

An Analysis of the Language of *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn*

— Forms and Functions of Verbs —

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So now they have made our English tongue
a gallimaufry or hodgepodge of all other speeches.

— Edmund Spenser —

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to make a minute classification and description of the forms and functions of verbs used in *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn*. This very short poem (715 lines) is assumed to be written about 1430. The author (anonymous) uses the stanza form of *ababababccddc*.

Verbs are almost of Germanic origin (72,8%) [Romance origin 23,7%]. Weak verbs generally add *-ed* to form the preterite tense and past participle. Regular infinitive form occurs in *-e* and strong verbs have considerably been reduced to weak forms

[Due to space limitations some items and examples have been omitted.]

I. Present indicative. The First Person Singular of the Present Indicative ends mainly in *-e*.

i) in rhyme:

becall, 410 (:ventalle <i>n.</i>)	dwell, 184 (:helle <i>n.</i>)
grede, 99 (:rede <i>n.</i>)	mote, 74 (:fote <i>n.</i>)
wene, 669 (:bene <i>adv.</i>)	were, 692, (:kene, <i>adj.</i>)
696 (:quene <i>n.</i>)	

ii) before consonants:

bare μe , 204: gif Sir, 664, 667: hete μe , 235: leue wel, 469: make, 430 (feith), 640, 646 (μe):
nolde for, 470: rede for, 438: werne μe , 265

iii) before vowels:

dwine and, 184: lede opon, 433: wite if, 197

iv) ϕ form:

ban, 89: go, 191 [(:wo, *n.*) in rhyme]

v) *-en*:

bren, 188: gloppen, 91: sayn, 208 [(:layn, *v.*) in rhyme]

II. The Second Person Singular of the Present Indicative ends in *-es* and *-est*.

i) *-es*:

dramaes, 513: seches, 406: stedes, 407

ii) *-est*:

ridest, 172: walkest, 136

III. The Third Person Singular of the Present Indicative ends usually in *-es*.

i) *-es*:

ameres, 87: aules, 87:bides, 29, 122, 330: buskes, 485: cleches, 618: commes, 349: dores, 52: droupes, 54: enspires, 255: glades, 458: glides, 26, 27, 28: gowes, 128: greches, 524: gurdes, 582, 606: hides, 124: kindeles, 905: pikes, 115: playes, 310: raykes, 345: relaves, 585: schedes, 20: sittes, 253: skirles, 536: skrikes, 536, 619: slikes, 617: squoes, 55: suwes, 343: swykes, 540: talkes, 512: wepes, 560: withholdes, 698: wrathes, 238

ii) *-e*:

beholde, 42, 375, 379: beleue, 69: bere, 241: halowe, 57: helpe, 177: semble, 3

iii) *-is* (*-ys*):

blendis, 212: startis, 580: wendys, 561: witis, 215

iv) *-φ*:

dos, 632: folo, 186

IV. The Plural of the Present Indicative ends regularly in *-en*, (*-n*) and *-es* (*-is*).

third person:

i) *-en*, (*-n*) before consonants:

defoulen *ϕe*, 262: failen *ϕe*, 233: fauten *ϕe*, 319: fleen to, 80: gurdin her, 495: setten listes, 477

ii) *-en* before vowels:

flokken in 331

iii) *-e* before consonants:

strike don, 591: worche me 216

iv) *-e* before vowels:

blende on, 629: shindre in, 501, (shindr in 503)

v) *-es*, (*-is*) before vowels:

wellis at, 179: riches oure 263

vi) *-es* in rhyme:

bides, 321 (:glides, *v.*): bites, 211 (:sites, *v.*): glides, 325 (:bides, *v.*): growes, 146 (:browes, *v.*): vnhides, 328 (:glides, *v.*)

vii) exceptions:

a) *-t* in rhyme:

hent, 488 (:went, *v.*): riȝt, 505 (:kniȝt, *n.*)

b) *-e* in rhyme:

strewe, 590 (:shewe *v.*)

