

*THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE*  
AND THE ENGLISH POEMS OF  
OXFORD, JESUS COLLEGE, MS 29 (II)

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## ABBREVIATIONS LIST

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ANTS	Anglo-Norman Text Society
Atkins	Atkins, ed. and trans., <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>
BL	British Library
BodL	Bodleian Library
Borgström	Borgström, ed., <i>The Proverbs of Alfred</i>
Brown	Brown, ed., <i>English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century</i>
C	London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix
Cartlidge-Composition	Cartlidge, “The Composition and Social Context”
Cartlidge-Owl	Cartlidge, ed. and trans., <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>
CHMS	Fein, ed. and trans., with Raybin and Ziolkowski, <i>The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript</i> , 3 vols.
CT	Chaucer, <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> , ed. Benson
Dean	Dean, with Boulton, <i>Anglo-Norman Literature</i>
Dickins	Dickins, ed., <i>The Conflict of Wit and Will</i>
Dickins-Wilson	Dickins and Wilson, eds., <i>Early Middle English Texts</i>
DIMEV	<i>Digital Edition of the Index of Middle English Verse</i> , ed. Mooney et al.
Dunn-Byrnes	Dunn and Byrnes, eds., <i>Middle English Literature</i>
EETS	Early English Text Society
Fein-Children	Fein, “All Adam’s Children”
Fein-MLSL	Fein, ed., <i>Moral Love Songs and Laments</i>
FRETS	French of England Translation Series

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THE ENGLISH POEMS OF OXFORD, JESUS COLLEGE, MS 29 (II)

Grattan-Sykes	Grattan and Sykes, eds., <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>
Hall	Hall, ed., <i>Selections from Early Middle English</i> , 2 vols.
Hill-Addenda	Hill, "Oxford, Jesus College MS. 29: Addenda"
Hill-History	Hill, "The History of Jesus College, Oxford MS 29"
Hill-Part2	Hill, "Oxford, Jesus College MS 29, Part II"
Kaiser	Kaiser, ed., <i>Medieval English</i>
Kluge	Kluge, ed., <i>Mittelenglisches Lesebuch</i>
ME	Middle English
MED	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i> , ed. McSparran et al.
Millett	Millett, trans., <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>
Morris	Morris, ed., <i>An Old English Miscellany</i>
Morris-Specimens	Morris, ed., <i>Specimens of Early English</i>
MS	Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 (II) [base manuscript]
MWME	Severs et al., eds., <i>A Manual of the Writings in Middle English</i> , 11 vols.
NIMEV	<i>A New Index of Middle English Verse</i> , ed. Boffey and Edwards
OE	Old English
OF	Old French
Oliver	Oliver, <i>Poems Without Names</i>
Patterson	Patterson, ed., <i>The Middle English Penitential Lyric</i>
Reichl	Reichl, ed., <i>Religiöse Dichtung im englischen hochmittelalter</i>
Saupe	Saupe, ed., <i>Middle English Marian Lyrics</i>
Silverstein	Silverstein, ed., <i>English Lyrics Before 1500</i>
Skeat	Skeat, ed., <i>The Proverbs of Alfred</i>
Stanley	Stanley, ed., <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>

## ABBREVIATIONS LIST

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Treharne	Treharne, ed., <i>Old and Middle English</i>
TCC	Trinity College Cambridge
VLT	Wogan-Browne et al., eds. and trans., <i>Vernacular Literary Theory</i>
Wells	Wells, ed., <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>
Whiting	Whiting and Whiting, <i>Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases</i>
Woolf	Woolf, <i>The English Religious Lyric</i>
Wright	Wright, ed., <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>
Wright-Halliwell	Wright and Halliwell, eds., <i>Reliquiæ Antiquæ</i>
Zupitza	Zupitza et al., eds., <i>Alt- und mittelenglisches Übungsbuch</i>



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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Historian Jill Lepore ruminates on the random contingencies that permit some traces of the past to survive, others to disintegrate and vanish:

Most of what once existed is gone. Flesh decays, wood rots, walls fall, books burn. Nature takes one toll, malice another. History is the study of what remains, what's left behind, which can be almost anything, so long as it survives the ravages of time and war: letters, diaries, DNA, gravestones, coins, television broadcasts, paintings, DVDs, viruses, abandoned Facebook pages, the transcripts of congressional hearings, the ruins of buildings. Some of these things are saved by chance or accident, like the one house that, as if by miracle, still stands after a hurricane razes a town. But most of what historians study survives because it was purposely kept — placed in a box and carried up to an attic, shelved in a library, stored in a museum, photographed or recorded, downloaded to a server — carefully preserved and even catalogued. All of it, together, the accidental and the intentional, this archive of the past — remains, relics, a repository of knowledge, the evidence of what came before, this inheritance — is called the historical record, and it is maddeningly uneven, asymmetrical, and unfair.<sup>1</sup>

The subject of Lepore's book is American history, which she brilliantly recalibrates by telling the familiar story of the political founding of the United States beside the deeply troubling co-narrative of the slave trade, of how "liberty and slavery became the American Abel and Cain."<sup>2</sup>

My subject here is less sweeping, but it is likewise about a space being preserved wherein people from the past may reveal to us their fears and desires — may sing in verse of passions and pieties, of aspirations and fervently held beliefs — only because a singular document has fortuitously survived. Inscribed some seven hundred and fifty years ago (that is, two centuries before Columbus sailed), Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 (II) can tell us nothing of the still-unknown Americas and their indigenous peoples, themselves innocent of ships yet to sail from Europe and Africa. Instead, what this compact book from the thirteenth-century West Midlands records are enigmatic facts about vernacular English poetry as it circulated in the same dialectal region that had spawned, a half-century before, the landmarks of early Middle English prose *Ancrene Wisse* and the *Katherine Group*.<sup>3</sup> Most of all, the Jesus manuscript brings into focus an English cultural context — a thirteenth-century trilingual nexus of authors and readers — for the dazzling *Owl and the Nightingale*, the earliest instance of large-scale English secular literature not shaped as a warrior epic (as *Beowulf* and *Brut* are), but instead as a comic debate infused with an encyclopedia of insights on human nature.

The Jesus manuscript has survived merely by dint of a series of fortunate accidents. In the early sixteenth century the book was apparently retrieved from the library of a dissolved monastery by someone who saw in it a text or two of interest (not likely the poems we now value most). It was the same person,

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<sup>1</sup> Lepore, *These Truths*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Lepore, *These Truths*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*.

probably, who bound it as an add-on with another volume — a Latin chronicle — seen as having surer value. Clothed in this new suit, it managed to pass for generations, ever at risk of loss, through a network of families related by marriage. By the late seventeenth century, this precarious trek brought it and its chronicle-partner, at last, to a spot of relative security in the library of Jesus College in Oxford, where it rests today.

### THE ENGLISH CONTENTS OF MS JESUS 29

Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 is a composite manuscript holding two codices that were originally separate and utterly unrelated: a fifteenth-century Latin chronicle of English history (Part I) and a late-thirteenth-century anthology of verse in French and English (Part II). The two are now bound together and have been so joined since at least the end of the seventeenth century, and probably much earlier. They were contained in one volume when the Rev. Thomas Wilkins, a Jesus College alumnus, donated the book to the college on January 9, 1693 CE, describing the donation as “An Antient Cronicle ab Anno 900 usque ad Annum 1444 [from the year 900 to the year 1444]. Latine, & a Saxon-Manuscript bound with it.”<sup>4</sup> Part II, the trilingual portion of interest here, is what Wilkins termed the “Saxon-Manuscript bound with it.”

