

Thomas of Erceldoune

Glossary by Poppy Holden, January 2019

Als I me wente þis endres daye,
Ffull faste in mynd makand my mone,
In a mery mornynge of Maye,
By Huntle bankkes my selfe allone,

NB *first person* other
making

I herde þe jaye and þe throstelle
The mawys menyde of hir songe,
þe wodewale beryde als a belle,
That alle þe wode a-bowte me ronge.

mavis (thrush) sang plaintively
woodlark also made a noise

Allonne in longynge thus als I laye,
Vndyre-nethe a semely tre,
[Saw] I whare a lady gaye
[Came ridand] ouer a longe lee.

If I solde sytt to domesdaye,
With my tonge to wrobbe and wrye,
Certanely þat lady gaye
Neuer bese scho askryede for mee.

to contort my tongue

described

Hir palfraye was a dappill graye,
Swylke one ne saghe I neuer none;
Als dose þe sonne on someres daye,
þat faire lady hir selfe scho schone.

small horse
such a one I never saw

Hir selle it was of roelle bone,
Ffull semely was þat syghte to see;
Stefly sett with precyous stones,
And compaste all with crapotee;

royal bone (ivory)

toadstone, a magical stone from the head of a toad

Stones of oryente, grete plente.
Hir hare abowte hir hede it hange;
Scho rade ouer þat lange lee;
A whylle scho blewe, a-noþer scho sange.

sometimes she blew, sometimes she sang

Hir garthes of nobyll sylke þay were,
The bukylls were of berelle stone,
Hir steraps were of crystalle clere,
And all with perelle ouer-by-gone.

girths
buckles were of beryl
stirrups
pearl

Hir payetrelle was of irale fyne,
Hir cropoure was of orpharë,
And als clere goIde hir brydill it schone
One aythir syde hange bellys three,

horse's breastplate
cropper was embroidered

bells

[Scho led three grehoundis in a leesshe,]
And seune raches by hir pay rone;
Scho bare an horne abowte hir halse,
And vndir hir belte full many a flone.

seven bloodhounds ran beside her
neck
arrow

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Downe þane lyghte þat lady bryghte,
Vndir-nethe þat grenewode spraye;
And, als the storye tellis full ryghte,
Seuene [sythis](#) by hir he laye.

times

[Scho](#) sayd, Mane, the lykes thy playe:
Whate byrde in boure maye [delle](#) with the?
Thou merrys me all þis longe daye;
I pray the, Thomas, [late](#) me bee.

she

deal

let

Thomas stode vpe in þat stede,
And he by-helde þat lady gaye;
Hir hare it [hange](#) all ouer hir hede,
[Hir eghne semede owte, þat are were graye.](#)

hung

hir eyes seemed anything (or out) that formerly were gray

And alle þe riche clothynge was a-waye,
Þat he by-fore sawe in þat stede ;
[Hir a schanke blake, hir oþer graye,](#)
And all hir body lyke the [lede](#).

her one thigh black, her other gray

lead

Thomas laye, and sawe þat syghte,
Vndir-nethe þat grenewod tree.

* * * *

Þan said Thomas, Allas! allas !
In faythe þis es a [dullfull](#) syghte;
How arte þou fadyde þus in þe face,
Þat schane by-fore [als þe sonne](#) so bryght[e]!

doleful

as the sun

Scho sayd, Thomas, take leue at sone and mon[e]
And als at lefe þat gewes on tree ;
This twelmoneth sall þou with me gone,
And [medill-erthe](#) sall þou none see.'

the land of humankind, not fairyland or heaven /hell

He knelyd downe appone his knee,
Vndir-nethe þat grenewod spraye,
And sayd, Lufly lady, rewe on mee,
Mylde qwene of heuene, als þou beste maye !

trust

yield

wherever my bones shall go

'Allas' he sayd, ' and wa es mee !
I [trowe](#) my dedis wyll wirke me care;
My saulle, Jhesu, [by-teche](#) I the,
[Whedir-some þat euer my banes sail fare.](#)'

secret hidden place

Scho ledde hym in at Eldone hill,
Vndir-nethe a [derne lee](#),
Whare it was dirke as mydnyght myrke,
And [euer](#) þe water till his knee.

always

amount

he heard only the rushing of the flood

The montenans of dayes three,
He herd bot swoghyng of þe flode ;

Text is *Thomas of Erceldoune*, Thornton MS (Lincoln A. 1. 17), from Murray, James A. H. *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune*. Llanerch, 1875.

