Beheading game

The **beheading game** is a literary trope found in Irish mythology and medieval chivalric romance. The trope consists of a stranger who arrives at a royal court and challenges a hero to an exchange of blows: the hero may decapitate the stranger, but the stranger may then inflict the same wound upon the hero. The supernatural nature of the stranger, which makes this possible, is only revealed when he retrieves his decapitated head. When the hero submits himself to the return blow, he is rewarded for his valor and is left with only a minor wound. The hero is seen as coming of age by undergoing the exchange of blows, and his symbolic death and rebirth is represented by the feigned return blow. Originating in the Irish legend of the *Fled Bricrenn*, the beheading game appears in several Arthurian romances, most notably *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.



The Green Knight has survived beheading by Gawain in this 14th-century manuscript.

The beheading game has been analysed for its relationship with the Arthurian concept of chivalry. At no point does the Green Knight specify that he must be beheaded, only that he will return whatever blow is struck. When Gawain makes the impulsive decision to decapitate the Knight, the values of Camelot require that he subject himself to death in the name of upholding the rules of the challenge. Gawain is incapable of bravely submitting to death, instead concealing a magic girdle that he believes will keep him from harm, thus demonstrating that he values survival over honour.

Contents

- **Description and history**
  - Celtic mythology
  - Arthurian romance
- **Literary analysis**
- **Game studies**
- **Other iterations**
- **References**
- **Works cited**

Description and history

The trope of the beheading game appears in 11 recorded works of medieval literature. Of these, two are Irish, four are French, two are German, and three are English. The trope is believed to have originated in Irish mythology, the mythic cycles of which were subsequently adapted into 12th century French chivalric romance. From there, the trope was introduced in 13th century German and 14th century English poetry.[1] The beheading game itself is adapted from the motif of the Exchange of Blows, in which a stranger propositions a hero with a challenge: the hero may strike a blow upon the stranger, but they agree to have that same blow returned to them the following day.[2] The unwritten folkloric origins of the trope remain unknown, but some philological scholars speculate that the Exchange of Blows derives from an ancient myth in which Summer and Winter do battle at the change of seasons.[3]

In its most basic form, the beheading tale concerns the appearance of a mysterious, possibly supernatural figure who appears at a royal court and proposes a challenge for the members of said court: they may attempt to behead the stranger with an axe, but in doing so, the volunteer agrees to be beheaded at a later point in time. The hero who volunteers to take part in this challenge successfully beheads the stranger, who then retrieves his decapitated head and departs. After the hero spends the resultant waiting period mentally preparing himself for the retributory blow, the stranger returns and either feigns the blow entirely or leaves only a small wound on the hero's neck.[3] The champion is congratulated for succeeding in the test of character, which is to honour the parameters of the game by submitting himself to certain death.[4] Sometimes the beheading game is expanded into a disenchantment narrative, as in *Sir Gawain and the Carle of Carlisle* and *The Turke and Sir Gawain*.[5] In tales such as this, after the initial exchange, the stranger asks the hero to behead him once more, which then frees the challenger of whatever curse has made him monstrous.[6]

Celtic mythology

The earliest recorded incidence of the trope of the beheading game is in the *Fled Bricrenn* (*Bricriu's Feast*),[7] part of the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology.[8] The overarching plot of the *Fled Bricrenn* involves three heroes – Cú Chulainn, Conall Cernach, and Lóegaire Búadach – who are each independently told by the titular character that they are worthy of the Championship Portion and are invited to a feast in their honour. When the three men arrive at Bricriu's feast, they are put through a series of trials, often involving supernatural figures, to determine which among them is superior.[9] Some written versions of the *Fled Bricrenn* involve two iterations of the beheading game. One, titled "The Champion's Bargain", dates back to at least the ninth century, while the "Uath" episode may be a later interpolation from when the manuscript was compiled in the eleventh century.[10]