By careful study of physical clues and historical records, Betty Hill, the chief scholar of the manuscript’s history, surmises that the likeliest point of origin for the pairing occurred shortly after both books were retrieved from libraries of unknown religious houses in the aftermath of England’s Dissolution, when monastic property was seized, dispersed, and frequently destroyed. The two books seem to have piqued a well-read person’s interest in law and history, especially as related to England. For Part I, a chronicle, such value is inherent. For Part II, it is less obviously so, but this much older volume holds a brief English text on *The Shires and Hundreds of England* (ca. 1086–1133) and a Latin statute on the pricing of bread (ca. 1256). Both works lend Part II a legal-historical interest that someone valuing a chronicle of England might have noted with pleasure. The owner who bound them together probably had scant interest in Part II’s literary character — its anthology of English verse and set of French poems by Chardri — but the happenstance of a literary volume being attached to a Latin chronicle paved that book’s path to survival.<sup>5</sup>

Hereafter, my references to “Jesus 29” or the “Jesus manuscript” will denote Part II (fols. 144–257), a manuscript that, before the post-medieval joint-binding process, was (and remains) entirely distinct from Part I (fols. 1–143). The 114 parchment leaves of Jesus 29 measure 185 mm x 140 mm as cropped for the rebinding that Wilkins gave it in the seventeenth century. A full collation reveals ten quires of twelve with some losses. The first half of Jesus 29 is filled with an extraordinarily sustained sequence of nearly all English verse (quires i–v; fols. 144–201). In 108 pages of concentrated English, the losses amount to just two missing folios — a conjugate bifolia in the fourth quire. The following chart outlines the works appearing in the English-content quires, with the two points of loss in quire iv indicated:

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<sup>4</sup> Hill-Addenda, p. 99. My discussion of the history of Jesus 29 is much informed by Hill’s research spanning forty years. See also Hill-History and Hill-Part2.

<sup>5</sup> Hill-History, pp. 208, 212–13; see also Hill-Part2, p. 275.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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quire i <sup>12</sup>	(fols. 144–55)	art. 1	<i>The Passion of Jesus Christ in English</i>
quire ii <sup>12</sup>	(fols. 156–67)	art. 2	<i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i> (lines 1–1670)
quire iii <sup>12</sup>	(fols. 168–79)	art. 2	<i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i> (lines 1671–1794)
		art. 3	<i>Poema Morale</i>
		art. 4	<i>The Saws of Saint Bede</i>
		art. 5	<i>The Woman of Samaria</i>
		art. 6	<i>Weal</i>
		art. 7	<i>Death's Wither-Clench</i> (lines 1–12)
quire iv <sup>12</sup> (-2, -11)	(fols. 180–89)	art. 7	<i>Death's Wither-Clench</i> (lines 13–50)
		art. 8	<i>An Orison to Our Lady</i> (lacks ending) <sup>6</sup>
		art. 10	<i>The Annunciation</i> (lacks opening)
		art. 11	<i>The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary</i>
		art. 12	<i>When Holy Church Is Under Foot</i>
		art. 13	<i>Doomsday</i>
		art. 14	<i>Death</i>
		art. 15	<i>Ten Abuses</i>
		art. 16	<i>A Little Sooth Sermon</i>
		art. 17	<i>Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr in English</i>
		art. 18	<i>On Serving Christ</i>
		art. 19	Thomas of Hales, <i>Love Rune</i>
		art. 20	<i>Song of the Annunciation</i> (lacks ending)
		art. 21	<i>Fire and Ice</i> (last 5 lines; lacks opening)
		art. 22	<i>Signs of Death</i>
		art. 23	<i>Three Sorrowful Tidings</i>
		art. 24	<i>The Proverbs of Alfred</i> (lines 1–79)
quire v <sup>12</sup>	(fols. 190–200)	art. 24	<i>The Proverbs of Alfred</i> (lines 80–318)
		art. 25	<i>An Orison to Our Lord</i>
		art. 26	<i>A Homily on Sooth Love</i>
		art. 27	<i>The Shires and Hundreds of England</i>
		[Latin]	<i>Assisa panis Anglie</i>
		[French]	<i>The Four Daughters of God</i>
		art. 28	<i>The Eleven Pains of Hell</i>

<sup>6</sup> *Will and Wit* (art. 9), probably copied on the leaf missing after fol. 180, is supplied in this edition from London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix.

In the English first half, linguistic interruptions occur only near the end of the long sequence: the brief *Assisa panis Anglie* (*Assize of English Bread*) followed by *The Four Daughters of God*, a French verse extract copied on five pages. These two non-English works appear before the long English finale to the sequence: *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28). The second half of Jesus 29 (fols. 201–57) is entirely in Anglo-French: *Le Doctrinal Sauvage*, a poem on courtly manners, followed by three long works, the entire known oeuvre of a poet named Chardri (“Richard” in anagram).<sup>7</sup>

### MS JESUS 29: A HISTORY OF OWNERSHIP, CA. 1540–1693

Clues allow us to construct a plausible narrative of Jesus 29’s sequence of owners from the onset of the Dissolution until Rev. Wilkins’s gifting of it to Jesus College, that is, from about 1540 until 1693. The first known owner of both parts of Jesus 29 was Thomas Ragland, a gentleman who wrote his name in the book sometime before the year 1547.<sup>8</sup> Thomas was the eldest son of Sir John Ragland of Carnlwdd in Llancarven, Glamorganshire. His mother was Anne Dennis, Sir John’s second wife; they were married in 1521. In 1537, after Sir John had died, Anne Ragland née Dennis married Sir Edward Carne of Ewenny, Glamorganshire. A likely scenario for the chain of ownership in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — that is, the interval after removal from a monastic library and donation to Jesus College Oxford — is that Carne gifted the joined manuscripts to his stepson Thomas Ragland, from whom the volume continued to descend across generations, via family and marriage, until it came into the hands of Wilkins, the donor.

The chain likely begins with Sir Edward Carne because he “acted as Commissioner for the dissolution of certain monastic houses in Gloucestershire and in Bristol, then part of Somerset.”<sup>9</sup> Carne provided distinguished service to the crown during the reign of Henry VIII, as Hill details:

The Commissioners started with St. Swithun’s, Winchester in November 1539. From there they proceeded to St. Mary’s, Winchester, Wherwell, Christ Church, Twynham, Amesbury, St. Augustine’s Abbey and Gaunt’s Hospital, Bristol, Malmesbury, Cirencester, Hales, Winchcombe, St. Peter’s, Gloucester and finally, in January 1540, to Tewkesbury.<sup>10</sup>

Hill postulates that Carne, with his “outstanding legal and diplomatic qualifications,” would have valued the historical interests contained in both books, and possessed sufficient bibliophilic care to have wanted them bound together.<sup>11</sup>

Carne died in 1561, but the book was in his stepson’s possession before then. It later passed from Thomas Ragland back to the direct Carne lineage, probably to his younger half-sibling Thomas Carne (d. 1602). James Carne, a cousin of Thomas Carne, enters his name in a sixteenth-century hand on fol. 47r: “thys ys lhames carne ys hand record of ma[yster] thomas carne and.”<sup>12</sup> There are various ways by which the book might have changed owners over the next century, fostered by “the complex relationships between

<sup>7</sup> Chardri, *The Works*, trans. Cartlidge.

<sup>8</sup> The inscriptions on fol. 143b read: “thys ys thomas ragland / ys boke he that ste[lath] hym salbe / hangyd by a crowke and thomas,” and “god saue the kynge and the quyne and thomas”; the latter dates the writing before the end of Henry VIII’s reign (1509–1547). See Hill-History, p. 209.

<sup>9</sup> Hill-History, p. 212.

<sup>10</sup> Hill-History, p. 212.

<sup>11</sup> Hill-History, p. 213. See also Hill-Addenda, p. 99. Reading the evidence differently, N. R. Ker proposes that it was Wilkins who bound the books together (Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. xx).

