The Identity of the Gawain-Poet

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Abstract

A method for the identification of the Gawain-Poet based upon multiple elements of the text is proposed, and a template of 11 requirements is proposed that a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet *must* fulfil. We find historical evidence that James Cottrell, originally in the service of the House of Lancaster, and then Mordomo-Mór to Philippa of Lancaster (Queen Félipa of Portugal), daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and wife of King João I of Portugal (João of Avis) and Monteiro-Mór to the Infante Dom Henrique (Henry the Navigator) fulfills 10 of these requirements with a strong inference that he also fulfills the last requirement. Analysis yields odds of at least 8,223 to 1 against this being a set of multiple coincidences. To test the hypothesis that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet we detail a further 24 points of additional supportive evidence from concordances between the text and the life of James Cottrell for which we have definite historical evidence. Taken collectively, the candidate's conformance to the 11 requirements, reinforced by the additional 24 parallels between the text and his life, generates an extremely high confidence level. Whilst no amount of circumstantial evidence can ever constitute direct proof, we must conclude it is beyond reasonable doubt that James Cottrell who accompanied Philippa of Lancaster to Portugal in 1386 was the author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the other poems of the manuscript in the British Library. We note also that an anagram of Bertilak is Bi Katrel (or of Bertilac is Bi Catrel), and that the remarkable isolation of the Gawain-Poet from contemporary poets and events in England is no longer surprising in view of his geographical isolation. From events in the life of James Cottrell we arrive at a firm dating of *Pearl* to 1388-1390 and a more tentative dating of the other poems.

1. Introduction

Putter summarises the known facts about the authorship of the poems in the manuscript:

> *… somewhere in England, towards the end of the fourteenth century, an unknown Englishman wrote four poems in a north west midlands dialect.*
>
> —Ad Putter, *An Introduction to the Gawain-Poet [PUTTER96] (p. 3)*

The end of the fourteenth century and the dialect are certainly reasonable inferences derived from the manuscript. It also seems very reasonable to infer that the poet was English (the dialect in manuscript is certainly convincingly idiomatic), but was the Gawain-Poet a man? And where is the evidence that the poet wrote somewhere in England? The problem is that there is absolutely no evidence *external* to manuscript pointing to the identity of the Gawain-Poet.

The first record of the manuscript itself is in the library of Sir Henry Saville of Banke, near Halifax, somewhat before 1614: "*an owlde boke in English verse beginning 'Perle pleasants to princes pay' in 4^0 limned*". From there it passed by 1621 to Sir Robert Cotton where it was rebound with extraneous material ("*Vetus Poema Anglicanum, in quo, sub insomnii figmento, multa ad religionem et mores spetcantia explicantur*") and barely survived a disastrous fire in 1731. Now in the British Library as MS Cotton Nero A.x A.x, it was rebound again in 1964 without the extraneous material but with no re-foliation[i], and now it contains only the four poems commonly referred to as *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The manuscript is a copy of an earlier one, but there is some evidence in the foliation that the poems have always been bound together in this order. The existing manuscript has been dated on somewhat slender grounds to about 1400, but the date of authorship must have been somewhat earlier.[ii] and the scribe (note: not the author) has been localised as coming from the region of south east Cheshire, south west Derbyshire and north west Staffordshire [MCINTOSH86], an area centred roughly around Holmes Chapel in Cheshire to Leek in Staffordshire. Internal evidence suggests strongly that the poems were composed no earlier than the closing decades of the fourteenth century, and a date of around 1350-1400 is perhaps most generally accepted. The poems were first published in their entirety in the nineteenth century

[i] There are currently two sets of folio numbers on the leaves of the manuscript, the older set from the Cotton library numbered 37 to 126, and a newer numbering (on pencil) by the British Library from 41 to 130. I will use the older numbering wherever necessary.

[ii] The date of authorship has been the subject of controversy, Wright suggested the last quarter of the fourteenth century [WRIGHT60] whilst Doyle [DOYLE82] dated it to the last half of the fourteenth century. Somewhat later Horrall [HORRALL86] suggested the manuscript might have been produced in the early fifteenth century based on detail in the illustrations. Cooke suggested an earlier date, 1330-1360 [COOKE89] which was later refined to sometime after 1355 [COOKE99] based on a re-evaluation of the depiction and description of armour in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* [LACY97]. A similarity in the subject matter of the opening lines of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Wynnere and Wastoure* has been noted (both refer to the fabled origin of Britain with Brutus, and the treason resulting in the fall of Troy) and Hulbert [HULBERT20] suggested that the author of *Wynnere and Wastoure* was indebted to the Gawain-Poet. Trigg [TRIGG90] has suggested that *Wynnere and Wastoure* might have been as late as 1370, possibly favouring the earlier date for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but I find the argument speculative at best. Overall a date of 1400±10 seems the most reasonable estimate of the date of the production of the manuscript. Unfortunately the hand of the scribe has not been found in any other manuscript, which would have helped in dating.

[MADDEN39] [MORRIS69] and have since been recognised as of great literary merit. Despite their significance, the authorship of this work remains in very considerable doubt, and most would agree that the only acceptable name for the Gawain-Poet to date is "anonymous". As far as dating and location are concerned, all we can say is that the manuscript was prepared by a scribe whose style was that of the Leek area somewhere around 1400. It is, however, perfectly clear from the text that the native dialect of the author was that of the north west, with the considerable influence from Old Norse suggesting that the Gawain-Poet came from further north than the scribe (the point is expanded in Section 3.3, "*The Dialect of the Poems and of the Gawain-Poet*"). Dating estimates cannot be precise, and error limits of ±10 years are probably the most optimistic we can apply.

It is almost generally accepted on literary grounds that a single poet was responsible for all the poems, but there is no *hard* evidence for this. A large part of the evidence for authorship presented in this work comes from the poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but we have not hesitated to draw on evidence from the other poems, particularly *Pearl*, when this seems appropriate. Dorothy Everett [EVERETT55] perhaps best summarised the case for common authorship

> *It seems easier to assume a common author than to suppose that two or more men writing in the same locality and the same period, and certainly closely associated with one another, possessed this rare and, one would think, inimitable quality.*
>
> —Dorothy Everett, *Essays in Middle English Literature, Ed. P Kean*

Although we concur with the general opinion that a single poet produced all the poems in the manuscript, we are confident that withdrawing evidence from the other poems does not weaken our argument for attribution unduly. Indeed, one could reverse the argument and use evidence from the other poems to increase confidence in common authorship.

There have been many earlier efforts to identify the Gawain-Poet but we must confess to a strong disposition to agree wholeheartedly with Pearsall and Putter that

> *[these] attributions are based on such naive and improbable assumptions concerning what constitutes evidence as to bring the study of attribution into disrepute.*
>
> —Derek A. Pearsall, *The Alliterative Revival: Origins and Social Backgrounds, [PEARSALL82] (p.52)*

and

> *… it depends on straining eyesight (and perhaps one's credulity) in order to see an anagram of the poet's name in selected words from* Pearl *[PETERSON74a], or a signature in the doodles underneath an ornamental letter in the manuscript [VANTUONO75].*
>
> —Ad Putter, *An Introduction to the Gawain-Poet, [PUTTER96] (p.2)*

While one might suppose that "doodles" could be a genuine attempt by an author to hide his name in a holograph, it would be very unlikely that a scribe copying a holograph would precisely reproduce the doodles. Conceivably one might place a little reliance on simplicity as opposed to comlexity, a single word anagram might be more acceptable than a "doodles" or an acrostic.

In any attempt to identify the Gawain-Poet it is important to distinguish between direct and circumstantial evidence. In the absence of any documentary evidence external to the manuscript, it has generally been assumed that any evidence derived from the content of the manuscript can be thought of as direct evidence. For example, Greenwood [GREENWOOD56] and Kooper [KOOPER82] noted that line 106 in the published editions of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is line 101 in the manuscript (the "bob" lines are written in the right margin rather than occupying a line by themselves), and that the roman numeral *ci* represents the Arabic 101. This line (101) contains the word *mas* and hence the name of the Gawain-Poet can be identified with Masci, the name of a prominent Cheshire family at that time. Following up on this name, Vantuono [VANTUONO75] [VANTUONO81] claimed to recognise the name *J. Mascy* in marginal material of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (folio 114) and beneath an illuminated letter in *Cleanness* (folio 62v), and the name *Macy* at the bottom of a folio in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (but see the comment of Putter above). Next it is important to identify the name with an historical character. There is documentary evidence that a John de Mascy was rector of Ashton on Mersey from 1364 to 1401. A John de Mascy of Sale (presumably the same man; the church at Ashton on Mersey is little more than a half a mile from the centre of Sale) is recorded as a priest and a civil servant between 1377 and 1389. So it was proposed that a member of the Mascy family of Cheshire (and probably John) was the Gawain-Poet. Finally we need to compare aspects of the candidate's life with the subject matter of the manuscript. Any correspondences we find constitute useful circumstantial evidence supporting the identification of the Gawain-Poet. This leads us to a distinction between the differing qualities of circumstantial evidences: those for which we have direct evidence, and those which we might infer as *possible or probable*. Thus we might infer from his position as priest that it was perhaps even *probable* that John de Mascy was both literate and familiar with the Vulgate bible, although many local priests at that time had only a very minimal education. We might also infer it was at least *possible* that he might have been familiar with the ritualistic detail of the hunt through his possible connections with local nobility. Such inferences must carry far less weight than if we could produce (which we can't) documentary evidence that Mascy was a university graduate and had been appointed as chief huntsman to some local noble. If we might misquote T. S. Eliot out of context, it is the difference between what *might have been* and *what has been*.

If the only evidence we have for the identity of the Gawain-Poet has to be drawn from the manuscript itself, we can distinguish at least three types of evidence.

- An encoding of the author's name in the text. For example, the author of the *The Destruction of Troy* states in his introduction that his name is to be found in the text, and the discovery of "Iohan Clerk de Whalale" (John Clerk of Whalley) by Turville-Petre [TURPET88] must be regarded as definitive. There is no such promise of an encoded author's name in the manuscript, but anagrams etc have been sought in the text, and might help in the proposal of a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet. However, we have no evidence that the Gawain-Poet intended to hide his name in the text, so any coding that might be found cannot be regarded as definitive, and we cannot exclude any proposal because there is no coding of his name in the text. However, any such coding found does provide at least a strong hint to any search for a candidate for the Gawain-

Poet. It would be strongly supportive, but not essential, that any name encoded could also be identified as a known historical person (a slight problem with “Iohan Clerk de Whalale”).

- Qualities that the Gawain-Poet *must* have possessed. For example, it is clear that the Gawain-Poet must have had considerable experience of life in a household of the nobility, wealthier aristocrats, or even at a royal court, the ritual of the breaking of the kill in the hunt, knowledge of earlier French literature, knowledge of the Bible and so on. No-one without qualities such as these could have written the poems in the manuscript. Qualities such as these are *essential* requirements of a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet although the absence of historical proof of possession cannot disqualify a candidate.

- Episodes in the poems which *might* be mirrored in the life of a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet. Such mirrored episodes might be possible source material for the Gawain-Poet, or they might simply be chance coincidences. For example, a candidate might have experienced an episode in which a ring and a girdle were offered by a lady to a knight in the absence of her husband. While this does mirror an episode in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, it *cannot* be regarded as an essential requirement.

Any coding of a name in the manuscript can only be regarded as a possible hint of an attribution, and the best we can do is to compile a template of *essential* qualities derived from the text, and use conformance to this template in the evaluation of a candidate. If a candidate conforms well to the template, then, and only then, can we test the hypothesis that the candidate actually is the Gawain-Poet by looking for further supportive parallels between episodes in the text and the life of the candidate.

The identification process thus starts from an element of suggestion for a name in the text, and proceeds to an identification of the name with an historical person. Next we derive a template for the Gawain-Poet from the text and compare the person with the template, using direct historical evidence from his life. If the conformance to the template is adequate, we finally support the identification by linking passages in the manuscript to events or experiences in the life of the historical person- for a poet can only write about *happenings* within his own experience.

> *The Ricardian poet deals in happenings- happenings which he has experienced or dreamt or read or learned about, or simply happenings.*
>
> —J A Burrow*Ricardian Poetry [BURROW65] p.47*

It is the conformance to the template that can provide good, convincing, circumstantial evidence (but not direct evidence) for an identification of an historical person with the Gawain-Poet. When we test the hypothesis by comparing the life of the candidate with happenings in the poems and find significant parallels, our confidence is increased. We should be clear that although we require direct evidence (i.e. external to manuscript) about the life of a candidate, the link to the poems is still only circumstantial evidence. Ideally of course the evidence and the life of the historical person should also lead us to new locations to search for new direct evidence. Always we are faced with the decision between a coincidence and a significant parallel. We can only build upon an accumulation of these

correspondences to achieve further confidence. A single *coincidence* might be a *chance occurrence* and carry little weight, but two coincidences are a surprise. When we encounter three coincidences we start to think more seriously that these are *not* coincidences or chance events at all, and when we encounter many multiple coincidences we are sure we see design behind them. It is on this basis that we proceed to an identification of the Gawain-Poet.

All quotations from the poems of the manuscript are taken from the edition published by Andrew and Waldron in 2002 [ANDREW02].

In the next section (Section 2, "*James Cottrell and the Gawain-Poet*" we find evidence for the name of the Gawain-Poet and identify the name with an historical person. This person we then regard as a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet. In the following section (Section 3, " *A Template for the Candidate*" we extract from the manuscript text a set of qualities which we regard as essential attributes of the Gawain-Poet. Anyone lacking these qualities could not have produced the poems in the manuscript. Alongside the enumeration of each of these essential qualities we present the historical evidence that our candidate conforms to the requirement. We test the hypothesis that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet in Section 4, " *Other Supportive Evidence for the Candidate*" where we note a set of twenty-four additional but unessential parallels between the text and the life of the candidate. It is still conceivable that although our candidate might possess all the essential qualities and many other parallels with passages in the poems, he was not the Gawain-Poet. The link between the historical person and the Gawain-Poet is only circumstantial, it might be only a set of multiple coincidences. In Appendix A, *Set Theory and Probability* we assess the probability of such a set of multiple coincidences occurring for a person drawn at random from the appropriate population of the north west of England. The results of this analysis are quoted in Section 3.12, "*Conformance of James Cottrell with the Template for the Gawain-Poet*" whilst the formal presentation of the procedure is given in Appendix A, *Set Theory and Probability*.

2. James Cottrell and the Gawain-Poet

Firstly, we find direct evidence for a name in the text from the following passage

> *'How norne e yowre ry t nome, and thenne no more?'*
> *'Þat schal I telle þe trwly,' quoþ þat oþer þenne:*
> *'Bertilak de Hautdesert I hat in þis londe.'*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2443-2445)*

In response to the request for a *ry t* and *trwly* name we get the response *Bertilak*. There is no obvious significance in this reference to a very minor character in the Arthurian cycle, but a simple anagram of *Bertilak* is *bi katrel*[iii]. Katrel is but one of many variations of the name of a knightly family of the north west of England from 1200 to 1600, and we propose that one James Cottrell, who accompanied Philippa of Lancaster to Portugal first as Mordomo-Mór (majordomo) to the royal household and later as Monteiro-Mór (chief hunter) to the Infante Dom Henrique at the Order of Christ[iv] (which made extensive use of the pentangle symbol), is at least a possible candidate[v] for the role of the Gawain-Poet.

Whilst it has almost invariably been assumed that the poems were written in England, there has been at least one suggestion, by Michael Bennett, [BENNETT97] (p.80), that they might have been written outside the north west Midlands for an expatriate audience, possibly in Brittany or Guyenne, but the idea has never been developed.

[iii]There has been some difference of opinion about the name Bertilak, it has been read as Bertilac which was preferred in [PUTTER96] in which case the anagram would be Bi Catrel. Bernlak has also been proposed, but I believe the most generally accepted is Bertilak as used by [ANDREW02].

[iv]The order was created by Pope John XXII on 14 March 1319 in the Bull "*Ad ea ex Quibus*" following the suppression of the Templars. The order was earlier named "*Ordem Real Militar de Avis*", later moving from Avis to the castle at Tomar.

[v]Besides the earlier suggestion of John de Masci, there is one other possibility of a name recorded in the text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* which has so far escaped notice. on l.65 at the top of folio 92[r] we have "*Nowel nayted onewe, neuened ful ofte*". The Nowells were closely associated with the family of James Cottrell. The Nowel (later Nowell) family were local to Whalley Abbey, first at Mearley, then at Read, and were later to achieve literary prominence in the sixteenth century when Laurence Nowell, Dean of Lichfield, preserved the manuscript of *Beowulf* and encouraged (initiated) the study of Old English poetry, his brother, Alexander, was Dean of St. Pauls for over 40 years and drafted the catechism. Roger Nowell of Read financed the education of Edmund Spenser at Merchant Taylor's School and Pembroke college. John Nowell of Capelside (Mearley) was vicar of Giggleswick in Ribblesdale 1548-1556, he was chaplain to Edward VI and procured the endowment of a grammar school at Giggleswick, "*Schola Gramm. regis Edw. VI de Giggleswick…medicate Johanne Nowel, Clerico, Capellano sua, Vicario Ecc. Par. de Giggleswick*" and "*Septem discretiores homines*" were constituted governors (William Catterall, … [and others]) [WHITAKER78] (p.168) Around 1520 Grace Catterall of Little Mitton married a Nowell [WHITAKER72] (p.22). Stephen Hamerton of Hellifield Peel appointed John Catterall as his attorney in 1538. Catterall Hall in Gigleswick is now the junior school of Giggleswick Grammar School. Fernão Lopes [FERNAO], (Ch. CXXVIII, of the Chronicle of Dom Fernando, p.65 and the footnote on p.344) mentions a Chico Novell who arrived in Portugal in 1381 among the retinue of Edmund of Langley, and a compatriot of James Cottrell. The Nowells were a rising family in the Whalley area at the end of the fourteenth century, and it is not inconceivable that one of them found wealth in the wars abroad.

> *Given the themes and concerns of some of the works it is not impossible that they were written outside the north-west Midlands, for an expatriate audience.*
>
> —M J Bennett, *The Historical Background, [BENNETT97] p.80*

James Cottrell was certainly an expatriate and Philippa had a very considerable English entourage.

There is evidence in the poems that the Gawain-Poet lead two very different lives. He shows himself as a practical man with deep knowledge of the formality of verbal contract, with detailed knowledge of the hunt, with experience of the bustle of ports prior to a departure, with the rigging of ships, and displays intimate knowledge of procedures at court. On the other hand his poetical work is primarily concerned with theological matters, with personal *trawþe* and, to a lesser extent, the Arthurian cycle of romance, all more typical of the contemplative life. Such dualism was by no means unknown in the fourteenth century. Although the Gawain-Poet was intensely interested in theological matters, it always seems to be as a non-cleric, the narrator in manuscript always appears on the secular side of the church- but see below Section 4.4, "*Clerical or Secular?*". Furthermore, he was always prepared to adapt the scriptures to suit his own poetic purpose.

A picture begins to emerge of a very practical man, very deeply immersed in aristocratic life and deeply interested in theological matters, but it seems very unlikely that he was a member of the nobility in England,[vi] although his family probably were of knightly status in England, for he refers to his liege lord and mentions a time of enforced poverty in *Patience*.[vii] He held a sufficiently high position in a court and his duties made him necessarily very familiar with the detail of courtly life and the legal formalities of verbal contract, and allowed him access to a good library and the time to indulge his more contemplative interests. Men of this position and with these opportunities were rare in the fourteenth century, but James Cottrell certainly fulfils all these requirements.

Perhaps the most striking puzzle about his identity is the apparent isolation of the Gawain-Poet. Despite his obvious close experience of the courtly life and his literary activities, he appears to have been completely isolated from the great concerns of the day in England and particularly from the great English poets of his time. Similarly, with his theological concerns, he shows no apparent contact with the theological disputes in England (typified by the life and work of Wycliffe and the Lollards) current in the last decades of the fourteenth century Again he is deeply aristocratic in outlook, but also locked into the dialect of the north west (where there was very little aristocratic presence). He shows no interest or even awareness of social problems in England (the recent Black death (1369) or the oppressive taxation leading to the Peasants' revolt of 1381). He has no comment to make about the democratisation of religion, no interest in political strife and no criticism of the nobility or high ecclesiastics (contrast *Piers Plowman* and *Wynnere and Wastoure*, and indeed much alliterative verse).[viii] This isolation may well be mirrored in the scarcity of his work (although one

[vi] James Cottrell was elevated to the nobility of Portugal somewhat later in life, and was the founder of the Portuguese Cotrim dynasty, see Appendix B, *The Manuscript of Salvador Soares Cotrim, 1724*.

[vii] James Cottrell was closely associated with the Order of Christ in Portugal which, of course, maintained the (perhaps nominal) usual vow of poverty of a religious order.

[viii] The isolation it should be noted is not just from his poetic contemporaries, but more generally it is a *social* isolation. The poems of the Gawain-Poet are socially isolated: servants do exist, but their life, thoughts and feelings are not explored:

can always take refuge from this in the known tendency of historical documents to disappear with the elapse of time). Nevertheless, although there exist over 60 manuscripts or fragments of *Piers Plowman*, over 80 of *Canterbury Tales*, 16 of *Troilus and Chrysede* and 40 of *Confessio Amantis*: there exists only one of the work attributed to the Gawain-poet (the manuscript). Many legal and official documents exist which point to the historical figures of Chaucer and Gower, and there is a little documentary evidence of the historical Langland, but (to date) no historical record of any sort of the Gawain-poet. The situation of James Cottrell from 1386 onwards, at the royal court of Portugal, is more than sufficient explanation of his isolation from the events and poets of England in the last decades of the fourteenth century (it was not until about 1415 that the *Confessio Amantis* was translated into Portuguese).

Despite this isolation, there are some aspects of the life of a candidate (including living at the right time, and familiarity with the dialect of the north west) that we can and *must* describe as essential: clearly the Gawain-Poet was a man some considerable education, he had clear and precise knowledge of the significance of the pentangle symbol, he was very familiar with the procedures of court, feasts and the hunt, he must have had access to a good library, and he obviously had detailed legal knowledge and so on. A person without all of these experiences could not have produced the poems of the manuscript. There are also some aspects which, while not absolutely essential, are strongly indicated: the mere existence of *Pearl* strongly suggests that the Gawain-Poet had a close connection with the death of a young girl before the age of two. The above might be described as "*happenings*" in the life of the Gawain-Poet. There are also a multitude of indications in the poems of other possible aspects of his life, but some of these may well have been experienced only at second hand (e.g. in his reading), and these cannot be regarded as *essential* requirements. The description of the experience of a storm at sea and the highly detailed description of the bustle at a port prior to departure in *Patience*, together with the detailed knowledge of a ship's rigging might have arisen from experienced at second hand, but even in this case the extent of the detail indicates a more personal experience. In the following section (Section 3, "*A Template for the Candidate*" we choose a set of eleven requirements which we believe *must* be met by any candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet and we present the evidence that James Cottrell conforms to these requirements. These requirements we believe to be both necessary and very nearly statistically independent. Together they constitute a reliable template with which to assess *any* candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet – and John de Mascy hardly does better than a "possible maybe". Again we stress the value of direct evidence:

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they might as well not exist. This social isolation is in marked contrast to Langland and Chaucer who particularly delighted in exploring other classes. In many ways the Gawain-Poet is closer to Jane Austen, he keeps closely restricted to the life he knows well- in the case of the Gawain-Poet this was the court and an environment of theological orthodoxy. Austen never recognised (in her novels) the existence or importance of the Napoleonic wars, and the Gawain-Poet had no time in his poetry for the Peasants' Revolution, the theological efforts of Wycliffe and the Lollards, the wars in Europe, or the Papal schism. If he spent the years 1381-1386 between his expeditions to Portugal in the service of John of Gaunt at the Savoy in London he would have been very aware in his daily life of the Peasants' Revolution when the Savoy was burnt (but John of Gaunt was away fighting in Scotland at that time). The Gawain-Poet focused closely on his own social environment to the exclusion of all else. In sharp contrast much of the other existing alliterative poetry of the late fourteenth century is very politically and socially aware. Jane Austen was aware of the Cottrell family, on 24th. January 1813 she wrote to her sister Cassandra "Mrs Bramstone is the sort of woman I detest- Mr Cottrell [The Revd. Clement Cottrell] is worth ten of her." and on 1-2 October 1808 "Yesterday we were visited by the eldest Miss Cotterel"

that James Cottrell held the position of chief huntsman (Monteiro-Mór) is far more convincing than a statement that as a member of a knightly family, attached to a royal household, he could well have had experience of the hunt. In Section 4, " *Other Supportive Evidence for the Candidate*" we test the hypothesis that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet by pursuing other analogies between events in the life of James Cottrell and the poems which further increases our confidence for the identification of James Cottrell with the Gawain-Poet.[ix]

[ix]We cannot falsify the hypothesis in the Popperian sense by making some prediction from the hypothesis which turns out to be untrue. We can only accumulate evidences that increase our confidence. The only way to falsify this hypothesis would be to produce direct evidence that someone else was the Gawain-Poet. The only way to prove the hypothesis is to produce direct evidence from outside the manuscript that James Cottrell did indeed write the poems. In Appendix A, *Set Theory and Probability* we derive a quantitative estimate of our final degree of confidence in terms of the odds against anyone (who is not the Gawain-Poet) satisfying all the criteria purely by chance: just how likely is a set of multiple coincidences.

