**The Sayings of St Bernard**

This poem supposedly represents the advice of the twelfth-century Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, though it almost certainly does not. *The Sayings of St Bernard* employs the *ubi sunt* (Latin for ‘where are they’) motif, which plays on nostalgia for the past. The poem survives in five manuscripts in addition to the Auchinleck manuscript, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 19.2.1: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108 (c. 1275-1325); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86 (c. 1275-1300); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional E.6(a); London, British Library, MS Harley 2253 (c. 1310); and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley poet A.1 (late 14th or early 15th century).

The edition below is of the Auchinleck version, which is only a fragment of the full text, corresponding to lines 121-131 and 157-180 in the MS Laud Misc. 108. Although the Auchinleck scribe as indicate breaks between the stanzas with the paragraph mark, I have added modern line breaks. I have also added modern punctuation. Letters in brackets are reconstructed.

1 Where ben men biforn ous were,  arc; [who] before; us
θat houndes ladden & haukes bere  led; bore
& hadden feld & wode,  field; wood
θe riche leuedis in her bour  ladies; their; bower (bedroom)
5 θat werd gold in her tresour  wore
1 Where θai eten & dronken & made hem glade,  them
Wiþ her briȝt rode?  cheeks
5  Wiþ joie was al her liif ylade;  life; led
Men kneled hem biforn.

10 θai beren hem wel swiþe heiȝe;  very; high (i.e. nobly)
Wiþ a tv[i]nkling of her eȝe  all lost
Her soules were forlore.

15 ¶ Where is þat hoppeing & þat song  hopping (i.e. dancing)
þe trayling & þe proude gong,  trailing [of gowns]
þe haukes & þe houndes?  wealth; gone away
Al þat wele is went oway;  joy; woe is me
Her ioie is turned to wayleway,  times
To manie hard stoundes.

20 ¶ Dreîȝe her, man, ȝif þat þou wit;  suffer here; if know (i.e. are wise)
A litel pine men þe bit.  pain; thee; bid
Wiþdrawe þine aise oft:  ease/pleasure/comfort
ȝif þe pine be vnrede,  if; dreadful
& þou þenke of þi misdede,  seem to you mild
It schal þe þink soft

25 ¶ ȝif þat þe fende, þe foule þing,  through; advice
Þurth wicked rede of fals egging
Adoun þe haþ yeast,
Vp & þe gode champioun,
Stond & falle no more adoun
30 For a litel blast.  down
because of a small blast [of wind]
¶ Take þe rode to þi staf
& þenk on him þat þeron ȝaf
His liif þat was so lef.
He it ȝaf for þe, þou ȝeld it him;
[let] thou yield it to him
35 Oȝain þi fo þi staf þou nim
& wreke þe of þat þef.
avenge yourself on that thief

¶ Jhesu Crist ous aboue,
Þou grant ous, for þi moder, loue
At our liues ende.
[may] thou grant; for the sake of
40 When we han riȝtes of þe prest
& þe deþ be at our brest,
Þe soule mot to heuen wende. must; go
Amen