<sup>12</sup> Hill-History, p. 210 (transcribed with the aid of N. R. Ker).

the families of Ragland, Carne of Ewenny, Carne of Nash, Lewis of Llanishen, and Wilkins of Llanquian.”<sup>13</sup> Here is one of Hill’s most plausible accounts:

Thomas Ragland, who was living at Ewenny in 1546–7, . . . eventually married Anne Woodhouse of Norfolk and, after 1566, sold his Glamorganshire estates. By, or at, this time the MS passed to his half-brother Thomas Carne of Ewenny, whose cousin James wrote in it. The MS was later handed down from Thomas’ son Sir John Carne of Ewenny to John’s daughter Elinor who married William Thomas of Llanvihangel, to their daughter Jane Thomas who married William Carne of Nash, and to their son Thomas Carne of Nash whose daughter Jane married the Rev. Thomas Wilkins.<sup>14</sup>

By this series of events and genealogical relationships, or a some variation of it, Wilkins “acquired from generations of Carnes one volume containing both parts.”<sup>15</sup>

It would be good to know the precise religious house from which Sir Edward Carne rescued Jesus 29. His wife Anne (Thomas Ragland’s mother) was a Berkeley on her mother’s side, and the lords Berkeley were longstanding patrons of St. Augustine’s Abbey, Gloucestershire, where many family members had been buried. Hill notes that the Berkeleys acquired the cartulary of that abbey — one of the religious houses included in Sir Edward’s commission. In Hill’s final statement on the matter, she asserts that St. Augustine’s Abbey is “where I think Carne picked up at least part II of the manuscript.”<sup>16</sup> There is no way to prove this hypothesis, though much respect is due to Hill’s decades of devotion to the study of Jesus 29. Unfortunately, she mentions no findings that directly connect St. Augustine’s Abbey with Jesus. The clues we do have point more directly toward Herefordshire (Ledbury and Hereford), to judge by scribal dialect; toward Halesowen (Worcestershire) and its daughter-house Titchfield Abbey (Hampshire), to judge by contents; and toward Amesbury (Wiltshire), to judge by certain aristocratic affiliations. The curious clues that have led scholars to Titchfield arise from an excavation of Jesus 29’s most important exemplar: the extraordinary lost MS X.

#### MS X: EXEMPLAR FOR MS JESUS 29 AND MS COTTON CALIGULA A.IX

The story of *The Owl and the Nightingale*’s presence in Jesus 29 begins with a now-vanished yet discernible exemplar known as MS X. This volume, a “stable binding-together of a number of different texts — in other words, a book . . . carefully arranged and displayed,” written by at least four hands, served as the model for Jesus 29 in many of its particulars.<sup>17</sup> The items found in two other manuscripts overlap with those of Jesus 29 to such a marked degree of replication that one can see the lineaments of a lost ancestor in them all. These others are London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, and Rome, Vatican Library, MS Reg. lat. 1659. We can deduce many features of MS X by examining the texts, layout, and letter-forms found in Jesus 29 alongside these volumes, especially Cotton, the sister manuscript of Jesus. The Vatican manuscript holds just one Chardi poem, *The Little Debate*, and is a minor witness in the matter. Cotton holds *Owl* and seven additional English items (arts. 2, 7–9, 13–16, in that order), as well as the three French Chardri poems. It

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<sup>13</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 276.

<sup>14</sup> Hill-History, p. 211.

<sup>15</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 276.

<sup>16</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 275, specifying that Anne Dennis was the “daughter of Sir William Dennis of Dyrham, Gloucestershire and of Lady Anne, sixth daughter of Maurice, the fifth Lord Berkeley.”

<sup>17</sup> Cartlidge, “Imagining X,” p. 33.

is distinctive, too, for its preservation of Layamon's *Brut*; it holds one of only two surviving copies of that long work. The exceptionally close resemblance of Cotton to Jesus has led their corresponding texts to be termed the "CJ-group."<sup>18</sup>

The points of agreement, especially those between Cotton and Jesus, allow for a hypothetical reconstruction of MS X, firmly defined in broad outline but tentative as to the full scope of contents, particularly when it comes to poems found in Jesus but not Cotton. The task of recreating the shape of X from the physical evidence has been nimbly performed by *Owl* scholar Neil Cartlidge. According to Cartlidge, the Cotton sequence of English verse is likely to be an abridged selection of what X held. In contrast, the Jesus scribe probably copied all that he found in X *ad seriatim*. Cartlidge draws this conclusion by observing that some short poems such as *Weal* (art. 6) were probably fillers in X, but in Jesus they are not obviously copied as such, suggesting that the Jesus scribe placed them seamlessly into his flow of texts, one after the next, erasing signs of their earlier filler status.<sup>19</sup> Cartlidge postulates that wherever Cotton lacks internal blocks of texts compared to Jesus — that is, arts. 3–6, 10–12 — those blocks were present in MS X. The end conclusion is that MS X contained the entire long string of texts from *Owl* to *A Little Sooth Sermon* as it appears in Jesus (arts. 2–16). This reasoning leads to a startling appraisal of the lost MS X, envisioning it as an older, purposefully constructed anthology of English verse that was almost as long and ambitious as what we now have in Jesus 29. That is, it was a well-ordered sequence with *Owl* at or near its head, establishing a remarkably early set of English verse that invited and received canonical treatment by subsequent copyists and readers.

We can guess at the shape of MS X in somewhat more detail by considering another source of vital evidence. This one is not a manuscript but rather a book catalogue compiled in 1400 as a record of the holdings of the library at the Premonstratensian abbey of Titchfield in Hampshire.<sup>20</sup> The catalogue lists five volumes that, when taken together, correspond in tantalizing detail to the contents of Cotton and (especially) Jesus, *viz*:

MS C.II

item 7: "Hystoria britoneum" (= Layamon's *Brut* found in Cotton, perhaps)<sup>21</sup>

item 8: "De conflictu inter philomenam et bubonem in anglicis" (= *Owl* found in CJ)<sup>22</sup>

MS M.XI

item 8: "Liber tobie uersificatus" (= *The Four Daughters of God* found in Jesus)<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Cartlidge, "Imagining X," p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> The matter of which lyrics might be short fillers in Jesus 29 is not clear-cut, however, because while MS X was likely ruled in columns throughout (as is Cotton), the long-line lyric matter in Jesus is written on pages without columns. The use of no columns for long-line verse is a planned program attributable to the Jesus scribe. See Fein, "Designing English," p. 49; and Scahill, "The Friar," p. 8n14.

<sup>20</sup> On the Titchfield Library catalogue, see Wilson, "The Medieval Library of Titchfield Abbey (Part I)," pp. 152, 159n16; and Wilson, "The Medieval Library of Titchfield Abbey (Part II)," pp. 255, 259. On its correspondences to Cotton, Jesus, and the lost MS X, see Hill-Addenda, pp. 102–03; Cartlidge-Composition, p. 251; Hill-Part2, pp. 271–72; and Cartlidge, "Imagining X," p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> In Cotton, the rubric is "Incipit hystoria bruttonum." Alternatively, this item could have been Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*; see Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. ix.

<sup>22</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is "Incipit altercacio inter filomenam et bubonem"; there is no rubric in Cotton.

<sup>23</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is "Ici comence de Tobie." The text is an extract from *Tobie*. See note 92, below.