The "Uath" or "Terror" episode contains one of the first trials presented to the three heroes. A man named Uath challenges Cú Chulainn and the others to behead him with an axe, but warns them that they will be beheaded in turn the following day. Consistent with the other episodes of the *Fled Bricrenn*, which posit Cú Chulainn as the superior warrior, he is the only one to take Uath's challenge. When he presents himself for the return blow, Uath spares Cú Chulainn by striking him with the blunt edge of the axe.[11] The beheading game is repeated at the end of the *Fled Bricrenn*, in the episode titled "The Champion's Bargain". There, a strange churl arrives at the court of Conchobar mac Nessa, the king of Ulster, and challenges its members to a beheading game. The three heroes accept the churl's challenge but flee before the blow can be returned; only Cú Chulainn submits himself to the axe. For his valor, the churl, revealed to be the trickster king Cú Roí in disguise, declares that Cú Chulainn deserves the Champion's Portion.[12]

Arthurian romance

There are at least seven accounts of the beheading game in Arthurian romance, all of which are believed to derive from the *Fled Bricrenn*.[13] All of these adaptations take one major deviation from the Irish source, while the Irish myth involves three rivals, Arthurian beheading game narratives involve a singular hero.[14] The first work of Arthurian literature to involve the beheading game is Chrétien de Troyes's unfinished *Perceval, the Story of the Grail*. In the poem, Caradoc, a young Knight of the Round Table, is tricked into participating in a beheading game by his sorceress father, who arrives at King Arthur's court in disguise. He returns one year after the original decapitation to strike his son with the flat of his sword and praise him for his bravery.[15] While Caradoc's narrative added more details to the game than were found in the *Fled Bricrenn*, the basic plot structure remains the same, as do the loyalty and bravery inherent in the original work translated capably to the conventions of chivalric romance.[16] For this reason, the structure of the original Irish myth remains mostly intact in the French romances such as *La Mule sans frein*, *Hunbaut*, and *Perlesvaus*.[17] Besides the singularity of Caradoc's adventure, the one other change taken from the Irish is that, while Cú Chulainn's trial was the culmination of his life of adventure, for Caradoc, the beheading game is his initiation into the world of errantry.[18]

Throughout Arthuriana, multiple knights are subjected to some iteration of the beheading game. In *Perlesvaus*, it is Lancelot who subjects himself to the game during his quest for the Holy Grail.[19] In accordance with the rest of the text, his encounter with the stranger is viewed as an analogy for Christian sacrifice. In returning to the site of the original beheading and offering himself as a sacrifice, Lancelot brings life to the ruined city, just as the sacrifice of Jesus was meant to save humanity from destruction.[20] In Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, meanwhile, Gareth undergoes in his chapter a number of trials which he must overcome in order to learn the merits and responsibilities of knighthood. One of these trials involves Lynette and Lyonesse, two noblewomen who come from afar to enlist Gareth into rescuing the latter from the monstrous Red Knight. Every ten days, Gareth decapitates the Red Knight, only for Lynette to return his head to him.[22] After several encounters with the Red Knight, Gareth determines that greater nobility would be found in taking mercy upon him and refusing to strike than in pursuing the more violent, supposedly courageous option.[23]

The Arthurian knight most often subjected to the beheading game is Arthur's nephew Gawain. He is the hero of both *La Male sans frein* and the *Hunbaut*, and in the latter, Gawain subverts the game by catching his opponent's severed head before it can be reattached, thus preventing the stranger from returning to life to strike his own blow.[24] Perhaps the best-known and most developed iteration of the beheading game in medieval romance, however, is the late 14th century poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.[25][26] The anonymous *Gawain*-poet combines the beheading game with another type of exchange, the temptation.[27] In the poem, the Green Knight arrives at Camelot on New Year's Day to propose a beheading game, with the volunteer asked to find the knight in the Green Chapel one year hence.[4] While on his way to the chapel, Gawain encounters the Bertilaks, who propose an exchange of winnings: Gawain may explore their castle while Lord Bertilak hunts, and at the end of the day, they exchange whatever they have acquired.[28] When Lady Bertilak attempts to seduce Gawain, he reveals the kisses that she gave him to Lord Bertilak,[29] but he does not disclose that she also provided him a magical girdle designed to keep the wearer from harm.[30] When Gawain arrives at the chapel, the Green Knight, revealed to be Lord Bertilak in disguise, feigns the beheading blow twice, and on the third swing, he leaves a small wound on Gawain's neck as punishment for his dishonesty about the girdle.[31] Upon his return to Camelot, Gawain, ashamed of his cowardice, decides to continue wearing the girdle as a badge of shame.[32]