V. The following Indicative Preterites of Anglo-Saxon Verbs of the First Weak Conjugation occur.

third person:

i) stems originally short — befelle, bytydde, glemed, glowed, grewed, holsed, kneled, lymped, marred, stalked, stemered, stent, wedded

ii) stems originally long — bede, bite, cladde, cleech, flokken, grille, mourne, steropp, strewe, vmbeclippe, wounde

iii) irregular verbs:

bought (O.E. *bycgan*), *bought* þe on rode 222
 brouȝt (O.E. *bringan*), þe body he her *brouȝt* 158 : *brouȝt* on a ber 175:
 carf (O.E. *ceorfan*), he *carf* downe clene 603
 clef (O.E. *clēofan*), *clef* his shelde clene 520: He *clef* þorgh þe cantell 521
 lay (O.E. *licgan*), ho, *lay*, vnder a lefesale 70
 rose (O.E. *rīsan*), rightwisly *rose* 317
 seȝ (O.E. *sēon*), *Seȝ* he neuer are 403
 spak (O.E. *sp(r)ecan*), *spak* Sir Galeron to Gawayn 638

VI. A few Indicative Preterites of Old Norse Verbs of the First Weak Conjugation occur.

atteled (O.N. *ætla*), He *atteled* with a slyuyng haf 616
 gliffed (O.N. *gljá*), He *gliffed* vp 356
 snaypped (O.N. *sneypa*) For þe sneterand snawe at *snaypped* hem snell 82

VII. Most Verbs of Romance make their preterites singular in *-ed*, without syncopation.

cesed (O.F. *cesser*), *cesed* for his sake 652
 changed (O.F. *changer*), kniȝt *changed* no chere 123
 coniured (O.F. *conjurer*), *Pen* *coniured* þe kniȝt 133
 couered (O.F. *cuvrir*), *Pe* cantell þat *couered* þe kniȝt 521
 cried (O.F. *crier*), *cried* on hiȝt 651
 dyned (O.F. *diner*), he *dyned* in his tente 484
 fondred (O.F. *fondrer*), The faire fole *fondred* 542
 stound (O.F. *estouner*), þat sturme oft *stound* 602
 taȝt (O.F. *atachier*), he *taȝt* him in tente 605
 trapped (O.F. *drap*), His horse *trapped* of that ilke 383

VIII. The Present Subjunctive of Weak Verbs occurs in only the Second Person Plural.

And *graunt* him his londe 676
 Withþi vnder our lordeship þou *lenge* a while 683
 And *relese* him his riȝt 675
 Withþi þou *saȝtil* with þe kniȝt 673

IX. The Infinitive ends generally in *-e*.

i) in rhyme :

bete, 103 (:wete, v.) : calle, 133 (:halle, n.) : doute, 170 (:poute, v.) : fall,
 72 (:lefeſale, n.) : fare, 260 (:mare, adj.) : folde, 376 (:beholde, v.) : grade,
 99 (:crede, n.) : grill, 632 (:ill, adj.) : here, 130 (:bere, n.) : holde, 255,
 668 (wolde, v.) : layne, 83 (:gayne, n.) : layn, 204 (:sayn, v.) : londe, 176
 (:aboute, adv.) : make, 596 (:sake, n.) : rede, 550 (:brede, n.) : ryngge, 708
 (:hunyng, n.) : shrette, 395 (:lede, v.) : slayne, 298 (:Bretayn, n.) : telle, 349 (:feele,
 n.), 190 (:helle, n.), 316 (:welle, v.) : wede, 558 (:nede, n.) : welde,
 425 (:felde, n.) : welle, 316 (:telle, v.) : wete, 102 (:sprete, n.)