MS N.III

- item 11: “De comitatibus quot sunt in anglia et quibus subiacet diocesibus”
- item 12: “De longitudine et latitudine anglie” (= *Shires* found in Jesus, perhaps)<sup>24</sup>

MS Q.III<sup>25</sup>

- item 2: “Vita septem dormientum” (= Chardri’s *Life of the Seven Sleepers* found in CJ)<sup>26</sup>
- item 5: “Passio christi” (= *Passion* found in Jesus, perhaps)<sup>27</sup>
- item 6: “Predicacio sancti pauli” (= *Eleven Pains* found in Jesus, perhaps)<sup>28</sup>
- item 11: “Vita sancti thome martiris” (= *Antiphon* found in Jesus, perhaps)<sup>29</sup>
- item 12: “Vita sancti iosaphat” (= Chardri’s *Life of Saint Josaphaz* found in CJ)<sup>30</sup>
- item 14: “Altercacio inter iuuentutem et senectutem” (= Chardri’s *Little Debate* found in CJ)<sup>31</sup>

MS Q.XI

- item 16: “De die iudicij in anglicis” (= *Doomsday* found in CJ)<sup>32</sup>

Of these five books, the miscellaneous content of MS Q.III attracts keen interest because it offers circumstantial evidence regarding the nature of MS X. According to Cartlidge, “we can perhaps assume that where J and Q.III seem to have contained other texts in common . . . these texts were also once present in X.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, set beside the evidence of Cotton and Jesus, the lost MS Q.III seems to testify further that the literary anthology of MS X became a force for distributing English poetry and Chardri’s French works to an ever-widening audience of readers. It seems, then, hardly a coincidence that *The Owl and the Nightingale* — verifiably present in MS X, from which the Cotton and Jesus scribes extracted it — sat in another volume in the same library. In MS C.II, *Owl* is the work that follows a history of Britain, which might have been a lost copy of Layamon’s *Brut*. A factual pairing of *Brut* with *Owl* survives in Cotton.<sup>34</sup>

## THE SCRIBE OF MS JESUS 29

Jesus 29 is the product of a single scribe who took it upon himself to fashion the layout of the poetry according to its line length (short-line in double columns, long-line in single columns) and metrics, providing, for

<sup>24</sup> Items 11 and 12 of Titchfield Abbey, MS N.III seem to be the two parts of *Shires* in reverse order. In Jesus, the rubric is “Her bigynneþ þe Syren and þe hundredes of engelonde.”

<sup>25</sup> Titchfield Abbey, MS Q.III also held “Salutationes beate marie,” which could denote one of the Marian poems found in Jesus (arts. 8, 10, 11). In addition, it held “Pene Saluatoris” and “Tractatus de yconomia,” which, according to Cartlidge, might denote Jesus 29’s *An Orison to Our Lord* (art. 25) and the French *Doctrinal Sauvage* (“Imagining X,” pp. 42–43n31,32).

<sup>26</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is “Ici comence la vie de Set Dormaunz”; in Cotton, it is “Ici comence la vie de Set Domanz.”

<sup>27</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is “Ici cumence la passyun ihesu christ en engleys.”

<sup>28</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is “Ici comencent les vnze peynes de enfern les queus synt pool vi[st].”

<sup>29</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is “Incipit Antiphona de sancto Thome Martyre in Anglico.”

<sup>30</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is “Ici comence la vie Seynt Iosaphat”; in Cotton, it is “Ici comence la vie de Seint Iosaphaz.”

<sup>31</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is “Ici comence le petyt ple entre le Iuuenel e le Veylard”; in Cotton, it is “Ici Comence le petit plet.”

<sup>32</sup> In Jesus, the rubric is “Incipit de die iudicii”; there is no rubric in Cotton.

<sup>33</sup> Cartlidge, “Imagining X,” p. 40, who adds that Q.III “must have been a descendant (or possibly ancestor) of X.”

<sup>34</sup> On the contents of Cotton, see Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. xi.

example, an innovative, avant garde layout for the unusual tail-rhyme stanzas of *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4).<sup>35</sup> He created a beautiful book with colored initials and red titles. The rubrics heading most English poems provide a Latin title, or a Latin transition like “Tractatus quidam” (Another treatise), but several items have no rubric, while the two that frame the collection are in French (*Passion, Eleven Pains*) and four others are in English (*Five Joys, Holy Church, Antiphon, Shires*). Three headings proclaim a work’s Englishness: “en Engleys” (*Passion*) or “in anglico” (*Poema Morale, Antiphon*). The scribe took special care in how he applied color, marking stanza initials in alternating red and blue and forming large, bicolored ornamental initials to betoken the openings of substantial texts (*Passion, Owl, and Poema Morale*, for example). Because the scribe wrote above the top line, which was not the professional manner in the thirteenth century, N. R. Ker names him a skilled amateur and characterizes his bookhand script as “admirably plain and simple, and, when possible, spacious.”<sup>36</sup> Because the book “is presentable and easy to consult,” John Scahill suggests that “the compiler intended it to be used and possessed at least partly by others.”<sup>37</sup>

How *did* the scribe of Jesus 29 come to create an anthology of English verse? His anthology is the most abundant, most persistently English assemblage of imaginative short poems to turn up in the period between the tenth-century Old English Exeter Book and the mid-fourteenth-century Harley 2253 manuscript.<sup>38</sup> Testimony from the Titchfield Abbey catalogue, and, in particular, the contents of MS Q.III, widens considerably the scope of what the scribe might have found in the MS X anthology when it rested on a table before his eyes and open inkpot. From it, he obtained *The Owl and the Nightingale*, *Chardri*, and more. He must have taken from it arts. 7–9, 13–16 (as found in Cotton), with a good chance that the entire sequence, arts. 2–16 (*Owl to A Little Sooth Sermon*), came from MS X.

What else might he have obtained from this source? Did he find there the opening work to his own anthology, *The Passion of Jesus Christ in English*? This could be the item listed as “Passio christi” in MS Q.III. Did he find there the conclusion to his English anthology, *The Eleven Pains of Hell*? This could be identical to the “Predicacio sancti pauli” in MS Q.III. The question of what the MS X anthology had in it, and in what order, takes us to the heart of assessing the Jesus scribe’s originality and purpose for making the anthology so crucially preserved in Jesus 29. Knowing that the scribe closely adhered to a model for some of it obstructs an evaluation of his activity. What did he receive ready-made? What did he add? Did the Jesus

<sup>35</sup> Fein, “Designing English”; and Wakelin, *Designing English*, p. 136. The Cotton manuscript is laid out in double columns throughout, as was apparently MS X. Cotton is the product of four scribes, but just one for the English verse. At least four hands were involved in the making of MS X, with two copying *Owl* (Cartlidge, “Imagining X,” pp. 42–43). On punctuation and letter-forms in Jesus compared to Cotton, see Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, pp. xvi–xviii.

<sup>36</sup> Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. xvi. See also Hill-History, p. 204; and Hill-Part2, p. 273n34 (“not essentially different from a twelfth-century hand”). The Jesus scribe’s handwriting is reproduced in Ker’s facsimile edition of *Owl*, where it may be compared to the Cotton’s scribe’s quite different gothic style.

<sup>37</sup> Scahill, “The Friar,” p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> The Exeter Book (tenth century) is Exeter, Exeter Cathedral Library, MS 3501 (Williamson, trans., *The Complete Old English Poems*, pp. 299–595). London, BL, MS Harley 2253 (ca. 1340) is edited in *CHMS*. For a discussion of Jesus 29 and the other early Middle English trilingual miscellanies, see Hunt, “Insular Trilingual Compilations”; Frankis, “The Social Context”; and Scahill, “Trilingualism.” Also notable are the two virtually all-English miscellanies: Auchinleck (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 19.2.1) (ca. 1330), mainly romances, with some saints’ lives and lyrics; and Oxford, BodL, MS Laud misc. 108 (ca. 1280), mainly saints’ lives, with two romances and a few lyrics. See Fein, ed., *The Auchinleck Manuscript*; and Bell and Couch, eds., *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108*.

scribe make something new (an expansive anthology), or was he mainly an unimaginative copyist? Does credit for the sequence belong to the maker of MS X, or even a predecessor of X?

At this point of speculation, it becomes necessary to move away from what cannot be known of the scribe's agency in selection and arrangement, and turn instead to the nature and qualities of Jesus 29, the manuscript that actually survives. The English sequence found in Jesus may well have been borrowed from more than one exemplar, with MS X's copies of *Owl* and *Chardri* becoming key determinants in its formation. Opening with a long, sometimes homiletic, scriptural paraphrase of Christ's Passion and closing with hell's pains represents a preacherly penchant for linking the torture of Christ to the eschatological punishment of unrepentant sinners. In this manner, the Jesus scribe's exercise in English bookmaking conveys an overarching moral frame for an English-speaking reader. It structures the Jesus sequence in ways that can be felt, observed, and sensed as alive with meaning, compared to the purely generic titles in Q.III — Latin names that may only wishfully be determined to denote the *same* texts, in *English*, as are found in Jesus. Nor does the discovery of these works in Q.III lead to more than a hope that they were ever in MS X.<sup>39</sup> Such hints are fascinating and suggestive, but they do not supply us with facts.