3. A Template for the Candidate

I propose here eleven qualities which I believe the Gawain-Poet must have possessed. That is, they are essential, a person who did not possess even one of them could not have written the poems in the manuscript. To be brief, they are:

1. The Gawain-Poet was a man.

2. He was born at the right time.

3. He spoke with the right accent.

4. He was highly educated (i.e. well-read).

5. He was very familiar with the religious symbolism of the pentangle.

6. He was very familiar with life at court.

7. He was very familiar with the ritual of the hunt.

8. He was intimately concerned with the death of a young girl.

9. He was had access to a good library (and free time to use it).

10. He was possessed of good legal knowledge.

11. He was very familiar with seafaring: bustle, rigging, and storms at sea.

Of these qualities you might possibly argue that pentangle and girl might have been literary invention, and that he might have learnt seafaring from other literature, so that they are not truly *essential*. I would argue that the pentangle was actually a symbol of heathen ritual to the English Christian church at that time, [HARDMAN99], although many years earlier it had been a symbol of Christian virtues to the Templars (so we might look for some link between a candidate and the Templars), that the mere existence of *Pearl* argues for personal experience, and that the close detail of the port, rigging and storm in *Patience* strongly suggest personal experience.

The first three qualities are so obvious that I take them for granted and do not look for the Gawain-Poet outside the men of the last decades of the fourteenth century or outside the north west of the country. In the detailed treatment in Appendix A, *Set Theory and Probability* my only concern with the first three qualities is to establish the size of the population born in the north west at the right time, and the statistical analysis is restricted the last eight criteria.

In the following eleven sections we present the evidence from the poems for each of these qualities in turn, and also outline the conformance of our candidate, James Cottrell, to each of them. Finally in Section 3.12, "*Conformance of James Cottrell with the Template for the Gawain-Poet*" we show how well overall James Cottrell conforms to the template and quote the results of the probability

analysis detailed in Appendix A, *Set Theory and Probability* against this conformance being an accumulation of coincidences.

3.1. Was the Gawain-Poet a man or a woman?

It has generally (and always implicitly) been assumed that the Gawain-Poet was a man, but where is the evidence? Certainly there were notable and educated women writers at this time, both in England and on the continent. Some 200 years before the manuscript was produced Marie de France, born in France but living in England, produced her "*Lais*" during the late 12th century (probably between 1170 and 1205). Julian of Norwich (probably 1342-1416 and a contemporary of the Gawain-Poet), an anchoress at the Church of St Julian in Norwich, was one of the greatest English mystics and produced the "*Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*" around 1393. Christine de Pizan (1365-1430) contributed to the "*Querelle des Femmes*" in 1402 when she addressed to Isabeau de Bavière, Queen of France, and Guillaume de Tignonville, Provost of Paris, a series of documents entitled "Epistles of the Debate over the '*Querelle du Roman de la Rose*' between certain persons of note." (Christine herself, and Jean de Montreuil, Provost of Lille). This was followed by "*La Cité des Dames*" and "*Le Livre du Tresor de la Cité des Dames*" (1404). All these ladies (and others) were clearly educated and competent writers, but were not native to the north west of England. Could the Gawain-Poet have been lady of equal talent born and raised in the English north west?

Consider an equivalent question: "*could a man have written the novels of Jane Austen?*" There is no scene in Austen where a women is not present, the happenings in the novels are those that a woman experiences (the ball but not the hunt), nowhere does she attempt to portray the inner working of any man's mind (or a servant's). We see the inner struggles of the heroines, but the men are little more than counters.[x] Austen keeps strictly to the world she knows; and it is a woman's world which happens to contain men. Now compare this with the work of the Gawain-Poet.

- There is no scene in any of the poems in the manuscript where a man is not present
- The Gawain-Poet never attempted to portray a woman's thoughts although the inner mental struggles of Sir Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, of Noah in *Patience*, and of the dreamer in *Pearl* were treated in great detail.
- The Gawain-Poet kept strictly to the world of personal experience, and the description of it identifies it as a man's world which happened to contain women.
- Many of the happenings in the work of the Gawain-Poet such as the hunt and the breaking of the kill, the arming sequence, the traveling in harsh winter conditions, the fighting on the way, the

[x]One might see some beginning to the fathoming of the mind of a man in D'Arcy and possibly in Captain Wentworth's letter to Anne, but contrast these with the probing of the motives and conflicting ideas and moral judgements in any of the heroines.

rigging of ships, the knightly challenge and response, the legal knowledge of verbal contract[xi] were completely foreign to a women's world at that time.

- Even the interaction between Sir Gawain and the Lady of Hautdesert is seen entirely from the man's point of view. Why did she tempt Sir Gawain? Because she was told to by Morgne le Fey? She doesn'nt even have a name: she is the wife of Bertilak.
- The descriptions of the perils and hardships in the journey of Sir Gawain is hardly the writing of a woman

> *At vche warþe oþer water þer þe wy e passed*
> *He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were,*
> *And þat so foule and so felle þat fe t hym byhode.*
> …
> *Sumwhyle wyth wormez he werrez and with wolues als,*
> *Sumwhyle wyth wodwos þat woned in þe knarrez,*
> *Boþe wyth bullez and berez, and borez oþerquyle,*
> *And etaynez þat hym anelede of þe he e felle.*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, (715-723)*

Based on these considerations I think most critics would agree that the Gawain-Poet was a man.

James Cottrell had a man's name, married a lady of the queen's retinue (Anna Canas de Urofol, probably Anne de Ufford), and produced a son, Lopo. I think we are justified in claiming he satisfies the first criterion.

3.2. The Dates of the manuscript and the Gawain-Poet

> *The date of composition can be judged only on such imprecise criteria as details of dress and architecture and on literary-historical grounds, from which a date in the last quarter of the fourteenth century seems probable*
>
> —Burrow and Turville-Petre [BURROW99]*A Book of Middle English, (p.161)*

The date of the composition of the poems of the manuscript has usually been thought to be in the last decades of the fourteenth century, and although there has been at least one attempt to date the

[xi]However, Novella d'Andrea, (d.1333) lectured in law at the University of Bologna. She was the daughter of Giovanni d'Andrea, professor in Canon law at the University. Her sister, Bettina d'Andrea, taught law and philosophy at the university at Padua up to 1335.

works to 1350-1360 this cannot be said to be generally accepted. A date of about 1380-1400 is perhaps the most acceptable. If we accept that the Gawain-Poet was writing in the last two decades of the fourteenth century, then, bearing in mind that the poems are very definitely the product of a mature talent, we can infer that the Gawain-Poet was no more than 50 years of age in 1380 and no less than 20 at 1400. Given these restrictions we can place the birth date of the Gawain-Poet at no earlier than 1330 and no later than 1380. If he had a long life (80 years), he might have lived into the range 1410-1460. The Nero manuscript, which is thought to be a copy, has been dated to around 1400, with a possible error margin of perhaps plus or minus 10 years,[xii] and always assuming that it was in fact made in England, suggests that the latest possible date for the composition of the last of the poems was somewhat prior to 1410. If we relax the assumption that the copying was done in England, and allow that a north western scribe might be abroad in exile (and several years behind the times), the manuscript copy might very reasonably date as late as 1410-1415, with the composition of the poems at sometime in the period 1380-1410.

James Cottrell accompanied Edmund of Langley, Earl of Cambridge, and later the first Duke of York, on his expedition to Spain and Portugal in 1381, in the role of "general" (when he must have been at least 20 years of age) according to Soares Cotrim(see Appendix B, *The Manuscript of Salvador Soares Cotrim, 1724*). When he returning later with John of Gaunt in late 1386, he was ready for promotion to the very responsible position of Mordomo-Mór, which he filled for almost 30 years, before taking a new post as Monteiro-Mór, which he held "for many years", so we might very reasonably infer that he could not have been much more than about 25-26 in 1386, so that he was born about 1360.[xiii] The dates for James Cottrell accord well with the dating derived from the manuscript. The probability is that the Gawain-Poet was born somewhere about 1340-1360, and was capable of producing mature work in the period 1380-1410.

3.3. The Dialect of the Poems and of the Gawain-Poet

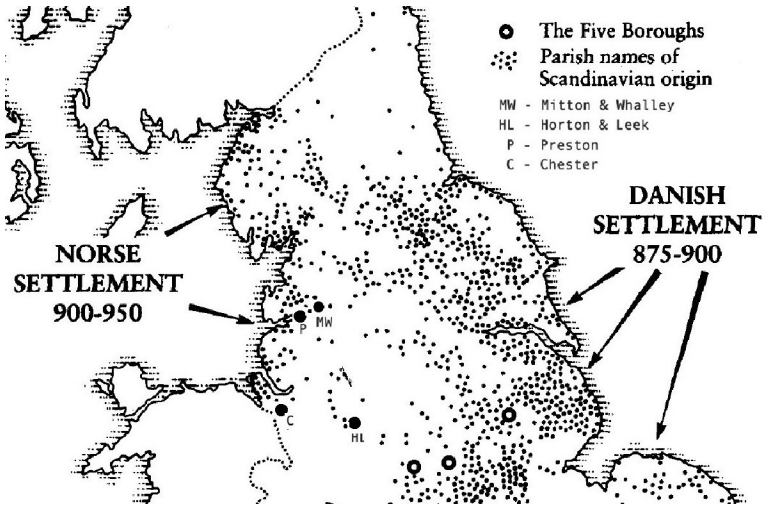
The native dialect of the Gawain-Poet was very definitely that of the northwest. McIntosh locates the home region of the scribe (not the poet) who produced the manuscript near Leek in south-eastern Cheshire. Others have located the dialect (of the poet, not the scribe) somewhat further north in

[xii] As far as I know no-one has made any serious attempt at estimating the error margins of the date of 1400. Dating the manuscript (but not necessarily the poems) to some time in the period 1390-1410, i.e plus or minus 10 years, seems to be the best accuracy we can claim if it was produced by a scribe originating from, and working in the region claimed by McIntosh.

[xiii] At the time Philippa of Lancaster and James Cottrell arrived in Portugal (late 1386), Lisbon had been firmly established as the capital of the country for 130 years, and was the location of the royal household. Following Philippa's marriage to João in February 1387 James Cottrell held the position of Mordomo-Mór to queen Philippa in Lisbon for almost 30 years until her death in 1415, after which he moved to Tomar as the Monteiro-Mór of Philippa's fourth son, the Infante Dom Henrique, who took up the appointment of the (lay) Governor of the Order of Christ. James lived in the house of Dom Henrique within the castle of Tomar until his retirement to a country estate at Eyreira. This would put him in his fifties when he moved to Tomar where he lived "many years" prior to his retirement to Eyreira, possibly around 1425-30. Allowing a few years at Eyreira, this would set his death at around 1435-1440 at an age of about 75-80. Thus we can, with some confidence, set his life span to 1360-1435.

Lancashire or east in Derbyshire. The extensive use of Old Norse vocabulary is very unlikely to be variation imposed by a scribe from that area. Earlier etymological studies agreed that 8-10 percent of the words in the manuscript are of Old Norse origin: Oakden [OAKDEN30] (vol. 1, p.85-86), Gordon [GORDON53] (pp.97-106), Anderson [ANDERSON69] (p.73), [ANDERSON77] (p.108), Davis [DAVIS67] (pp.138-143), Vantuono [VANTUONO84] (vol.1, p.373-374), whilst more recently Hinton [HINTON87] found only 5-6 percent. In either case a significant proportion of the vocabulary of the Gawain-Poet has strong ties to Old Norse. Duggan, in an attempt to distinguish between the dialect of the scribe and the Gawain-Poet, has argued that the Gawain-Poet came from somewhat further south than his scribe [DUGGAN97], which is hard to reconcile with the extensive use of Old Norse words. Turville-Petre [TURPET77] discusses the origin of words in alliterative poetry of the fourteenth century is some detail, and almost all his examples from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* come from Old Norse and he notes the prevalence of Old Norse in the Lancashire and Cumberland area. The north west of England, particularly Lancashire, Cumberland, Westmorland and just possibly the extreme west of Cheshire were settled by Norse Vikings from Ireland and the Isle of Man from 900-950, in contrast to the somewhat earlier Danish settlers of 875-900 onwards in the south and east. There is a dense concentration of parish and settlement names of Norse origin in the Bowland Forest area between Whalley and Lancaster, very few around the Cheshire-Staffordshire border, and none at all to the south west of a line between the Dee estuary and London. See Figure 1, "Scandinavian Settlement in England", adapted from the map by Swanton on p.297 of [SWANTON98].

Figure 1. Scandinavian Settlement in England



There are certainly north-south regional differences in the presentation of text in fourteenth century manuscripts. One such is the use of the alternatives "*qu*" and "*wh*" in what, where, when, why and while, but the work of the Gawain-Poet uses both although strongly favouring "*wh*". The "*wh*" form is used exclusively in the *The Destruction of Troy* which originated from Whalley in north-east Lancashire, so the preference for "*wh*" by the Gawain-Poet might perhaps suggesting a more northerly origin of the Gawain-Poet, but hardly conclusive. In contrast the author of *St. Erkenwald*

used the "*qu*" form exclusively, despite his obviously north western dialect. The evidence is presented in Table 1, "Use of "*qu*" and "*wh*"".

Table 1. Use of "*qu*" and "*wh*"

	Pearl	*Cleanness*	*Patience*	*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*	*St. Erken-wald*	*The Destruc-tion of Troy*
what	9	11	13	7	0	103
quat	4	2	0	12	6	0
where	2	3	1	5	0	5
quere	2	1	0	1	1	0
when	19	32	9	30	0	238
quen	9	7	19	22	7	0
why	2	2	3	0	0	22
quy	1	0	0	1	3	0
whil(e)	0	1	2	1	64	0
quil(e)	0	0	0	2	0	4

We are proposing a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet somewhat farther north than the home of the scribe, deeper in the area of strong Old Norse influence, but this seems to be more in accord with the extensive use of vocabulary of Old Norse origin. The family headquarters of James Cottrell were at Little Mitton on the boundary of Whalley Abbey, but a cadet branch had formed at Horton, close to Leek on the north Staffordshire-south east Cheshire boundary very early in the fourteenth century - exactly the area where the scribe of the manuscript has been located. The region around Whalley had been dominated by the Viking settlements until Athelstan purchased Amounderness (roughly Lancashire between the Ribble and the Lune) "at great personal expense" from the "pagans" about 930. The largest Viking treasure hoard (dated to the first decade of the tenth century) ever discovered was found in 1840 ([WHITAKER72] vol.II p.336, in a long footnote extending to p.340, and [HIGHAM93] (p.185)) at Cuerdale on the south bank of the Ribble about two miles east of Preston (about the limit of navigability by sea-going craft) and ten miles west of Whalley.

The importance of a north western dialect is obviously very high, no-one could have written the poems unless that was his native dialect. The family of James Cottrell originated in north-east Lancashire, on the northern banks of the Ribble around Goosnargh (from Old English, *cnearr*, about four miles north-east of Preston, (also Grimsargh and Cumeragh nearby), but spread locally in the thirteenth and the first decade of the fourteenth centuries. A cadet branch appeared very early in the fourteenth cenury close to the boundary of south east Cheshire with north west Staffordshire at Horton, about 3 miles slightly north of east from Leek. Clearly James Cottrell had close connections

with both the area of Old Norse (Amounderness) and the area attributed to the scribe of the manuscript. He certainly would have had a thorough grounding in the dialect of the north west, but the major use of Old Norse suggests he was from the Whalley rather than Horton. The close geographical and family relation to Whalley Abbey and the origin of the *The Destruction of Troy* by John Clerk of Whalley would also support his origins in that place by providing access to a library and acquaintance with a strong tradition of alliterative poetry. Although the accounts of Whalley Abbey in the fourteenth century are mainly lost, the last accounts of Whalley Abbey included an item "*de mensa Ric. Catterall*"([WHITAKER72] vol.I p.120), and another member of the family was a monk, Fr. Rad. Catterall, at the abbey around 1500 (p.115).[xiv]

3.4. The Education of the Gawain-Poet

The Gawain-Poet was a highly educated man. In summary, he was obviously fluent in Latin, very familiar with the Vulgate bible (Newhauser [NEWHAUSER97], pp.272-275, gives a formidable list of sources), with the "*Roman de la Rose*", [PUTTER95] with classical history and the founding of Britain, with Arthurian legend, almost certainly with Dante, and very possibly also with Boccaccio. But this summary does not do anything like full justice to the depth of reading experience that is shown in the work of the manuscript. Elizabeth Brewer [BREWER92] has documented the debt of the Gawain-Poet to Celtic legend and the early medieval French poets. Although it is by no means easy to distinguish between sources with which the Gawain-Poet may have been familiar, and parallels or analogues which might have arisen within a more general cultural environment, the familiarity of the Gawain-Poet with older French poetry cannot be disputed. Putter [PUTTER95] has explored in great detail the debt of the Gawain-Poet to early French Arthurian romance from Chrétien de Troyes onwards. Despite his familiarity with Arthurian romance, the Gawain-Poet treats his subject matter in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in a very different manner to that of Jean le Meun, and shows himself to be a poet of his age, far more concerned with personal *trawþe* then with heroic deeds. Unlike Chaucer, who treated Arthurian subject matter in cavalier fashion, relegating it all to the land of faery, the Gawain-Poet imposed his more modern thought on the old framework. Very surprisingly, despite his modern thought and concerns, and despite his obvious learning and familiarity with older literature, the Gawain-Poet shows no evidence of any familiarity with the work of contemprary English and French poets – but see Section 4.3, "*Isolation of the Gawain-Poet from Other Poets in England*". His educational background is a requirement of the highest importance, and also of very low probability: only a very small fraction (one in a thousand maybe) of the population of the north west of England could have been educated to this level in the last decades of the fourteenth century. There are also indications that the Gawain-poet was familiar with "*Mandeville's Travels*" (the insular version in French), the "*Roman de la Rose*" by Jean de Meun of Clopyngel ("Cleanness", 1057: "*For Clopyngnel in þe compas of his clene Rose*"), a wide general background of French Arthurian literature, including Chrétien de Troye's "*Eric et Enide*", the first continuation of Chrétien's "*Percival*", Wace's "*Brut*" (a translation and popularisation of

[xiv] An interesting possibility is the use of the word *torre* by the Gawain-Poet: the word is from Old English, but was borrowed (one of the few) from the original Celtic language. It also migrated from Celtic into the Portuguese language - the national records of that country are held in the *Torre do Tombo*.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin "*History of the Kings of England*"), Dante's "*Divina Comedia*", especially "*Purgatorio*" and even Boccaccio's "*Olympia*" although that is not known to have been available in England at that time. There is also some internal evidence (some of it controversial or speculative) that the Gawain-poet was familiar with Virgil ("*Patience*", 129-68), Cato's "*Distichs*", Ovid's "*Metamorphoses*", Avitus of Vienne ("*De Diluvio Mundi*"), the anonymous "*Carmen de Sodoma*", Aristotelian economics and other classical literature. If only a fraction of this exposure to classical literature is correct, then the Gawain-Poet was indeed an uncommonly well-educated man by the standards of the fourteenth century.

We have no direct evidence for the education received by James Cottrell, but we do know that he was a tutor to the royal princes in Portugal, entrusted with implanting in them the history and the knightly traditions of Philippa's ancestors, her father John of GauntDuke of Lancaster and her grandfather Henry de Grosmont, first Duke of Lancaster. From his role in the education of the royal princes we must infer that he was a man of some learning. His youth was presumably spent at the family residence in the neighbourhood of Whalley Abbey, and a close relative of his was a monk in the abbey [WHITAKER72]. Under these conditions it would not be surprising if a bookishly inclined youth obtained some education at Whalley Abbey. If he spent the years between the expeditions to Portugal in 1381 and 1386 at the Savoy, the London home of John of Gaunt, there would have been further opportunity for learning. However, all this, however reasonable and likely, is only a "*might have been*". What we *can* demonstrate is that he effectively did go into exile in 1386, isolated from the latest literary trends in England and northern France, but with access to a good library of older works Section 3.9, "*Access to a Library*". Finally, his last patron, the Infante Dom Henrique, was dedicated in his study of biblical and theological affairs, with a special interest in liturgy, "*In official documents he was never at a loss to quote the Bible*" [RUSSELL01] (pp.20-21), and he is known to have established a chair in theology and became Protector of the University of Lisbon.

3.5. The Use and Symbolism of the Pentangle

The Gawain-Poet was familiar with the pentangle and made much of its Christian and knightly symbolism. He was not only familiar with the pentangle, but he regarded it as important enough to justify a lengthy diversion (lines 620-665) from his story in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

> *And quy þe pentangel apendez to þat prynce noble*
> *I am in tent yow to telle, þof tary hyt me schulde.*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, (623-624)*

From Hardman [HARDMAN99] we learn that the use of the pentangle symbol in England in the late fourteenth century was extremely rare, and that the English church itself associated the symbol

with heathen and magical practices. The knowledge of, or imaginative use of, the Christian and knightly symbolism of the pentangle was a very unlikely attainment anywhere in England.[xv]

The arms of Sir Gawain consisted of a gold pentangle on a red background

> *Then þay shewed hym þe schelde, þat was of schyr goulez*
> *Wyth þe pentangel depaynt of pure golde hwez;*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, (619-620)*

Following the death of his patron, Philippa of Lancaster (Queen Félipa of Portugal) in 1415, James Cottrell was very closely associated with the Order of Christ at the Castle of Tomar in Portugal. James Cottrell was not one of the brethren, but was appointed Monteiro-Mór (head hunter or master forester) to the new lay Master of the Order, the Infante Dom Henrique, Henry the Navigator, to whom he had been tutor. The Pentangle was an important symbol of the Order, derived originally from the Templars whom they succeeded, and the pentangle symbol was inscribed in the windows of their chapel and on the graves of dead brothers, where it can still be seen today (see Section D.3, "*The Pentangle at the Order of Christ at Tomar*" in Appendix D, *Arms and Pentangles*).[xvi] Admittedly all this experience was a few years later than the supposed date of the manuscript, but James Cottrell had replaced Dom Lopo Dias de Sousa (who was also the last elected Master of the Order of Christ) as Mordomo-Mór at the royal household as early as 1387, had shared with him the tutoring of the princes, and had married his son, Lopo (was he named after Lopo de Sousa?), to Dona Isabel de Sousa. His son Lopo became Monteiro-Mór of Dornes which had a church with an unusual, perhaps unique, pentagonal tower built by the Templars in the twelfth century. We must conclude that he had close contact with the Order of Christ and the pentangle prior to 1390.