Literary analysis

Both in the original Celtic mythos and in the later Arthurian romance, literary scholars have described the beheading game as a metaphor for coming of age. For heroes such as Cú Chúlainn and Gawain, the feigned decapitation they face is a symbolic death that allows for them to be reborn.[33] This is taken further in Caradoc's story, as his encounter with his enchanted father is the first knight-errantry he enjoys as a Knight of the Round Table.[18] Both in Celtic mythology and Arthurian romances, beheading was a mechanism by which a hero could pass into adulthood, either through the action of taking an opponent's head, which would cement their status as a warrior, or by subjecting oneself to death through possible decapitation in a beheading game.[34] The Bildungsroman aspects of the beheading game are particularly highlighted in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, as rather than returning to Camelot himself, the Green Knight demands that Gawain come to him. The whimsical, carefree world of Camelot at Christmastime is interrupted by a road of trials, during which Gawain develops physically, emotionally, and spiritually while preparing for his death.[35]

The other central theme of the beheading game is that of cultural values. At the end of the narrative, the hero is spared and the blow only feigned, because he fulfilled the contract that was established at the beginning of the game.[36] In this context, some scholars have seen the *Gawain*-poet as using Gawain's girdle to criticize the emptiness of the Arthurian concept of chivalry. When the Green Knight first arrives at Camelot, he speaks of the honourable reputation that Arthur's knights possess, and proposes the game as a means of testing the merits of that reputation.[37] While Arthurian chivalry emphasises the honourable nature of a sacrificial death, Gawain's decision to behead the Green Knight, which then requires him to fulfill the other side of the contract, is far more foolish than admirable.[38] For Laura Ashe, an English professor at Worcester College, Oxford, the idea that Gawain must travel to the Green Chapel to uphold the chivalric ideals of Camelot, even knowing that it would bring death, demonstrates the foolishness of ideals that preserve honour over life.[39] Additionally, Gawain is criticized for his decision to use the magic girdle that will supposedly preserve his life, demonstrating that he has deemed his life more important than the concepts of honour he is meant to uphold.[40] Literary critic Piero Boitani notes that Gawain is initially presented to the reader as "the perfect representative of the virtues which that society has elevated to principles of life", making his failure to uphold those values at the end of the narrative that much more disturbing.[41]

Analyses of Gawain's failure to complete the quest tend to focus on his concealment of the girdle.[4] Other scholars have noted, however, that Gawain's failure begins simply with his response to the challenge. Unlike other iterations of the beheading game, the Green Knight does not specify that he must be decapitated, only that whatever blow is done to him will be returned. Ashe suggests that the holly branch the Green Knight carries in his other hand was a test, and that he wished for a clever knight to strike him with the branch rather than the axe.[42] Verena L. Veiss of Lehigh University goes so far as to deem the initial beheading scene "Gawain's first failure", criticizing the hero for making the impulsive decision to strike a fatal blow when at no point did the challenger specify that the game required a beheading.[43]

The tone of the beheading game becomes darker with adaptation, and the magical elements are altered. In Malory, for instance, severed heads do not speak, creating an air of finality in the action that is only subverted when the challenger reattaches his head.[44] This is mostly due to the differing connotations around beheading in Celtic and medieval English culture. For instance, the Celts believed that decapitation was an honourable form of execution for a foe who had fought valiantly, while for the English, beheading was a punishment reserved for traitors.[45] The royal nature of the head as the container of human power is also not present in the medieval English as it is in Celtic belief,[46] making the Green Knight a sort of pagan figure in a Christian world where death, particularly decapitation, is final.[47] Elizabeth Scala, a medievalist with the University of Texas at Austin, has used this different tone to explain why Gawain makes the decision to behead the Green Knight. Whereas an Irish hero like Cú Chúlainn has enough experience with the supernatural to believe that his opponent will survive what should have been a fatal blow, Gawain has no reason to believe such a thing, and he is not faced with the gravity of his decision until the Green Knight retrieves his severed head.[48]

Game studies

Within the categories of play described by Johan Huizinga in his *Homo Ludens*, the beheading game would serve as a type of single combat belonging to archaic culture.[49] This single combat is complicated into a godgame, a type of game in which one character, the gamemaster, entraps his opponent in a secretive strategy that falls beyond the simple pretenses of the game.[50]

