

“As the Book Says” — *Confessio Amantis* における定型表現とその変種 — “As the Book Says”: A Formulaic Expression and its Variations in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*

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ABSTRACT

中英語頭韻詩には特定の語の組み合わせが定型表現のように現れる。本論では頭韻詩の分析から明らかになった定型表現のひとつである“as the book says”という言い回しが同時代の脚韻詩にも使用されているかを検証する。定型と思われる表現が散見される脚韻詩のひとつである *Confessio Amantis* において繰り返し使われる特定の語の組み合わせとその変種を分析した結果、頭韻詩人と同様、脚韻詩人もその語るナラティブが個人の創作によるものではなく、典拠となるオーソリティに拠っていると自ら語ることで語りの信憑性を増強しようとしたことが明らかになった。このような語りの手法の機能を aural-narrative constellation あるいは narrative report of speech acts と定義し、さらには脚韻詩ならではの制約や脚韻によってペアとなる語の特徴について考察する。

Certain groups of words in Middle English verse and prose appear to act as a formulaic expression for the smooth story development and metrical necessities. This essay analyzes the expression, “as the book says,” in the *Confessio Amantis* by John Gower and its variants to illuminate that certain collocations of words play a more significant role than a simple prefabricated wording and can be one of the metrical devices that may be designated as an aural-narrative constellation or narrative report of speech acts. The essay examines how the expression, “as the book says,” is used by Gower and considers its variants in nine patterns according to

different replacement steps. Formulaic expressions in Middle English verse, unlike Old English *kennings*, are not identical repetitions of the same wording or phrasing but can be found in the recurring collocations in a similar metrical position.

This essay examines the formulaic expression, “as the book says,” in John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (CA). The study on formulae in medieval English poetry began in Francis P. Magoun’s article on Anglo-Saxon narrative poetry (1953), which triggered extensive discussions on the use of such set phrases (Campbell 1960; Whallon 1961; Stevick 1962; Lawrence 1966; Niles 1983; Creed 1990; Foley 1991; Whitman 1993; O’Keeffe 1997). Ronald A. Waldron (1957) first examined formulaic expressions in Middle English poetry, which generated comprehensive research on formulae in ME alliterative verse (Clark 1951; Finlayson 1963; Holland 1973; Duggan 1976; Krishna 1982; Parks 1985; Duggan 1986; Markus 2006; Hanna 2008). Recently, critics such as Ursula Schaefer (1996), Alison Wray (2002), Norbert Schmitt and Ronald Carter (2004), and Bill Louw (2007) have acknowledged the significance of similar collocations of words and common meaning to emphasize the special role played by certain word combinations in verbal art.

In the expression, “as the book says,” the narrator uses reporting speech for assurance and insinuation, which is called “narrative report of speech acts” (Biber et al. 1999: 1118-1121; Freeborn 1996: 223; Leech & Short 2007: 257-87). As Nigel Fabb asserts, “while the dissociation of the speaker and the attribution of a thought to a third party may be a means of communicating that the thought is untrue, it may also be a means of guaranteeing the truth of the thought” (1997: 265). The wording and its variations can be a device to increase the credibility of the source from which the author adapted the story. Various examples that include “as the book says” and similar expressions suggest that Gower, along with other ME poets, does not rely

on prefabricated expressions as OE poets do on their kennings, but uses similar collocation patterns to denote similar ideas.

The word *book* for the present research is the third sense in *the OED* definition:

3. A specific text, elliptically or contextually understood.

a. Freq. with capital initial. The Bible (occas. *spec.* the New Testament or Gospels), freq. with reference to its use in the administration of oaths.

b. A liturgical text or prayer book, *esp.* the Book of Common Prayer.

The following three quotes under 3. a. remain in a similar structure because they consist of the noun *book* and the verb *say*:

OE *Ælfric Homily* (Cambr. Ii.4.6) in J. C. Pope Homilies of Ælfric (1967) I. 483 *Þa wæs Godes sylfes Gast, swa swa seo boc us secgð, gefered ofer wæterum.*

c1250 in *Stud. Philol.* (1931) 28 598 *Ase in þe boc þa apostel speket.*

a1400 (►a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Gött.) I. 2042 *A mantil..he toke, And ȝede bacward, als sais þe bock.*

James P. Oakden first commented on the use of tags in ME alliterative verse. Based on the idea that tags are used to fill out the lines according to metrical necessities, Oakden lists seven common tags in Part IV (1935: 381-91) of his book, one of which is the expression “as the book says.” The collocation pattern of “*as* + Noun + Verb” can be found in every major alliterative poem of the

fourteenth century. Though Oakden uses the verb *say* in his template, *tell* is much more common.

Joyce Coleman presents data from various literary texts to explain the social context of medieval aurality in Chapter Four of her book entitled, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (1996). Her analysis of the three verbs of denoting reading, namely, *write*, *read*, and *hear/hearken*, reveals the special function of reading as “an emotionally and intellectually engaging, multisensory, sociable, satisfying, and productive focus of human interaction” (Coleman 1996: 108). Quoting mainly from Chaucer, Coleman assumes three patterns in the aural-narrative constellation system: “Author ‘reads’ sources,” “Author ‘writes,’” and “Audience ‘hear’ (or ‘read’) or ‘read and/or hear’ (1996: 100-101). “Various constituents—i.e., its references to writing, reading, and hearing—are equally valuable but necessarily understood only in relation to each other” (Coleman 1996: 97).¹ She explains Gower’s use of aural phrases as follows:

In his prologue, at the beginning of book I, and in his epilogue Gower speaks directly to his audience, using standard aural phrases to describe their reception. In introducing his dream of Amans and the Confessor, Gower says he will write (prol.: 74) for hearers (line 66) who will read him (line 77). We note the familiar aural phrases “as ye shall hear” (prol.: 589; 8:3055), “as ye have heard devise” (prol.: 822; 1:96), and “Now herkne, who that wol it hie” (1:96).

(Coleman 1996:186)

Coleman does not include the recurring expression, “as the book says,” in her list though her examples would entail such a construction. The present research focuses on expressions of saying and hearing according to the types of the verb as well

as the grammatical relationship between the verb and the subject to reveal the role of the narrator and the hearing audience.