The arms of the family of James Cottrell consisted of three gold mascles on a blue background (Azure, three mascles or), and those of the Catteralls of Rathmell in Ribblesdale also included "over all a bendlot gules". These three mascles can be re-arranged to fit a gold pentangle (see Section D.1, "*Three Mascles and the Pentangle*" in Appendix D, *Arms and Pentangles*). Poor evidence, but no worse than relating mascle to Masci [GREENWOOD56]. The arms James Cottrell assumed in Portugal were a blue and gold chessboard (see Section D.2, "*Arms Assumed by James Cottrell in Portugal*" in Appendix D, *Arms and Pentangles*), striking a memory of Sir Gawain in Wolfram's Parzival having to defend himself with a chessboard when he didn't have a shield to hand.

[xv] It is not clear how much of the detailed (and slightly forced) description of the symbolism of the pentangle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* originated in the poetic imagination of the Gawain-Poet, but at least it must have been based on concepts of the Christian and knightly symbolism common to the poet's environment.

[xvi] The arms of the Assheton family of Downham near Whalley [WHITAKER72] v.II p.121 consisted of a large five-pointed star with a hole in the middle (see Section D.4, "*The Arms of Assheton of Downham*" in Appendix D, *Arms and Pentangles*) but this is *not* a pentangle.

3.6. The Familiarity of the Gawain-Poet with Life and Customs at Court

The Gawain-Poet was closely familiar with the ways of court. He knew in detail the formalities of the feast, who sat where, who was served first, and the decorations applied to the food. He knew the games that were played, the way evenings were spent, the role of ladies, the details of courtesy to a host and to a guest. See the feasting at Arthur's court (lines 37-136) and at Hautdesert (lines 884-894, 928-934, 975-990 and 999-1007) in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Balshazar's feast in *Cleanness* (lines 1456-1484) for examples of this knowledge. He was certainly no stranger to life at court, indeed there is little or no evidence that he was aware of any other form of social life.

James Cottrell was Mordomo-Mór (Majordomo, Head Steward or Lord Chamberlain) of the royal household of Portugal from 1387 to 1415; see Section B.1, "*The Manuscript*". In this role he would be required to be fully aware of, and responsible for, all the finest detail of arrangements for royal feasting, for games in the evening, and with the detailed rules of courtesy in the court.

3.7. The Familiarity and Expertise of the Gawain-Poet in the Detail of the Hunt

The Gawain-Poet was fully aware of all the detail of the hunt (see the extensive evidence in Fitt 3 of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, see lines 1327-1357 for the deer hunt, and lines 1605-1617 for the boar hunt), of the duties of the ground staff, of the seasons of the game, of the order of precedence amongst the mounted followers, and particularly of the fine detail of the breaking of the kill, and the sharing out of the spoils, even including that allowed to the dogs (l. 1359), the lower huntsmen and the ravens (l. 1355). This was not "book-learning", this must have been direct experience far exceeding that of esquires attending a royal court. Hunting images also appear in *Pearl* (lines 184 and 1085).

Following the death of Philippa in 1415, James Cottrell was appointed Monteiro-Mór (chief or greatest hunter, perhaps Head Forester) to the Infante Dom Henrique, Henry the Navigator on his appointment to the Mastership of the Order of Christ. [COTRIM] It is not unreasonable to infer that he had attained considerable knowledge of hunting in his life at the royal household, and this resulted in his appointment as Monteiro-Mór. Russell [RUSSELL01] (p.19) says "Henry's enthusiasm for the hunt is plainly to be seen in his 1428 letter to his father". Another of the princes tutored by James Cottrell, the Infante Dom Duarte, was later to write a book of riding, hunting, jousting and chivalry [DUARTE]. João had earlier written a treatise on the chase, the "Livro do Montario". Hunting was important in the Portuguese court, and James Cottrell was intimately involved in it.

3.8. The Death of a Young girl

From the subject matter of *Pearl* we might infer that the Gawain-Poet either had a daughter of his own who died at an early age - less than two - or, equally possibly, that his patron had a similar experience.

Ho watz me nerre þen aunte or nece (233)
Art þou my perle þat I haf playned, (242)
Regretted by myn one on ny te? (243)
Þat is in cofer so comly clente (259)
A juel to me þen watz þys geste (277)
I watz ful ong and tender of age (412)
Þou lyfed not two er in oure þede (483)

—The Gawain-Poet, *Pearl*

It is not clear from the text of *Pearl* how, or even if, the young girl is related to the dreamer. She is referred to as "*faunt*" (faunt is also a noble lady) (*Pearl*, 161) and "*gyrle*" (*Pearl*, 205), but never as daughter. Wilson [WILSON76] refers to the possibility of *Pearl* being the daughter of a patron. In the strict sense the relationship: "*wat me nerre than aunte or nece*", (*Pearl*, 233) would imply a close blood relationship (consanguinity), but could also be construed as "*more dearly loved and closer to me than aunt or niece*". It is clear that the girl is very young, "*not two er in oure þede*" (*Pearl*, 483), and because of her youth the poet is concerned about her fate in heaven. He refers to her as: "*my lytel quene*" (*Pearl*, 1147). Again "*quene*" could be taken literally or as a term of endearment. She is "*A mayden of menske, ful debonere*" (*Pearl*, 162), and the girl addresses him in the manner of a queen to a commoner (*Pearl*, 409,411), but she also removes her crown on meeting him (*Pearl*, 236-8) and, as Wilson [WILSON76] (p.23) points out, children would remove their caps in the presence of a superior (father or tutor).

Whilst the death of a young daughter was far from uncommon in those days, and it is always *possible* that James Cottrell and Anne de Ufford had a daughter who died young, it is *certain* that Philippa had a daughter, her first-born child Branca, born 13 July 1388 who died in 1389. In his position and his close relationship with Philippa, the poem *Pearl* would have been a very appropriate gift to the queen to console her and assure her of her first child's position in heaven. "Branca" is also Portuguese for white, the colour of pearl. It would have been particularly appropriate for James Cottrell to have referred to Branca as "my lytel quene". The relationship between Philippa and James Cottrell presents some interesting possibilities. Philippa had only recently arrived in Portugal, she must have been still struggling with the language and she was mourning the death of her first-born. She must surely have relied heavily upon her Mordomo-Mór (James Cottrell) who was responsible for the organisation of her household and who was married to (or about to marry) one of her ladies in waiting, Ana Canas de Urofol (probably Anne de Ufford).

3.9. Access to a Library

For some extended period of his life the Gawain-Poet must have had access to a good library of both secular and religious works, certainly in his more mature days, and very likely also in his youth and formative years. It is also important to show that any library to which a candidate had access possessed copies of the relevant works (outlined in Section 3.4, "*The Education of the Gawain-Poet*"). Since we are proposing that the Gawain-Poet was an ex-patriot, living in exile in Portugal and effectively isolated from current literature in England, it is important to demonstrate that he was living in a community which had a strong tradition of literature, and especially of poetry, and that adequate library facilities were available. Surprisingly, it appears that this library did not hold much, or even any, of the more recent literature of England and northern France. It would also be an advantage if we could show that he had in his youth at least the possibility of some contact with a mature poet.

The royal house of Portugal had a long history of dedication to literature, there exists a brief lyrical poem (a cossante) attributed to King Sancho I in 1200. His son Alphonso III had lived for 13 years in France and returned to Portugal on his accession to the throne in 1248 bringing poets with him. The reign of Alphonso was one of intense poetic activity under his patronage, and he introduced all forms from Provence and northern France. The Cancioneiro da Ajuda is dated to this period. His son Dinis (reigned 1279-1325), educated by a Frenchman, Aymeric of Cahors, was himself a major poet and ordered translations of Spanish, latin and Arabic literature. The popularity of the Arthurian cycle in Portugal throughout this period is emphasised in the article on Portuguese Literature in the Encyclopedia Britannica, I quote from the 1963 edition:

> *The early popularity of the "matiere de Bretagne" is attested … in the five songs based on Breton "lais" with which the Concioneiro Colocci-Brancuti opens: the ideals of chivalry and the spirit of sentimental adventure associated with the knights of the Round Table clearly made strong appeal to the Portuguese temperament. The Historia dos Cavaleiros da Mesa Redonda e da demanda do Santa Graall, an adaption from the French dating from the early fourteenth century is the chief relic of a considerable activity in this field …*
>
> *—Encyclpedia Britannica, 1963*

After a short period of dynastic disputes, the court became once again a centre of literary culture. João himself wrote the *Livro da Montaria*, a treatise on hunting, and created the position of Keeper of the Royal Archives for Fernão Lopes whilst his son Duarte, in the fifteenth century, expanded an already rich library with much ancient and contemporary literature (including Gower's *Confessio Amantis*) and created the office of Cronista Maior do Reino for Fernão Lopes.[xvii] Duarte also collected medieval poetry and histories, and wrote a moral treatise, *Leal Conseilheiro*, whilst his brother, Pedro produced a translation from the latin of Seneca's *De Beneficus* and other works by

[xvii] Robert Southey called Fernão Lopes (1380-1460) "beyond comparison the best chronicler of any age or nation".

Cicero and Vegetius. Henrique studied all the geographical information then available, and established chairs of theology in the University of Lisbon.

In this environment, with this long tradition of literature, and with access to such libraries, it is hardly surprising that James Cottrell was able to produce the major works of poetry in the manuscript. Nor is it surprising that he not influenced by contemporary English and French poets.

In his youth, perhaps at the main family residence at Whalley, with a member of his family in holy orders at the abbey it is not unlikely that he had access to the abbey library, which is known to have housed one of the two surviving copies of Higden's *Polychronicon*. Also, the Princeton copy of the *The Siege of Jeruselem* which came from the Petre family of Dunkenhalgh near Whalley [TURPET88] may well have been a survivor of the abbey library. The only surviving copy of *Beowulf*, which was preserved by Lawrence Nowell of Read near Whalley may also have come from the abbey. John Lyndelay, abbot of Whalley 1342-1377 was most noted for his scholarship and writing *The Coucher Book of Whalley* and *De Statu Blagborneshire*).[xviii] It does seem highly likely that the library at Whalley must have held copies of alliterative poetry, and James Cottrell would have met the author, "Iohan Clerk de Whalale", of *The Destruction of Troy*, who may well have been a clerk at the abbey and resident in Whalley close to the family home.

3.10. The Legal Knowledge of the Gawain-Poet

The Gawain-Poet demonstrates a close knowledge of the verbal form of legal contracts in his description of the contracts between Sir Gawain and Bertilak, both as the Green Knight and as the master of Hautdesert.

Þen carppez to Sir Gawan þe kny t in þe grene,
'Refourme we oure forwardes, er we fyrre passe.
Fyrst I eþe þe, haþel, how þat þou hattes
Þat þou me telle truly, as I tryst may.'
'In god fayth,' quoþ þe goode kny t, 'Gawan I hatte
Þat bede þe þis buffet (quatso bifallez after)
And at þis tyme twelmonyth take at þe anoþer
Wyth what weppen so þou wylt–and wyth no wy ellez
On lyue.' (377-385)
…
And þou hatz redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe,
Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kynge asked,
Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawþe,
Þat þou schal seche me þiself, whereso þou hopes

[xviii] Whitaker [WHITAKER72] refers to "the accurate and industrious Lyndelay" (p.96), but the abbey accounts in 1355, following the Visitation by the abbott of Rievaulx showed a "Debito de claro [of] DCCxvl. iijs. ivd." from which Whitaker deduces (p.97) "… *that abbott Lyndlay was more of a scholar than either a disciplinarian or economist*".

I may be funde vpon folde, and foch þe such wages
As þou deles me today … (392-397)
…
And of þe kny t þat hit kepes, of colour of grene.
Þer watz stabled bi statut a steuen vus bytwene (1059-1060)
…
And I schal ware alle my wyt to wynne me þeder–
And þat I swere þe for soþe and by my seker traweþ (402-403)
…
Trwe mon trwe restore,
Þenne þar mon drede no waþe. (2354-2355)

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

‘ et firre,’ quoþ þe freke, ‘a forwarde we make:
Quatsoeuer I wynne in þe wod hit worþez to yourez
And quat chek so e acheue chaunge me þerforne.
Swete, swap we so: sware with trawþe,
Queþer leude so lymp lere oþer better.’
‘Bi God,’ quoþ Gawayn þe gode, ‘I grant þertylle;
And þat yow lyst for to layke lef hit me þynkes.’
‘Who brynges vus þis beuerage, þis bargayn is maked,’
So sayde þe lorde of þat lede; þay la ed vchone.

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1105-1113)*

As Mordomo-Mór to the royal household and court James Cottrell would be responsible for all the legal contracts with suppliers to the royal court. He would be required to be fully aware of the legal details of contract, and to use them on a regular basis.

3.11. The Bustle of Departure at a Port, the Rigging of Ships and a Storm at Sea

The Gawain-Poet describes in great detail the bustle of a port prior to the departure of a boat and a detailed knowledge of the rigging of a ship.

Þus he passes to þat port his passage to seche
Fyndes he a fayr schyp to þe fare redy,
Maches hym with þe maryneres, makes her paye
For to towe hym into Tarce as tyd as þay my t.
Then he tron on þo tres, and þay her tramme ruchen,

Cachen vp þe crossayl, cables þay fasten,
Wi t at þe wyndas we en her ankres,
Spende spak to þe sprete þe spare bawelyne
Gederen to þe gyde-ropes, þe grete cloþ falles,
Þay laden in on laddeborde, and þe lofe wynnes,
Þe blyþe breþe at her bak þe bosum he fyndes;
He swenges me þys swete schip swefte fro þe hauen.

—The Gawain-Poet, *Patience (97-108)*

In the same poem he also describes in great detail the experience of a major storm at sea

Anon out of þe norþ-est þe noys bigynes,
When boþe breþes con blowe vpon blo watteres.
Ro rakkes þer ros with rudnyng anvnder
Þe see sou ed ful sore, gret selly to here;
Þe wyndes on þe wonne water so wrastel tegeder
Þat þe wawes ful wode waltered so hi e
And eft busched to þe abyme, þat breed fysches
Durst nowhere for ro arest at þe bothem
When þe breth and þe brok and þe bote metten,
Hit watz a joyles gyn þat Jonas watz inne,
For hit reled on roun vpon þe ro e yþes
Þe bur ber to hit baft, þat braste alle her gere,
Þen hurled on a hepe þe helme and the sterne;
Furst tomurte mony rop and þe mast after;
Þe sayl sweyed on þe see, þenne suppe bihoued
Þe coge of þe colde water, and þenne þe cry ryses.
et coruen þay þe cordes and kest al þeroute; (137-153)
…
Bot euer watz ilyche loud þe lot of þe wyndes,
And euer wroþer þe water and wodder þe stremes
Þen þo wery forwro t wyst no bote (161-163)

—The Gawain-Poet, *Patience*

James Cottrell was certainly familiar with the departure of a boat on a major voyage, he twice (at least) took sail from England for Portugal. On the expedition of 1381 he also experienced a major storm when the fleet was forced to put in at Brest because of the bad weather. However we must also acknowledge that descriptions of storms at sea were plentiful in the literature of the period, and also that anyone venturing out to sea at that time was quite likely to experience a storm - particularly in the Bay of Biscay *en route* to Portugal. His last patron, Infante Dom Henrique, Henry the Nav-

igator, whom he had tutored as a youth, was renowned for his interest in sailing and exploration, and is credited (probably apocryphally) with founding a school of navigation at Sagres.

3.12. Conformance of James Cottrell with the Template for the Gawain-Poet

Putting aside the conformance of James Cottrell with the absolutely necessary first (Section 3.1, "*Was the Gawain-Poet a man or a woman?*"), second (Section 3.2, "*The Dates of the manuscript and the Gawain-Poet*") and third (Section 3.3, "*The Dialect of the Poems and of the Gawain-Poet*") constraints, the remaining eight points suggest very strongly the identification of James Cottrell with the Gawain-Poet. We have direct historical evidence that he fulfils seven of these eight requirements, and a strong inference that he must also fulfil the eighth requirement (Section 3.4, "*The Education of the Gawain-Poet*"). At least qualitatively we can note that James Cottrell fits the template extremely well, but the question remains open as to how likely is it that the fit to the template is purely a matter of chance and (multiple) coincidences. In Appendix A, *Set Theory and Probability* we determine quantitative estimates of the likelihood of this conformance arising from chance from set theory in Section A.2, "*Set Theory and Probability*" and from probability theory in Section A.3, "*Simple Probability Theory*". Following the procedures outlined in that Appendix we find the overall probability that any one candidate drawn at random from the appropriate population would possess all the last eight qualities is 0.000115715 and the odds against anyone possessing all these qualities by chance are 8,642 to 1. We must conclude that this is extremely unlikely to be a multitude of coincidences. If we consider only the last seven requirements for which direct historical evidence is available then the probability is 0.00578575 and 172.8384 to 1 against it being a chance happening. When we attempt to add in some estimate of the further parallels between the poems and the life of James Cottrell in Section 4, " *Other Supportive Evidence for the Candidate*" we arrive at almost astronomical odds of 362,960 to 1 against pure coincidence. We must conclude that James Cottrell not only conforms extremely well to the template, but there is no significant chance of this conformance being a multitude of coincidences. We are surely approaching confidence at greater than the 99% level that we have identified the Gawain-Poet. Finally we must stress that the quantitative assumptions in the analysis in Section A.3, "*Simple Probability Theory*" are extremely over-optimistic, for example we have assumed that 1 in 50 of the population of the north west was educated to the standard exhibited by the Gawain-Poet. One in a thousand might still be a significant overestimate.

4. Other Supportive Evidence for the Candidate

We now look for further supporting evidence in the life and times of James Cottrell. We stress that individually some of these points might be tenuous and of trivial or minor importance; it is in the aggregation of these points that they add up to a very significant weight of evidence supporting the attribution. Most of the following points concern parallels between the manuscript and the life of James Cottrell; a few are more generally concerned with his family and its later literary associations. We can merge these points into the probability estimate by assigning a probability of 0.85 to each of the 24 points (i.e. we assume that for each point, although extremely unlikely, 85 out every 100 of the total population of 231,430 will exhibit the point purely by chance[xix]). This yields an overall probability of a person from the north west towards the end of the fourteenth century meeting all these points of only 0.02023 or about 49.4 to one against a set of multiple coincidences. Combining this with the lowest estimate (see Appendix A, *Set Theory and Probability*) of 173 to 1 we arrive at odds of 8,550 to 1 against any one individual exhibiting all the points in the template (except education) and also the 24 coincidences we now outline. Little chance of James Cottrell being the victim of a fortuitous set of coincidences. If we include the education requirement we arrive at odds of 362,960 to 1 against this happening purely by chance. Odds at this sort of level are indistinguishable from certainty.

4.1. Ordered Abroad by his Liege Lord

In *Patience* the Gawain-Poet advocates patience if one is sent abroad by his “liege lord”.

> *Other yif my lege lorde lyst on lyue me to bidde*
> *Other to ryde other to to renne to Rome in his ernde*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Patience (51-52)*

From the way the point is expressed, we may infer that the narrator (and perhaps the Gawain-Poet) did have a liege lord, the only question in *Patience* is whether or not his liege lord sent him abroad.

James Cottrell was in the service of John of Gaunt up to 1386, and he was sent abroad by John of Gaunt. First in 1381 when he accompanied the army of Edmund of Langley, Earl of Cambridge, and later the first Duke of York. Salvador Soares Cotrim [COTRIM] refers to him as a “general” in this army, but it is doubtful if there was such a rank at that time. On the second occasion, in 1386, he accompanied John of Gaunt on his abortive attempt to claim the throne of Léon and Castile After this he remained in Portugal with John of Gaunt’s daughter, Philippa of Lancaster, on her marriage

[xix] A more likely estimate might be 10 out of every 100, which would yield odds of 1×10^{24} (a trillion trillion) to 1 (against multiple coincidences.

to João in February 1387.[xx] Sentenced to a lifetime of exile in this manner, James Cottrell was certainly sent abroad by his liege lord, and it would have availed him little to show any displeasure or reluctance. It is known that Philippa's chancellor later requested permission to return home, and met with Philippa's sympathy - if not acquiescence. [RUSSELL55] (p.545). Although Soares Cotrim refers to him accompanying Edmund of Langley, it seems most likely that John of Gaunt was the original liege-lord of James Cottrell, particularly as the family manor was held of the Duke of Lancaster. A coincidence probability of 0.85 would mean we expect 85 out every 100 of the total population of 231,430 to have been sent abroad by their liege lord. Hardly feasible!

4.2. The Ring and Girdle Scenario

In the critical temptation scene (the third) of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Sir Gawain is first offered a red gold ring holding a valuable stone, which he refused

Ho ra t him a riche rynk of red golde werkez,
Wyth a starande ston stondande alofte,
Þat bere blusschande bemez as the bry t sunne;
Wyt e wel, hit watz worth wele ful hoge.
Bot þe renk hit renayed …

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1817-1821)*

When Sir Gawain refused this gift, the lady of Hautdesert then offered him her girdle

'If e renay my rynk, to ryche for hit semez,
e wolde not so hy ly halden be to me,
I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse.'
Ho la t a lace ly tly þat leke vmbe hir sydez,
Knit vpon hir kyrtel, vnder þe clere mantyle;
Gered hit watz with grene sylke and with golde schaped,
No t bot arounde brayden, beten with fyngrez.
And þat ho bede to þe burne and blyþely biso t,
Þa hit vnworþi were, þat;he hit take wolde;

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1827-1835)*

and insisted that he take it, binding him to secrecy.

[xx]Philippa had earlier been betrothed by proxy to João in December 1386, and this is sometimes referred to as the date of the marriage. The formal marriage took place on 14 February, 1387.