ii) before consonants :

carpe with, 143 : chaute þe, 446 : dowe þe 672 : dre my, 141 : dryve forthe, 564 : dubbe þe,
 672 : encroche þe, 287 : fecche me, 551 : fede folke, 319 : grete(=weep), þe 278 :

grete(=greet) 228 : here μe 131 : holde μes , 258 : leere μe , 201 : lende lo 214 : lese Breytayn, 285 : lese μe , 293, lese suche, 432 : leve but, 259 : leve, lorde, 264 : make μe , 236, 706 : mende thi, 193, mende μi , 198 : pray were, 706 : rede right, 525 : reunege μe , 550 : singe μe , 210 : speke with, 101 : stounde μe , 552 : thenke laith, 432 : warry μe , 423 : welde wolde, 365

iii) before vowels:

dy on, 295, dye on, 305 : hunte at 5, 435 : rede out, 704 : stonde vprigt 657 : walke on, 315, 434 : write into, 703

iv) behore h .

breke His, 242 : contorte his, 486 : kele hem, 45 : stere him, 266 : teche hem, 34 : wring his, 423

v) $-\phi$ in rhyme:

bring, 249 (: Heuenking, *n.*), 290 (:king, *n.*) : fall, 72 (:lefessale, *n.*) : liȝt, 272 (:wherewright, *n.*) : say, 21 (:pay, *v.*), 94, (:gay, *adj.*), 308, (:day, *n.*)

vi) $-\phi$ before consonants:

comfort his, 480 : diȝt thare, 170 : light ful, 268 : pray were, 705 : warry μe , 423

vii) $-\phi$ before vowels:

fall of, 7 : fraist I, 412 : liȝt me, 214

X. The Imperative Second Person Singular Verbs of Anglo-Saxon origin always have $-e$.

fonde, 193 (O.E. *fūndian*) : late, 414 (O.E. *lettan*, *lættan*) : lene, 228 (O.E. *lænan*, *lènan*): let(e), 155, 471, (O.E. *lætān*, *lētān*) : spire, 256 (O.E. *spyrian*) : thare, (O.E. *þurfān*) : $\mu enke$, 318 (O.E. *þencan*), thenk, 192 : trowe, 207 (O.E. *treowan*, *truwian*) : vmbroke, 462 (O.E. *ymblocian*)

exception: ϕ -form : rest, 438 (O.E. *restan*)

XI. The Imperative Second Person Singular of Verbs of Old Norse Origin ends in $-e$.

gete, 283, 296 (O.N. *gæta*) : take, 171, 273, 483, (takis, 165) (O.N. *take*)

XII. The Imperative Second Person Singular of Verbs of Romance origin ends $-e$.

greue, 100 (O.F. *grever*) : muse, 167 (O.F. *muser*)

XIII. The Perfect Participle of Weak Verbs ends in $-(e)d$, $-de$, $-e$ and $-t$.

i) $-(ed)$:

a) : in rhyme :

deued, 277 (:leued, *v.*) : leued, 279 (:deued, *v.*) : reued, 281 (:leued, *v.*) : steled, 579 (:shelde, *n.*)

b) : before consonants:

bigged ful, 71, 671 : bokeled ful, 368 : browed ful, 385 : crisomed with, 138, 224 : forbled her, 658 : forwondred μey . 334 : holked ful, 116 mached be, 437

c) : before vowels:

brad in, 342 : christened and, 138, 224 : folowed in 225 : salued of, 244 : walled I, 669 : wounded iwy, 303, wouded as, 608, wonded is, 561

ii) $-de$:

a) : in rhyme:

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clade, 106 (hadde, v.) : frydde, 7 (:hadde, v.) : vntolde, 149 (:colde, *adj.*)

b) : before consonants:

saude with, 7

iii) -e:

a) : in rhyme:

brewe, 592 (: strewe, v.) : kydde, 3 (:bytydde, v.)

b) : before consonants:

smite with, 544

iv) -t:

in rhyme:

piȝt, 442 (:miȝt, n.) : shent, 631 (:bent, n.) : tiȝt, 355 (:pight, v.)