The weight of the evidence bends toward seeing the Jesus scribe as having made some insertions and structural shapings on his own. A "canon" of imaginative and moral verse, as it must have existed in MS X — *Owl*, *Chardri*, and perhaps *Poema Morale* — was vigorously augmented by the addition, in Jesus, of the ancient *Proverbs of Alfred* and the incandescent *Love Rune* by Thomas of Hales, a delicately crafted lyric on Christ as mystic Lover. No sign exists that either MS X or the Titchfield Abbey library held these works. Moreover, the Jesus scribe may have made purposeful choices of omission as well as of selection. While *Brut* sometimes accompanies *Owl*, as happens in Cotton and perhaps C.II, the Jesus scribe did not repeat this pairing. Cartlidge's reconstruction of MS X shows us not just what MS X possibly held; it also indicates how more than that exists in Jesus 29 — namely, arts. 17–26 — most of them unique in the surviving record. Interestingly, here is where more secular strains tend to be added, as are dominant in *Owl*, and also a softened theme of God's love rather than divine vengeance. Here is also where poems in the distinctive "Love Rune meter" predominate.<sup>40</sup> It thus seems likelier than not that the Jesus scribe had more exemplars at his disposal, that is, that the Jesus anthology is not just a copy of the MS X anthology but instead an enlargement of it, set in an original framing structure of Christ's Passion and judgment of sinners.

The first name of the Jesus scribe may be preserved in a signature that ends the final English work, *The Eleven Pains of Hell*:

Hwoso wrot thes pynen ellevene,  
His soule mote cumme te hevene  
And pleye ther myd engles bryhte,  
Ther heo beoth in hevene lyhte;  
And nabbe he never Godes grome,  
For Hug' is his rihte nome,  
And he is curteys and hendy.  
Thi, god him lete wel endy.

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<sup>39</sup> Cartlidge assigns these works a tentative place in his reconstruction ("Imagining X," pp. 42–43).

<sup>40</sup> Fein, "Designing English," p. 57.

Amen.  
(lines 283–91)<sup>41</sup>

The scribe may be the “curteys and hendy” Hugh (or Hugo) named here. Conversely, the one who “wrot thes pynen ellevene” may be the poet, or even a previous scribe. These closing lines are absent from the second version of *Eleven Pains* found in Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86 (ca. 1280). The two versions exhibit wide variation because both scribes assumed the revisionist privileges of literary scribes and freely dabbled in verse alterations. So behind this stanza there are various possibilities: the scribe signs his accomplishment (claiming inscription, or recomposition, or both), or he preserves the original author’s name, or he mechanically reproduces the name of a previous scribe. Given that the effort before a reader’s eye is the scribe’s own handiwork, it is tempting to believe that this little prayer with self-praise comes directly from the Jesus scribe “Hugh,” who thus signs *Pains* in a personal manner.

Another unique closure appears as the last couplet of *Poema Morale*. This work circulated widely and the couplet occurs nowhere else, so it logically belongs to the scribe:

Bidde we nu, leove freond,    yong and ek olde,  
That he that this wryt wrot,    his saule beo ther atholde. Amen.  
(lines 389–90)<sup>42</sup>

Like the ending of *Eleven Pains*, this add-on petitions for the writer’s reward in heaven. On the written page, it also displays a stylistic feature characteristic of the scribe’s visual repertoire. Other poems conclude with a prayer-stanza that opens “Bidde we.” In each instance, the scribe draws the initial *B* in red. In the visual aesthetics of Jesus 29, it is striking how often the red *B* of “Bidde we” catches the eye. Here this feature marks the closing couplet of *Poema Morale*, likely composed by the scribe; it is also present in *Passion* (end of first section), *The Saws of Saint Bede*, *The Annunciation*, and *Fire and Ice*.

Another matter to consider is how the Jesus scribe typically treated his exemplars. With older texts, such as *Proverbs* and *Shires*, he does not copy exactly what he sees, but instead displays a tendency to edit and modernize.<sup>43</sup> Ker notes that, when the Jesus scribe copied *Owl* from MS X, he was prone to “introduce improvements of his own and to leave verses incomplete rather than copy what he could not understand.”<sup>44</sup> Comparing the Jesus scribe to the Cotton scribe, Cartlidge calls him “characteristically more willing to edit (though not always intelligently).”<sup>45</sup> He was, like the Cotton scribe and both X copyists of *Owl*, a native English speaker whose dialect was of the West Midlands. His own speech is localized specifically to the area

<sup>41</sup> “He who wrote these eleven pains, / May his soul come to heaven / And play there with bright angels, / When they’re in heaven’s light; / And may he never have God’s anger, / For Hugh is his true name, / And he is courteous and kind. / For that, may his ending be good. / Amen.” On Hugh, see Hill-Addenda, pp. 101–02n24; and Cartlidge-Composition, p. 258.

<sup>42</sup> “Pray we now, dear friend, young and also old, / That he who wrote this writ, his soul be admitted there. Amen.” On this addition, see Hill-Addenda, pp. 101–02n24.

<sup>43</sup> See especially, in this edition, the Explanatory headnote to *Proverbs*, where the kinds of changes wrought by the scribe are summarized.

<sup>44</sup> Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. xviii. According to Scahill, this “interventionist attitude . . . suggests that the scribe himself was in charge of the operation” (“The Friar,” p. 8).

<sup>45</sup> Cartlidge, “Imagining X,” p. 36. See also Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. xli–xliv.

of Ledbury, Herefordshire, indicating “the area where the scribe learnt to write,” and he “picked up his texts in a similar language area which included parts of the dioceses of Hereford and Worcester.”<sup>46</sup>

The time period that has long been accepted for the making of Jesus 29 is the second half of the thirteenth century. Recent assessments have narrowed the window to 1275–1300.<sup>47</sup> Speculating on the scribe’s profession and shortening the range to 1285–1300, Hill proposes that he operated as a secular clerk in the familia of Richard Swinfield, bishop of Hereford (1283–1317), a prelate known for frequently visiting and lodging at “various Monasteries of different Orders or at one of his manor houses.”<sup>48</sup> In his travels, Swinfield welcomed minstrel entertainments, as did those who hosted him, and expenses in his account books include fees paid to professional musicians and jongleurs.<sup>49</sup> Hill suggests that the scribe or others he knew acquired the different poems in religious houses of various orders as they accompanied the bishop on his diocesan travels. She speculates as to the manner of borrowing and copying:

The exemplars of the contents of MS J were probably borrowed and copied over a period of time at some provincial centre. The copies were then checked and amended about 1300 by the corrector before the exemplars were returned. Whether or not the J scribe himself modernized and ‘edited’, he was apparently responsible for the lay-out and compilation of texts designed to edify and entertain an audience of secular clerics such as those of Swinfield’s familia and/or Swinfield himself.<sup>50</sup>

Hill’s hypothesis as to the scribe’s profession, provenance, and collaboration with a corrector is of considerable interest, but it all remains shadowy and in need of reconciliation with the scholarly reconstruction of MS X. In sum, both lines of research — those of Hill and Cartlidge — form a reasonable narrative when they are merged. The lost MS X did exist: it shaped the forms in which *Owl* and *Chardri* are now preserved, and it contained more English poetry, the CJ group in particular. Other exemplars contributed to the making of Jesus, however, and the scribe somehow had the means to access them. A closer look at the Jesus sequence and its authors supplies further clues as to how Jesus 29 came into being.

## MS JESUS 29: DATING THE TEXTS, NAMING THE AUTHORS

Jesus 29 used to be typically classed as a “friar’s miscellany”: a collection of English verse authored by proselytizing friars to provide learned, pious instruction to a largely unlettered laity.<sup>51</sup> This theory offered a memorable label but was never tenable because it contradicts statements about authors and audiences found

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<sup>46</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 272. See also Cartlidge, “Imagining X,” p. 40.