And biso t hym for hir sake discouer hit neuer
Bot to lelly layne fro hir lorde; þe leude hym acordez

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1862-1863)*

It may at first sight seem highly improbable that such a scene could have been played out in the life of very many people. However, the gift of a ring was by no means an uncommon sign of friendship, and the gift of an intimate article of clothing by a lady to a lover might also not have been too uncommon. However, it is when we combine the two together and then conflate the gifts with a lady of high social status, in the absence of her husband, and include a reluctance of the lover to receive the gifts, a binding to secrecy, an insistence on the costliness of the ring, and associate the incident with a be-heading threat and a last minute reprieve that we define a requirement of very low probability. There is certainly no overwhelming need to expect the Gawain-Poet to have experienced such a situation in his lifetime, it could well be an exercise in pure fiction, and a ring and girdle incident cannot be regarded as a necessary requirement. But if we should find a candidate who has actually been exposed to such a situation, we must rate it of very high importance indeed; the parallel to the text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is just too close to be easily accepted as coincidence [xxi]

In the royal court of Portugal there occurred a very similar set of incidents in 1381 which was witnessed by João (then João of Avis) and was familiar enough to the historian Fernão Lopes, a contemporary of James Cottrell, to be included in his historical work [FERNAO]. The incident closely involved João, the ultimate patron of James Cottrell, and resulted in a be-heading order for João (which was subsequently repealed under pressure from Edmund of Langley, in whose service was James Cottrell that year). Juan Fernandez Andeiro, had been kept hidden at the court at Estremoz by king Fernando for political reasons. Fernão Lopes ([FERNAO] (p.97) relates that there were suspicions of the relationship between queen Leonor and Andeiro, and that while Fernando was away there happened two events similar to those that occurred between Sir Gawain and the lady of Hautdesert in the third temptation scene while Bertilac is away. Only the order of events is rearranged, first Leonor gave Andeiro a veil, but in return he asked for a more intimate garment (“kept more about her person”: a girdle), then she gave him a gold ring set with a big red stone which she insisted was very costly. Andeiro was very reluctant to accept the ring, but she insisted on his taking it. João of Avis was a witness of this and regarded it as a very unseemly exchange. This is certainly reminiscent of the Lady of Hautdesert offering Sir Gawain a red gold ring set with a valuable stone, which he refused, saying it was too costly, after which she insisted on him accepting her girdle. James Cottrell and Fernão were contemporaries at the time Fernão was writing his history, and of similar age (Fernão was born 1380, 20 years younger than James Cottrell), and both held high position in the royal household and court of João and Philippa. It seems to be entirely feasible that James Cottrell would have heard the story from Fernão, even if he hadn’t learnt it whilst serving

[xxi] actually a set of nine coincidences: ring, girdle, social status, absence of husband, reluctance to accept, secrecy, costliness, be-heading, and reprieve. If these were all independent, a coincidence probability of 0.5, 1 in 2, would yield odds against them all occurring together of 512 to 1.

with Edmund in 1381, and later adapted it to his own ends. The incidents are so relevant to the scene in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* that it is worth quoting Fernão.[xxii]

> *Senhora, mais chegado e mais husado quéria eu de vós o pano, quando m'o vós ouvessees de dar, que este que me vós daaes*
>
> —Fernão Lopes, *Chrónica de Dom Fernando, Ch.CXXXIX*

This was overheard and re-told by one of her ladies-in-waiting, and eventually it was learned by Leonor that this had become public knowledge. Leonor feared that the king's (Fernando's) half-brother João of Avis might try to retaliate on Fernando's behalf against Andeiro, and at her instigation João of Avis was imprisoned and ordered to be beheaded immediately. Aided by an intervention from Edmund of Langley (and James Cottrell accompanied him on this 1381 expedition to Portugal), the beheading order was repealed and João released. Later, on meeting with Leonor again (p.117)[xxiii]

> *Acobar o jantar, trouverom a fruita; e a rrainha come¸ou de fallar nas joyas que tiinha e quanto lhe custarum, gabando-as muito; e o conde al¸ou-sse da mesa ficando os outros asseentados, e ella tirou hüu anell que tiinha no dedo, d'hüu rrubi que dezia que era de gram pre¸o e tendeo a maã com elle e disse ao conde, emguisa que o ouvirom todos; "Johane, toma este anell". "Nom tomarei" disse ell. "Porque?" disse ella. "Senhora, disse ell, porque ei medo que digam d'ambos". "Toma tu o que te eu dou, disse ella, e diga cada hüu o que quiser"; e elle tomou-ho e pose-o no dedo; e ao meestre e aos outros quehi estavom nom lhes paeceo bem esta cousa, e teverom aquellas por mui maas rrazoões.*
>
> —Fernão Lopes, *Chrónica de Dom Fernando, Ch.CXLVI*

Whilst Sir Gawain was able (almost) to resist the temptations of the lady of Hautdesert, it appears that Juan Fernández Andeiro had failed the test of chivalry to the disapproval of João. The Gawain-Poet has re-shaped the events to show how a true knight should have reacted in this situation (in fact Sir Gawain did not behave altogether perfectly, and did accept the girdle, and the remainder of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is concerned with his fault in not rendering it to Bertilak). The true events were known to João (who was present at, and offended by, the gift of the ring) and one can imagine his approval of the way the story was re-shaped in a more moral fashion, probably for the edification of the young princes being tutored by the Gawain-Poet It is also particularly significant that the story of the ring and the girdle are tied to a be-heading and a reprieve.

[xxii] Lomax and Oakley [FERNAO] translate this as: "*My lady, rather than this cloth which you have just given me, I would prefer another one which you have used more and kept more about your person, when you have it to give to me*" [FERNAO].

[xxiii] Lomax and Oakley [FERNAO] translate this as: "*When the meal was over, fruit was brought in. The Queen began to talk about her jewels and how much they cost, and praised them greatly. The Count [Juan Fernandez Andeiro] rose from the table while the others remained seated, and came to the divan on which the Queen reclined at table. She pulled from her finger a ring set with a ruby that she said was a stone of great price. She held it towards him and spoke to him so that all could hear her: 'João [Juan], take this ring.' 'I cannot', he replied. 'Why?' she asked. 'Madam', he answered, 'because I am afraid of what the others will say.' 'Take what I give you', she said, 'and let the rest say what they like.' So he took it and put it on his finger. The Master João [of Avis] and everyone present disapproved of this, finding this exchange most unseemly.*"

In this history, which must have been known to James Cottrell, we have almost all the ingredients of the final testing of Sir Gawain: The installation of a knight in a castle, the leaving of the knight with the lady of the castle while the host was away, the testing of the knight in a matter of love by the lady with the gift of a ring and a girdle, the failure of the knight in the test, the attempt to keep the gift secret, the be-heading threat and the reprieve, and the moral judgement. The final replaying of the scene by James Cottrell in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in which Sir Gawain only fails in a manner understandable to the court of Arthur, must have both pleased João and served as an excellent education in knightly behaviour for the princes.

Is it hardly even remotely feasible that 1 in a 10,000 (46 individuals) in the north west could have experienced such a sequence of events? Surely this is attempting to push coincidence and chance to unreasonable limits.

4.3. Isolation of the Gawain-Poet from Other Poets in England

Perhaps the most difficult problem about the Gawain-Poet is the apparent lack of any recognition or significant influence between the Gawain-Poet and the three other great poets of his day, Gower, Chaucer and Langland. All three were working in the last decade of the fourteenth century, Geoffrey Chaucer on *Canterbury Tales*, John Gower on *Confessio Amantis* and William Langland re-writing *Piers Plowman* These three were all aware of each other, and it is difficult to see why the Gawain-Poet was so isolated. The sophistication of his work, the knowledge of languages required, and above all the intimate acquaintance with courtly procedure insist that the Gawain-Poet had experience at a court, probably outside the north west, where he would surely have been exposed to his contemporary poets and to modern thought. This isolation from what was happening in England requires some explanation, the Gawain-Poet could not have been a “provincial” in anything other than birth and early up-bringing. This ignorance of the poetic developments of the day was also apparently reciprocal, Gower, Chaucer and Langland do not appear to have been influenced by the Gawain-Poet, even though Langland was writing in a style close to the typical alliterative style of the north and west, and Chaucer does refer to the alliterative tradition (rum, ram, ruf), although in a somewhat slighting manner. The question remains unanswered: how could such a talented, sophisticated and intellectual poet be unaware of the other three great poets of his day and country, and, equally, how could they be unaware of the Gawain-Poet? A very similar problem arises with the poets of contemporary France and the northern continent of Europe, such as Froissart (also present at the English court), Marchaud and Deschamps. Putter has demonstrated [PUTTER95] very convincingly that the Gawain-Poet was influenced deeply by the older French poets, particularly perhaps by the Roman de la Rose, so there was obviously no language barrier, he must have at least read French very competently. Why was the Gawain-Poet not influenced by the modern French poets?

To assess the probability that a major English poet could be isolated so completely from his English contemporaries, is not simple. It might be re-phrased as “what is the probability that one of the four major English poets of the period should be so placed that he was apparently as unaware of the work

of the other three as they were unaware of his". If the Gawain-Poet was resident in England, and was well aware of courtly procedures, then this probability is obviously very small, Chaucer and Gower were certainly known at court. We believe the question of isolation is certainly very important, and requires more serious thought than it has attracted in the past. The isolation of James Cottrell in Portugal provides a natural and complete answer to this problem, he was isolated by distance. The very recent work of Gower, Chaucer and Langland, much of it still under construction in 1386-1390 period, had not percolated as far as Portugal. It was not until early in the fifteenth century that Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (completed 1392-3) was translated into Portuguese.[xxiv] One can attribute the isolation of the Gawain-Poet from modern French poets by the continual warring between Portugal and Spain [PALENZUELA03] (which closed land routes to France), and between England and France (which restricted shipping), by the papal schism (with England insisting that Portugal recognise the Pope of Rome over Avignon), and the necessity for all communication between England and Portugal to be forced upon the sea.[xxv] Worthy of more consideration is he question of John Clerk of Whalley when we realise that James Cottrell was a member of a family whose headquarters were at Little Mitton, little more than half a mile from the walls of Whalley Abbey.[xxvi] One might speculate on the likelihood of at least one poetic influence from England: perhaps John Clerk of Whalley was the poetic tutor of the Gawain-Poet, James Cottrell in his early years. Certainly *The Destruction of Troy* strikes me as the work of an older man, technically very competent, but lacking the fire of youth.

4.4. Clerical or Secular?

Of the four poems, *Patience* and *Cleanness* might almost be described as "sermon material", the only worry being the expansion and sometimes unorthodox modification of scriptural sources. The subject matter of *Pearl* is also largely a theological debate. This religious emphasis has lead to the suggestion that the Gawain-Poet was a cleric, either of the regular elite [HILL68] or of a more humble role as a secular cleric [PUTTER96]. However, as Putter and others have pointed out, the poet invariably presents himself in these poems as being on the receiving end of both sermons and

[xxiv]The original Portuguese manuscript has been lost, but a Spanish version is still extant and the introduction (*incipit*) to this says that the Portuguese translation was made *for* Robert Payn, an English man who had accompanied Philippa and had settled in Portugal as a canon of Lisbon cathedral.

> *Este libro es llamado confisyon del amante, el qual composo Juan Goer, natural del rreyo de Ynglaterra. E fue tornado en lenguaje portugues por Rroberto Payna, natural del dicho reyno e canonigo de la ¸ibdad de Lixboa*
>
> *—Escurial Library, MS g.II,19*

It appears that this translation dates the first recorded appearance of English poetry in Portugal, so that it easy to understand the isolation of the Gawain-Poet from the work of Chaucer, Langland and Gower. One might also ask who translated Gower into Portuguese? Who better than an accomplished poet such as the Gawain-Poet? who, after 20 years in the country must have been fluent in Portuguese - but see Russell [RUSSELL61] for another view, and Buescu [BUESCU01] for a modern review of the still unresolved position of Gower's "Confessio" in the library of Dom Duarte.

[xxv]There was extensive trade between England and Portugal in the last decade of the fourteenth century [RUSSELL55] (p.542, footnote 4).

[xxvi]The family had another major presence at Horton, just north of Leek, exactly where McIntosh places the Nero manuscript.

the eucharist. Indeed Putter concludes "*I admit, therefore, to ever-diminishing degrees of conclusiveness as I restate the Gawain-Poet's profile that has emerged in this opening chapter: [that] he was almost certainly a cleric from the north west Midlands…probably a relatively unimportant cleric; perhaps in the service of a nobleman*". Certainly the Gawain-Poet had a strong interest in, and much knowledge of religious matters, but I find no evidence that he was in holy orders of any kind.

James Cottrell was certainly closely connected with religious affairs and was attached to the Order of Christ at Tomar in a lay capacity as Monteiro-Mór. His patron at court, Philippa, was deeply religious and insisted on the introduction of the Use of Sarum into the cathedral at Lisbon and into the royal household. There is absolutely no evidence that James Cottrell was a cleric of any description.

4.5. The Fiend of the Green Chapel

The description which is given by Gawain's guide of the fiend who inhabits the Green Chapel is not consonant with the descriptions of either the Green Knight or Bertilak. Everywhere else in the poem the Green Knight is presented almost as an example of knighthood, (apart from his greenness of course). The guide speaks of the inhabitant of the Green Chapel as a fiend who loves to kill anyone who comes near him, even priests, and has been doing so for a long time. John Burrow expressed this very clearly

> *The odd thing here is the way the Green Knight is presented as an ancient and well-known local hazard*
>
> —J A Burrow, *A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, p.119*

and goes on to suggest the Green Knight as described by the guide should be identified with "Death". Surely a simpler explanation is that the guide who knew nothing of the quest of Sir Gawain (Sir Gawain had said nothing of about the nature of his mission whilst at Hautdesert and only insisted that he must be at the Green Chapel on New Year's day), rather than describing the Green Knight, is recounting a local legend of a fiend in human shape who inhabits this wild valley so close to Hautdesert. Moreover the guide makes no mention of the greenness of the fiend. This discrepancy has attracted little attention, and the dire warnings of the guide have generally been passed over as an attempt to further test the knighthood of Gawain by offering him an escape from danger.

James Winny [WINNY92] in his gloss on line 2106 "*For he is a mon methles, and mercy non vses*", notes that "*This description of the Green Knight is markedly unlike the exuberantly playful figure who demands a Christmas game of Arthur.*" One might quibble about the use of the term "*exuberantly playful*" - certainly this was not the impression received by Arthur's knights - but the point is taken that the description given by the guide does not fit the Green Knight. Elsewhere in the poem the Green Knight is described in terms generally applicable to a typical knight and he even says at Arthur's court "*Þat I passe as in pes*" and has left his knightly weapons at home.

e may be siker bi this braunch þat I bere here
Þat I passe as in pes and no ply t seche;
For had I founded in fere, in fe tyng wyse,
I haue a hauberghe at home and a helme boþe,
A schelde and a sharpe spere, schinande bry t,
Ande oþer weppenes to welde, I wene wel, als;
Bot for I wolde no were, my wedez ar softer.
Bot if þou be so bold as alle burnez tellen,
Þou wyl grant me godly þe gomen þat I ask

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (265-273)*

The description of the the inhabitant of the Green Chapel given by the guide provided by Bertilak, to direct Sir Gawain on New Year's morning is an almost complete contradiction of all that we know of either the Green Knight at Arthur's court, or of Bertilak either at home at Hautdesert or in green shape at the chapel or Arthur's court. The guide's description is not just a passing reference, he refers to the "Chapel Grene" by name (even though he has no knowledge of a "green knight") and gives a lengthy description of its inhabitant and *a history of his activities in the past*. The Green Chapel is a local phenomenon and has been there a long time, and *so has its occupant*.

Þer wonez a wyghe in þat waste, þe worst upon erþe,
For he is stiffe and sturne, and to strike louies,
And more he is þan any mon upon myddelerde,
And his body bigger þen þe best fowre
Þat ar in Arþurez hous, Hestor, oþer oþer.
He cheuez þat chaunce at þe Chapel Grene,
Þer passes none bi þat place so proude in his armes
Þat he ne dyngez hym to deþe with dynt of his honde;
For he is a mon methles, and mercy non vses.
For be hit chorle oþer chaplayn þat bi þe chapel rydes,
Monk oþer masseprest, oþer any mon elles,
Hym þynk as queme hym to quelle as quyk go hymseluen.

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2098-2109)*

This is not a description of the Green Knight who says

Lif I deliuer had bene, a boffet paraunter
I couþe wroþeloker haf waret, to þe haf wro t anger.
Fyrst I mansed þe muryly with a mynt one

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2343-2345)*

nor is it that of a man who has acted only once, and that at the "*Þur myþt of Morgne la Faye (2446)*" who

'Ho wayned be vpon þis wyse to your wynne halle
For to assay þe surquidré, if hit soth were'

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2456-2457)*

Contrast the guide's description with that of the "*beuer-hwed*" Bertilak as he greets Sir Gawain on his arrival at Hautdesert

Þenne þe lorde of þe lede lotez fro his chambre
For to mete wyth menske þe mon on þe flor.
He sayde, ' e ar welcum to welde, as yow lykez,
Þat here is; al is yowre awen to haue at yowre wylle
And welde.'
'Graunt mercy', quoþ Gawayn;
'Þer Kryst hit yow for elde.'
As frekez þat semed fayn
Ayþer oþer in armez con felde.
Gawan gly t on þe gome þat godly hym gret,
And þu t hit a bolde burne þat þe bur a te,
A hoge haþel for þe nonez and of hyghe eldee;
Brode, bry t watz his berde and al beuer-hwed,
Sturne, stif on þe stryþþe on stalworth schonkez,
Felle face as þe fyre, and fre of his speche;

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (833-847)*

nor is it a description of the green challenger at king Arthur's court - except possibly in his size

Þer halles in at þe halle dor an aglich mayster,
On þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe;
Fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware and so þik,
And his lyndes and his lymes so long and so grete,
Half-etayn in erde I hope þat he were,
Bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene,
And þat the myriest in his muckel þat my t ride;
For of bak and of brest al were his bodi sturne,
Both his wombe and his wast were worthily smale,
And alle his fetures fol ande in forme, þat he hade,
Ful clene.

For wonder of his hwe men hade,
Set in his semblaunt sene;
He ferde as freke were fade,
And oueral enker-grene.

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (136-150)*

Although the guide is aware of the Green Chapel and the local legend of its inhabitant, he is completely unaware of the nature of the task facing Gawain, and is simply trying to divert him from an encounter with the local fiend said to live in that wild valley. We should look for a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet who is familiar with such a valley and legend.

James Cottrell was a member of a family with headquarters at Whalley, which was connected to Lancaster and other family estates at Catterall and Heton in Lonsdale by the very old (certainly pre-fourteenth century) route across Bowland Forest, which, at its wildest point, climbs up Fiendsdale. At the foot of Fiendsdale is a very old stopping place, Langden Castle, part chapel, part prison, part resting place on the old road from Whalley to Lancaster. The stopping place was in existence in the fourteenth century, and was within a mile or two of the lost Brennand chapel mentioned by John Lyndelay in *De Statu Blagborneshire* [WHITAKER72] in the mid-fourteenth century. Above Langden Castle is the rocky outcrop of the (natural) Holden Castle, and the Green Well above that. The local legend of Fiendsdale (and local legend there must have been to merit the name), the old chapel-cum-prison and the lost Brennand chapel fulfil the role of images used by the James Cottrell to portray the fiend and the Green Chapel[xxvii] as described by the guide of Sir Gawain.

If we were to accept the location of the Green Chapel at the bottom of Fiendsdale, then we must assume that the route taken by Sir Gawain and his guide was based on the old mediaeval road over Fiensdale Head, and they must have approached Fiendsdale from the west. The climb from Haut-desert

Þay bo en bi bonkkez þer bo ez ar bare;
Þay clomben bi clyffez þer clengez the colde.
Þe heven watz uphalt, bot ugly þer-under;
Mist muged on þe mor, malt on þe mountez,
Vche hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge.
Brokez byled and breke bi bonkkez about,
Schyre schaterande on schorez þer þay doun showued.
Til hit watz sone sesoun tþat þe sunne ryses

[xxvii] As far as I know it has not been recognised previously that it must have been a *long* barrow: if Sir Gawain recognises and differentiates between the end and the sides it could not have been a round barrow. It also sits on a "launde", and Sir Gawain can walk around it before climbing on top. It would be hard to produce a better description of a typical long barrow, and the association of such a structure with evil would be obvious. The only objection to this is that long barrows (or any barrows) were not typically built beside a stream at the bottom of a steep-sided valley, they were features of the plain or the hills. Less than 2 miles from the family property at Heton in Lonsdale is the great Torrisholme long barrow in flat country.

Þat tyde.
Þey were on a hille ful hyghe,
Þe quyte snaw lay bisyde.

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2077-2088)*

fits remarkably well with the wild Bowland Forest scenery on the climb from Hazlehurst to Fiendsdale Head, followed by the descent of Fiendsdale starting from the rocks at the head of Fiendsdale Water.

'Mary!' quoþ þat oþer mon, 'now þou so much spellez
Þat þou wylt þyn awen nye nyme to þyseluen
And þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe.
Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere in þi honde,
And ryde me doun þis ilk rake bi on rokke syde,
Til þou be bro t to þe boþem of þe brem valay' (2140-2145)

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2140-2145)*

and finally the Green Knight appears from the natural rocks of Holdren castle overlooking Langden Castle

And syþen he keuerez bi a cragge and comez of a hole,

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2221)*

Speculative certainly, but it does fit well. Could Hautdesert have benn based on some predecessor of Bleasdale Tower, about a mile from the start of the climb from Hazlehurst? Very close nearby there is the old packhorse bridge, the pre-Norman church dedicated to St. Admer, and the even older Bleasdale Circle.

There are even memories of king Arthur in the area with Admarsh (possibly derived from Aedd-Mawr) and as McKay [MCKAY88] says "We have a wonderful glimpse of the old-world reverence for Arthur as a Christian, and a monarch, on finding his name enshrined,in a purely Welsh form, as the titulary saint of Admarsh, high up among the Bleasdale fells". Admarsh chapel near Bleasdale Tower, was a common stopping place on the old medieval route.

Finally we might note that the description of the Green Chapel in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* sounds much like an ancient long barrow

Hit hade a hole on þe ende and on ayþer syde,
And ouergrowen with gresse in glodes aywhere

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2180-1)*

and the family site at Heton (now Heaton) is little more than two miles from the great barrow at Torrisholme - but see Section 4.18, "*Family at Court*" for Heton in Lonsdale.

4.6. Stanleys, Chethams, Booths and Dunham Massey

The transcription of the *The Destruction of Troy* by Thomas Chetham, a bailiff in the service of the Stanley family in the early sixteenth century, and the name of Elizabeth Booth of Dunham Massey in the margin of *St. Erkenwald* has focused some attention on the Stanley family as possible patrons of the Gawain-Poet.

The family of James Cottrell were closely associated with the Stanley family, the Chethams, Elizabeth Booth and the Dunham Massey estate; William Chantrell (died 1439), was Sergeant-at-law to Thomas Stanley in 1433, and held land in Dunham Massey, whilst the Elizabeth Booth, daughter of George Booth of Dunham, mentioned in the manuscript of *St. Erkenwald* was married to William Chantrell de Bache [VISITCHESH]. The Chantrell family held a fourth part of Dunham Massey between 1434 and 1586 The background history of Dunham Massey and the Chauntrells is summarised in Appendix C, *The Dunham Massey Estate and the Cottrells of Cheshire*. John Chetham of Nuthurst to whom the transcription of *The Destruction of Troy* was bequeathed by his father Thomas (in the service of the Stanleys), had a son Henry who married a daughter of Sherburne of Stonyhurst near Whalley, whose brother, Robert had married Dorothy Catterall, of the family of James Cottrell and daughter and heiress of Thomas Catterall of Litle Mitton in 1569 [WHITAKER72].

4.7. The Couplet in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

The manuscript contains a couplet written above the second illustration to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in folio 129^{r} on the first page after the completion of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. This is the first of three blank pages originally following the text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. It appears that the couplet was written on the page prior to the production of the illustration (as if the illustrator assumed this was part of the text) which was reduced to allow the couplet to remain visible (this is in contrast to all the other illustrations which are full page except the anomalous one on folio 86^{r} where the illustration is included at the end of *Cleanness* on the lower half of the page). Furthermore, it appears that the illustrations were completed *after* the leaves were sewn [GREG24], suggesting that some time (years?) may have elapsed between the copying of the text into the manuscript, the binding of the manuscript, the inserion of the couplet, and finally the completion of the illustrations.[xxviii] There are also indications that the work of the scribe has been altered (corrected?) in several places by the correction, or addition of a letter or word in a very different hand.

[xxviii] The illustrations appear to have benn line drawings coloured in at a later stage.

My minde is mukel on on þat wil me no t amende
Sum time was trewe & fro scham couþe hir defende.

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (folio 125)*

This couplet does not appear to be in the hand of the scribe (see [DAVIS67] and the summary by Savage [SAVAGE56]), although it appears to have been written prior to the production of the illustration. Just conceivably it might be the hand of the Gawain-Poet himself, rather than the scribe, although there is absolutely no evidence for this. Roughly translated this becomes "*My memory is much on one who can no longer help me, in the past she was true as stone and could always defend herself.*".