The following examples illuminate how the expression, “as the book says,” is used in the *CA*. Gower is known as a polyglot poet of “a strong feeling for correctness of language and of metre whose utterance is genuinely natural and unaffected” (Macaulay 1908: 155). Like his contemporary Chaucer, Gower uses resources from three languages, Latin, French, and English, while his exploitation is not only in subject but also in stylistic conventions about structure and phrases (Galloway 2009; Machan 2006). Using the digital text of Macaulay’s edition in the *Middle English Compendium*, I searched lines that include expressions of saying and hearing and double-checked the examples in the concordance by J. D. Pickles and J. L. Dawson (1987). More than 1,200 lines were collected out of the total 33,444 lines of Prologue and eight Books, which is about 3.7 % of the entire lines. The lines were further classified into eleven patterns. Nine patterns out of the eleven appear to be a variation of the formulaic expression. Below is the list of the nine patterns, starting from the base and showing different types of deviation from it:

Pattern 1: “as the book tells/says”

Pattern 2: “as NOUN tells/says”

Pattern 3: “as NOUN VERB”

Pattern 4: “NOUN tell/say”

Pattern 5: “as I tell/say”

Pattern 6: “as you tell/say/hear”

Pattern 7: “hear and tell”

Pattern 8: as + PASSIVE

Pattern 9: “as who says”

The base pattern may be postulated as follows: Both the noun to quote a source reference and the verb of saying can lexically vary while other words such as dative pronouns or modal auxiliaries can be added, providing that they would be unstressed and thus not receive metrical stress to deviate significantly

from the metrical norm. Three examples will be shown for each pattern while the appendix include all lines that belong to the pattern:

(Pattern 1-1) The base, “as the book tells/says” 27 lines

III. 1095 Contek, so as the bokes sein,*

VII. 600 The water, as the bokes sein.*

VII. 2240 At hom; and as the bokes telle,*

Most of the lines contain the word *book* and *says* in the third and fourth metrical beat positions respectively, which is marked by an asterisk in the above examples. This pattern, in which the expression appears in the latter part of the verse line, is most common in ME alliterative verse.² The expression in the *CA*, however, can stretch over the verse line as seen in the following examples. An adjective such as *old* and *holy* may be added to the expression:

V. 30 For as these olde bokes telle, *

VI. 966 For, as these holi bokes seie, *

VII. 2845 So as these olde bokes sein, *

The order of the noun and the verb may be reversed, but only the verb *say* appears in such lines. *Tell* never appears in this pattern:

(Pattern 1-2) “as says the book” 9 lines

II. 3048 Schal non receive, as seith the bok,*

V. 3176 And in this wise, as seith the bok,*

VIII. 547 This yonge Prince, as seith the bok,*

In these lines, the word group occupies the third and fourth metrical positions, which is marked by an asterisk again. The expression is not stretched over the verse line. The following line, the only one in the *CA*, is composed of the same structure except for the different conjunction:

VII. 3290 For after that the bokes sein,*

If this line is included, the number of the lines in Pattern 1-2 is ten.

Different verbs may appear as seen in the pattern below:

(Pattern 1-3) “as the book VERB” 8 lines

I. 3392 And as the bok makth remembrance,

IV. 2529 So as the bokes it recorden,

VII. 1182 So as the bokes ous enforme,

In the above lines, longer verbs than *say*, such as *record* and *inform*, are used, which results in a different placement of the noun and the verb. The expression occupies the third and fourth beat positions, but can stretch over the verse line.

The conjunction *as* may be replaced by *after*:

(Pattern 1-4) “after the book tells/says” 4 lines

II. 1586 And after that the bokes sein,*

V. 1111 The whiche, after the bokes telle,*

V. 3014 And thus, after the bokes sein,*

Other lexical items may replace the noun *book* and the verb *say*. In the second group, a different noun or a pronoun is used in the same structure while the verb is limited to *say* or *tell*. Since there are three elements, the conjunction, the noun, and the verb, let us mark the line that contains one different element as a one-step replacement. The line that contains the expression in its third and fourth metrical positions is marked with an asterisk:

(Pattern 2-1) “as NOUN tells/says” 29 lines

Prol. 434 And tho ben, as thapostel telleth,*

VII. 462 So as the Philosophre telleth.*

VIII. 1326 In Tharse, as the Cronique telleth,*

Nouns may vary, but the most frequent one in this structure is *philosopher*. There are two lines in

which *after* is used in place of *as*:

V. 1953 Which, after that thapostel seith,*

V. 3059 After the Philosophres sein,

When a longer noun than *book* is used, the expression occupies the verse line, but there are lines that occupy the third and fourth metrical positions as in Patterns 1-1 and 1-2. A pronoun, *men*, may replace the noun *book*:

(Pattern 2-2) “as men tell/say” 38 lines

I. 612 He clotheth richesse, as men sein, *

IV. 2148 Fro Pafagoine and as men sein, *

VIII. 154 Of alle reson, as men sein, *

Other pronouns may replace *book*:

(Pattern 2-3) “as PRONOUN tell(s)/say(s)” 34 lines

II. 2120 Among himself, so as thei telle, *

V. 7578 And so it fell, riht as thei sein, *

VII. 4055 And in this wise as we thee seie, *

The order of the noun and the verb may be reversed, but the replacement by a pronoun is not found in the reversed word order. In other words, the collocation of *tell/say* and a different noun is the only structure that may be designated as Pattern 2-4:

(Pattern 2-4) “as tells/says NOUN” 12 lines

Prol. 955 The man, as telleth the clergie, *

IV. 2988 For ther, as seith the Poesie, *

VII. 1217 The which, as telleth the scripture, *

The inversion occurs because of the end rhyme. For example, the three examples above are in the following couplet lines:

Prol. 955 The man, as telleth the clergie,

Prol. 956 Is as a world in his partie,

IV. 2987 Which marcheth upon Chymerie:

IV. 2988 For ther, as seith the Poesie,

VII. 1217 The which, as telleth the scripture,

VII. 1218 Berth of tuo fisshes the figure.

The following two lines contain a different conjunction, *so* and *thus*:

