

Leeds Studies in English

Article:

Bruce Dickins, 'Havelok 64-66', *Leeds Studies in English*, 4 (1935), 75-76

Permanent URL:

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HAVELOK 64-66.

W. H. French and C. B. Hale in their invaluable *Middle English Metrical Romances* (New York, 1930) give an edition of "Havelok" which supplements in a variety of ways that commonly used in this country—Sisam's revision of Skeat (Oxford, 1915). On one passage however I must join issue with the American editors. The MS. reading of vv. 64-66 is

Was non so bold lond to rome

Pat durste upon his bringhe

Hunger ne here wicke þinghe.

French and Hale accept, not only Sir William Craigie's emendation of *lond* to *lowerd* (Skeat-Sisam, p. 105), which is pretty certainly correct, but Holthausen's *Hunger, ne othere wicke þinghe* (also adopted in Skeat-Sisam). The MS. reading is however a traditional alliterative phrase found at least three times in Wulfstan, who lived under a king very different in type from Apelwold. Bosworth-Toller cites *here ne hunger, here and hunger, here oððon hunger*; cf., in Middle English, Lambeth Homilies, p. 13:

here ne hunger . . . here 7 hunger;

Owl and Nightingale, 1191:

Ich wot of hunger, of hergonge;

Arthur and Merlin 4093-4:

Here is comand to this lond

Gret hunger, and here gong;

possibly also Lazamon 8245. I do not think there is any case for tampering with the MS. reading, which can be translated 'famine nor devastation—evil things.' The line in need of emendation is v. 65 which is short of a couple of syllables. Skeat-Sisam completes it by adding [*menie*] after *his*. If, however, we assume that the original read

Pat durste upon his londe bringhe,

we restore the prosody of v. 65 and at the same time account for the corruption in v. 64.

I should add that Professor E. V. Gordon, who had come to

the same conclusion independently, cites from "The Proverbs of Alfred" (J. Hall, *Selections from Early ME.*, p. 19, ll. 55-6) the striking parallel

pan knyhte bi houep.
kenliche on to fone.
for to werie þat lond.
wip hunger and wip herivinge.

B.D.

SEYND BACOUN.

All previous commentators on the *Nonne Preestes Tale* have assumed that *seynd* in the phrase *seynd bacoun* (CT. B 4035) is the p.p. of *sengen* and have translated 'singed, broiled' (so F. N. Robinson), or 'smoked' (so G. H. Cowling in his *Selections from Chaucer* published last year). But neither sense is quite satisfactory and one is tempted to seek another etymology. I suggest that *seynd* is derived from OF. *saim*, *sain*, 'fat,' in Modern Standard French preserved only in *saindoux*, 'lard.' The *-m* forms alone are recorded in ME. (NED. *seam*, *sb*³), but, under EDD. *saim*, *-n* forms are noted from Lancashire and E. Kent. The p.p. of a derivative verb, *seym'd up* 'choked with fat,' is found in Northumberland, and it should be remembered that the adj. *fat* is participial in origin. 'Fat bacon' suits the context well. Thirty years ago when I was a boy in S. Lincolnshire the small-holders and farm labourers ate very little flesh-meat but fat bacon of their own feeding and curing. The fatter it was, the better they liked it. The *povre widwe's* pig would be fattened on acorns, beech-mast and the like (cf. *masty swyne* at HF. iii, 687) and slaughtered before winter.

If however the derivation from ME. *sengen* be preferred, the exact meaning is, I think, 'sooty.' NED. cites Dryden's *a sing'd Sow's Head*=*fissa fumosum sinciput aure* (Persius vi, 70), and *rashers of sindg'd bacon*, which is merely of course an