An attractive but speculative interpretation might be that James Cottrell in 1415 was remembering his patron, Philippa, just after her death (from plague) on 17 July 1415, and wondering what was to become of himself with his patron gone. Conceivably he could have written the two lines, prior to illustration, in a copy of his work that was later to travel to England. Possibly his might also be the hand that inserted corrections. In her early days in Portugal Philippa had to contend with opposition from the established Portuguese court and always defended herself well and soon became a strong and dominant queen. The suggestion by Horrall, [HORRALL86], based on detail in the illustrations, that the illustrations (at least) were somewhat later than the text would certainly support the possibility of dating the couplet to 1415. One might speculate that the manuscript was a copy of an earlier work to be sent back to England. The hand of the scribe has not been found in any other contemporary manuscript, possibly suggesting that the scribe was just as isolated from England as the Gawain-Poet himself (see Section 4.3, "*Isolation of the Gawain-Poet from Other Poets in England*").

4.8. Poverty in the Life of the Gawain-Poet

The Gawain-Poet hints in *Patience* that he might have had to undergo a period of enforced poverty,

Bot syn I am put to a poynt þat pouerté hatte,
I schal me poruay pacyence and play me with boþe

—The Gawain-Poet, *Patience 35-36*

although this immediately follows his adaption of the Beatitudes in Matthew *5*, 3-10

Thay arn happen þat han in hert pouerté
For hores is þe heuen-ryche to holde for euer;
Þay ar happen also þat haunte mekenesse,
For þay schal welde þis worlde and alle her wylle haue;

Thay ar happen also þat for her harme wepes,
For þay schal comfort encroche in kythes ful mony;

—The Gawain-Poet, *Patience 13-18*

and the conflation of worldly and moral patience with poverty may not necessarily apply directly to the Gawain-Poet.

There is certainly no convincing evidence of enforced poverty in the life of James Cottrell, unless his appointment by the Infante Dom Henrique to the position of Mordomo-Mór in the Order of Christ could be seen as an enforced move from the high life of the royal court to a poorer life in a religious institution. It is hard to see much real poverty in an important role in a very wealthy Order, but the knights of the order were required to take the usual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. It is at least conceivable that James Cottrell would have regarded the life at the Order of Christ as one of enforced relative poverty compared with the high life at court.

4.9. The Order of the Garter

The final line of Sir Gawain, "*HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE*", (probably added by a different hand - the Gawain-Poet again?) is a very slight variant of the motto of the Order of the Garter, "*Hony Soit Qui Mal y Pense*". Additionally, there is a description of robes worn by Sir Gawain at Hautdesert which sound remarkably like the robes of a Knight of the Garter [CARGILL28] … see the description of the Garter robes in the fourteenth century [NORRIS27]

He were a bleaunt of blwe, þat bradde to þe erþe,
His surkot semed hym wel, þat softe watz forred,
And his hode of þat ilke henged on his schulder;
Blande al of blaunner were boþe al aboute.

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1928-1931)*

It has often been argued that this implies some connection between the Gawain-Poet and the Order of the Garter, and possibly that his patron was a member of that Order. The probability of a candidate being associated with a Knight of the Garter might not be too small even though there were a very limited number of these knights, especially in the north west.

James Cottrell was certainly closely associated with several Knights of the Garter, and the Order of Christ was in many ways similar to the Order of the Garter in England. It had the same chivalrous intentions, the same knightly values, and, of course, had a close relationship with the church. The Order of Christ was composed of 69 mounted and armed knights together with 9 clerics, 6 sergeants, and a Monteiro-Mór (James Cottrell). The war against the Moors was a very real and continuing issue, but, nevertheless, when the brethren were not out harassing the Moors, one can well imagine them making good use of a Monteiro-Mór and spending much time hunting. Gaunt himself was a

Knight of the Garter, Philippa's grandfather, Henry of Lancaster was one of the original Knights of the Garter. João was made a knight of the Garter, and so were both of the young princes, Duarte and Henrique. The Portuguese royal family regarded the honour highly enough to include the motto in their burial masonry, and Philippa imported many English customs into the Portuguese court and society. Putting it rather flippantly, there must have been times when it was difficult for James Cottrell to move around the castle without tripping over one or two Knights of the Garter.

4.10. The Servaunt of a Soverayn

Sir Gawain replies to lady of Hautdesert (line 1278) that "*Soberly your servaunt, my soverayn I holde you*". In the context of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* this has generally been taken as a polite form of words. Suppose we take it more literally, Sir Gawain would naturally describe himself as a "*servaunt*" of his patron, but although the lady of Hautdesert was not a "*soverayn*", the patron of the Gawain-Poet may well have been a queen.

If this is construed as an aside in the poem from James Cottrell to Philippa, then it would be literally true, James Cottrell was a *servaunt*, and Philippa was his *soverayn*. We can take it that the Gawain-Poet was a servant of some description, (very high probability), but that he was servant to a queen is of rather lower probability (there were not too many queens).

4.11. Moral Conflict

The Gawain-Poet in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is concerned with the imperatives of moral decisions between conflicting demands. Although Sir Gawain never questioned the need to fulfil his contract with the Green Knight, even at the likely expense of his life he intends to appear at the green chapel on the right day, he is faced with the decision between two conflicting promises. Either he keeps faith with his promise to Bertilak to deliver up all he has won in the day, or he keeps faith with his promise of secrecy to the lady of Hautdesert; he cannot do both. There is no question of breaking his *trawþe* in accepting the girdle to preserve his life, the Green Knight used "magic" to restore his head, why should Sir Gawain not do the same to preserve his life? It is only in the agreement with his host at Hautdesert that he is prepared to break his *trawþe*, perhaps encouraged by the hope that the magical properties of the girdle might save his life. This is his ultimate decision, he breaks the agreement with Bertilak (a failure) and keeps faith with the lady. We might hope to find in the life of the Gawain-Poet some exposure to a similar conflict between opposing duties.

When the 1381 expedition of Edmund of Langley put in at Brest to escape the bad weather, they employed the time usefully in laying siege to the castle. Edward of Woodstock (Prince of Wales and Gascony, Duke of Cornwall and Count of Chester, the Black Prince), the elder brother of both Edmund of Langley and John of Gaunt, had earlier laid siege to the castle in 1371, taking the son of the lord of the castle hostage and forcing a difficult moral decision on the lord. The agreement was that unless help arrived for the besieged garrison before a certain date, the castle was to be surrendered, and as a token of the agreement, the Edward, the Black Prince held the lord's 13 year-old son as hostage. Although a ship carrying provisions for the beleaguered castle did arrive four

days before the dead-line, the Black Prince refused to accept this as help within the terms of the agreement and demanded the surrender of the castle. The lord of the castle was thus faced with either the sacrifice of his son or the sacrifice of the castle and his dependents. Antoine de la Sale [ANTOINE][xxix] recounts the story of the moral conflict facing the lord, his duty to his son and family as opposed to his duty to the residents of the castle. The outcome of the conflict was that the lord sacrificed his son (and Antoine stresses the importance of the lord's wife in this decision), preferring to uphold his knightly duties and be remembered as "*le preudhomme et très loyal chevallier*". The Seigneur du Chastel eventually defeated the Edward, the Black Prince and took many hostages. He defaulted somewhat from true knightly chivalry in executing twelve of the highest ranking hostages (rather than agreeing to the normal ransom terms) and returning the others severely mutilated. Revenge at this level is certainly not the action of a "*preudhomme et très loyal chevallier*". The Seigneur du Chastel failed in having to act in the face of conflicting responsibilities (the choice between sacrificing his son or his castle and its inhabitants) just as Sir Gawain failed by breaking his *trawþe* with Bertilak to fulfil his promise ("*…discouer hit neuer / Bot to lelly laynefro hir lorde; þe leude hym acordez / Þat neuer wy e schulde hit wyt*" 1862-1863) of secrecy to the lady of Haut-desert. Edmund would have been aware of the situation in which his brother, Edward, the Black Prince, had placed the lord of the castle, and would surely have told the story to his followers, including James Cottrell, during the period of the later siege. In a strange quirk of fortune, Antoine de la Sale later attended a feast at the royal household in Portugal prior to the departure of an invading fleet to Ceuta in 1415 in which he took part. He could well have met up with James Cottrell at that time, although that must have been well after the composition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and before the composition of the Réconfort. Antoine de la Sale seemed to follow closely in the footsteps of James Cottrell by becoming tutor to the princes of Louis of Luxembourg in 1448, writing a collection of moral anecdotes, a poem of consolation for the death of a young prince. and a "*Lettre sur les Tournois*" on the formalities of armour and tournaments.

4.12. Water: Limestone and Gritstone

Apart from a brief excursion to Downham on the northern slopes of Pendle Hill, all previous attempts to locate the Green Chapel have been in limestone country, Wetton Mill in the valley of the Manifold [KASKE70] (pp.111-121) and Ludchurch [ELLIOTT97]. The descriptions of streams in the mountain country of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, particularly in Fitt 4, are vivid but far from typical of the streams of limestone country where much of the water travels underground (as in the Manifold valley of Derbyshire).

[xxix] Antoine de la Sale (or la Salle) was born around 1388 in Provence, probably at Arles. He was a natural son of Bernard de la Salle, a famous soldier of fortune, who served many masters, among others the Angevin dukes. In 1402 Antoine entered the court of Anjou and in 1407 he was at Messina with Duke Louis II, who had gone there to claim the kingdom of Sicily. He later accompanied the Portuguese expedition of 1415 against the Moors when Ceuta was taken. René, successor to Louis de Luxembourg, made La Sale tutor to his son, Jean d'Anjou, the duc de Calabre, for whom he created a book of instruction, La Salade. Among the many works attributed to La Sale is "*l'Hystoyre et plaisante Cronique du Petit Jehan de Saintré*" (1456), "*le Réconfort du Madame de Fresne*" (1457, a consolation on the death of her young son); and a "*Lettre sur les Tournois*" (1459). It is in the Réconfort that Antoine recounts the story of the Seigneur du Chastel.

Brokez byled and breke bi bonkkez aboute,
Schyre Schaterande on schorez, þer þay doun schowued. (2082-2083)
…
A bal ber bi a bonke þe brymme bysyde,
Bi a for of a flede þat ferked þare;
Þe borne blubred þerinne as hit boyled hade. (2172-2174)

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

This is surface water which cannot penetrate the hard rock underneath. The scenery described in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* close to the Green Chapel is certainly *not* limestone country, it is the gritstone scenery of the western Pennines further north. The point is further confirmed on line 1710 during the third (fox) hunt, where "*a strothe rande*" (an edge of a wooded marsh) is far from the well-drained valleys of limestone country.

The Bowland Forest area where James Cottrell probably spent some of his youth in the family homes is not limestone country[xxx], there are a multitude of fast flowing streams dropping from the heights to marshy and wooded valley bottoms. The countryside thereabouts was much more heavily wooded in the fourteenth century than it is now, and provided deer for hunting into the eighteenth century [WHITAKER72].

4.13. The manuscript in England

Nothing is known about the transfer of the manuscript to Henry Saville of Banke (1568 to 1617), when we hear about it for the first time towards the end of the sixteenth century. There is some indication [PUTTER96] (p.36) that John Paston II owned a copy of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* prior to his death in 1479. Humfry Newton (1466-1536) of Macclesfield produced some poems in the alliterative style and diction of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* [ROBBINS50] in [SALTER83] (p.62) suggesting that he had at least had access to a copy of the work of the Gawain-Poet.

A Savil and a Catterall were fellow monks at Whalley Abbey in the last decades of the fourteenth century [WHITAKER72]. This could be an indication, if no more, that there was a possible route for the manuscript getting into Saville hands if James Cottrell sent a copy of his work back to his relation in Whalley Abbey a century before the dissolution of the monasteries. As far as the possible Paston manuscript is concerned, John Paston II held the manor of Paston (and other lands in north east Norfolk). The manor of Gimingham, about 3 miles from Paston was held of the Duke of Lancaster, who was the only major land-owner in that region. The first of the Pastons, Clement (d. 1419), "*had in Paston five or six score acres of land at most,*" "*much of that bond land belonging to the Gimingham Hall Manor.*" Clement's son William (1378-44) "*purchased much land in Paston … he had a lordship in Paston but no manor house*" William's son, John Paston I (1421-66) claimed

[xxx]There is a very localised outcropping of limestone in the Whitewell Gorge area, but overall Bowland Forest is hard gritstone country.

a manor at Paston "*too the great loss of the Duchy of Lancaster*" (quotations from [VIRGOE89]) and it was his son Sir John Paston II (1442-79) who probably had a copy of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. There were also marriages between the family of James Cottrell with Talbots and between Talbots and Pastons in the fifteenth century.. The Newtons of Newton and Pownall near Wilmslow were neighbours of the Booths and the family of James Cottrell The Newtons were connected with the Booths via marriages with the Mainwarings. Hardly evidence, but we do have links between Saville, Paston, Newton, the Duchy of Lancaster and the family of James Cottrell.

4.14. The Authorship of *St. Erkenwald*

The Gawain-Poet has occasionally been proposed as the author of *St. Erkenwald*[xxxi] [SAVAGE56]. The poem has been related to the revival of that saint in London in 1386, and Elizabeth Salter [SALTER83] (pp.74-76) maps the poem to London where the shrine of St. Erkenwald is in Old St. Pauls, "*Þe metropol and þe Mayster-toun hit euermore has bene*" (l.26). Salter says "It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the poet and intended audience were not only interested in, but intimately familiar with London", to which we would add "in Englond" (l.1). Turville-Petre [TURPET89] (p.101) believes that "*The poem cannot be precisely dated. The suggestion that it may be associated with the Bishop of London's attempt in 1386 to re-establish the cult of St. Erkenmwald is not conclusive*". Despite the obvious localisation, the poem was written in a dialect closely similar to that in the manuscript, and one can only assume that it was written by a man from the north west who was resident in London, probably in the 1380s. On the whole though, I think it is safe to say that current opinion generally disfavours the attribution to the Gawain-Poet on the grounds of lack of any real evidence. [ANDREW97] (pp.26-28).

James Cottrell would almost certainly have been in London in 1386 prior to his departure for Portugal. Probably he had been there since his return in 1382 from the 1381 expedition to Portugal. At least he was in the right place at the right time to see the rise of the cult of Saint Erkenwald. *Pearl* is certainly a mature work, hardly a first attempt, and if the identity of the Gawain-Poet is confirmed as James Cottrell then perhaps we need to re-open the question of the authorship of *St. Erkenwald*

4.15. The Audience of the Gawain-Poet

The Gawain-Poet required an audience for his work. There are two aspects to consider, visual and auditory. From the layout of the text in the manuscript it seems obvious that the Gawain-Poet was concerned with the appearance of his work, it was designed to be looked at: that is, to be read. However, books were rare, and he must have also expected and relied upon an audience that listened to himself or someone reciting his work, either from memory or by reading aloud from a book.

[xxxi] Quotations from *St. Erkenwald* are taken from the anthology by Thorlac Turville-Petre Turville-Petre, Thorlac [TURPET89].

There are certainly enough indications in the text that the Gawain-Poet expected a listening audience.[xxxii]

If e wyl lysten þis laye bot a littel quile
I schal telle hit astit, as I in toun herde,
With tonge. (Sir Gawain and the Green Knight *30-32)*
…
I am tent yow to telle, þof tary hyt me schulde. (Sir Gawain and the Green Knight *624)*
…
And e wyl a whyle be stylle,
I schal telle yow how þay wro t. (Sir Gawain and the Green Knight *1996-1997)*
…
Wyl e tary a littel tyne and tent me a whyle,
I schal wysse yow þerwyth as holy wryt telles (Patience *59-60)*
…
if e wolde ty t me a tom telle hit I wolde (Cleanness *1153)*

—The Gawain-Poet, *manuscript*

In a time of a plentiful supply of books these might well have been literary devices targeted at a visual audience, but at the end of the fourteenth century this must be taken as an indication that the work was to be read or recited to an auditory audience. We can place some constraints upon the nature of that audience. The members of that audience must have understood the English language, they must have been familiar with, or at least in a position to accept, the dialect of the English north west, they must have been of a social position such that they would be attendant at the social events which included the recital of poetry. The audience must also have been sufficiently large to constitute a worthwhile target for the efforts of a poet. All these requirements would be met in a household containing esquires, military and religious personnel, and retainers, such as any noble or royal household, and we must expect to find the Gawain-Poet attached to such a household.

James Cottrell was attached to the royal household of Portugal from 1387 onwards. His position of Mordomo-Mór in that household was such as to ensure that he was present at all major social events. The primary audience of James Cottrell as the Gawain-Poet must have been the royal court of Portugal, of which some at least must have been native Portuguese speakers. However, a sizeable contingent of English men and women accompanied Philippa to Portugal on a permanent basis, and of these it is likely that there was a reasonable contingent from Cheshire and the north west amongst them. Also, and perhaps more importantly, Philippa was a native English speaker who may have spent some of her youth at Lancaster in the north west of England.[xxxiii] Another, and complimentary

[xxxii]Burrow [BURROW65] notes that "*a littel quile*" is about two and half hours, although the modern division of the text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* into four fitts, based upon capitalisation in the manuscript, suggests it might have been presented as a serial, perhaps on successive nights.

[xxxiii]Deschamps composed and sent his Ballade in praise of the Order of the Flower to John of Gaunt's eldest daughter, Philippa,"en Lancastre le trouvere, ce croy" [KITTREDGE03]

possibility is that the poems were used in the instruction of the young princes, knowing that Philippa wished them to be aware and proud of the knightly prowess of their English ancestry.

4.16. The Green and Gold Girdle

The Gawain-Poet stresses the colours of the girdle: green and gold

Þe fordel of þe grene silke þat gay wel bisemed
…
And þa þe glyterande golde glent vpon endez

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2035-2039)*

and has Sir Gawain wear it as a baldric on his return.

And the blykkande belt he bere þeraboute,
Abelaf, as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,
Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace with a KNOT,

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2486-2487)*

When he finally reaches Arthur's court again it is decided in his honour that in future all of the knights of the Round Table shall wear a green baldric

Þat lordes and ledes þat longed to þe Table,
Vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue,
A bende abelaf hym aboute, of a bry t grene,
And þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.
For þat watz acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table
And he honoured þat hit hade, euermore after,

—The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (2515-2520)*

This insistence on the use of a green and gold baldric is mirrored in the attire of the knights of the Order of Christ whose arms are a gilt cross with a green background. Afonso IV obtained papal permission for the Knights of Avis to bear a green cross, and they wore the green and gold badge on their tunics. João, the ultimate liege-lord of James Cottrell had been Master of the Order of Christ before taking the throne of Portugal in 1385. James Cottrell was Monteiro-Mór to the Order of Christ and must have been well aware of the green and gold.

The appearance of green and gold in the girdle an baldric contrasts with the Green Knight who is "*oueral enke grene*" (150) and we might infer a different relationship. The Green Knight makes a

verbal contract with Sir Gawain and we note that documents of the Exchequer calling in unpaid debts were sealed with green wax. See Harley Lyrics III *The Evils of Taxation* quoted in [TURPET89] (p.19).

Greyþe me seluer to þe grene wax

—Harley Lyrics III. The Evils of Taxation (38)

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is certainly about the payment of verbal contractual debts. As Mordomo-Mór to the court, James Cottrell would have been responsible for contracts with suppliers, both written and verbal. He may possibly have used green wax.

4.17. The Arms of Sir Gawain and James Cottrell

The arms of Sir Gawain consisted of a gold pentangle on a red background C

The arms of the family of James Cottrell consisted of three gold mascles on a blue background (Azure, three mascles or). These three mascles can be re-arranged to define a gold pentangle, see Section D.1, "*Three Mascles and the Pentangle*". No worse than relating "*masclellez*" in *Pearl* (l.732) to the sable mascles in the arms of the Mascy of Sale [GREENWOOD56] (p.11). The arms James Cottrell assumed in Portugal were a blue and gold chessboard, perhaps striking a memory of Sir Gawain in Wolfram's "*Parzival*" having to defend himself with a chessboard when he didn't have a shield to hand.

4.18. Family at Court

The Gawain-Poet shows clear evidence (see Section 3.6, "*The Familiarity of the Gawain-Poet with Life and Customs at Court*") of familiarity with the ways of court in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (lines 60-75 and 999-1006) and in *Cleanness* (lines 1397-1412). It would be supportive if another member of his family could demonstrate allegiance to a suitable court.

Quite clearly James Cottrell was a resident member of the royal household in Portugal. We also find that one John Cat was an esquire in the household of Edward III in 1368, the year before Geoffrey Chaucer is listed as one of the "*esquiers de meindre degree*" in the lists of esquires of the king's household for 1368 and 1369 printed in the Chaucer Life Records (Chaucer Society) [HULBERT02]. We can speculate that John Cat was a relative, and possibly close ancestor (perhaps father?) of James Cottrell.

The Catterall family succeeded to the manor of Heton in Lonsdale, just across the river from Lancaster castle, sometime about 1377 and held it until 1441 . Baines [BAINES36][Vol. IV p.530] records that the lord of Heton in 47 Edward III (1374) paid 10 shillings aid towards the marriage of the eldest daughter of John of Gaunt. John of Gaunt's eldest daughter was Philippa of Lancaster, born 31 March 1360, and her marriage to João did not take place until early in 1387. Froissart does record

that there were two previous marriages attempted for Philippa, to King Charles VI of France and Albert, Duke of Bavaria, but both failed. Philippa would have been 14 in 1374, so it is possible that the Lord of Heton made a payment in anticipation of a projected marriage for Philippa, but it is also possible that Baines simply got the date wrong. Either way it is clear that Heton in Lonsdale was held by the family of James Cottrell of John of GauntDuke of Lancaster in the last decades of the fourteenth century.

4.19. Patience

The Gawain-Poet in *Patience* stresses the need to learn patience. Newhauser [NEWHAUSER97] (p.261) rather over-stresses this when he says "*The poem enforces the impression that the poet himself was hard at work learning the lesson of patience*".

Faced with a new life in exile, a new language, and new responsibilities, James Cottrell certainly had need to learn patience.

4.20. Holly and Peace

When the Green Knight enters the hall at Camelot he carries in one hand a bunch of holly and in the other an axe. Most critics have associated the holly with a peaceful intent.

> *Bot in his on hande he hade a holyn bobbe*
> *(Þat is grattest in grene when greuez ar bare)*
> *And an axe in his oþer, …*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (206-208)*

Savage [SAVAGE56] (p.15) has noted that in the novel Scarsdale (Sir J. Kay-Shuttleworth, London, 1860, p.60-62), centred on the Whalley area, "*An emissary was sent out to the workmen from the beleaguered mill, and on his journey he carried a holly-bob as a sign of his peaceful intention, that he might not be stoned or shot.*". Savage concluded that the use of holly as a symbol of peaceful intentions had a five century existence in the area. Interestingly, a little further south, Mr. Thornton in Elizabeth Gaskell's "North and South" (1854-5, ch.22) meets his rebellious workmen without any holly, and stones fly.[xxxiv]

James Cottrell certainly had strong family connections in the Scarsdale-Whalley area, and it is possible, as Savage claims, that this use of a holly-bob was an old local tradition.

[xxxiv] In "*Mary Barton*" (1848, ch.23), by the same author, a child in danger of death is referred to as a "pearl of price". Compare "*Perlez py te of ryal prys*" (*Pearl* line 193). Although the complete *Pearl* did not appear until 1864 – could it be that Gaskell had read some of the published snippets of the work of the Gawain-Poet in Warton's "The History of English Poetry? Or is the *pearl of price* a long-lived local custom?".