<sup>47</sup> For evolving opinions regarding the date of Jesus 29, see Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. ix (1250–1300); Hill-History, p. 204 (1256–1300); Hill-Addenda, p. 105 (1272–1300); Cartlidge, “The Date,” pp. 230–47 (after 1272, his new date for *Owl*); Hill-Part2, p. 273 (1285–1300, connected with Swinfield’s episcopacy); and Cartlidge, “*The Owl and the Nightingale*.”

<sup>48</sup> Hill-Part2, pp. 272–74; quote appears on p. 274.

<sup>49</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 274. See Webb, ed., *Roll of the Household Expenses of Richard de Swinfield*, especially 1:147–52.

<sup>50</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 274. See also Cartlidge-Composition, pp. 261–62: “Whether or not J and C were produced within a religious house, there is no evidence that they were necessarily used within an institutional setting . . . There is, in short, no way of determining the original contexts of the manuscripts from the nature of their contents.” A near-contemporary hand inserted corrections in Jesus 29, detailed in Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. xix. Hill dates the corrector’s hand 1297–1305 (Hill-Part2, p. 273).

<sup>51</sup> For refutations of the theory, see especially Frankis, “The Social Context,” pp. 179–82; Scahill, “The Friar,” pp. 8–10; and Cartlidge-Composition, pp. 258–62.

in the texts themselves. The writers — some named, most not — hail from various religious professions: friars, canons, secular priests, lay clerks.<sup>52</sup> A thorough sifting through the known facts of authors, origins, and dates allows suggestive associations to arise. While definitive answers are few, we are able to achieve a sharpened picture of the puzzle before us in Jesus 29.

The oldest poems in Jesus 29 are probably *The Proverbs of Alfred* and *Poema Morale*, both written in the twelfth century before the first Franciscans arrived in England in 1224. How eagerly the friars were received as spiritual reformers may be seen in how the author of *Ancrene Wisse* (ca. 1225–1230) urged recluses to beware of using secular priests and monks as confessors while also advising them to go ahead and trust friars.<sup>53</sup> But, prior to the friars' coming, *Proverbs* and *Poema Morale* circulated as compendia of moral advice — secular and pious, respectively — well-trusted instances of sagacious truth-telling in the vernacular. The Jesus 29 compilation is, therefore, not simply a miscellany of texts by friars that illustrates their preaching in vernacular verse. And, to examine authorship further, the early Middle English proverb-set *Proverbs* is not, of course, authentically by the revered King Alfred; it merely trades on his reputation for wisdom, as do the two contestive birds in *Owl*, who invoke Alfred's name over and over again. "So says Alfred" brightens their barbs with the sheen of English good sense and judicial authority. Correspondingly, other poems in Jesus 29 cite Bede's wit (*Ten Abuses*) or Solomon's wisdom (*Love Rune*). The title of one, *The Saws of Saint Bede*, derives from the medieval bent for mythically ascribing authorship to men revered for wise words.<sup>54</sup>

An author's prayer occurs at the end of *The Passion of Jesus Christ in English*, the first item in the Jesus sequence. The passage petitions God to bless the poet and his "ordre":

And he that haveth this rym iwryten, beo hwat he beo,  
 God, in thisse lyve hyne lete wel itheo,  
 And alle his iveren, bothe yonge and olde.  
 God, heom lete heore ordre trewliche her holde,  
 That hi mote togadere cume to heveriche blysse  
 Hwanne hi schullen toparty ut of lyve thisse.  
 (lines 697–702)<sup>55</sup>

These lines indicate an original audience of brethren, young and old, in a religious house of canons, monks, or friars. The reference is, however, too general to offer more detail than that.

In the following paragraphs I survey the authorial names, or other authorial indications, attached to particular works in Jesus 29, English and French. I also include a look at those texts that are the most reliably datable, in particular the two anomalous prose works. The only verifiable English author is Thomas of Hales. His profession as Franciscan friar, named in the rubric to *Love Rune*, is largely responsible for the "friar's miscellany" misnomer that formerly attached to Jesus 29. While that effort can now be dismissed as

<sup>52</sup> In dissecting the evidence for diverse types of authorship, Cartlidge links the lyrics only in how they, together, "carefully submerg[e] their authors' identities in the fiction of prophetic utterance" (Cartlidge-Composition, p. 258).

<sup>53</sup> Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 73; and Duffy, "Religious Belief," p. 299. See also D'Angelo, "English Franciscan Poetry"; and Fleming, "The Friars and Medieval English Literature."

<sup>54</sup> Unnamed in Jesus 29, this item's title is supplied from its second manuscript, Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86.

<sup>55</sup> "And he who's written this rhyme, be what he may, / God in this life allow him to thrive, / And all his comrades, both young and old. / God allow them their order truly to maintain here, / So that they may together come to heavenly bliss / When they depart out of this life." On this passage, see Cartlidge-Composition, pp. 258–59. *Love Rune* also ends by petitioning a prayer for the author, Thomas of Hales.

flawed, it remains critically important that we focus attention on this single named historical presence in the English lyrics of the Jesus anthology.

**Thomas of Hales.** The only English author whose name is unequivocally preserved in the Jesus manuscript is the Franciscan friar Thomas of Hales (fl. 1220–1280). His name and profession appear at the head of *Love Rune* in a long incipit.<sup>56</sup> *Love Rune* was composed ca. 1240–1272 during the reign of Henry III, the king honored by name in the verse. Confirmed facts about Thomas’s life are few, yet clearly indicative of his significance. He was a young chorister at Hereford Cathedral in the early thirteenth century, perhaps during the bishopric of Ralph of Maidstone, 1234–1239. Maidstone left his position in 1239 to enter the Franciscan order, and others followed him. Quite possibly, young Thomas was among them. In 1252–1256, Thomas was associated by name with Adam Marsh (ca. 1200–1259) and other important Franciscans in London, so he may have belonged to the London house.<sup>57</sup> The prominent Marsh was a protégé and intimate friend of Robert Grosseteste (ca. 1175–1253), bishop of Lincoln (1235–1253), and both had political influence as spiritual advisors to Henry’s Queen Eleanor of Provence, as well as to Henry’s sister Eleanor de Montfort and her husband Simon de Montfort.<sup>58</sup>

New life-records about Thomas of Hales, reported in 1998 by a historian-biographer of Queen Eleanor, have not yet been stitched into literary scholars’ accounts of this author. Prior to Eleanor’s surviving correspondence with the much-trusted Marsh and the very learned Grosseteste, and prior to Thomas’s own record of association with Adam Marsh in London, Thomas of Hales served, for about six years, 1246–ca. 1252, as counselor to the queen, perhaps as her personal chaplain.<sup>59</sup> Discovery of documents placing Thomas fully in the ambit of Queen Eleanor radically deepens the level of familiarity to be understood in the compliment paid to Henry III’s piety in *Love Rune*. Humility in kingship was a quality that Henry cultivated publicly and privately. Thomas’s adroit compliment pays homage to this virtue by praising the king’s fealty and humility before Christ’s kingship while simultaneously honoring his royal primacy. Positioning the compliment at the center of the poem, Thomas designed it to be displayed prominently at the head of a recto.<sup>60</sup> Both king and queen were avid supporters of the Franciscan order. It is therefore very reasonable, now, taking into account Thomas’s career at court, to postulate that *Love Rune* was created under the auspices of royal patronage.<sup>61</sup>

We can confirm only a few literary works made for Queen Eleanor under her or the king’s commission. Unsurprisingly, two are deluxe productions rendered in French, the language the queen spoke by birth and at court.<sup>62</sup> Because she spent most of her life in England, she surely could speak English too, but we have no external evidence that an English work like *Love Rune* was ever produced for her.<sup>63</sup> One elite Anglo-French

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<sup>56</sup> The Latin incipit belongs to the original poem. See Fein-*MLSL*, pp. 11, 23; and Fein, “Roll or Codex?,” p. 18.

<sup>57</sup> On Thomas of Hales’s life-records, see Hill, “The ‘Luue-Ron’”; Horrall, “Thomas of Hales, O.F.M.”; Hill-Part2, pp. 272–73; and Lawrence, ed. and trans., *Letters of Adam Marsh*, 1:176–77, 2:542–43.