Other iterations

The beheading game has found its way into contemporary culture by means of direct adaptations of the myths from which it originates. W. B. Yeats, for instance, adapted Cú Chulainn's encounter into a play first titled *The Golden Helmet* and later rewritten in 1910 as *The Green Helmet*.[51] In Yeats's iteration, the Red Man returns the year after he is beheaded to demand a head of his own, and Cú Chulainn bravely offers his own head in sacrifice.[52] The story of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, meanwhile, has been adapted several times, most recently in David Lowery's 2021 film *The Green Knight*, which starts Dev Patel as Gawain and Ralph Ineson as the Green Knight.[53]

Outside of Britain and Ireland, the closest analogue for the beheading game is found in the Icelandic *Sveins rímur Múkssonar*.[54] In this work, an ogre named the Grey Carle appears at the court of the King of the Greeks and individually challenges all those present to a beheading game. When the hero Sveinn obliges, the Grey Carle picks up and reattaches his severed head, informing Sveinn that he will return the next day.[55] It is believed that the beheading game of the *Fled Bricrenn* came to Iceland through an English intermediary that is now lost.[56]

Christopher Wrigley has compared the Ugandan myth of the Snake and the Tortoise to the beheading game. In the myth, Wa-nfudu the tortoise tricks Remba Omusota, the despotic snake ruler, into beheading himself by claiming that tortoises cut their heads off every night, which he demonstrates by retracting into his shell. Once Remba and his soldiers are dispatched, Kintu becomes king.[57] For Wrigley, both the European beheading game and the Remba story use the fear of beheading as a metaphor for circumcision, and the liberation enjoyed by the Ganda once they are freed of Remba's rule parallels the relief that heroes like Gawain experience once they subject themselves to beheading.[58]

References

1. Benson 1965, p. 11.
2. Benson 1965, pp. 11–12.
3. Wrigley 1996, p. 108.
4. Burrow 2001, p. 45.
5. Thompson 1976, pp. 202–203.
6. Friedman 1960, p. 269.
7. Brewer 1973, p. 9.
8. Boyd 2017, p. 151.
9. Martin 1992, p. 74.
10. Buchanan 1932, pp. 316–317.
11. Benson 1965, pp. 13–14.
12. Benson 1965, pp. 14–15.
13. Loomis 1997, p. 59.
14. Loomis 1997, p. 60.
15. Burrow 2001, p. 43.
16. Benson 1965, pp. 20–21.
17. Benson 1965, pp. 21–22.
18. Benson 1965, p. 23.
19. Brewer 1973, pp. 22–27.
20. Ashe 2010, pp. 166–167.
21. Sanders 2006, p. 34.
22. Loomis 1997, pp. 87–88.
23. Sanders 2006, pp. 38–39.
24. Loomis 1997, p. 105.
25. Thompson 1976, p. 201.
26. Weiss 1976, p. 361.
27. Boitani 1982, pp. 60–61.
28. Burrow 2001, p. 47.
29. Burrow 2001, p. 50.
30. Thompson 1976, p. 202.
31. Benson 1965, pp. 231–240.
32. Burrow 2001, p. 52.
33. Sadowski 1996, p. 222.
34. Janes 2005, p. 22.
35. Sadowski 1996, pp. 185–191.
36. Martin 1992, p. 75.
37. Benson 1965, p. 212.
38. Ashe 2010, pp. 162–164.
39. Ashe 2010, pp. 168–169.
40. Ashe 2010, pp. 171–172.
41. Boitani 1982, p. 67.
42. Ashe 2010, p. 168.
43. Weiss 1976, pp. 361–366.
44. Tracy 2012, p. 206.
45. Hill 2009, pp. 117–118.
46. Tracy 2012, p. 211.
47. Hill 2009, pp. 121–122.
48. Scala 2002, pp. 49–51.
49. Stevens 1972, p. 70.
50. Pugh 2002, pp. 526–527.
51. Sato 2019, p. 45.
52. Sato 2019, pp. 46–47.
53. Aronstein & Drummond 2021, pp. 90–92.
54. Tracy 2012, p. 212.
55. Sveinsson 1957, p. 11.
56. Sigurðsson 1988, p. 70.
57. Wrigley 1996, pp. 105–106.
58. Wrigley 1996, p. 109.