4.21. Obedience

In *Patience* the Gawain-Poet makes the point that when ordered to do something it is useless to resist or to show displeasure

> *if me be dy t a destyné due to haue,*
> *What dowes me þe dedayn, oþer dispit make?*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Patience (49-50)*

The same attitude was instilled in the young princes of the Portuguese court by their tutors, including James Cottrell. Fernão Lopes is paraphrased by Russell [RUSSELL01] (p.22) "*The chronicler [Fernão] goes on to assert that, even when he [João] called upon them [his sons] to do something of which they themselves disapproved, they carried it out without showing a sign of their inner feelings*".

4.22. Dublin 1500

The Gawain-Poet clearly had strong religious beliefs and interests. We might look for other family commitments to religious establishments.

Another Sir James Cottrell was abbott of St. Thomas, Dublin at the beginning of the sixteenth century [DUBLIN][xxxv]. The last accounts of Whalley Abbey included an item "*de mensa Ric. Catterall*", and another member of the family was a monk at the abbey around 1500.

4.23. The Templars

The Knights Templar had been founded in 1118 and settled for the first time in Europe in Portugal in 1128. The Order of Christ (previously Real Ordem dos Cavaleiros de Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo), founded in 1318, was derived from the Knights Templar in Portugal. When Pope Clement V ordered the dissolution of the Templars in 1312, King Denis of Portugal, convinced the Pope that the Templar's had only been granted perpetual use of properties, and that their assets should remain within the gift of the King (inquisitions of 1314), and Pope John XXII recognised the right of the new order to inherit the Templar assets and property. They also made extensive use of the pentangle, and associated Christian virtues with the symbol (see Section 3.5, "*The Use and Symbolism of the Pentangle*"). So we might look for some link between a candidate and the Templars.

[xxxv] "*In a Fiat of the same date (1539) we have recorded a warrant by commission for a pension to Sir Henry Duffe, late Abbot of St. Thomas, of £42; to Sir James Cottrell, previous Abbot, a pension of £10; to Sir John Brace, Prior, a pension of 53s.4d., and to be Curate (i.e., P.P.) of the Church of St. Catherine; to Sir John Butler, his confrere, a pension of 40s., and to be Curate (i.e., P.P.) of St. Jame's by Dublin, and to have his orchard within the precinct of Thomas Court; and to Patrick Clyncher, Clerk of the Organs, £5*". [DUBLIN].

James Cottrell was closely associated with the Order of Christ and later lived in the headquarters of the order in the castle of Tomar. The order was founded following the dissolution of the Knights Templar of Portugal and effectively took over their properties and traditions. While not a knight of the order, James Cottrell was appointed as Monteiro-Mór to the order after the death of his patron Philippa of Lancaster (Queen Félipa of Portugal) in 1415. Prior to that he had replaced The Grand Master of the Order of Christ, Lopo Dias de Sousa,, as Mordomo-Mór to the royal household, and married his son Lopo Canas Cotrim to Dona Isabel de Sousa, daughter of Dom Gon¸alo de Sousa and Dona Teresa de Alvim. Lopo became Monteiro-Mór to the nearby town of Dornes which had a church with a unique pentagonal tower, built by Gualdim Pais, the fourth Grand Master of the Templars of Portugal, about 1156. At Tomar James Cottrell would also have seen the pentangle in the church window and the pentangle symbols on the headstones of deceased Knights of the Order of Christ.

5. Dating of the Poems

Accepting that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet, we can now make some reasonable dating estimates for the poems based on dated events in the royal household of Portugal. If, as seems most likely, *Pearl* was a poem of consolation for Philippa on the death in 1389 of her daughter, Branca, then we might date *Pearl* to late that year or possibly early 1390. We can then relate the later poems to the education of the royal princes. Philippa's second child Afonso (1390-1400) also died young but was followed by Duarte (1391-1438), Pedro (1392-1449) and Henrique (1394-1460) who were tutored by James Cottrell. *Cleanness* and *Patience* are interpretations of significant events in the Old Testament and look like exemplars designed to teach the qualities of clean living, patience, and submission to the will of God. They would have been most relevant in the period 1398-1401 when the princes were around 6-10 years of age: they were poems of instruction, inculcating religious knowledge and ideals. The fires sent by the Lord for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra in *Cleanness* might be an echo of a local event in 1397. The Gawain-Poet describes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra in a long passage starting about line 951, which includes the fire sequence.

> *Of felle flaunkes of fyr and flakes of soufre,*
> *Al in smolderande smoke smachande ful ille,*
>
> —The Gawain-Poet, *Cleanness (954-955)*

In June 1397 the forces of Castile raided and burnt Viseau which, after restoration, was destined to be the estate of Infante Dom Henrique. This must have been a topic of great concern at the Portuguese court and would certainly have been known to James Cottrell. If this event was a source of inspiration used in *Cleanness*, it would also perhaps be an indication of the date of composition of that poem. In 1398, a year after the sack of Viseau, when Duarte and Pedro were 7 and 6 years old, the lesson would be both topical and appropriate, the poetical form would attract and hold the attention of the princes, and the message is simple: behave well. This would perhaps place it slightly prior to *Patience* with its somewhat deeper theological message at perhaps 1400. Following this, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* would then reasonably be related to the instruction of the princes in chivalry from ages 10 onwards. This would set a date for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the last of the poems in the manuscript, at about 1401-1403 when Duarte, the eldest, was aged 10-12. This is one or two years later than the generally accepted date of the Nero manuscript, but well within reasonable error bounds of ±10 years. In any case, the date of the manuscript is based upon the premise that it was produced in England, somewhere around Holmes Chapel in Cheshire. If we accept that a scribe from that area might well have accompanied Philippa, he would have retained his training of prior to 1386 and could well have produced a copy in Portugal around 1410-1415 in the style of England prior to 1400, possibly for James Cottrell to send home. Finally, in Section 4.7, "*The Couplet in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" we speculated on the possibility that the Gawain-Poet himself added the couplet to the manuscript, which is not a holograph, and is probably a copy of a copy, following the death of Philippa in 1415, and this would impose a *terminus ad quem* to the dating sequence.

Tentatively then we have the following date-line for the poems of the manuscript:

Table 2. Dates of Poems.

Date	Poem
(1382-1386)?	(*St. Erkenwald*)?
1389-1390	*Pearl*
1397-1398	*Cleanness*
1399-1400	*Patience*
1401-1403	*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
(1415)	(addition of the couplet to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*)
The inclusion of *St. Erkenwald* in this table is very tentative. The date is appropriate for James Cottrell who was probably in London for the period 1382-1386, but there is no evidence. The final dating of the couplet to 1415, based upon the death of Philippa, is also speculative.	

6. Conclusions

We have seen that James Cottrell fulfils most, if not all, of the essential requirements of the Gawain-Poet. He had all the qualities required to have produced the poems in the manuscript, but we have definitely not *proved* that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet, only that the likelihood of anyone meeting all the requirements is so extremely low, that finding anyone else meeting them to the same extent as James Cottrell is very highly improbable. We have tried to distinguish between direct evidence about the life of James Cottrell ("*what has been*") and possibilities ("*what might have been*"). We have also tried to distinguish between the eleven requirements that we have classified as essential and the remaining twenty-four items which add to our confidence or test the attribution. We believe we have identified a template of eleven necessary requirements which any candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet *must* fulfil, we have shown that there is direct evidence that James Cottrell fulfils all but one of them (with a very strong possibility that he also fulfils that one as well), and that the probability of anyone fulfilling all those eight requirements by chance is extremely low (probably considerably more than 170 to 1 against). On the basis of the evidence above we feel justified in proposing the hypothesis that James Cottrell was in fact Gawain-Poet.

The choice of which requirements are to be deemed necessary is obviously subjective to some extent. I do not think anyone would disagree that the Gawain-Poet was an educated man (but not necessarily a university graduate), but many might question the inclusion of an association with the bustle of ports and storms at sea amongst the essential requirements. We feel that James Cottrell meets so many of the requirements, both necessary and supportive, that any rearrangement of priorities will have little effect on the overall conclusion.

The distinction between direct evidence and inference is not always completely clear, and some judgement is required. For example, although we have direct evidence that James Cottrell was appointed Monteiro-Mór, we have no direct evidence that James Cottrell ever took part in the activity of hunting. We judge his appointment as Monteiro-Mór to be direct evidence for knowledge of the hunt. Similarly, we have no direct evidence that James Cottrell ever received any education at all, that he knew Latin and the Vulgate bible extremely well, or that he was familiar with Dante etc. We do, however, feel that we can infer some evidence of education from his position in the royal household, his role in tutoring the young princes and his access to the royal library (itself a further inference from his position in the household). In this case we cannot claim direct evidence for his education, see Section 3, " *A Template for the Candidate*".

Again we must stress that all the evidence accumulated is circumstantial in its relevance to the identification of the Gawain-Poet. It is direct evidence only with relevance to the life of James Cottrell in Portugal. If we are prepared to put our trust in anagrams and the couplet then we do have two items of direct evidence linking James Cottrell to the manuscript–the name Bertilak is an anagram of Bi Katrel, and if the couplet added to the first page following *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* prior to the illustration relates to the death of Philippa, then this is dated at 1415.

Perhaps the most obvious and exciting prediction of the hypothesis that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet is that evidence might exist in the records of the royal household held in the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon and at the Order of Christ. It was probably from records in the Torre do Tombo that Soares Cotrimcompiled his manuscript Appendix B, *The Manuscript of Salvador Soares Cotrim, 1724*, which is now held there. If we were to find references to the poetic activities of James Cottrell in the records accumulated and maintained by Fernão Lopes, this would constitute direct proof. If we fail to find such records, however, we cannot say that we have to discard the hypothesis: historical records do have an unfortunate habit of disappearing. Nevertheless we believe the hypothesis is strong enough to merit a search for evidence in Portugal.

Similarly it is possible that the records maintained by John of Gaunt's household might yield some more information about James Cottrell, his inclusion in the retinue of John of Gaunt on the 1386 expedition, his residence in the household, possibly even some indication of literary proclivities. However, it is clear that Soares Cotrimwas guilty of some exaggeration of the noble origins of the family of James Cottrell when he claimed that James Cottrell was a member of one of the most important families in England. Similarly, whilst the claim that James Cottrell was born in London may possibly have been true, it may well have been an extrapolation of his being in the service of John of Gaunt in London.

James Cottrell was possibly related to the John Cat, an esquire in the household of Edward III at the same time (1368-9) as Chaucer (who is listed as an esquire of the lesser degree). It would be interesting to follow up on this John Cat and his family.

We believe that we have presented an extremely strong case that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet. If this is accepted, not only do we know the name of the Gawain-Poet, but we also know a great deal about his life and his experiences which are reflected in his poetry.

Based upon the proposition that James Cottrell was the Gawain-Poet we have proposed dates for the poems in the period 1387-1403. The ordering of the poems in the manuscript is the order in which they were written. Speculatively we have noted that the likely date of *St. Erkenwald* is also compatible with this ordering, and that the addition of the couplet above the second illustration to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* might have been in 1415 and in the hand of the Gawain-Poet himself.

Finally we have briefly and inconclusively considered the authorship of *St. Erkenwald*: James Cottrell was in London at the time of the revival of the legend of St. Erkenwald, and his family had strong links with the Elizabeth Booth of Dunham Massey whose name appears in that manuscript.

7. Acknowledgements

This identification of the Gawain-Poet would never have seen the light of day if Paulo Alcobia Neves of Tomar, Portugal had not directed my attention (in a totally different context) to the manuscript " *Títulos e noticia da, origem de seu apelido, sua antiguidade em Portugal, suas armas, sua genealogia continuada até ao ano de mil setecentos e vinte e quatro*" by Salvador Soares Cotrim, which Paulo very generously translated into English. Paulo also suggested the identification of Ana Canas de Urofol, a lady of the retinue of Philippa, mentioned by Soares Cotrim with Anne de Ufford who accompanied Philippa. If this identification of James Cottrell with the Gawain-Poet meets with general acceptance, the literary world will owe a great deal to Paulo. Whether or not it is accepted, all mistakes remain my sole responsibility.

Thanks are also due to Dot Logsdon, then Head Librarian of the Oaxaca Lending Library who, about the same time, and also unintentionally, re-directed my attention to the problem of the authorship of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

This document was prepared in Extensible Markup Language (XML) [XML]) using the Oxygen XML Editor 13.1 Oxygen XML editor [OXYGEN], and conforms to the Docbook 5.0 schema [DOCBOOK]. The transformation to Extensible Stylesheet Language Formatting Objects (XSL-FO, Formatting Objects (FO) [FO]) was achieved using SAXON 6.5.5 [SAXON] with the Docbook XSL stylesheet 1.78.1 (with appropriate customization), and further transformation to Portable Document Format (PDF) [PDF]) was achieved using XEP 4.19 XML to PDF conversion by RenderX [XEP]. The text is presented using the Gentium Plus 1.5.02 font set[GENTIUM].

A. Set Theory and Probability

Table of Contents

A.1. Preamble

In this appendix we first outline a simple set theory description which illustrates the progressive approach to the evaluation of a candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet, and then we apply some simple probability theory to an estimate of the population which contained the Gawain-Poet. The detail is required to support the earlier statements about the probability of identifying James Cottrell with the Gawain-Poet.

We see the Gawain-Poet as a member of a set of individuals. Certainly the Gawain-Poet was a member of the set of all humans whoever lived on earth, but this is not very helpful. He was also male and fluent in the dialect of the north west of England, which does define a more useful set. He was also of a mature age, perhaps 20-50, to produce the poems of the manuscript, and he must have been living in the last few decades of the fourteenth century We accept this as our starting point, our Universe of Discourse and choose a set of male individuals native to the north west of England, aged between 20 and 50 at some time between 1355 and 1405, and assume that the Gawain-Poet must have been a member of this set.

A set is very simply a group of items (elements), bundled together with no order implied. The set is generally given a name. For example, the set Vowels = {a,e,i,o,u}. We use the uppercase italic letters *A*, *B* etc to represent the names of arbitrary sets, and braces { and } to enclose a set. The presentation of this detail makes use of a few technical symbols from both set theory and probability theory, and it is convenient to summarise these first. It is perhaps a little unfortunate that two of the symbols, $\cap$ and |, have somewhat different meanings in set and probability theory.

Table A.1. Symbols used in this appendix

Symbol	Description	Example
$\in$	is an element of	the Gawain-Poet$\in B$ or $2\in \{1,2,3\}$
$\subset$	is a sub-set of	$A\subset B$ or $\{2,3\}\subset\{1,2,3\}$
$\not\subset$	is not a subset of	$A\not\subset B$ or $\{6,7\}\not\subset\{1,2,3\}$
$\supset$	is a superset of	$A\cap B\supset B$
$\varnothing$	the empty set	{}
$\cap$	intersection with	$A\cap B$, the set of elements common to both A and B
\	complement of	$A\backslash B$, the set of elements in A which do not occur in B
P(…)	probability of …	P(pentangle) is the probability that a single individual drawn at random from the population has a detailed knowledge of the symbolism of the pentangle
P($A\cap B$)	probability of both A and B	P(pentangle$\cap$court) is the probability that a single individual drawn at random from the population has a detailed knowledge of both the pentangle and the court
P($A\|B$)	probability of B given that A has occurred	P(pentangle|court) is the probability that an individual knowing the pentangle will also have knowledge of the court. Only if pentangle and court are independent criteria, does P(pentangle|court)=P(court)

A.2. Set Theory and Probability

Any serious candidate proposed for the role of the Gawain-Poet must conform to many of the items contained in the template developed in Section 3, "*A Template for the Candidate*". A qualitative approach to illustrating the progress of conformance to the requirements is simple set theory using Venn diagrams. Let us, for example, consider five requirements. The ordering of the points has no significance. Consider the case where a candidate for the Gawain-Poet *must* conform to all of the following five points (in addition, of course, to being a male member of the population of the north-west with a native dialect characteristic of that region and living at the right time: points 3.1-3.3 in the template (Section 3, "*A Template for the Candidate*" above):

- Could be described as having a good general education.
- Was familiar with the pentangle and its Christian and knightly symbolism.
- Was very familiar with a nobleman's court, where he had considerable experience of courtly life, courtesy, feasts and religious observance.
- Was intimately aware of the organisation and rituals of the hunt and the breaking of the kill.

- Was closely associated with the death of a young girl, probably his or his patron's daughter.

The selection of points for this example corresponds to points 3.4-3.8 in the template (Section 3, "*A Template for the Candidate*" above).

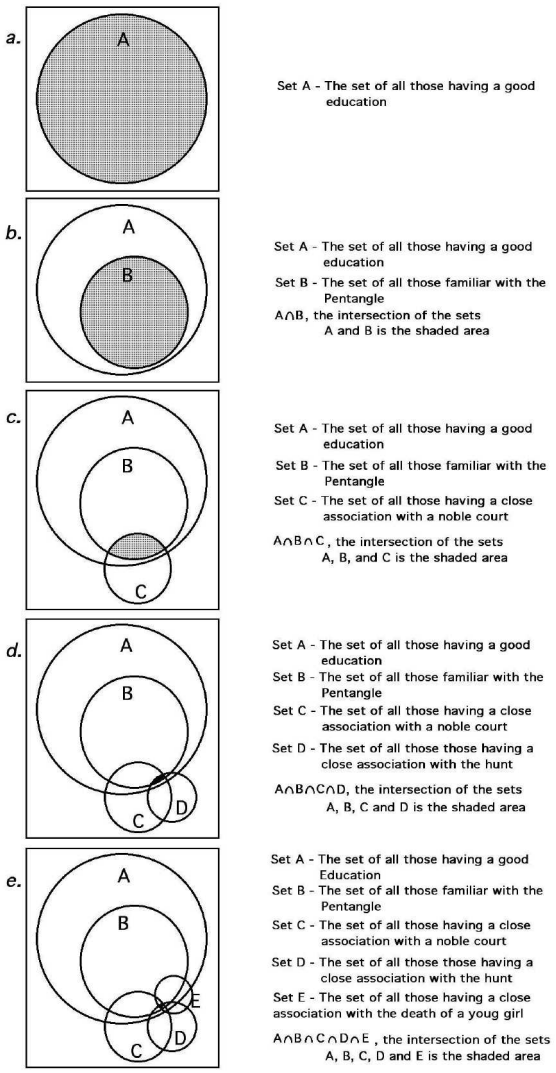
We start with a large candidate population from the north west of England, and reduce that population by requiring the fulfilment of successive conditions: to be a member of the population, a candidate must not only have a good education, but must also be familiar with the pentangle and its Christian and knightly symbolism, etc. Each successive condition is a further constraint upon the size of the set of possible candidates, which shrinks at the application of each constraint.

We assume that the Gawain-Poet was an Englishman from the north-west of the country,[i] and aged between 20 and 50 at some time during the last decades of the fourteenth century. This sub-set of all Englishmen is then taken as the Universe of Discourse, represented by the rectangles[ii] drawn around the circular sets in Figure A.1, "Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet" where, schematically at least, the areas of the circles represent the sizes of the various sub-sets of the population; but see below for a more quantitative approach.

[i] I think this might be best described as the western slopes of the Pennines, ranging perhaps from Stoke-on-Trent to Lancaster. The Gawain-Poet was very familiar with the Pennine moorland, and the Nero *A*.x manuscript has been localised near Holmes Chapel, just below the Pennine edge. Critics have often employed the location "Cheshire", but a man from Chester would not have had any close familiarity with the Pennine uplands. I use the generic term "north west".

[ii] By defining our Universe of Discourse in this way we have already applied the first three criteria (3.1 to 3.3) of the template: we have chosen a group of males who all satisfy the date and dialect requirements. It is of course totally irrelevant that the Universe of Discourse was introduced into set theory by Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) from Daresbury in the heart of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* country.

Figure A.1. Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet



In figure a, the circle, *A*, represents the set of north-western Englishmen between the ages of 20 and 50 in the last decades of the fourteenth century who could be described as “educated” at least to the level demonstrated by the Gawain-Poet in the manuscript. This set might include men such as priests, lawyers, clerks, sons of local gentry and literary men etc, but would probably exclude many (if not most) of them as lacking in sufficient education. This set necessarily lies entirely within the Universe of Discourse, and the Gawain-Poet is required to be a member of this set.

In figure b, the circle *B* represents the set of those who were familiar with the pentangle and its Christian and knightly symbolism, (which is not necessarily a sub-set of *A* as in the figure). Providing there is intersection between *A* and *B*, i.e. $A \cap B \neq \varnothing$, where $\varnothing$ is the empty or null set, then the Gawain-Poet is to be found in the intersection, $A \cap B$, which is shaded in the figure.

In figure c, the circle C represents the set of those who were very familiar with the ways of court. This set is not necessarily a sub-set of A or B, but must lie within the Universe of Discourse. Intersection with both A and B is required so that $A \cap B \cap C \neq \varnothing$. The Gawain-Poet is to be found in the smaller set $A \cap B \cap C$. If C does not intersect with both A and B, there is no north western Englishman who can satisfy all of the first three requirements.

In figure d, the circle D represents the set of those who had close knowledge of the procedures and rituals of the hunt. The same constraints on intersection are required, if the Gawain-Poet is be a member of the set $A \cap B \cap C \cap D \neq \varnothing$.

In figure e, the circle E represents the set of those who had been closely associated with the death of a young girl before the age of two, and perhaps associated in some way with pearl. The Gawain-Poet is now restricted to the intersection set $A \cap B \cap C \cap D \cap E \neq \varnothing$.

We can then, of course, impose further restrictions on the set containing the Gawain-Poet, and the number of members of the intersection set continues to decrease.

The critical point here is the extent of the overlap between circles, for example between the sets A and B (the intersection of the sets, $A \cap B$). This overlap can vary from B entirely within A, i.e. $B \subseteq A$, to B totally outside A, i.e. $A \cap B = \varnothing$. It is important to realise that the overlap does not in any way reflect statistical independence. Even $B \subset A$ does not imply that membership of A is a prerequisite to membership of B. For example, although an ability to read Old French (membership of a set X) is a necessary prerequisite to being familiar with the "Roman de la Rose" (membership of a set Y), the dependence of X on Y is not implied by $Y \subset X$. On the other hand, those with a knowledge of the symbolism of the pentangle (a set Z) may conceivably fall entirely within the set X ($Z \subset X$), but the ability to read Old French is certainly not a prerequisite to knowledge about the pentangle. In this case we might well regard membership of the sets X and Z as statistically independent. There is no implicit statistical dependence in a Venn diagram, the intersection of two sets is purely a matter of observation.

However, if two sets are statistically independent, we have no reason to suspect the remote possibilities that the two sets are equal ($A=B$), that either is a sub-set of the other ($A \subset B$ or $B \subset A$) or indeed that $A \cap B = \varnothing$, and we see that the intersection set $A \cap B$ is smaller than both A or B and is decreasing in size with the application of each constraint. At the moment we have no idea just how small it is getting, but if we could reduce the size of the final intersection set to one member, then we could say with some confidence that we have included sufficient requirements to allow us to identify the Gawain-Poet. A complete and unambiguous identification would only be possible if we could populate the sets with real names, but in the absence of real names we can still achieve something by estimating the sizes of the sets.

The portrayal of sets in Venn diagrams is most often arbitrary- as in Figure A.1, "Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet"- but it is possible to make the sizes of the sets reflect the probability of membership of the sets, or to reflect geographical relevance as in [SAMUELS84]. In our case the ratio of the areas of the set A (education) and the Universe of

Discourse is the probability of any member drawn at random from the Universe of Discourse being a member of the set *A*. If we start with a square of side 10.0cm to represent the population[iii] of 231,430, then the set *A*, assuming a probability of 1 in 50, is a circle of radius 0.798cm holding 4,628 individuals, and similarly the set *B* (pentangle, 1 in 40, 5,785 individuals) has a radius of 0.892cm. If we assume, for illustration only, that an intersection imposed by a constraint reduces the size of the intersection set by 50%, then the set containing the Gawain-Poet is now reduced to 2,314 individuals. Four further constraints reduce the size to 145 individuals in a circle of 1.4mm. radius, and only just visible in a 10cm. square. However a population of 145 individuals is still far too large to be an effective template for the Gawain-Poet. To reduce the population of the intersection set to a single individual requires a reduction by 87.9% for each of the four consecutive constraints. Applying seven consecutive constraints requires an average reduction of 70.0%.