<sup>58</sup> Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 64, 90, 93–94; and Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 40–41, 79–85, 117–18.

<sup>59</sup> Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 92–94. The new fact is briefly noted by Renevey, “1215–1349: Texts,” pp. 99–101.

<sup>60</sup> The Jesus scribe preserves the important mise-en-page of the original poem; to do so, he had to decrease the number of lines per page (Fein, “Roll or Codex?,” pp. 21–22).

<sup>61</sup> Without knowledge of the new life-records, I suggested royal patronage for *Love Rune* in 1999: Fein, “Roll or Codex?,” p. 21. Knowing of them, Renevey assumes it to be so (“1215–1349: Texts,” pp. 99–101).

<sup>62</sup> On Eleanor’s languages and dialects, see Wogan-Browne, “The Tongues of the Nightingale,” p. 91.

<sup>63</sup> Queen Eleanor collected chivalric and Arthurian romances in French, and certainly owned Latin psalters and books of hours (Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 82–83, 87–92).

product dedicated to the queen is the elegant, illustrated *Estoire de seint Aedward le rei* (*History of Saint Edward the King*) (1236–1245) by Matthew Paris (ca. 1200–1259).<sup>64</sup> Henry III adopted Edward the Confessor as his own patron saint, a model of holy kingship — a stance put on bold public display in his sumptuous rebuilding of Westminster Abbey (the Confessor’s church and burial site). Christened in the saint’s honor was Henry and Eleanor’s eldest son, the future Edward I. A second fine book believed to be produced for Eleanor is the exquisite Trinity Apocalypse (1255–1260).<sup>65</sup> Another one, openly dedicated to her, is John of Howden’s *Rossignos* (*The Nightingale*) (1273–1282).<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, *Rossignos* does not survive in its original mode of presentation — presumably another delicate book — but only in a manuscript of about a century later.<sup>67</sup>

The remainder of what we can confirm about Thomas of Hales comes from a limited oeuvre of religious writings in Latin and French. Beyond *Love Rune*, Thomas authored a Latin prose life of Mary (surviving in many copies) and an Anglo-Norman sermon with Latin prayers on Christ’s Judgment likened to the parable of the talents.<sup>68</sup> Significantly, Thomas’s extant corpus seems always directed toward aristocratic women, individual or plural. Given his recorded relationship with Queen Eleanor and his documented presence in London, it is intriguing that his French sermon survives solely in a thirteenth-century volume associated with Westminster Abbey, where it is “written down very much as it was delivered” in a hand “of about 1270 or earlier.”<sup>69</sup> His popular *vita* of Mary includes an “intrusive passage” on the founding of the order of Fontevrault, a house particularly close to the royal family, as burial site of Henry’s mother, uncle, and grandparents (Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine).<sup>70</sup>

Thomas was likely more prolific than we can document. A sign of his writerly stature abides in how his works carried on in late Middle English. The Latin life of Mary, a work of affective piety, was translated as *The Lyf of Oure Lady*, and *Love Rune* also continued to circulate because it was modernized a century later

<sup>64</sup> Dean, no. 522. See Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, p. 91; and Paris, *The History of Saint Edward*, trans. Fenster and Wogan-Browne, pp. 3, 10, 18–19, 54. The manuscript, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, is viewable at <https://iiif.bibliissima.fr/collections/manifest/6c5301d59a190827bb1d1bd36c468b122d7bbc5f>. This book is a copy of the original book presented to Queen Eleanor (which does not survive), executed ca. 1255, probably for her daughter-in-law Eleanor of Castile (Paris, *The History of Saint Edward*, trans. Fenster and Wogan-Browne, pp. 27–28).

<sup>65</sup> Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, p. 90. Both Morgan, “Illustrated Apocalypses,” pp. 12–15, and Short, “Introduction,” p. 135, explore clues of Franciscanism and female patronage in the making of the *Trinity Apocalypse*. See also, in general, Short, ed., *The Trinity Apocalypse*; and the essays in McKitterick, ed., *The Trinity Apocalypse*.

<sup>66</sup> Dean, no. 626. See Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 83–85, 93, 97–98, 248; John of Howden, *Rossignos*, ed. Hesketh; and *VLT*, pp. 204–11. Renevey compares the mysticism of *Love Rune* to the devotional aesthetic of *Rossignol* (“1215–1349: Texts,” pp. 99–105).

<sup>67</sup> The manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 471, is viewable at <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/mj062xw5755>.

<sup>68</sup> Legge, ed., “The Anglo-Norman Sermon.” For the Latin life, see Horrall, ed., *The Lyf of Oure Lady*. See also Horrall, “Thomas of Hales, O.F.M.,” pp. 293–94.

<sup>69</sup> Legge, ed., “The Anglo-Norman Sermon,” pp. 212, 214. The sermon is preserved in Oxford, St. John’s College, MS 190, with Latin sermons and the French *Mirour de seinte eglise* ascribed to Edmund Rich (see note 83, below). A record locates Thomas at Westminster in 1246 as witness to a charter in which Queen Eleanor states her wish to be buried there (Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, p. 93).

<sup>70</sup> Horrall, “Thomas of Hales, O.F.M.,” p. 297, who notes Thomas’s “great respect for royalty” (p. 296). See also Horrall, ed., *The Lyf of Oure Lady*, pp. 86, 120n86/10–20. On Fontevrault (mother house of Amesbury Priory), see Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 303–04.

as the simpler poem *Clene Maydenhod* found in the late-fourteenth-century Vernon manuscript.<sup>71</sup> It may be that we lack further attributions to Thomas because contemporary, close-knit circles recognized his oeuvre and felt no urgency to label it. It is worth considering how there could be more English verse by Thomas hidden in the Jesus sequence. Because Jesus 29 is the only known repository for an English lyric by Thomas, it follows that the Jesus 29 thread of anonymous poems is the best site for others to be preserved in, if any are.

Consequently, it is important that the evidence be reexamined. Where *was* the Jesus manuscript deposited when the monasteries of England were dissolved and their libraries dispersed? Hill proposes that Jesus 29 (Part II) came from St. Augustine's Abbey, Gloucestershire, citing its association with the Berkeleys. But among the religious houses visited by Commissioner Carne were also Hales (i.e., Halesowen) in Worcestershire and Amesbury in Wiltshire. The former is attached to Thomas as chosen place-name, his probable birthplace. The latter is tied to Queen Eleanor, for that is where she died a nun in 1291. These links surely bear as much consideration as the birth family of Carne's wife, a Berkeley. Carne could have picked up the valuable anthology at Halesowen, in the region belonging to Thomas and the scribe; or at Amesbury, from a library used by the queen dowager and her granddaughters — Mary and Eleanor, age seven and eleven — who lived with her there as nuns, from 1286 until her death in 1291.<sup>72</sup>

We also should ask how poetry by Thomas of Hales fell into the hands of the Jesus scribe. A tantalizing hint exists in the array of texts in the medieval library of Titchfield Abbey. As I have noted, the search for exemplars leads to a lost verifiable MS X (bearer of *Owl*, *Chardri*, and English verse) and to the Titchfield Abbey library known only by its 1400 catalogue. A Premonstratensian house of white canons, Titchfield was founded in 1232–1233 by its mother house Halesowen Abbey, itself founded in 1218.<sup>73</sup> Titchfield's first abbot, Richard, was a recruit from Halesowen; in following years the mother house made regular visitations to its colony house. Holding about two hundred books, the Titchfield Abbey library likely contained material that had circulated there from Halesowen, whose patrons were the powerful Cantilupes.<sup>74</sup>

These potent associations raise the matter of where a cache of Thomas's English verse, if it existed, would have been stored and read. Would it have been in a West Midlands religious foundation (Hales, i.e., Halesowen); or in an episcopal library frequented by a cohort of clerks (Hereford); or in a Franciscan house of learned, well-connected friars (London); or in a library tailored to a wealthy patron, perhaps in a nunnery (Amesbury)? Thomas's English lyrics might have numbered only one, or many. They might have circulated only narrowly among close-knit circles (friars and aristocrats), or more widely. One can only speculate. But,

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<sup>71</sup> Furnivall, ed., *The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS., Part II*, pp. 464–68; and Wells, “‘A Luue Ron’ and ‘Of Clene Maydenhod,’” pp. 236–37.