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At þe laste he sayde, Full wa es meel !	woe is me
Almaste I dye, for fawte of f[ode.]	lack
Scho lede hym in-till a faire herbere ,	garden
Whare frwte was g[ro]wan[d gret plentee]	
Pere and appill, bathe ryppe þay were,	ripe
The date, and als the damasee .	damson
Þe fygge, and alsso þe wyneberye ,	grape or whinberry
The nyghtgales byggande on þair nests ;	dwelling
Þe papeioyes faste abowte gane flye,	parrots
And throstyls sange, wolde hafe no reste.	songthrushes
He pressede to pulle frowte with his hande,	fruit
Als mane for fude þat was nere faynt ;	as a man who was nearly fainting for food
Scho sayd, Thomas, þou late þame stande,	let
Or ells þe fende the will atteynt .	the fiend will kill you
If þou it plockk, sothely to saye,	
Thi saule gose to þe fyre of helle;	soul
It commes neuer owte or domesdaye,	
Bot þer in payne ay for to duelle .	dwel
Thomas, sothely I the hyghte ,	truly I command you
Come lygge thyne hede downe on my knee,	lay your head
Ant [þou] sall se þe fayreste syghte	
Þat euer sawe mane of thi contree.	
He did in hye als scho hym badde;	
Appone hir knee his hede be layde,	
Ffor hir to paye be was full glade;	please
And þane þat lady to hym sayde	
Seese þou nowe 3one faire waye,	
Þat lygses ouer 3one heghe mountayne ?	lies over that high mountain
3one es þe waye to heuene for aye,	
Whene synfull sawles are passed þer payne	souls
Seese þou nowe 3one oþer waye,	
Þat lygges lawe by-nethe 3one rysse ?	brushwood
3one es þe waye, þe sothe to saye,	
Vn-to þe joys of paradyse.	
Seese þou 3itt 3one thirde waye,	
Þat ligges vndir 3one grene playne?	
3one es þe waye, with tene and traye ,	pain and trouble
Whare synfuil saulis suffiris þaire payne.	
Bot seese þou nowe 3one ferthe waye,	fourth
Þat lygges ouer 3one depe delle?	
3one es þe waye, so waylawaye!	
Vn-to þe birnande fyre of helle.	burning

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Seese þou 3itt 3one faire castelle,
[þat standis ouer] 3one heghe hill ?
Of towne and towre it **beris þe belle**;
In erthe es none lyke it vn-till.

surpasses all

For sothe, Thomas, 3one es myne **awenne**,
And þe kynges of this countree;
Bot **me ware leuer be** hanged and drawene,
Or þat he **wyste** þou laye by me.

own
I would rather be
knew

When þou commes to 3one castelle gay,
I pray þe **curtase** mane to bee;
And whate so any mane to þe saye,
Luke þou answeere none bott mee.

courteous

My lorde es seruede at **ylk a mese**
With thritty knyghttis faire and free;
I sall saye, syttande at the **desse**,
I tuke thi speche by-3onde the see

each meal
dais

Thomas still als stane he stude,
And he by-helde þat lady gaye ;
Scho come agayne als faire and gude,
And also ryche one hir palfraye.

Hir grewehundis fillide with dere blode,
Hir raches couplede, **by my faye**;
Scho blewe hir horns **with mayne and mode**,
Vn-to þe castelle scho tuke þe waye.

truly
fervently

In-to þe haulle sothely scho went,
Thomas foloued at hir hande;
Than ladyes come, bothe faire and gent,
With curtassye to hir knelande.

