Hood in Greenwood Stood: Alterity and Context in the English Outlaw Tradition*, edited by Stephen Knight, 1-29. *Medieval Identities: Socio-Cultural Spaces* 1. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.

---. *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

---. *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*. Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 1999.

---. "Robin Hood: The Earliest Contexts." In *Images of Robin Hood: Medieval to Modern*, edited by Lois Potter and Joshua Calhoun, 30-33. Newark: University of Delaware, 2008.

---. ed., *Robin Hood: The Forrester's Manuscript* (British Library Additional MS 71158), with a Manuscript Description by Hilton Kelliher, edited by Stephen Knight. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998.

Knight, Stephen and Thomas Ohlgren, eds. *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*. Rev. ed. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

Langland, William. *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Critical Edition of the B-Text, Based on Trinity College Cambridge MS. B. 15. 17*, edited A. V. C. Schmidt, 2nd edition, London: Dent, 1995.

Li Romans de Witasse Le Moine: Roman de treizième siècle. Édité d'après le manuscrit, edited by Denis Joseph Conlon. Fonds Français 1553, de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. University of North Carolina Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 126. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972.

Mellows, Charles and William Thomas Mellows. trans. *The Peterborough chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, edited by W.T. Mellows. Rev. ed. Peterborough: Museum Society, 1966.

Middle English Dictionary Online. University of Michigan, 2015.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>

“NCA Profile: 30 Southern Magnesian Limestone.” In www.naturalengland.org.uk, Accessed October 29, 2015.

file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/30.Southern%20Magnesian%20(4).pdf, 7.

“Nottinghamshire PFRA: Topography in Nottinghamshire,” *Nottinghamshire City Council Online*, 2015. <http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/mapa-topography.pdf>.

Oxford English Dictionary Online. Oxford University Press, 2015. www.oed.com.

Ohlgren, Thomas and Lister M. Matheson, eds. *Early Rymes of Robyn Hood: an edition of the*

texts, ca. 1425 to ca. 1600. Tempe: ACMRS, 2013.

Ohlgren, Thomas. *Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465-1560: Texts, Contexts, and Ideology*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007.

Pearsall, Derek. "Little John and the Ballad of Robin Hood and the Monk." In *Robin Hood: Medieval and Post-Medieval*, edited by Helen Phillips, 42-50. Dublin: Four Courts, 2005.

Pearsall, Derek and Elizabeth Salter. *Landscapes and Seasons in the Medieval World*. London: Paul Elek, 1973.

Phillips, Helen, ed. *Robin Hood: Medieval and Post-Medieval*. Dublin: Four Courts, 2005.

Pollack, Sir Frederick and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*. Volume 1, 2nd Edition, 1898. Reprint. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1968.

Pollard, A. J. *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late Medieval Stories in Historical Context*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004.

---. "The Yeoman." In *Historians on Chaucer: The "General Prologue" to the Canterbury Tales*, edited Stephen H. Rigby and Alastair J. Minnis, 77-93. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. ed., Teams Middle English Texts Series, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 169-83. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

Robin Hood and the Monk. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. ed. Teams Middle English Texts Series, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 37-56. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

Robin Hood and the Potter. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. ed. Teams Middle English Texts Series, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 59-79. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

The Royal Horticultural Society. "Taxus Baccata: English Yew." *Royal Horticultural Society Online*. 2015. Accessed October 29, 2015.
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/Plants/18001/i-Taxus-baccata-i/Details>

Ruhl, Gail, Judy Loven, and Jeff Burbrink. "Deer Damage." *Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory Online*, Purdue University. 2015. Accessed October 29, 2015.
<https://www.ppd.l.purdue.edu/PPDL/weekklypics/3-23-09.html>.

Saunders, Corrine J. *The Forest of Medieval Romance*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993.

Simeone, W.E. "Robin Hood and Some Other Outlaws." *The Journal of American Folklore* 71, (1958): 27-33.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, edited by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, 2nd ed., revised by Norman Davis. 1925. Reprint. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

Swinnerton, H. H. *Cambridge County Geographies: Nottinghamshire*. 1910. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

The Tale of Gamelyn. In *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, Rev. ed. Teams Middle English Texts Series, edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, 194-226. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation. Edited by Angela M. Kinney (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

Wiles, David. "Robin Hood as Summer Lord." In *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*, edited by Stephen Thomas Knight, 77-98. Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 1999.

"William Smith's Maps – Interactive." Edited by Peter Wigley, *UKOGL*, 2015.

<http://www.strata-smith.com/map/>.

"Yew (*Taxus baccata*)." Woodland Trust Online. Accessed October 29, 2015.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/native-trees/yew/>