It might appear that the overlap required between the sets is surprisingly small, but if we anticipate the next section Section A.3, "*Simple Probability Theory*" a little more we can demonstrate that it is not unreasonable. Suppose the area of the Universe of Discourse represents 231,430 individuals and estimate that 2% of this population (i.e. 1 in 50) is educated to the standard exhibited by the Gawain-Poet (a total of 4,628.6 highly educated individuals[iv] in the north west of England in the last decades of the fourteenth century). The set *A* now has 4,628.6 members. Now we select another group (the set *B*) from the Universe of Discourse of individuals familiar with the symbolism of the pentangle, say or 2.5% (i.e. 1 in 40 or a total of 5,785.75 individuals in the north west of England in the last decades of the fourteenth century). How many of these will fall within *A*? We are choosing at random (i.e. the steps are statistically independent), so the chance that any one individual falls in *A* is 4,628.6÷231,430. If we select 5,785.75 individuals, each with the same chance of being in *A*, then the intersection of *B* with *A* is 5,785.75×(4,628.6÷231,430) or 115.715 individuals, a reduction of 97.5%. selecting a third group, *C* of 5% who are familiar with the court, reduces the intersection set by 95% to 5.78575 individuals, and a fourth set *D* at 10% brings us down to 0.578575, i.e. less than a single individual in $A \cap B \cap C \cap D$. This application of probability to a geometrical example yields (of course) the same populations as the more formal approach in Section A.3, "*Simple Probability Theory*".

Perhaps it is worthwhile at this point that we should re-iterate that the sets *A*, *B*, *C* … are all independent subsets of the Universe of Discourse. That is, the members of the set *B* are all those who were associated with the Christian and knightly symbolic use of the pentangle, completely independently of their membership of any other set. If any set happens to be disjoint from the general intersection, e.g. if $A \cap B \cap C \cap D = \varnothing$, then we would have to conclude that no member of the Universe of Discourse could have been the Gawain-Poet. In general we expect that the complement of *A* relative to *B* is non-zero, i.e. $A \setminus B \neq \varnothing$ and similarly $B \setminus A \neq \varnothing$. It is perfectly reasonable that a person closely associated with the death of a young girl might not be educated or aware of procedures at court etc, or that a person with knowledge of verbal contract had never read *Roman de la Rose*, but that person could not have been the Gawain-Poet The smaller the intersection between sets, the more rapidly

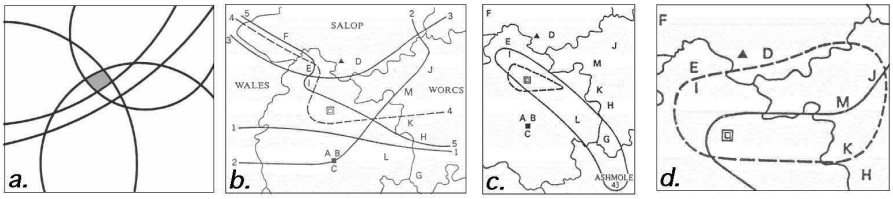
[iii] We derive this "magic" number in the next section Section A.3, "*Simple Probability Theory*"

[iv] We use fractions of individuals to show that the results agree precisely with those derived in Section A.3, "*Simple Probability Theory*". In general discussion we would round down to the nearest integer.

the population of the intersection set containing the Gawain-Poet shrinks. In the following discussion, Section A.3, "*Simple Probability Theory*", we will be dealing with a group of totally independent sets with non-zero intersections, $A \subset B \not\subset C \subset D \not\subset E$…etc and $A \cap B \cap C \cap D \cap E$…etc.…$\neq \varnothing$.

This set theory approach is not new to the field, it is a formalisation of the technique used by McIntosh, Samuels and collaborators in many papers culminating in the Linguistical Atlas of Late Middle English [MCINTOSH86]. If we extract a portion of the final (e.) Venn diagram above Figure A.1, "Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet", we get something similar to the figures in e.g. Samuel's analysis of the geographical location of origin of the Harley Lyrics manuscript [SAMUELS84]. Although in the geographical location analysis, use can be made of the concept of being "outside a geographical set", this is not particularly useful in the identification of the Gawain-Poet; adding in restrictions such as "he did not write *Piers Plowman* or *Canterbury Tales*" does not help very much- although they may well be true. The comparison between Figure A.1, "Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet" figure e and the illustrations in Samuel's paper are shown below in Figure A.2, "*A* Region of the Venn Diagram in Figure A.1, "Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet" Compared with Extracts from the Figures in [SAMUELS84]".

Figure A.2. *A* Region of the Venn Diagram in Figure A.1, "Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet" Compared with Extracts from the Figures in [SAMUELS84]



From left to right the diagrams are extracts from Figure A.1, "Venn Diagrams Illustrating the Construction of a Template for the Gawain-Poet" and Figures 1, 2, and 3, from [SAMUELS84].

In the first extract from Samuel's paper (figure b.) we see county boundary lines, which help us to visualise the space, but are not relevant to the argument. The numbered lines represent parts of set boundaries for specific dialectical features, which are also related to geographical location, and the letters are members of the sets defined by the numbers. The progressive narrowing down of the geographical area where the Harley Lyrics manuscript might have been produced, by the addition of more constraints (set boundaries for specific dialectical features) is shown in the figure.

A.3. Simple Probability Theory

For a start we define the Universe of Discourse. This is essentially a restricted population which contains the Gawain-Poet. We expand the period during which the poems were written from 1380-1400 (see Section 3.2, "*The Dates of the manuscript and the Gawain-Poet*") to 1355-1405. This

surely covers all reasonable estimates of the date of composition of the poems of the manuscript. There are some obvious limitations to this population:

- The range of birth dates covered is 1305-1385
- The range of reaching maturity at age 20 is 1325-1405
- The range of death dates at age 80 is 1385-1465

This selection, covering a possible span of 160 years, covers all previous estimates of the social and geographical group to which the Gawain-Poet belonged, not only adequately but with considerable leeway. We now assume that the Gawain-Poet is one of a group of male individuals aged between 20 and 50 existing in the period 1355-1405. The extent of this population is far greater than any estimated population in the closing decades of the fourteenth century, we need an estimate of the number of unique individuals aged between 20 and 50 throughout the whole period 1355 to 1405. Clearly many individuals occur in many years within this range, and should only be counted once. The population which included the Gawain-Poet is the set of all men from the north west who are aged between 20 and 50 at some point in the period between 1355 and 1405.

For a start we need an estimate of the population of the north-west of England during the last decades of the fourteenth century. We defined earlier the "north-west" as the western slopes of the Pennines between Stoke and Lancaster, omitting the lower lying areas of west Cheshire and Lancashire because the Gawain-Poet was very familiar with the high fell country. As an approximation we will take this to be similar to the total population of Cheshire in 1377 provided by Russell [RUSSELL48], quoted by Bennett [BENNETT79], of 25,000. This is regarded by Bennett as probably somewhat low, but is perhaps not too far out for our purpose, so we use this as the size of the 1377 part of an initial population set which contains the Gawain-Poet. The population of individuals in the time range 1355 to 1405 is considerably larger than Russell's population estimate. Let us start by assuming that the population of the north-west in this period increased from perhaps 21,000 in 1355 to 36,000 in 1405. This range includes Russell's estimate of 25,000 for 1377. (With the Black Death of 1369 active within this period, this is surely an over-estimate of population growth). Next let us assume that only one half of the population are between the ages of 20 and 50 at any given time, and that only half of these are male, giving us initial and final populations of 5,250 and 9,000. Next assume that all 20-year-olds live long enough to pass the age of 50. (Significant loss by death between 20 and 50 must certainly have occurred, but we ignore it). We next assume that population growth is linear, and if we treat each individual as a unique unit of population in each year, this leads to a very considerable over-estimation of the population in which the Gawain-Poet is to be found: $51\times(5{,}250+9{,}000)\div2 = 363{,}375$. Individuals born between 1335 and 1355 all occur a total of 31 times in successive years, those born between 1305 and 1335 appear from 1 to 30 times, and those born 1356-1385 occur 30 to 1 times. Taking these duplications into account we estimate a total population[v] of 20-50 year-olds in 1355-1405 of 231,430.

[v]Before elimination of duplicates we have a population of $51\times(5{,}250+9{,}000)\div2 = 363{,}375$. For one person of each age we have a total number of duplicates of $30\times21 + 2\times(29+28+27+\ldots+1) = 1500$. If we now assume that the populations of each age are equal, we have $1500\div81 = 18.51852$ average duplicates per individual over the whole period, and a final population

(The period 1380-1400 is probably a more reasonable estimate of the time the manuscript poems were produced, and for this period we find a population of 20-50 year olds of only 41,767, but we work with the wider interval 1355-1405 and the 5.541 times larger population of 231,430. If you prefer the tighter date range, the probability of James Cottrell being the Gawain-Poet is increased by this factor of 5.541).

Thus we have a population (our Universe of Discourse) of about 231,430 which contains the Gawain-Poet. Recalling the simplifying assumptions such as every one who attains the age of 20 lives to reach 50, and ignoring any possible reductions in population from the Black Death, we must regard this population very much as an optimistic upper limit.

We can now make some reasonable assumptions about the constraints we impose upon this set. In all cases we will err very significantly on the generous side. How many of this population can we describe as possessing a "good general education": perhaps 1 in 50, implying that there were 4,627 well educated people in the north west in this period.[vi] How many were aware of the pentangle and were familiar with its Christian and knightly symbolism: perhaps 1 in 40.[vii] How many were closely familiar with the ways of court: perhaps 1 in 20.[viii] How many had considerable experience of the hunt, particularly with the strict conventions of the handling of the kill: perhaps 1 in 10. How many had an association with the death of a young girl, possibly his daughter or that of his patron: perhaps 1 in 5. How many had access to a good library: perhaps 1 in 10. And so on.

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of 363,375-(18.51852×(5,250+9,000)÷2)) = 231430.545 or a population of 20 to 50 year old individuals in the period 1355 to 1405 of 231,430.

[vi] By educated we cannot imply a university education: there were not many with that in the area, certainly not the 4,627 we arrive at with an estimate of 1 in 50, although as Bennett [p.73] says,"Sir Hugh Calveley cannot have been the only local knight to put his nephews through university". Perhaps we should take "educated" to imply that a man could read and write English, have a good knowledge of Latin and French, be reasonably familiar with the Arthurian cycle, with classical history and literature, be familiar with the alliterative tradition of poetry, and be aware of the local geography, at least to include north Wales. Even this level of education considerably exceeded that of a younger brother of the minor gentry: Orme [ORME84] describes the education of an aristocratic boy as the attainment of basic literacy (reading and writing) followed by some Latin, but from the age of twelve concentrating on the arts of war. This is certainly in accord with the importance of war in fourteenth century Lancashire and Cheshire where the wars in France were the major source of wealth. However, it is conceivable that a younger son of the local gentry, bookishly inclined, might absorb a wider education from contact with local ecclesiastics and clerks, particularly if he happened to live near an abbey. Nevertheless, an education of the level posited here must have been a very rare occurrence, and an estimate of 1 in 50 of men or women between 20 and 50 is far too optimistic: 1 in 500 might still be short of the mark. The picture emerges of a young man who had been happy to spend a great deal of his time with books and listening to poetry, hardly an eldest son who would have been concerned with the estates, or a younger son who was bent on improving himself by war. Proximity to a good library in the formative years of his youth is indicated, together with a social status that gave him access to the library: a family of local gentry residing close to an abbey would fit the bill, particularly if a family member were part of the abbey establishment.

[vii] Phillipa Hardman [HARDMAN99] has shown that there is little evidence of this awareness in England in the fourteenth century, the pentangle, with its inner structure occurs only very rarely, and the symbol generally appears to have a magical significance, which was strongly opposed by the church

[viii] The eldest sons of the minor gentry would be at home, learning and helping to run the family's estates, the best a younger son could do was to accept service in the household of some noble, or train for the clergy, and often both. By far the majority of the population of course were not younger sons of local gentry, they were the peasant population supporting the local gentry, and would have little or no possibility of learning the detail of courtly life.

We are ultimately interested in calculating the probability that a single individual fulfills all the criteria A,B,*C*,…*H*. Consider first the probability P(A∩B) of fulfilling both A and B.

$P(A \cap B) = P(A)P(B|A)$

Where P(A)P(B|A) is the probability of B given that A has already occurred. In the limit of complete independence of A and B

$P(B|A) = P(B)$

and

$P(A \cap B) = P(A)P(B)$

and finally

$P(A \cap B \cap C \ldots \cap H) = P(A)P(B)P(C)\ldots P(H)$

Now we pull these estimates together and see how they limit the size of the set of persons from the north west in that period among whom the Gawain-Poet is to be found. In the table below (Table A.2, "The Effect of Constraints upon the Size of the Population Set Containing the Gawain-Poet") we successively apply these constraints and follow the decreasing size of the final set. In the table there is the assumption that the criteria are statistically independent. For example, if the probability of an individual possessing an education is 0.02 (1 in 50), and the probability of an individual being aware of the pentangle and its symbolism i.e. 0.025 (1 in 40), and if these two properties are independent, then the probability of an individual possessing both properties (i.e. being a member of both sets) is the product of the individual probabilities or $0.02 \times 0.025 = 0.0005$ (1 in 2000)[ix]. The table shows the decrease in the size of the final set.

The purpose of the template for the Gawain-Poet is to insist that any candidate for the role of the Gawain-Poet must lie within the intersection of these 11 sets of north-western Englishmen. Conversely of course we are insisting that it would be very difficult (but perhaps not impossible) to accept that anyone for whom we have positive evidence that he did *not* fulfil all the requirements[x] of the template could have produced all the poems in the manuscript. Lack of evidence does not invalidate a candidate, but it does result in lower confidence. Finally note again that as our Universe of Discourse requires such properties as being an English man or alive at the right time and speaking a native north western dialect, these requirements *cannot be included* as separate requirements- they are present in the estimation of the population of the Universe of Discourse.

[ix]The smaller the probability the smaller the size of the intersection set. In principle the probability is the ratio of the sizes of the intersection set and the Universe of Discourse.

[x]Such negative evidence is, of course, very difficult to obtain.

Table A.2. The Effect of Constraints upon the Size of the Population Set Containing the Gawain-Poet[a]

Independent Requirement	Fraction of Population Assumed	Population of set Including Gawain-Poet	Intersection Set
Universe of Discourse	all	231,430	
Educated (A)	1 in 50	4628.61	(A)
Pentangle (B)	1 in 40	115.715	($A \cap B$)
Court (C)	1 in 20	5.78575	($A \cap B \cap C$)
Hunt (D)	1 in 10	0.578575	($A \cap B \cap C \cap D$)
Girl (E)	1 in 5	0.115715	($A \cap B \cap C \cap D \cap E$)
Library (F)	1 in 10	0.011572	($A \cap B \cap C \cap D \cap E \cap F$)
Legal (G)	1 in 10	0.001157	($A \cap B \cap C \cap D \cap E \cap F \cap G$)
Port & storm (H)	1 in 10	0.000116	($A \cap B \cap C \cap D \cap E \cap F \cap G \cap H$)

[a]To explain this table we need some very simple probability theory. The application of the first constraint (education) is straightforward: if only 1 in 50 of the population are educated to the standard of the Gawain-Poet then the Gawain-Poet must be a member of set A of size 231430/50=4628. The application of the second constraint requires a little more thought. If the requirements are statistically independent (e.g. the fact that a candidate has experience of the bustle at port prior to departure does not predispose in any way the likelihood that he was concerned in the death of a young girl), then we have no knowledge of the possible overlap of the two sets, (we have no knowledge of whether $B \cap A = \varnothing$, $B \subset A$, $B = A$ or $B \supset A$). Therefore we can say that the size of $A \cap B$ is less than the smaller of A and B. In this table we rely solely on the statistical independence of conformance with the individual requirements so that the size of $A \cap B$ after applying the first two constraints is $(231430 \div 50) \div 40 = 116$.

By the application of four constraints we have reduced the likely population of the group containing the Gawain-Poet to less than 1 (in fact 0.578575 or about 1.73 to 1 that we have found the Gawain-Poet: rather better than an even chance). If we find a candidate satisfying these 4 constraints, we can be at least hopeful that we have identified the Gawain-Poet. If we find the candidate satisfies still more constraints, we increase our confidence that we have identified the right man. A population of individuals is necessarily quantised and one must query the meaning of fraction population figures in this table. We use the reciprocal of fractional populations as a measure of the odds against a candidate meeting all these requirements by chance, and if we find a candidate meeting all 8 of the above constraints, yielding an overall population of 0.0001216, this would imply that the odds that this candidate was in fact the Gawain-Poet would be about 8,223 to 1 on. In the case of James Cottrell where we have no direct evidence of his education, and can only infer it from his duties, if we omit the education requirement from our list of proven qualities, the population of the remaining 7 requirements is 0.005786 and the odds that we have found the Gawain-Poet about 173 to 1 on that we have identified James Cottrell as the Gawain-Poet. Arbitrarily we might say that any odds greater than 100 to 1 represent a near certainty. In addition to this application of the template to James Cottrell, we find (Section 4, " *Other Supportive Evidence for the Candidate*") another 24

parallels between the life of James Cottrell and the work of the Gawain-Poet which must boost our confidence level still further. The "coincidence" of the girdle-ring-beheading-reprieve scenario (Section 4.2, "*The Ring and Girdle Scenario*") and the experience of James Cottrell is a particularly unlikely chance happening.

To get some feeling for the sensitivity of this population analysis, we present in Table A.3, "The Sensitivity of Constraints and Probability upon the Population Set Containing the Gawain-Poet" the odds against fortuitous multiple coincidences for probabilities (fractions) of 0.02 (1 in 50), 0.05 (1 in 20) and 0.1 (1 in 10) when we set all 8, 7, 6 or 5 of the requirements in Table A.2, "The Effect of Constraints upon the Size of the Population Set Containing the Gawain-Poet" to the same value.

Table A.3. The Sensitivity of Constraints and Probability upon the Population Set Containing the Gawain-Poet

Fr	All 8 Requirements		7 Requirements		6 Requirements		5 Requirements	
	Population	Odds	Population	Odds	Population	Odds	Population	Odds
1 in 50	0.000000005	183,022,108	0.00000030	3,375,750	0.0000148	67,515	0.00074	1,350
1 in 20	0.00000904	110,616	0.0001806281	5,530	0.0036161	276	0.07232	14
1 in 10	0.0023143	432	0.023143	43	0.23143	4.3	2.3143	0.43

Total population=231,430. Equal probabilities for all requirements. 8 requirements: education, pentangle, court, hunt, girl, library, legal, port. 7 requirements: pentangle, court, hunt, girl, library, legal, port. 6 requirements: education, pentangle, court, hunt, library, legal. 5 requirements: pentangle, court, hunt, library, legal.

For example: for Fr = 1-in-20 and 6 requirements, the population is $231{,}430 \times 0.05^6 = 0.0036161$ and the odds against finding by chance a person who fulfills these 6 requirements is about $1 \div 0.00036161$ or 276 to 1. If we find such a person we can be confident that this person fits the template sufficiently well and is sufficiently unique: it is very highly likely that he is/was the Gawain-Poet.

If we set all 8 probabilities to 1 in 10, the odds are about 432 to 1, or omitting the education requirement, about 43 to 1 against a fortuitous set of chance occurrences. The technique is very sensitive to the probabilities assigned, and these are necessarily somewhat subjective, but with 8 simultaneous requirements any fractions less than 1 in 10 are adequate for considerable confidence. At an overall result in the region of 1 in 100 we have reached something very close to certainty. The number of criteria required is also very important but six constraints with probabilities of 1 in 20 is sufficient to produce odds of 276 to one against a fortuitous set of coincidences. Clearly the estimates of probabilities in Table A.2, "The Effect of Constraints upon the Size of the Population Set Containing the Gawain-Poet" are wildly optimistic, for example it is highly improbable that 1 in 50 of the male population between 20 and 50 in the north west of England in the last decades of the fourteenth century were educated to the level demonstrated by the Gawain-Poet.

Alternatively, accepting the probabilities assigned in Table A.2, "The Effect of Constraints upon the Size of the Population Set Containing the Gawain-Poet", and taking the stand of devil's advocate, we can be much stricter and rule out 2 of the criteria as possible imaginative exercises by the Gawain-Poet (girl and port/storm). Taking the remaining six criteria (education, pentangle, court, hunt, library, legal) as necessary and independent requirements for the Gawain-Poet we arrive at 0.00578575 in a population of 231,430, or 173 to 1 that we have found the Gawain-Poet. We see that even if we eliminate education as well, the five remaining requirements (which reduce the population containing the Gawain-Poet to 0.28929 and odds of 3.45 to 1) are adequate to define an acceptable template.

A.4. Pairwise Correlations

So far we have assumed that the criteria we have selected as defining a template for the Gawain-Poet are statistically independent. It could reasonably be argued that there could well be some dependence between some pairs of criteria. For example, an educated individual (a member of set A) is more likely to be aware of the symbolism of the pentangle (a member of set B) than someone with little or no education, and therefore the probability of both is higher than predicted by P(A)P(B).

If events are *not* independent

$P(B|A) \neq P(B)$

and

$P(B|A) > P(B)$ if B is more likely to occur if A has already occurred (positive correlation)

and

P(B|A) < P(B) if B is less likely to occur if A has already occurred (negative correlation)

and we now need to consider all possible pairwise correlations. For the three events A,B, and C we have

P(A∩B∩C) = P(A)P(B|A)P(C|A)P(C|B)

and finally P(A∩B∩C…∩H) = P(A)× the product of all 28 pairwise correlations. These are listed in the following table together with qualitative estimates of statistical dependence.

Table A.4. Pairwise Correlations.[a]

P[b]	C[c]	P	C	P	C	P	C	P	C	P	C	P	C
B|A	+												
C|A	+	C|B	+?										
D|A	0	D|B	0	D|C	+								
E|A	-	E|B	0	E|C	0	E|D	0						
F|A	+	F|B	+?	F|C	+	F|D	0	F|E	0				
G|A	+	G|B	0	G|C	+?	G|D	0	G|E	0	G|F	+?		
H|A	0	H|B	0	H|C	0	H|D	0	H|E	0	H|F	0	H|G	0

[a]Estimates of the degree of correlation between criteria

[b]Pairwise Correlation

[c]0 indicates no obvious pairwise correlation

+ indicates some positive correlation

+? indicates possibly some slight positive correlation

- indicates some negative correlation

We have tried to eliminate statistical dependence as far as possible in the criteria in our template, but clearly a little remains. It is not feasible to attempt a quantitative estimate of the few significant pairwise correlations in the criteria, but we believe that the over generous fractional populations used more than compensate for the small dependencies between some of the criteria in the template for the Gawain-Poet.