Prol. 1032 For so seith Crist withoute faile,

VII. 649 And thus seith the naturien

The third pattern may be designated as lines that contain a different noun and a different verb in the base collocation pattern while the verbs used in this pattern tend to be ones to denote senses and acts of saying, recording, hearing, or finding. Since the two elements, the noun and the verb, are replaced by other lexical items, the pattern is a two-step replacement. The position of the expression is not fixed toward the line-end:

(Pattern 3-1) “as NOUN VERB” 28 lines

V. 1756 As seint Gregoire it wrot and sayde

VII. 717 So as the Philosophre tauhte*

VII. 3135 So as the Philosophre affermeth, *

A pronoun may be used in this pattern:

(Pattern 3-2) “as PRONOUN VERB” 57 lines

II. 2110 We gon, there as we scholden finde*

V. 4244 Which in Colchos, as it befell, *

VIII. 1037 Withinne a time, as it betidde, *

As observed in Pattern 2-3, *as* sometimes accompanies another conjunction *so*. The pronoun *men* appears in the following examples:

(Pattern 3-3) “as man VERB” 15 lines

III. 686 Which stormy is, as men it finde, *

IV. 1614 In sondri place as men mai rede. *

VII. 4821 For so as alle men witesse,*

Only two conversion examples are found in the entire poem:

(Pattern 3-4) “as VERB NOUN” 2 lines

II. 588 Of grete Rome, as is the sawe,*

V. 4102 Somtime spekth as don the men:*

The fourth group lacks the conjunction *as*. The first pattern contains the verb *say* or *tell* but neither *book* nor *as*, which is a different case of a two-step replacement. Since the positions of the noun and the verb are more mobile within the verse line, lines that contain the wording in their closure are no longer marked with an asterisk after this group:

(Pattern 4-1) “NOUN tell/say” 29 lines

I. 333 Ovide telleth in his bok

V. 1746 Gregoire seith in his aprise,

VII. 686 These olde philosophres sein

The noun may be replaced by a pronoun:

(Pattern 4-2) “PRONOUN tell/say” 11 lines

I. 389 In Metamor it telleth thus,

VI. 977 In thevangile it telleth plein,

VII. 739 In Almageste it telleth this:

The use of *man* is also possible:

(Pattern 4-3) “man tell/say” 29 lines

IV. 2652 Which is, men sein, a gret prudence:

V. 244 So that a man mai sothly telle

VIII. 3032 Men sein that trouthe hath broke his bond

The order of the noun and the verb may be reversed:

(Pattern 4-4) “tell/say NOUN” 6 lines

II. 121 This Galathee, seith the Poete,

V. 1172 And that was Juno, seith the bok.

VII. 380 Bot lest nou what seith the clergie;

While the subject is *book*, different verbs, such as *read*, *write*, and *declare*, are used. This pattern is similar to Pattern 1-3, “as the book VERB,” but lacks the conjunction:

(Pattern 4-5) “the book VERB” 10 lines

II. 2140 For who these olde bokes rede

V. 580 Who so these olde bokes troweth,

VI. 616 The bok hierafter nou declareth.

A pronoun may appear in the same pattern:

(Pattern 4-6) “PRONOUN VERB” 6 lines

IV. 1804 For this a man mai finde write,

V. 333 For this a man mai finde write,

VI. 1225 Of Nero men schul rede and singe

The fifth pattern consists of the first person singular pronoun *I* and varying verbs. The examples below express the similar idea to “as the book tells” while the subject is the first-person singular pronoun, namely, the narrator himself or herself. The collocation pattern remains in the basic Noun plus Verb pattern, which is a one-step replacement. The first group contains the verb *say* or *tell* and similar verbs:

(Pattern 5-1) “as I tell/say” 62 lines

II. 2156 Thurgh Falssemblant, as I schal telle.

V. 2112 With Covoitise, as I thee telle.

VII. 4239 The fifte point, as I seide er,

Other verbs may appear with *I*, which is a two-step replacement:

(Pattern 5-2) “as I VERB” 86 lines

I. 2271 That thou this vice as I the rede

IV. 2444 In olde bokes as I finde,
VII. 2632 Of trouthe als fer as I suppose;

The expression, “as I read,” reflects the common idea of reading in the Middle Ages. Written texts were produced in a context in which a performance aloud in a social occasion was assumed (Burrow 1982: 47).³

The next pattern does not contain the conjunction *as* but maintains the verb *say* or *tell*. The following lines include *say*, *tell*, and other related verbs while the subject is the narrator himself or herself. The pattern is another two-step replacement:

(Pattern 5-3) “I tell/say” 95 lines

I. 66 I may you telle, if ye woll hierе,
IV. 1656 For this I telle you in schrifte,
VI. 1375 For this I mai wel telle soth,

In Pattern 5-4, no conjunction is used while the subject *I* appears with a verb of saying or recording, which is a three-step replacement. The sense of deviation is clearer compared to the other patterns in the fifth group:

(Pattern 5-4) “I VERB” 71 lines

II. 3185 Now herkne a tale which I rede,
IV. 145 In a Cronique I finde write
VII. 3417 I rede in olde bokes thus:

The subject may be the second-person pronoun. In the following examples, the pattern is “as you tell/say,” which is another one-step replacement:

(Pattern 6-1) “as you tell/say/hear” 20 lines

I. 1586 Which, as thou seist, thou schalt me teche,
V. 3222 As ye have told, I have wel herd.
VII. 5399 In schrifte, so as thou me seidest,

The construction, “as you hear,” can be a two-step replacement. This pattern is more frequent

than the “as you tell/say” pattern. The expression directly addresses the audience to remind of a common source:

(Pattern 6-2) “as you hear” 55 lines

Prol. 589 In such a wise as thou schalt hierе,
IV. 632 Toward miself, as ye mai hierе,
VIII. 501 His herte berth, so as ye herde,

Another variation is “as you VERB,” which is a two-step replacement:

(Pattern 6-3) “as you VERB” 17 lines

II. 1613 In a Cronique, as thou schalt wite,
IV. 2034 For if thou wolt the bokes rede
V. 7383 Sente Anthenor, as ye wel knowe.