XV. The Perfect Participle of Strong Verbs ends in -en.

forbeten with, 659 : knowen for, 139

XV. Preterite-present Verbs:

i) haue:

1. sg. pr. ind.	I <i>haue</i> kinges in my kyn knowen for kene 139
	I <i>haue</i> no lenger tome tidinges to telle 314
2. sg. pr. ind.	<i>ȝou has</i> wonen hem in werre with a wrange wile 421
3. sg. pr. ind.	God <i>has</i> lent me this grace 140
	The king to counsaile <i>has</i> called his kniȝtes so kene 461
1. pl. pr. ind.	We ar in oure gamen; we <i>haue</i> no gome graiȝe 436
2. pl. pr. ind.	Fraunce <i>haf</i> ye frely with your fight wonnen 274
3. pl. pr. ind.	<i>ȝat ȝis</i> in desert <i>haue</i> me laft on my deȝday 98
	Pride with ȝe appurtenaunce, as prophetez <i>han</i> tolde 239
3. sg. pt. ind.	<i>ȝat</i> euer segge <i>had</i> souȝt, or sen was with sight 359
	I wende neuer wee in is world <i>had</i> ben half so wiȝt 639
3. pl. pt. ind.	To hunte at ȝe herdes at longe <i>had</i> ben hydde 5
<i>imp.</i>	<i>Haue</i> pite on ȝe poer while ȝou art of power 173
	<i>Haue</i> gode day, Gaynour and Gawayn ȝe gode 313

ii) may:

1. sg. pr. ind.	I mourne for no montur, for I <i>may</i> gete mare 555
2. sg. pr. ind.	<i>ȝus may</i> ȝou dryve forthe ȝe day to ȝe derk night 564
3. sg. pr. ind.	<i>ȝe</i> praier of ȝe poer <i>may</i> purchas ȝe pes 178
3. pl. pr. ind.	They <i>mon</i> weten of care 246
1. sg. pr. subj.	While I ȝe hede <i>may</i> bere 426
3. pl. pr. subj.	<i>ȝat</i> haȝeles <i>may</i> here 130
3. pl. pt. ind.	There <i>might</i> haȝeles in hiȝ herdes beholde 42
	Vnneth <i>miȝt</i> ȝo sturne stonde vpriȝt 657
3. pl. pt. subj.	Ha else <i>miȝt</i> here, ȝe hendest in halle 131
	If bedis of bisshoppes <i>miȝt</i> bring ȝe to blisse 200

iii) shal:

1. sg. pr. ind.	And ȝis mekel mervaille ȝat I <i>shal</i> of mene 73
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- For I *shal* speke with þe sprete 101
2. sg. pr. ind. Þou sei me þe sothe wheþer þou *salle* 135
Tel me what þou seches and wheþer þou *salle* 406
3. sg. pr. ind. He *shal* light ful lowe on þe sesondes 268
This knight *shal* clanly encroche þe crowne 287
1. pl. pr. ind. How *shal* we fare 261
2. pl. pr. ind. For ye *shul* lese Bretayn 285
And ye *shullen* turne ayen for þe tyþing 292
3. pl. pr. ind. Yet *shal* þe riche Romayns with you be aurronen 280
Þei *shullen* dye on a day, þe doughty bydene 305
3. sg. pt. ind. But for doel of þe dombe best þat þus *shuld* be dede 554
- iv). wil:
1. sg. pr. ind. Nowe *wil* Y of my turment tel or I go 190
I *wol* fiȝt on a fede—þere to I make feith—430
3. sg. pr. ind. Þus deth *wil* þou diȝt, thare you not doute 170
3. pl. pr. ind. Þen lite wyn þe light þat now *wil* þe loute 176
2. sg. pt. ind. What woldes þou, wee, if hit be thi *wille*? 405
3. sg. pt. ind. Ner Gawayn *wold* wede 558
1. sg. pt. subj. But one þing *wold* I wite if þi *wil* ware 197
Bot one word, quod Waynour, yit weten I *wolde* 237
2. sg. pt. subj. *Woldest* þou leve, lorde 634
3. sg. pt. subj. Ho was þe worþiest wight þat eny welde *wolde* 365
To lese suche a lordshipp me *wold* thenke laith 432

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