B. The Manuscript of Salvador Soares Cotrim, 1724

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B.1. The Manuscript

The manuscript by Soares Cotrim, dated 1724, was brought to my attention (in a very different context) by Paulo Alcobia Neves, [COTRIM]. The document is preserved in the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon and to my knowledge has never been published, reproduced or quoted elsewhere. In it there is reference to a James Cottrell who came to Portugal in 1386 with John of Gaunt. He remained there the rest of his life, first as Mordomo-Mór to the Queen of Portugal, Philippa of Lancaster, the daughter and first child of John of Gaunt and Blanche of Lancaster, and after her death from the plague in 1415, as Monteiro-Mór to her son Henry (known as the Navigator). James took the Portuguese name of Jaime Cotrim, and married a lady of the queen’s household, Ana Canas de Urofol. Paulo Alcobia Neves [FERNAO] suggested that this lady was Anne de Ufford who had accompanied Philippa and had taken the Portuguese name of Ana Canas de Urofol. On Henry’s appointment to the lay Governorship and the Grand Mastership of the “Order of Christ”, in 1415, James accompanied him to live in the castle of the Order of Christ at Tomar.

The manuscript was written to establish the origins of the Portuguese noble family of Cotrim, and a translation of an extract follows dealing with the arrival of James Cottrell in Portugal, and his subsequent life there.

> *… Dom Afonso 11th, king of Castile, married Dona Maria, legitimate daughter of Dom Afonso, 4th king of Portugal, and had issue Dom Pedro, king of Castile, who died at the hands of his illegitimate brother Dom Henrique, who took the kingdom from him, and is named as Henrique the second in the list of the Kings of Castile The afore-mentioned Dom Pedro had a daughter called Dona Constan¸a, the legitimate pretender to the Castile kingdom, who was married in England to John of Lancaster, son of Edward III, king of England, and they had issue Dona Catherina. By that time Dom Fernando was king of*

Portugal, and was worried about the usurpation of the Castile crown by the illegitimate and fratricide murderer and tyrant D. Henrique, who now held the power in Spain, which should have descended to the daughter of the dead king Dom Pedro. D. Fernando did't have enough power himself to start a legitimate and justified project, so he wrote to John, Duke of Lancaster, asking him to come to Portugal and promising to help him establish the legitimacy of what in justice was his right. As the Duke of Lancaster was not able to come himself to Portugal, he sent his younger brother, the Count of Cambridge with a large army. Among them was a General called Jayme Cotrim, or James Cottrell, born in London, and a member of one of the most important families of England, but they soon returned to England without glory, because firstly Dom Fernando, King of Portugal had established peace with Castile, and secondly because they realised they had not enough strength, so they decided to wait for a better opportunity. Meanwhile Dom Fernando had died and the people proclaimed the Master of Avis (João) as the new king of Portugal. At this time king João was a supporter of the rights of the Duke of Lancaster, and sent his support, help and friendship, with his ambassador, the Master of Santiago. Happy, the Duke came himself to Spain bringing with him Dona Constan¸a, his wife, their daughter Catherina, and his daughters Philippa and Isabel. They arrived in Corunha and the Portuguese King sent a delegation to meet them. They met in the borders of Galiza (Galicia) and a marriage was arranged. The wedding was quickly celebrated, and among the nobles who joined Queen Felipa there was Jaime Cotrim, who remained in Portugal as the queen's Mordomo-Mór. Jaime ceased this function when the Queen died. After his mother died, Prince Dom Henrique, the legitimate son of Dom João and Dona Felipa, and Master of the Christ Order, named James Cottrell as his Monteiro-Mór. They both lived many years in Tomar where the great Castle of this Order was located. Jaime's arms and his descendants are registered in the Torre do Tombo (national archive) in page 34 of the Armory book. They are composed of a shield in blue and gold with 6/6 and as his timbre (over the helmet) three penachos in blue. Jaime Cotrim married Dona Ana Canas de Urofol, a Dame of Dona Felipa's house and had a son called Lopo Canas Cotrim who married Dona Isabel de Sousa, daughter of Dom Gon¸alo de Sousa and Dona Teresa de Alvim.

—Soares Cotrim,*Títulos e noticia da, origem de seu apelido, sua antiguidade em Portugal, suas armas, sua genealogia continuada até ao ano de mil setecentos e vinte e quatro. Translation by Paulo Alcobia Neves. Amended by Ron Catterall.*

B.2. Royal Household in Lisbon

The first capital and royal household of Portugal was at Coimbra, based on the Roman city of Aeminium, but taking its name from the ninth century Bishopric of Conimbriga, was re-captured from the Moors by El Cid in 1064. Coimbra was the capital of Portugal from about 1140 to 1255. Lisbon was re-captured from the Moors in 1147, and the capital was transferred from Coimbra to Lisbon in 1255. The university, first established by Diniz in 1290 at Lisbon was transferred to and from Coimbra several times before it finally settled in Coimbra in 1537.

B.3. “Mordomo-Mór” and “Monteiro-Mór”

The Portuguese royal household towards the end of the fourteenth century, while not so rich as the House of Lancaster, pursued a very Anglophile policy, and, under Philippa’s guidance, adopted many English customs. The king, João I, spent most of his time in the perennial wars with Castile, leaving the day-to-day running of the country to his (English) queen, who introduced many English customs of both church and chivalry, and we might very reasonably expect that her “Mordomo-Mór” would be closely concerned in the implementation of the changes. The role of her “Mordomo-Mór” would be very similar to a corresponding role in the English royal household, the Lord Steward or possibly the Lord Chamberlain of the Household. Similarly the “Monteiro-Mór” of prince Henry, his ‘great hunter’, might have a role similar to that of a Chief Forester in England. It is perhaps relevant that the suffix *-Mór* applied to both Mordomo and Monteiro derives from the Celtic origins of the population of Portugal and is used as a superlative to denote the greatest.

To carry out his duties, James Cottrell needed to be familiar with trade, with legal affairs, with the detail of the organisation of royal feasts, with the social niceties of royal society and, this being a time of war, responsible for the keeping and control of the apparatus of war. Philippa was also intent on the introduction of English customs into the Portuguese royal house, both religious and chivalric, and required the knightly deeds of their English ancestors it to be impressed upon her children, so that James Cottrell was required to take some responsibility for the tutoring of her sons in knightly accomplishments (including the rituals of the chase).

Prior to the arrival of Philippa, João had a Portuguese Mordomo-Mór to run the household, Dom Lopo Dias de Sousa, who, in addition to his position in the royal household, was also a noted soldier, and the last elected Grand Master of the knightly and religious Order of Christ. There appears to have been little conflict between Dom Lopo and James; possibly Dom Lopo was glad to be relieved of some of his duties and the difficulty of being responsible to an English speaking queen. If there were any difficulties, they had clearly been resolved when Lopo, son of James Cottrell, married Dona Isabel de Sousa, daughter of Gon¸alo de Sousa, also connected with the royal household, and the families were united. The marriage of their children also indicates the similar social status of their parents.

With the death of Philippa in 1415, João dispensed with the role of Mordomo-Mór for James Cottrell, who transferred into the service of Philippa’s fourth (and ultimately most famous) son the Infante Dom Henrique (Henry the Navigator), already established as João’s favourite son. The title conferred upon his earlier tutor, James Cottrell, by the Infante Dom Henrique was that of Monteiro-Mór.

B.4. The Arms Assumed by James Cottrell in Portugal

The social position of James Cottrell in the royal household placed him on a level with the established Portuguese nobility, and he was very quickly awarded knightly status and a coat of arms (Section D.2, "*Arms Assumed by James Cottrell in Portugal*"). Not surprisingly he retained the colours of his own family's arms in England (arms: azure, three mascles or), blue and gold, but took as his device a chequered chess board, possibly from the chess board used as a shield by Sir Gawain in Wolfram's Parzival.

B.5. Tomar: the Knights Templar and the Order of Christ

The castle at Tomar was built by Gualdim Pais. Pais, the Master of the Templars at Braga in Portugal, who became Grand Master of the Templars in 1156 and received the ruined castle of Ceras from the king, Afonso I (1139-1185, generally known as Afonso Henriques), in 1159. In 1160 Pais started construction of a new castle at Tomar, and in 1162 Tomar received its town charter and become the headquarters of the Templars in Portugal. At this time the frontier with the Moors in Portugal was the Rio Tejo, and in 1190, Tomar on a tributary of the Rio Zêzere, a northern tributary of the Tejo, was besieged by the Moors. Pais, then an old man, lead the resistance and finally defeated the Moors lead by Yacub. Pais died in 1195 and was interred in the chapel of Santa Maria dos Olivais in Tomar.

After the demise of the Knights Templar early in the fourteenth century, king Dinis I (1261-1325) created a new Order of Knighthood, the Order of Christ which was confirmed by Pope Clement V in 1312. The new order received all the properties of the now-dissolved Templars in Portugal and made the castle at Tomar their headquarters from 1357. The first Grand Master of the new Order, Gil Martins, who had previously been Master of the Order of Aviz, died in 1321. At the time James Cottrell arrived in Portugal, Dom Lopo Dias de Sousa was Grand Master of the Order of Christ as well as being Mordomo-Mór to the royal household. De Sousa was the last elected Grand Master, and was succeeded on his death by the Infante Dom Henrique who was finally confirmed as (lay) Governor of the order by the Pope in 1420.

Prince Henry and James Cottrell lived in the house at Tomar shown in Figure B.2, "The House of the Infante Dom Henrique inside the Castle at Tomar"

Figure B.1. The Castle at Tomar

Photo by World heritage, [FERNAO]

Figure B.2. The House of the Infante Dom Henrique inside the Castle at Tomar

Photo by Paulo Alcobia Neves, [FERNAO]

B.6. James Cottrell's Retirement as Jaime Cotrim, Senhor da Quinta do Souto de Eyreira (Paio Mendes).

Towards the end of his life, probably around 1425-1430, James Cottrell retired to a country estate (Figure B.3, " Solar da Quinta do Souto de Eyreira") quite clearly as "landed nobility". At Eyreira he built (or occupied) a house (still standing although largely in ruinous condition (Figure B.3, " Solar da Quinta do Souto de Eyreira") and the honours he had received from the royal family, which had been registered in the Torre do Tombo (national archive), page 34 of the armory book, are on the wall (Figure B.4, "The Cotrim Arms on the Wall of Eyreira Lo Solar da Quinta do Souto de Eyreira"). The date of his death is not recorded, but it must have been somewhere around 1435. A "Quinta" is a country property, often surrounded by trees, with agricultural land and generally a domestic house. A "Souto" is a plantation of cultivated chestnut trees, and "Eyreira" is a small "aldeia" (village) in the county of Ferreira de Zêzere, near Santarém, just south of Tomar. The Rio Zêzere is a major tributary of the Tagus (Téjo) river. The house has almost certainly been modified and at least re-roofed since James Cottrell's days:

Figure B.3. Solar da Quinta do Souto de Eyreira

Photo by Paulo Alcobia Neves, [FERNAO].

Built into the wall (far top right corner in the above picture) are the arms assumed by James Cottrell

Figure B.4. The Cotrim Arms on the Wall of Eyreira Lo Solar da Quinta do Souto de Eyreira

Photo by Paulo Alcobia Neves, [FERNAO]"/>.

B.7. Locations of Tomar, Dornes and Eyreira

Tomar, the headquarters of the Order of Christ, is situated on the Rio Nabão, a northern tributary of the Rio Zêzere, about 45 km north east of Santarém (Santarém is about 75 km north east of the royal household at Lisbon). Dornes is a small town or village (aldeia) overlooking the Zêzere, some 35 km north east of Tomar, and Eyreira is located in the foothills of the Serra de Montejunto some 25 km south west of Santarém and 22 km from the Rio Tejo.

The locations of Tomar, Dornes in the region (distrito) of Santarém and the Concelho of Ferreira de Zêzere, and Eyreira in the region of Santarém and the Concelho of Cartaxo can be found on the modern map of Portugal [MICHELIN].

Figure B.5. The Locations of Tomar, Dornes and Eyreira

The locations of Dornes, Tomar and Eyreira are marked by D, T and E. The foot of the “T” marks the town of Tomar, the locations of Dornes and Eyreira are marked by the bottom left corner of the “D” and the “E”.

C. The Dunham Massey Estate and the Cottrells of Cheshire

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There are strong connections between the family of James Cottrell with the Chethams, the Booths, the Dunham Massey estate in Cheshire, and the Mascies of Cheshire. The family name Chantrell or Chauntrell is traceable back to the Catheralls of Horton near Leek, and thus back to Catterall and Little Mitton, near Whalley. The Chantrell branch of the family settled at Bache, just south of Chester sometime before 1434, and also held part of the Dunham Massey estate until at least 1586. The change from “C” to “Ch” is by no means uncommon, the Roman “Cestre” became “Chester”, and in Old English, “c” is pronounced “ch”. “u” and “n” are just about indistinguishable in Middle English script ([TWOMEY99] quotes Meil Ker “As usual with an English scribe n and u are indistinguishable”.

C.1. Chantrell of Bache

The following items of evidence are culled from Ormerod’s “History of Cheshire” [ORMEROD82]

- 1434- John Chauntrell and his wife Margery held Bache and a 4th part of the Dunham Massey estates in joint tenure with Thomas de Bolde. Bache then remained the seat of the Chauntrells until 1641 when it was sold to Robert Cottton.
- 1439- Their son and heir, William Chauntrell (died 1439), Sergeant-at-law to Thomas Stanley in 1433, held the lands in Dunham Massey. He married Alice who died 1482, holding in dower one third of the 4th part of Dunham Massey. His younger brother, John, married Lucy, the sister of Robert Booth who had laid claim to the Dunham Massey estate. This claim was settled with one quarter going to each of Stanley and Chauntrell, and one half to Booth.
- 1473- John Chantrell, son and heir of William and Alice, died 1473.
- 1503- Robert Chantrell, died 1503, held the 4th part of Dunham Massey.
- In 1508, Wiliam Chantrell (aged more than 30 in 1503) was bound over “in £40 to keep the peace towards Hamo son of Sir John Legh of Baguley, kt”. His sureties in this were Robert Barton, Richard Mascy of Grafton, Robert Mascy of Golborne and Hohn Leche of Cauredon. In 1520 he held the 4th part of Dunham Massey. Chantrel is associated with Booths and Masseys.

- 1526- Robert Chantrell (died 1541) held 40 messuages, 1000 acres of land, 100 of meadows, 200 of pasture, 100 of wood, part of a watermill, and 59s of rent in Bache, Stockport, Dunham Massey, Altrincham, Sale, Upton, Newton and Chester. (This is Newton near Chester). In 1541 he held the manor of Bache and the 4th part of the manor and lands in Dunham Massie.

- 1558- Lawrence Chantrell died 1558 possessed of 4th part of Dunham Massey.

- 1585- [VISITCHESH] records Elizabeth Booth, daughter of George Booth of Dunham, married William Chantrell de Bache.

- 1586- William died 1586 still holding 4th part of Dunham Massey.

- 1641- the Chantrells sold Bache estates to Richard Cotton (was he by any chance a relation of Sir Robert Cotton (1571-1631) who owned the manuscript?)

Vantuono, [VANTUONO99] (page xxi) claims that “Dunham Massey became a centre of cultural excellence in the fourteenth century under Henry Henry de Grosmont], and in the fifteenth century under the Booths”.

C.2. The Dunham Massey Estate

For the descent of Dunham Massey, see Ormerod [ORMEROD82] (vol 1, p.526-30). The family connections here become a little complicated. The following is the best description I can reconstruct.

The manor of Dunham-Massey was originally held by Hamon Massy, first baron of Dunham, under Hugh Lupus, earl of Chester in the reign of William I. The manor then passed successively through a total of five Hamon Massy descendants (all named Hamon Massy) until the last, dying without male heir, the manor was divided among many co-heirs. Henry de Grosmont, first Duke of Lancaster bought out all the co-heirs, re-united the estate and assigned Dunham to Roger le Strange of Knocking. From here the manor somehow became divided again between Fittons, Duttons, Venables and Masseys, until Robert Booth, a younger son of John Booth of Barton acquired several properties from Sir William Venables (died 1421) by marriage to his daughter and co-heir, Dowse Venables. This Robert Booth then laid claim to the Dunham estate, and the matter was finally settled when Sir Thomas Stanley and William Chantrell, his Sergeant-at-law acquired half of Dunham for themselves (a fourth part each) in 1433, Robert Booth retaining the other half. William’s younger brother John married Lucy, sister of Robert Booth. The descendants of William Chantrell continued the line of Catheralls of Horton, whilst John acquired the manor of Bache, just south of Chester, around 1434 and started the line of Chauntrells of Bache. John’s great grandson continued the alliance with the Booths when he married Elizabeth Booth (whose name appears in the manuscript of *St. Erkenwald*), great great great granddaughter of Sir Robert Booth of Dunham Massey (the Booths had a run of very short-lived descendants, William, William and George who held the manor for only 7, 12 and 12 years respectively).

Ormerod seems to confuse this Elizabeth with a later Elizabeth (possibly a daughter or granddaughter) who married Randle Holme [HOLME], and who was mayor of Chester in 1633. This Randle Holme was descended from the Norleys of Norley, east of Delamere Forest, and Alice Sparke of Bickerton, who claimed descent from the Catheralls of Horton, who also held land in Norley. Ormerod [ORMEROD82] says Alice Sparke was the husband of Ralph Catheral, a younger brother of the ancient house of Horton, but Ormerod's pedigree of Catherall of Horton shows Ralph marrying Margaret Sparke, not Alice. Alice Sparke's father, Roger, was living 7 Henry VIII (1516).

C.3. The Manuscripts of *St. Erkenwald* and *The Destruction of Troy*

The only surviving manuscript of *St. Erkenwald* (Harl. MS 2250, dated internally at 1477) was owned about 1530 by Thomas Bowker, a priest in Eccles, Lancashire, just across the river Mersey from Dunham Massey. A note in the margin (also dated to about 1530) contains the name of Elisabeth Boothe of Dunham-Massey [LUTTRELL58].

There are some interesting and relevant (but unanswerable) questions here. How did the manuscript of *St. Erkenwald* get to Dunham Massey (from London?) and into the possession of Elizabeth Booth? Obviously it was a copy added to the Harley manuscript 2250 (folios 72^{v}- 75^{v}) but where was the copy made? Who came first, Bowker or Booth? One possibility is that an original copy of *St. Erkenwald* passed through the family of James Cottrell from London to Cheshire, and a copy made locally passed by marriage into the possession of Elizabeth Boothe, and then to Bowker.

We are still very reluctant to attribute *St. Erkenwald* to the Gawain-Poet, but just possibly it might have been some of his early work, it would be rather unreasonable to assume that the Gawain-Poet burst into poetic life with fully mature work such as *Pearl* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

We also know that the only surviving copy of *The Destruction of Troy* (Hunterian MS 388, Glasgow University) was made by Thomas Chetham of Nuthurst about 1540. Chetham was a landowner in south Lancashire, and a bailiff in the service of the Stanley family (compare William Chantrell who was Sergeant-at-law to the Stanleys in 1434), and at his death in 1546 the manuscript was bequeathed to his son, John, "to be an heyrlome at Notehurst". Nuthurst no longer exists, but used to lie in Moston in Greater Manchester, and there is a record of this Thomas Chetham at that place for April 4, 1527:[i]

About eight o'clock in the morning, Thomas Radclyffe of Chaderton, gentleman, John, son of Edmund Tetlow, Ralph Cowper, of Chaderton, husbandman, John Smethhurst, of the same place, husbandman, with other wrongdoers to the number of 30, whose names were unknown, assembled on the waste of Nuthurst, in the hamlet of Moston and within the vill of Assheton, riotously, and drove off the animals of Thomas Chetham and Edmund Chaderton, gentleman, which were feeding there according to anticessorial custom. (The quotation is from Vol XXV-52. Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society).

—Edward Baines, *History of the County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster [BAINES36]*

It seems clear that the manuscripts of *The Destruction of Troy*, and *St. Erkenwald* [STE], the former from Whalley in Lancashire, and the latter probably originating in London, but written in a dialect very similar to *The Destruction of Troy* are both tied very closely to a few families, all related by marriage: the Booths, who owned *St. Erkenwald*, married to the Chantrells of Bache, the Chethams of Nuthurst, who copied *The Destruction of Troy*, and later married with the Sheburnes who inherited the Catterall estates at Whalley and the Newtons, of whom Humphrey was influenced by the work of the Gawain-Poet. I will try to show in a later paper that one of the Catteralls, John Catterall [of] Heton [in] Lonsdale[,] Lancaster (a 35 letter anagram from the first 35 books of *The Destruction of Troy*) was the patron of John Clerk of Whalley who produced the *The Destruction of Troy*.

D. Arms and Pentangles

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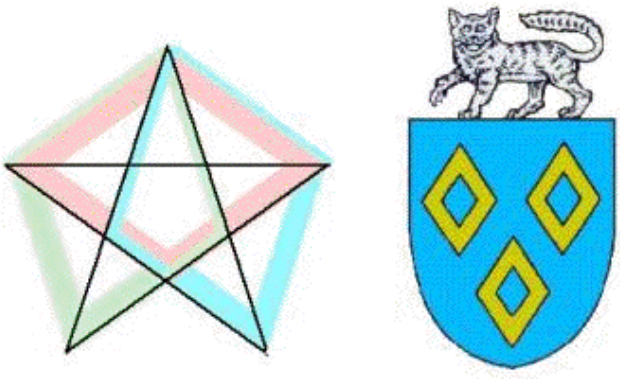
D.1. Three Mascles and the Pentangle

The arms of the family of James Cottrell in Lancashire are “Azure, three mascles or”, with the crest “a silver cat passant guardant”. The arms of the branch of the family at Horton in Cheshire are identical except for the addition of a lion rampant between the mascles. The arms of the Rathmell branch of the family near Settle in Ribblesdale are “Azure three mascles or over all a bendlot gules”. It is possible to arrange the three mascles so as to fit perfectly into the pentangle, and in the Rathmell arms we have the introduction of the colour red to complete the shield of Sir Gawain: “… þe schelde, þat was of schyr goulez / Wyth þe pentangle depaynt of pure golde hwez”*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 619-620.

Figure D.1. Fit of Three Mascles to the Pentangle



D.2. Arms Assumed by James Cottrell in Portugal

The arms assumed by James Cottrell in Portugal employed the same colours (azure and gold) as those of his family in England, but in place of the three mascles, the arms were a blue and gold

chessboard, suggestive of the chessboard used by Sir Gawain in Wolfram's "Parzival" as a shield. The arms are recorded in the Armory Book, p. 34, held in the Torre do Tombo [COTRIM].

Figure D.2. Arms of James Cottrell (Cotrim, Jaime)

D.3. The Pentangle at the Order of Christ at Tomar

The pentangle, which assumes an important role in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* symbolising the Christian and knightly virtues, is inscribed over the graves of the brethren of the Order of Christ in the "Claustro da Lavagem" in the Convento at Tomar in Portugal. There is no question here of the heathen or magical symbolism of the pentangle, the Order of Christ was a Christian and knightly order who carried the symbol over from the Templars whom they replaced in Portugal early in the fourteenth century. The pentangle symbol also occurs on the facade of the church of Santa Maria do Olival in Tomar, which holds the graves of 22 Master Templars, and also on other religious buildings in Portugal.

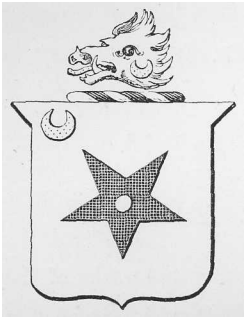
Figure D.3. The Pentangle above Graves at Tomar

Photo by Rod Thorn [THORN]

D.4. The Arms of Assheton of Downham

The arms of the Assheton family of Downham near Whalley were a five-pointed star, “Argent a mullet sable pierced of the field” [VCH] vol. 6, p.554, but this was *not* a pentangle, the inner structure is missing. The feature in the top left corner shown by [WHITAKER72], and reproduced in the figure below, has disappeared in [VCH]. The Assheton family of Downham near Whalley did not appear until the early sixteenth century, but their origins in the locality of Whalley go back to the thirteenth century.

Figure D.4. The Arms of the Assheton family of Downham



The Arms of Assheton of Downham [WHITAKER78]

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