The following two lines are in the same structure, but the dative case is used with an impersonal verb:

IV. 1769 Min holi fader, as you semeth,
IV. 3501 Min holi fader, as you liketh.

The pronoun *you* and other verbs are combined while no conjunction appears before them. This is a three-step replacement:

(Pattern 6-4) “you VERB” 23 lines

IV. 2362 In sondri bokes thou miht rede.
V. 1371 Bot yit of that which thou hast herd,
V. 4567 Bot that thou hast me told and said,

There are lines in which two verbs, *hear* and *tell*, are combined. Oakden lists the following examples as one of the tags in ME alliterative verse (1935: 386):

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight 26

Ay watz Arthur the hendest, as I haf herde telle.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight 1144

A hundreth of hunteres, as I haf herde telle,

The following lines from the *CA* contain such expressions, which is a three-step replacement:

(Pattern 7) “hear and tell” 31 lines

- II. 2097 That I ferst herde telle this,
V. 7502 And whan sche herde telle thus,
VIII. 2862 And whan Resoun it herde sein

Passive forms appear to denote similar ideas of reporting and hearing, which is a two-step replacement:

(Pattern 8) as + PASSIVE 76 lines

- Prol. 285 As it is in the bokes write,
VI. 2435 In boke as it is comprehended,
VIII. 62 And in the geste as it is founde,

The following lines are a few examples in the passive voice that do not contain *as*. It is more likely that the conjunction *as* is used when verbs such as *write*, *say*, or *tell* are used in the passive voice:

- III. 641 Ensample lefte, which is write:
V. 2967 Of that was seid in prophecie,
V. 3192 For in Cronique is write yit
V. 4133 And of a Raven, which was told
VII. 1170 The which is Capricornus told,

Finally, a fixed wording, “as who says,” is found in the *CA*:⁴

(Pattern 9) “as who says” 36 lines

- I. 644 And takth it, as who seith, be stelthe
V. 7195 To alle men, as who seith, knowe
VIII. 43 As who seith, alle men have herd,

The MED lists the following examples for Sense 1b. of *who*, defining its function as “indefinite pronoun, used as subject in conventional parenthetical clauses with *as*.” The expression “as who seieth” has the following function:

(a) interpreting a preceding utterance: that is to say, in other words, which is as much as to say that; (b) as ~ seieth, etc., interpreting a preceding action: as if to say, as though saying; (c) qualifying a single word or phrase, either preceding or following: in a manner of speaking, as it were, you might say, as they say; also, in the manner of, as you might say; (d) as ~ seieth, introducing the response to a preceding rhetorical question: in a word; the answer is.

Citations for the above uses include *Cursor Mundi*, Wycliffite Sermons, *South English Legendary*, Chaucer’s *Envoy to Bukton*, *Wars of Alexander*, and *Gesta Romanorum*. Along with these contemporaries, Gower uses this expression, “as who says,” as a convention.

Lines in the nine patterns explained above tend to contain the clause, “as the book tells/says,” or its variation in the latter part of the verse line, namely in the third and fourth metrical beat positions, though the expression may stretch over the verse line. In ME alliterative verse, the most common place of the conjunction is the line-medial position as shown in the examples demonstrated in Footnote 2. In order for *book* and *tell/say* to receive metrical stress and form a metrical beat, the expression must appear in the second half of the alliterative line. In the *CA*, however, the clause can be stretched out over the entire verse line, which is not observed in alliterative verse.

Lexical items that can replace *book* and *tell/say* in the *CA* include the following words and phrases. Modern spellings are used as much as possible, but some words are in ME forms:

BOOK:

alle women, Almageste, thapocalips, thapostel, Astronomien, bible, Christ, the Chronicle, Cillenus, clergy, (old) clerk(s), common voice,

Constance, Demephon, the divine, thevangile,
folk, fortune, Galathee, (old) gest, god, gospel,
Gregoire, Gregois, Greek's law, Habraham,
king, love, man's tongue, Marchus Claudius,
Metamor, nature, naturien (follower of natural
magic), old wise men, Ovide, people, (old/
wise) philosopher(s), the plain law, poesy,
poet, prophecy, reason, shrift, the Scole, the
scripture, Sedechie, Saint Gregoire, these olde
wise, truth, Valeire, Venus, vois, wit, Zorobabel

TELL:

affirm, affirm and say, appende (belong),
areche (reach), argue, bear, befall, begin,
behold, behote (promise), believe, belong,
beseech, betide, bid, call, can/couthe, can
seek, come to mind, dare, declare, describe,
devise, do, do the law, excite, fall, feel, feign,
find, find write, guess, hear, inform, is betid,
is due, is fortunèd, is happened, is in soth, is
of record, is specified, is/was, know, learn,
make mend, make remembrance, may be, may
find, may guess, may hear, may wite, mean,
might, ought, pray, read, read and singe,
record, rehearse, see, see and hear, should,
should be, show, shrive, speak, stand, suffice,
suppose, teach, think, trowe (believe),
understand, use, was beheld, was bidden, was
forto done, wene (expect), wite, witness,
would, write, write and paint

In contrast, ME alliterative verse contains the
following lexical items in this expression:

BOOK:

all burnez, Bruytte, chance, chronicles, clause,
clerke, credo, deed, Dryȝtyn, Duchemen,
duke, elders, gest(s), gydes, hathell men, holy
wryt, Isoder, jaye and japes, kind, king, ladies,
law, letters, line, my mind, old men, our list,
romance, Siraphis, story, text, treaty, true life,

wise men, witness, world, writ, your rewill

TELL:

ask, bid, record, say, show, speak, tell

From these variations, it is evident that Gower,
along with his contemporaries, refers to the common
source, which may be the source assumed by the
poet and the audience, the religious authority, the
political authority, or social witness. As Robert R.
Edwards contends, "in medieval theories of reading
the literal includes other kinds of discourse besides
historical narrative, such as proverbs, parables and
the law" (2010: 61). By means of formulaic
expressions the poets refer to the source that is
assumed powerful and reliable and try to establish
the credibility of their tale. Citing stories from old
sources, Gower uses "various chronicles, histories,
and sayings of poets and philosophers, like a
honeycomb gathered from various flowers, to the
extent that his infirmity allowed him" (Peck 2009:
21). Gower assumes broad resources in his simple
"narrative power" (Pearsall 1966: 478) to "recover
the past, so too he perceives in books a means to
secure what would otherwise be lost" (Olsson 1992:
17). From the beginning of the Prologue, he refers to
the presence of old books. The "narrative report of
speech acts" (Freeborn 1996: 223; Fabb 1997: 265;
Leech & Short 2007: 257-87) is, thus, utilized in the
natural rhythm to strengthen the credibility of the
narrative and its circulation in the outer world (Fabb
1997: 263-67).⁵ Russell A. Peck explicates:

Confession Amantis is essentially an exercise in
the phenomenology of reading as cultural
therapy—a book written for our (the readers') sake.
Gower starts with reading as an emotive,
individual act, largely figured in the subjectivities
of Amans's desire. But he concludes with an
entirely different sense of reading as a
collaborative act, where voices of the past,

present, and future intermingle to construct a new sense of self, a self participated in through otherness. Reading bridges the gaps.