Harpe and fethill bothe þay fandē,
Getterne, and als so þe sawtrye;
Lutte and rybybe bothe gangande,
And all manere of mynstralsye.

harp and fiddle both they tried,
gittern, and also the psaltery;
lute and rebec both going,
and all kinds of minstrelsy.

Þe most meruelle þat Thomas thoghte,
Whene þat he stode appone the flore;
Ffor **fefty hertis** in were broghte,
Þat were bothe **grete and store**.

fifty harts (deer)
large and valuable

Raches laye lapande in þe blode,
Cokes come with dryssynge knyfe;
Thay brittened þame als þay were wode;
Reuelle amanges þame was full ryfe.

bloodhounds lay lapping in the blood
cooks came with dressing knives
they butchered them as if they were mad

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Knyghtis [dawnese](#) by three and three,
There was revelle, [game](#) and playe;
Lufly ladies, faire and free,
That satte and sange one riche araye.

danced
gaming

Thomas [duellide](#) in that solace
More þane I 3owe saye, [parde](#),
Till one a daye, so hafe I grace.
My lufly lady sayde to mee:

dwelt
by God

NB reverts to first person

Do [buske](#) the, Thomas, þe [buse](#) agayne,
Ffor þou may here no lengare be;
[Hye the faste, with myghte and mayne,](#)
[I sall the bryng till Eldone tree.](#)

Thomas, you must get ready again

go quickly, with utmost strength
I shall bring you to the Eildon tree.

Thomas sayde þane, with heuy chere,
Lufly lady, nowe late me bee;
Ffor certis, lady, I hafe bene here
Noghte bot þe space of dayes three.

Second person

‘Ffor sothe, Thomas, als I þe telle,
Þou hase bene here thre 3ere and more;
Bot langere here þou may noghte duelle;
The skylle I sall þe telle whare-fore.

[‘To morne of helle þe foulle fende](#)
[Amange this folke will feche his fee;](#)
[And þou arte mekill mane and hende;](#)
[I trowe full wele he wolde chose the.](#)

tomorrow the foul fiend of hell
will collect his prey
and you are a large, comely man;
I really believe he would choose you.

‘Ffor alle þe gold þat euer may bee,
Ffro [hethyne](#) vn-to þe worldis ende,
þou bese neuer be-trayede for mee;
Þefore with me I [rede thou wende](#).’

here

advise you to go

Scho broghte hym agayne to Eldone tree,
Vndir-nethe þat grenewode [spraye](#);
In Huntlee bannkes es mery to bee,
Whare fowles synges bothe nyght and daye.

bush
birds

‘Fferre owtt in 3one mountane graye,
Thomas, [my fawkone bygges a neste](#);
A fawconne es an [erlis](#) praye;
[Ffor-thi](#) in na place may he reste.

NB This is hard to understand but is in all versions of the text
my falcon builds a nest
sea eagle’s
accordingly

‘Ffare well, Thomas, I wend my waye,
Ffor [me by-houys ouer thir bentis browne](#):
Loo here a fyt: more es to saye,
All of Thomas of Erselldowne.

I must go over the brown heath

FYTT II.

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Fare wele, Thomas, I wend my waye,
I may no lengare stande with the:’
‘Gyff me a tokynyng, lady gaye,
That I may saye I spake with the.’

‘To harpe or carpe, whare-so þou gose,
Thomas, þou sail hafe þe chose sothely :’
And he saide, Harpyng kepe I none,
Ffor tonge es chefe of mynstralsye.

‘If þou will spelle, or tales telle,
Thomas, þou sall neuer [lesynge](#) lye;
Whare euer þou fare, by [frythe](#) or [felle](#),
I praye the spoke none euyl of me.

lying
woodland or moorland

‘Ffare wele, Thomas, with-owttyne gyle,
I may no lengare duelle with the:’
‘Lufly lady, habyde a while,
And telle þou me of some [ferly](#).’

wonder

‘Thomas, herkyne what I the saye:’ etc.

Here begin the prophecies.