Works cited

Aronstein, Susan; Drummond, Tarah (Fall 2021). "*The Green Knight* by David Lowery (review)" (https://muse.jhu.edu/article/839320). *Arthuriana*. **31** (3): 90–92. doi:10.1353/art.2021.0030 (https://doi.org/10.1353%2Fart.2021.0030). S2CID 244912809 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:244912809). Retrieved March 21, 2022.

Ashe, Laura (2010). "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the Limits of Chivalry". In Ashe, Laura; Djordjević, Ivana; Weiss, Judith (eds.). *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Exploitations_of_Medieval_Romance/nqKCrkAwzmcC?hl=en). Cambridge, CB: D. S. Brewer. pp. 159–172. ISBN 978-1-84384-212-5.

Benson, Larry D. (1965). *Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Art_and_Tradition_in_Sir_Gawain_and_the/7alaAAAAMAAJ?hl=en). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. ISBN 978-0-81350-501-5.

Boitani, Piero (1982). *English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/English_Medieval_Narrative_in_the_Thirt/eCMvTkgVRYwMC?hl=en). Translated by Hall, Joan Krakover. Cambridge, CB: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-23562-6.

Boyd, Matthieu (November 2017). "The timeless tale of *Bricriu's feast*" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.26818/nortamericeltstud.1.2.01151). *North American Journal of Celtic Studies*. **1** (2): 151–172. doi:10.26818/nortamericeltstud.1.2.0151 (https://doi.org/10.26818%2Fnortamericeltstud.1.2.0151). JSTOR 10.26818/nortamericeltstud.1.2.0151 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.26818/nortamericeltstud.1.2.0151). S2CID 192309502 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:192309502). Retrieved February 27, 2022.

Brewer, Elizabeth (1973). *From Cuchulainn to Gawain: Sources and Analogues of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/From_Cuchulainn_to_Gawain/1jeSAAAAIAAJ?hl=en). Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield. ISBN 0-87471-443-5.

Buchanan, Alice (June 1932). "The Irish Framework of Gawain and the Green Knight" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/457878). *PMLA*. **47** (2): 315–338. doi:10.2307/457878 (https://doi.org/10.2307%2F457878). JSTOR 457878 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/457878). Retrieved February 27, 2022.

Burrow, J. A. (2001). *The Gawain-Poet* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Gawain_poet/o0ZvDwAAQBAJ?hl=en). Tavistock, DN: Northcote House. ISBN 0-7463-0878-7.

Friedman, Albert B. (April 1960). "Morgan le Fay in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/2851343). *Speculum*. **35** (2): 260–274. doi:10.2307/2851343 (https://doi.org/10.2307%2F2851343). JSTOR 2851343 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/2851343). S2CID 161599373 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:162199973). Retrieved March 21, 2022.

Hill, Ordelle G. (2009). *Looking Westward: Poetry, Landscape, and Politics in* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Looking_Westward/-AJ7R56O0_wC?hl=en). Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press. ISBN 978-87413-049-2.

Janes, Regina (2005). *Losing Our Heads: Beheadings in Literature and Culture* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Losing_Our_Heads/okYTCgAAQBAJ?hl=en). New York, NY and London, LO: New York University Press. ISBN 978-0-8147-4269-3.

Loomis, Roger Sherman (1997). *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/ZCmvBAAAQBAJ?hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjGIt3qP3TAhVUgnIEHaSXDbYQ8fIDegQIEAK). Chicago, IL: Academy Chicago Publishers. ISBN 0-89733-436-1.

Martin, B. K. (June 1992). "The Medieval Irish stories about Bricriu's Feast and Mac Datho's Pig" (https://muse.jhu.edu/article/494875/summary). *Parergon*. **10** (1): 71–93. doi:10.1353/pgn.1992.0041 (https://doi.org/10.1353%2Fpgn.1992.0041). S2CID 144234371 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:144234371). Retrieved February 27, 2022.

Martin, Carl Grey (2009). "The Cipher of Chivalry: Violence as Courtly Play in the World of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/25642113). *The Chaucer Review*. **43** (3): 311–325. JSTOR 25642113 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/25642113).