(2009: 18)

A final point to consider is the use of formulaic expressions in relation to the meter. The *CA* is assumed to be an octosyllabic rhymed verse, reflecting Gower's serious commitment to sound symbolism and word play. Gower's meter is known to be smooth and regular without violating the natural accentuation of words (Macaulay 1908: cxx; Yeager 1990: 36).⁶ Syllable counting is not very strict while the lines remain accent verse (Macaulay 1900; Macaulay 1908). Examining rhyming pairs reveals that the frequent formulaic expressions appear with the same rhyme word in their adjacent line. Five such pairs are shown below. The line-end *tell* is often paired with *duell*:

telleth/duelleth

Prol. 433 In whom that alle vertu duelleth,

Prol. 434 And tho ben, as thapostel telleth,

Prol. 817 Whos name as the Cronique telleth

Prol. 818 Was Othes; and so forth it duelleth,

I. 485 Ben Monstres, as the bokes tellen,

I. 486 And in the grete Se thei duellen:

VII. 2239 Bot tok him only forto duelle

VII. 2240 At hom; and as the bokes telle,

VIII. 1325 Of Thaise his doghter, wher sche duelleth,

VIII. 1326 In Tharse, as the Cronique telleth,

The line-end *seith* is always paired with *feith*:

seith/faith

II. 597 Constance, as the Cronique seith,

II. 598 Sche hihte, and was so ful of feith,

II. 2503 Er it was set to Cristes feith,

II. 2504 Ther was, as the Cronique seith,

III. 2547 In Grece afore Cristes feith,

III. 2548 I rede, as the Cronique seith,

IV. 1675 Hem whom thei scholde, as the bok seith,

IV. 1676 Converten unto Cristes feith.

V. 837 Ther was, as the Cronique seith,

V. 838 Of misbelieve an other feith,

Common rhyming pairs include the combination of *sein/ayein*, *saide/maide*, *telle/helle*, and *told/old*. They are words from Old English but not of Romance origin. Kate Harris points out Gower's use of 'rime riche' (rhyme on initial, stem, and terminal), using an example of *accord* and *discord* (1983: 37), a pair of Romance origin words. At least in formulaic expressions that include *say* and *tell*, the rhyming pairs tend to be words of Germanic origin.

The structure introduced by *as* can be a common structure though the lexical combination in each occasion may differ. The poets are concerned about the metrical correctness and rely on the repetitious use of similar forms and common meaning for an effective delivery of their story as Schaefer (1996) and Jeremy Smith (2000) assert. The expression, "as the book says," occupying the latter half of the verse line is habitual and may function as a syntactic formula though the metrical position is freer in the *CA* than in the alliterative counterpart. Coleman in her chapter in *Middle English* (2007) argues that "aurality" does matter for a better understanding of medieval texts. Assuming that medieval reading of literary pieces was bimodal of orality and aurality, she defines aurality "as 'the shared hearing of written texts,' with 'orality' as 'the shared hearing of texts,' and 'literacy' as 'the private reading of written texts'" (Coleman 2007: 72). In a shared hearing, repetition and redundancy must have helped the

audience to comprehend what the text conveyed (Coley 2012; Horobin & Smith 2002). Elizabeth Allen in a different chapter of the same book points out the various devices used in such a reading and hearing context as follows:

Tag-lines, apostrophe, narrative endorsements ('That trytour has no pere!'), inconsistencies in name or social status, noticeable reiterations, ill-fitting juxtapositions—all such formal disruptions call readers' attention to repetition and renewal, the structural building-blocks of episodic romance. According to Peter Brooks, repetition is a 'major operative principle' of plot; it shapes what he calls the 'energy' of a story, 'giving it perceptible form, form that the text and the reader can work with in the construction of thematic wholes and narrative orders.' Through repetition, narratives master otherwise formless or boundless human needs and desires.

(Allen 2007: 192)

Determining what collocations are possible and how lexical elements may vary (Ringbom 1968; Lawrence 1966) will reveal a special function of such wording in ME narratives, alliterating or rhyming.⁷

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Appendix: List of Lines for Each of the Nine Patterns

(Pattern 1-1) The base, "as the book tells/says" 27 lines

I. 485, II. 194, III. 1095, III. 2372, IV. 1675, IV. 2299, V. 30, V. 2970, V. 4346, V. 5227, VI. 966, VI. 1010, VI. 1200, VII. 82, VII. 206, VII. 285, VII. 600, VII. 1042, VII. 1262, VII. 1424, VII. 1754, VII. 2240, VII. 2845, VII. 3299, VII. 5336, VIII. 88, VIII. 1152

(Pattern 1-2) "as says the book" 9 lines

II. 1275, II. 3048, IV. 2427, V. 1598, V. 2688, V. 3176, VII. 480, VIII. 276, VIII. 547

(Pattern 1-3) "as the book VERB" 8 lines

I. 3392, III. 2558, III. 2567, IV. 2529, V. 120, VII. 1182, VII. 1200, VII. 1232

(Pattern 1-4) "after the book tells/says" 4 lines

II. 1586, III. 2586, V. 1111, V. 3014

(Pattern 2-1) "as NOUN tells/says" 29 lines

Prol. 434, Prol. 817, I. 400, I. 607, I. 1994, I. 2274, I. 3187, II. 597, II. 764, II. 2297, II. 2504, III. 2548, IV. 2487, V. 837, V. 1365, V. 1794, V. 5165, V. 6146, V. 6804, VI. 1111, VII. 59, VII. 462, VII. 1084, VII. 1645, VII. 2151, VII. 2329, VII. 4593, VIII. 1326, VIII. 1546

(Pattern 2-2) "as men tell/say" 38 lines

Prol. 442, I. 490, I. 612, I. 768, I. 1408, I. 1850, I.