O'Neill, Barry (1991). "The Strategy of Challenges: Two Beheading Games in Mediaeval Literature". In Selten, Reinhard (ed.). *Game Equilibrium Models IV: Social and Political Interaction* (https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-662-07369-8). New York, NY and Tokyo, JP: Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg. pp. 124–149. doi:10.1007/978-3-662-07369-8 (https://doi.org/10.1007%2F978-3-662-07369-8). ISBN 978-3-662-07369-8.

Pugh, Tison (2002). "Gawain and the Godgames" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/44313147). *Christianity and Literature*. **51** (4): 525–551. doi:10.1177/014833102051004020 (https://doi.org/10.1177%2F014833102051004020). JSTOR 44313147 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/44313147).

Sadowski, Piotr (1996). *The Knight on His Quest: Symbolic Patterns of Transition in* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Knight_on_His_Quest/6LhaAAAAMAAJ?hl=en). Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press. ISBN 0-87413-580-X.

Sanders, Arnold (Spring 2006). "Sir Gareth and the 'Unfair Unknown': Malory's Use of the Gawain Romances" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/27870731). *Arthuriana*. **16** (1): 34–46. doi:10.1353/art.2006.0054 (https://doi.org/10.1353%2Fart.2006.0054). JSTOR 27870731 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/27870731). S2CID 161683736 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:161683736).

Sato, Yoko (October 2019). "Yeatsian Heroes and Laughter" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/26843133). *Journal of Irish Studies*. **34**: 42–52. JSTOR 26843133 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/26843133). Retrieved March 21, 2022.

Scala, Elizabeth (2002). *Absent Narratives, Manuscript Textuality, and Literary Structure in Late Medieval England* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Absent_Narratives_Manuscript_Textuality/ClUHDAAAQBAJ?hl=en). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 0-312-24043-0.

Sigurðsson, Gísli (1988). *Gaelic Influence in Iceland: Historical and Literary Contacts* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Gaelic_Influence_in_Iceland/EK96QgAACAAJ?hl=en). Reykjavík, IS: Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs. ISBN 978-9-979-54434-0.

Sprouse, Sarah J. (2016). "Two Sets of two Hunters: The Illusion of *Gomen* in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" (https://muse.jhu.edu/article/628023). *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*. **47**: 165–188. doi:10.1353/cjm.2016.0045 (https://doi.org/10.1353%2Fcjm.2016.0045). Retrieved March 21, 2022.

Stevens, Martin (January 1972). "Laughter and Game in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/2851217). *Speculum*. **47** (1): 65–78. doi:10.2307/2851217 (https://doi.org/10.2307%2F2851217). JSTOR 2851217 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/2851217). S2CID 162497580 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:162497580). Retrieved March 21, 2022.

Sveinsson, Einar Ól (1957). "Celtic Elements in Icelandic Tradition" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/20521244). *Béaloideas*. **25**: 3–24. doi:10.2307/20521244 (https://doi.org/10.2307%2F20521244). JSTOR 20521244 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/20521244). Retrieved March 21, 2022.

Thompson, Raymond H. (1976). "'Muse on þi Mirrour ...': The Challenge of the Outlandish Stranger in the English Arthurian Verse Romances" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/e1260031). *Folklore*. **87** (2): 201–208. doi:10.1080/0015587X.1976.9716035 (https://doi.org/10.1080%2F0015587X.1976.9716035). JSTOR 1260031 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/1260031).

Tracy, Larissa (2012). "'So he smote of hir hede by myssefortune': The Real Price of the Beheading Game in *SGGK* and Malory". In Tracy, Larissa; Massey, Jeff (eds.). ***Heads Will Roll: Decapitation in the Medieval and Early Modern Imagination*** (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Heads_Will_Roll/9qZ04fwmbt0C?hl=en). Leiden, NL: Brill. pp. 207–231. ISBN 978-90-04-2115-51.

Weiss, Victoria L. (1976). "Gawain's First Failure: The Beheading Scene in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/25093365). *The Chaucer Review*. **10** (4): 361–366. JSTOR 25093365 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/25093365). Retrieved February 27, 2022.

Wrigley, Christopher (1996). *Kingship and state: The Buganda dynasty* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Kingship_and_State/nWKAFW9oVJcC?hl=en&gbpv=0). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-47370-5. Retrieved January 26, 2022.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Beheading_game&oldid=1083872485"

This page was last edited on 21 April 2022, at 07:16 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License 3.0; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.