3395, II. 261, II. 659, II. 1464, II. 2103, II. 2266, III. 1045, III. 1761, III. 1947, IV. 1167, IV. 1248, IV. 1505, IV. 2148, IV. 2308, V. 1014, V. 1432, V. 1886, V. 2923, V. 4272, V. 5510, V. 6573, V. 6726, VI. 332, VI. 496, VI. 1220, VII. 1138, VII. 2173, VIII. 154, VIII. 834, VIII. 2546, VIII. 2716, VIII. 2926

(Pattern 2-3) "as PRONOUN tell(s)/say(s)" 34 lines

Prol. 455, I. 844, I. 848, II. 787, II. 1189, II. 1432, II. 2120, II. 2923, II. 3208, II. 3377, III. 1168, V. 843, V. 1069, V. 1134, V. 1349, V. 1525, V. 1569, V. 2125, V. 2140, V. 3010, V. 5943, V. 6415, V. 7578, VI. 1738, VI. 2214, VII. 983, VII. 2978, VII. 4049, VII. 4055, VII. 4379, VII. 4634, VIII. 749, VIII. 1479, VIII. 2767

(Pattern 2-4) "as tells/says NOUN" 12 lines

Prol. 955, III. 615, III. 2519, IV. 302, IV. 2988, V. 140, V. 816, V. 5231, V. 5275, VII. 1217, VII. 1348, VII. 1361

(Pattern 3-1) "as NOUN VERB" 28 lines

II. 106, III. 970, III. 1395, III. 2247, III. 2248, IV. 874, V. 1756, V. 2271, V. 3183, V. 6389, V. 7640, VII. 9, VII. 495, VII. 528, VII. 717, VII. 1056, VII. 1057, VII. 1847, VII. 2402, VII. 3135, VII. 4233, VIII. 94, VIII. 119, VIII. 600, VIII. 882, VIII. 998, VIII. 2512, VIII. 2681

(Pattern 3-2) "as PRONOUN VERB" 57 lines

I. 340, I. 953, I. 3363, II. 1238, II. 2101, II. 2110, III. 809, III. 1808, IV. 1549, IV. 2070, IV. 2613, IV. 3072, V. 786, V. 1025, V. 1043, V. 1175, V. 1181, V. 1929, V. 2375, V. 2381, V. 2533, V. 2638, V. 2879, V. 4109, V. 4244, V. 4266, V. 4832, V. 4964, V. 5049, V. 5205, V. 5313, V. 6790, V. 6803, V. 7025, V. 7468, VI. 614, VI. 2020, VII. 196, VII. 978, VII. 1078, VII. 1727, VII. 2358, VII. 3051, VII. 4412, VII. 5221, VII. 5398, VII. 5423, VII. 5435, VIII. 653, VIII. 674, VIII. 833, VIII. 888, VIII. 1027, VIII. 1037, VIII. 1847, VIII. 2165, VIII. 2793

(Pattern 3-3) “as man VERB” 15 lines

II. 3031, III. 686, IV. 1614, V. 2412, V. 3309, V. 5940, V. 7453, VI. 1150, VII. 731, VII. 1291, VII. 4821, VII. 4832, VII. 5004, VIII. 188, VIII. 999

(Pattern 3-4) “as VERB NOUN” 2 lines

II. 588, V. 4102

(Pattern 4-1) “NOUN tell/say” 29 lines

Prol. 354, Prol. 967, I. 333, I. 362, II. 379, II. 3136, III. 633, IV. 2025, V. 1155, V. 1746, V. 4229, V. 4917, V. 5570, V. 5980, V. 7256, VII. 344, VII. 651, VII. 686, VII. 814, VII. 1546, VII. 1607, VII. 1950, VII. 2499, VII. 2685, VII. 3181, VII. 3945, VII. 4313, VII. 5080, VII. 5172

(Pattern 4-2) “PRONOUN tell/say” 11 lines

I. 389, II. 2748, III. 2559, V. 166, V. 582, V. 637, VI. 654, VI. 860, VI. 977, VII. 739, VII. 2979

(Pattern 4-3) “man tell/say” 29 lines

II. 366, II. 2577, III. 1201, IV. 2652, IV. 2920, V. 244, V. 249, V. 2633, V. 2875, V. 3823, V. 4719, V. 6032, V. 6045, V. 6059, V. 7296, V. 7388, VI. 551, VI. 673, VII. 361, VII. 1473, VII. 2322, VII. 2506, VII. 2826, VII. 5138, VIII. 75, VIII. 1723, VIII. 1866, VIII. 3032, VIII. 3040

(Pattern 4-4) “tell/say NOUN” 6 lines

II. 121, V. 1172, V. 1529, V. 1563, VII. 380, VII. 922

(Pattern 4-5) “the book VERB” 10 lines; The last two examples are in a similar structure, but contain a different noun.

II. 2140, III. 2307, IV. 1211, IV. 2379, V. 580, V. 886, V. 3245, VI. 616, V. 878, VII. 3049

(Pattern 4-6) “PRONOUN VERB” 6 lines

II. 871, IV. 1639, IV. 1804, IV. 2138, V. 333, VI. 1225

(Pattern 5-1) “as I tell/say” 62 lines; Line V. 2644

contains the first-person pronoun *we* instead of *I*.

I. 99, I. 537, I. 2305, I. 2494, I. 2615, II. 377, II. 1995, II. 2093, II. 2156, II. 2285, II. 2801, III. 161, III. 1479, IV. 262, IV. 583, IV. 676, IV. 1209, IV. 2191, IV. 3366, IV. 3485, IV. 3685, V. 225, V. 617, V. 1196, V. 1303, V. 1777, V. 2112, V. 2601, V. 2644, V. 3622, V. 4865, V. 5348, V. 5733, V. 6392, V. 6429, V. 6710, V. 7089, V. 7095, V. 7150, V. 7495, V. 7654, VI. 392, VI. 564, VI. 748, VI. 899, VI. 927, VI. 1260, VI. 1669, VII. 1339, VII. 2285, VII. 4239, VII. 4557, VIII. 132, VIII. 247, VIII. 1179, VIII. 1275, VIII. 2127, VIII. 2283, VIII. 2807, VIII. 189, VIII. 2051, VIII. 2754

(Pattern 5-2) “as I VERB” 85 lines

Prol. 964, I. 272, I. 306, I. 575, I. 584, I. 896, I. 1210, I. 1957, I. 2271, I. 3436, II. 77, II. 2040, II. 2041, II. 2076, II. 2431, III. 721, III. 730, III. 817, III. 865, III. 951, III. 1642, III. 2772, IV. 55, IV. 517, IV. 886, IV. 1449, IV. 2395, IV. 2444, IV. 2559, IV. 2874, IV. 3038, IV. 3052, IV. 3135, IV. 3304, V. 213, V. 453, V. 575, V. 631, V. 834, V. 1050, V. 1362, V. 1498, V. 2682, V. 4490, V. 4572, V. 4753, V. 4795, V. 5047, V. 5480, V. 5524, V. 6222, V. 6343, V. 6664, V. 6836, V. 7650, VI. 8, VI. 319, VI. 601, VI. 1303, VI. 1363, VI. 1382, VI. 2410, VII. 392, VII. 394, VII. 828, VII. 993, VII. 1034, VII. 1220, VII. 1251, VII. 1330, VII. 1369, VII. 1404, VII. 1766, VII. 2299, VII. 2632, VII. 4186, VII. 4312, VII. 4365, VII. 4684, VII. 5314, VIII. 601, VIII. 2149, VIII. 2427, VIII. 2590, VIII. 2665

(Pattern 5-3) “I tell/say” 95 lines

Prol. 593, I. 66, I. 412, I. 1266, I. 2018, I. 2392, I. 2760, I. 3297, II. 30, II. 249, II. 489, II. 524, II. 550, II. 1615, II. 1879, II. 2386, II. 2421, II. 2568, II. 2855, II. 2958, II. 3369, II. 3520, III. 938, III. 1028, III. 1756, III. 2249, III. 2757, IV. 449, IV. 516, IV. 704, IV. 1079, IV. 1540, IV. 1609, IV. 1656, IV. 1682, IV. 1683, IV. 1753, IV. 2203, IV. 2485, IV. 2801, IV. 3141, IV. 3185, IV. 3496, IV. 3489, V. 1367, V. 1423, V. 2258, V. 2516, V. 2928, V. 2939, V. 3262, V. 3541, V. 3542, V. 4228, V. 4242, V. 4431, V. 5204, V. 5228, V. 5230, V. 5659, V.

5664, V. 5670, V. 6428, V. 6497, V. 6677, V. 6705, V. 7097, V. 7107, V. 7223, V. 7360, V. 7366, V. 7370, V. 7434, VI. 323, VI. 530, VI. 597, VI. 676, VI. 921, VI. 1375, VI. 1877, VII. 852, VII. 1434, VII. 1644, VII. 2966, VII. 3626, VII. 3807, VII. 4207, VII. 4212, VII. 5402, VII. 5404, VII. 5407, VII. 5438, VIII. 432, VIII. 539, VIII. 975

(Pattern 5-4) “I VERB” 71 lines

I. 1979, I. 2272, I. 2458, I. 3153, II. 83, II. 291, II. 1614, II. 2068, II. 3185, II. 3186, II. 3188, III. 818, III. 1200, III. 1331, II. 1329, III. 2366, III. 2599, IV. 145, IV. 448, IV. 928, IV. 978, IV. 1406, IV. 1504, IV. 1662, IV. 1900, IV. 2324, IV. 2676, IV. 2927, IV. 446, IV. 2028, IV. 2273, IV. 2596, IV. 2645, IV. 2960, IV. 4233, V. 99, V. 3222, V. 4231, V. 4237, V. 4374, V. 4485, V. 4534, V. 4808, V. 6143, V. 6145, V. 6360, V. 6397, V. 6647, V. 6706, V. 7008, V. 7185, V. 7335, V. 7603, VI. 485, VI. 2439, VII. 712, VII. 1481, VII. 2118, VII. 2216, VII. 2357, VII. 2642, VII. 2846, VII. 2910, VII. 3143, VII. 3417, VII. 4149, VII. 4590, VIII. 2066, VIII. 2474, VIII. 2607, VIII. 3124

(Pattern 6-1) “as you tell/say/hear” 20 lines

I. 1377, I. 1586, I. 1830, II. 555, II. 3367, III. 628, III. 881, III. 941, V. 63, V. 3222, V. 4491, V. 5219, V. 6653, VI. 600, VI. 705, VI. 699, VII. 11, VII. 353, VII. 4841, VII. 5399

(Pattern 6-2) “as you hear” 55 lines

Prol. 589, I. 66, I. 388, I. 1881, I. 2178, I. 2536, I. 2776, I. 3098, I. 3403, II. 82, II. 981, II. 1601, II. 1229, III. 277, III. 1027, III. 1683, IV. 632, IV. 1282, IV. 2211, IV. 3142, IV. 3275, IV. 3689, V. 1299, V. 1322, V. 1623, V. 2444, V. 2950, V. 4260, V. 4358, V. 4363, V. 4639, V. 4779, V. 5262, V. 6103, V. 6143, V. 7526, V. 7609, VI. 444, VI. 454, VI. 1227, VII. 965, VII. 949, VII. 1271, VII. 1500, VII. 2060, VII. 2177, VII. 2242, VII. 2353, VII. 2838, VII. 4591, VIII. 501, VIII. 1212, VIII. 1914, VIII. 1939, VIII. 3055

(Pattern 6-3) “as you VERB” 17 lines

II. 95, II. 1613, III. 297, III. 1087, IV. 1397, IV. 1803, IV. 2034, V. 62, V. 4666, V. 5496, V. 7024, V. 7101, V. 7383, V. 7604, VII. 5400, VIII. 1507, VIII. 2303

(Pattern 6-4) “you VERB” 23 lines

I. 3438, II. 550, III. 1749, III. 2207, III. 2487, IV. 2362, IV. 2630, V. 107, V. 445, V. 1371, V. 1379, V. 1591, V. 3223, V. 4436, V. 4536, V. 4567, V. 6948, V. 7839, VI. 113, VI. 962, VI. 1415, VII. 1237, VII. 1493

(Pattern 7) “hear and tell” 31 lines

I. 1008, I. 2642, II. 1266, II. 1445, II. 1830, II. 2097, III. 1011, III. 2492, IV. 1693, V. 168, V. 304, V. 1879, V. 2193, V. 2447, V. 3028, V. 5246, V. 6255, V. 7434, V. 7502, VI. 1596, VI. 1820, VII. 3967, VII. 4753, VII. 4836, VII. 5163, VIII. 660, VIII. 677, VIII. 1410, VIII. 1955, VIII. 2862, VIII. 2742

(Pattern 8) as + PASSIVE 76 lines

Prol. 285, Prol. 873, I. 16, I. 44, I. 261, I. 593, I. 891, I. 1209, I. 1404, I. 3388, II. 2071, III. 605, III. 653, III. 829, III. 1339, III. 1348, III. 1357, III. 1687, III. 1718, III. 2365, VI. 730, VI. 1560, VI. 1492, VI. 2569, VI. 2310, VI. 3122, V. 745, V. 1602, V. 1733, V. 1897, V. 2958, V. 3108, V. 3136, V. 3211, V. 3271, V. 4361, V. 4583, V. 6609, V. 7449, V. 7823, V. 869, VI. 984, VI. 1617, VI. 2435, VII. 464, VII. 666, VII. 367, VII. 217, VII. 1018, VII. 1106, VII. 1559, VII. 1979, VII. 1359, VII. 1026, VII. 1269, VII. 1608, VII. 1802, VII. 1986, VII. 2047, VII. 2368, VII. 2751, VII. 3146, VII. 4384, VII. 4098, VII. 4617, VII. 4849, VII. 4204, VII. 4327, VII. 5130, VII. 5191, VIII. 37, VIII. 62, VIII. 236, VIII. 744, VIII. 1609, VIII. 1798

(Pattern 9) “as who says” 36 lines

I. 644, I. 1381, I. 1611, I. 1710, I. 1765, I. 2794, I. 2963, II. 696, II. 3241, III. 74, III. 178, III. 1149, III. 2387, IV. 585, IV. 1654, IV. 1744, IV. 3468, V. 114, V. 1607, V. 3921, V. 4107, V. 4419, V. 5891, V. 6545, V. 7195, V. 7049, V. 7600, V. 7779, VI. 256, VI. 513, VI.

929, VII. 2215, VII. 4987, VIII. 43, VIII. 284, VIII. 1279

- 1 Coleman adds four more patterns: invitations to "read" sources function as covert assertions of authorial reading; in-frame narrators replicate the system; occasionally, in-frame narrators replicate the system too much; texts exist in manuscript. See Coleman (1996: 76-108).
- 2 Typical examples from alliterative verse are as follows:
Destruction of Troy 167
 These balfull bestes were, as the boke tellus,
Destruction of Troy 526
 Will ye suffer me to say, and the sothe telle?
Paience 60
 I schal wysse yow therwyth as holy wryt telles.
Piers Plowman P. 101
 To bynde and vnbynde, as the boke telleth,
Wars of Alexander 17
 That was the athill Alexsandire, as the buke tellis,
Wars of Alexander 35
 Thus ware thai breued for the best, as the buke tellis;
Wars of Alexander 203
 Thare thai wrate tham I-wis, as the buke tellis,
Wars of Alexander 699
 Bo3es him vp to a brenke, as the buke tellis,
Wars of Alexander 881
 Sone eftir in a seson, as the duke sais,
Wars of Alexander 916
 The son of ane Cerastis, as the buke witnes.
Wars of Alexander 1242
 Ane Beritinus, a berne, as the buke tellis,
Wars of Alexander 1430
 Was Balaan the bald berne, as the boke tellis,
Wars of Alexander 1615
 And thai meruailed tham mekill, as the buke tellis,
Wars of Alexander 1668
 3it bedis he him, the bald kyng, as the buke tellis.
Wars of Alexander 1691
 Ane Ardromacius, a gome, as the buke tellis.
 See Cable (1991) and Putter & Stokes (2000) for arguments on alliterative verse.
- 3 J. A. Burrow explains the fundamental difference between medieval and modern ideas of reading as follows:
 People in the Middle Ages treated books rather as musical scores are treated today. The normal thing to do with a written literary text, that is, was to *perform* it, by reading or chanting it aloud. Reading was a kind of performance. . . The performance of a text was most often a social occasion.

These occasions took many forms, depending upon the social setting and the nature of the text. (1982: 47)

Such reading demands more superfluous redundant expressions than in silent reading. For the poet, the repeated expressions must have been a useful device derived from the tradition.

- 4 "Tell the truth" is a common wording in ME alliterative verse:

Destruction of Troy 526

Will ye suffer me to say, and the sothe telle?

Parlement of Thre Ages 159

Totheles and tenefull, I tell yowe for sothe;

Wars of Alexander 729

"Sa ma aydeus," quod that othire man, "thou tellis me treuthe,

Wynnor and Wastour 17

Bot whoso sadly will see and the sothe telle,

- 5 Gower is known not to deviate too much in his meter. The natural accent is rigidly maintained in his verse compared to Chaucer's meter. See Macaulay (1900: cxx and cxxvi).

- 6 Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre consider Gower's meter "most controlled" in his iambic lines of eight or nine syllables in four beats (2005: 56). The verse line is in the rigid metrical structure in perfect rhyme in every four beats (Coleman 2011; Zarins 2010). Robert F. Yeager notes that in such a regular meter, Gower uses rime riche for dialogues to add a realistic effect. See Yeager (1990: 1-44, especially 36-37) and Burrow and Turville-Petre (2005: 56-59).

- 7 Burrow contends:

The main strength of English literature in [the Middle English] period-as in Old English-lies in narrative, rather than in lyric or dramatic writing. This is indeed the period within which English narrative verse reaches its apogee, in the Ricardian age, with the work of the *Gawain*-poet, Gower, and Chaucer; and throughout the period narrative proliferates in a rich variety of forms, prose and verse. (1982: 68)