<sup>72</sup> Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 300–03. Wogan-Browne et al. speculate that Eleanor had a copy of *Rossignos* with her in her somewhat active life at Amesbury: “Unlike King Arthur’s Guenevere, her legendary predecessor [*sic*] in retirement to Amesbury, Eleanor seems less to have been seeking refuge from the world than an alternative base from which to follow the interests of the crown” (*VLT*, p. 205).

<sup>73</sup> Hill-Addenda, pp. 102–03. “Hales,” probably designating Thomas’s birthplace, is Halesowen, not Hailes (Gloucestershire), where a Cistercian abbey was founded in 1246; see D’Angelo, “English Franciscan Poetry,” p. 236.

<sup>74</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 272; and Cartlidge-Composition, p. 251. Walter de Cantilupe was bishop of Worcester, 1237–1266, and allied (against crown and papacy) with Edmund Rich and Robert Grosseteste in matters of ecclesiastical reform, as expressed in the Jesus lyric *Holy Church* (art. 12). His nephew, Thomas de Cantilupe, was bishop of Hereford, 1275–1282, preceding the tenure of Richard Swinfield. He had earlier served as Chancellor of England, 1264–1267, but lost his royal appointment because he sided with Simon de Montfort during the Second Barons’ War. Walter also sided with de Montfort’s cause.

to stay within the confines of Jesus 29 and the evidence it gives, one finds *Love Rune's* distinctive meter in other poems. It is the stanza form used for *Will and Wit*, *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary*, *Fire and Ice*, and *A Homily on Sooth Love*.<sup>75</sup> A delicate lyric in a different meter, *Song of the Annunciation*, is paired with *Love Rune*, following it as *cantus* — a thematic yoking that seems likely to be from Thomas's pen. Others stand as contenders: the homiletic, female-centered *Woman of Samaria*; the polemic, chivalry-tinged *When Holy Church Is Under Foot*; the clever, gentle preaching in *A Little Sooth Sermon*; the idealistic, St. Thomas-centered *On Serving Christ*; and the lyrically affective *Orison to Our Lord*. At the very least, Jesus 29 stands as witness, in thirteenth-century English religious verse, to a pressing demand and ready response for expressive modes more rich and varied than mere dreariness and doom.<sup>76</sup> The very presence of Thomas of Hales's *Love Rune* tells us that this is so, and also requires that we delve deep in scrutinizing the whole sequence.

**Two Mysteries from Guildford: Nicholas and John.** In seeking clues on the authorship of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, scholars are confronted by two names, both said to be “of Guildford.”<sup>77</sup> The identities of Nicholas of Guildford and John of Guildford cannot be traced to specific individuals with any level of certainty. However, in light of Thomas of Hales's documented association with Eleanor of Provence, it is worth observing (as has not been previously in *Owl* scholarship) that Guildford, Surrey, located seventeen miles south of Windsor, was counted among Queen Eleanor's many holdings during her marriage and widowhood, 1235–1291.<sup>78</sup> In 1274, two years after Henry III's death, she established a Dominican house, the Guildford Black Friary, dedicated to the memory of a grandson, Prince Henry, who died that year at age six. The queen dowager, in mourning, arranged for the boy's heart to be buried there.

A more tenuous hypothetical link might further associate the poem with Queen Eleanor and the reading practices of women in her circle. *Owl* may borrow obliquely from a contemporary fashion among wealthy pious readers for nightingale imagery, taking this stylized affectation and transmuting it to secular English expression. The debate-poem's name in Jesus 29 is *not* the title we know today, but rather the reverse: “altercacio inter filomenam et bubonem,” a debate between a *nightingale and an owl*, setting “filomenam” first.<sup>79</sup> As mentioned above, an Anglo-French work of guided meditation named *The Nightingale* (*Rossignos*) was dedicated to Queen Eleanor by its author John of Howden. Like Thomas of Hales in the 1240s and 50s, John served as spiritual counselor to a then-widowed Eleanor in the 1270s and 80s. In documents, he is listed as both queen's clerk (referring to Eleanor) and king's clerk (referring to Edward I).<sup>80</sup> While little is known of his life, John ranks among the most important of thirteenth-century Anglo-Latin authors. *Rossignos*, his only Anglo-French work, is styled similarly to his more learned *Philomena* (again,

<sup>75</sup> Fein, “Designing English,” pp. 57–58.

<sup>76</sup> On the peak modes of religious verse (devotion to the Virgin, warnings of the afterlife, affective stirrings of compassion and joy), see Pearsall, *Gothic Europe*, p. 47. The full range is amply represented in the Jesus 29 English sequence.

<sup>77</sup> By a different line of thought, some have proposed that *Owl* was authored by a woman. See Eadie, “The Authorship”; and Barratt, “Flying in the Face of Tradition.”

<sup>78</sup> Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 288–89, 293, 302. In *Owl* scholarship, the place-name has been a puzzle; see Cartridge-*Owl*, p. 101.

<sup>79</sup> The title found in Titchfield Abbey, MS C.II is likewise “De conflictu inter philomenam et bubonem in anglicis.” See note 22, above.

<sup>80</sup> On John of Howden's identity, see John of Howden, *Rossignos*, ed. Hesketh, pp. 2–7.

*The Nightingale*).<sup>81</sup> Both are long texts of lyrical devotion based on the Life, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ and the Ascension of his Mother, adorned with bird imagery and clerical erudition.<sup>82</sup> The title is explained in the prose incipit:

Et a non ceste pensee 'Rossignos', pur ce ke, sicome li rossignos feit de diverses notes une melodie, aucu fait cest livres de diverses matires une acordaunce. Et pur ce encores a il non 'Rossignos' que il estoit fez e trové en un beau verger flori ou rossignol adés chauntoient. Et pur ce fu il faiz que li quor celi qui le lira soit esprys en l'amour nostre Seignour. Benoit soit qui le lira!

(And this meditation has the name "Nightingale," because, just as the nightingale makes from diverse notes a melody, so too this book makes from diverse subjects a harmony. And also it has the name "Nightingale" because it was composed and invented in a beautiful flowering garden where nightingales were accustomed to sing. And it was made in order that the heart of one who reads it may be inspired in the love of our Lord. Blessed be the reader!)<sup>83</sup>

When *Owl* is thus read against a contemporary courtly fashion of elegant piety and nightingale lyricism, the sequential joining of *The Passion of Jesus Christ in English* with an English "nightingale" becomes, in Jesus 29, subtly imitative of a literary trend, remade, recharged, and bifurcated, "en engleys."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Howden's *Philomena* was translated from Latin to Middle English: D'Evelyn, ed., *Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ*.

<sup>82</sup> Consisting of forty-three meditations of about 125 lines each, *Rossignos* is touched with affective piety, chivalric language, and praise of crusaders, including Eleanor's own illustrious kin (lines 3969–4052). See John of Howden, *Rossignos*, ed. Hesketh, pp. 141–44, 218–21; Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 60, 83–85, 93; Wogan-Browne, "The Tongues of the Nightingale," p. 85; and *VLT*, pp. 204–05.

<sup>83</sup> John of Howden, *Rossignos*, ed. Hesketh, p. 33 (translation mine). Another important late-thirteenth-century "nightingale" is John Pecham's Latin verse *Philomena*, which survives in over thirty manuscripts. In it the nightingale represents both the Passion and the Christian soul meditating on mankind's history from creation to salvation; at each hour, the nightingale sings a different song. Pecham, a Franciscan, was archbishop of Canterbury, 1279–1292. On Pecham's poem, see Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society*, pp. 100–03. Wogan-Browne et al. usefully summarize the nightingale tradition as it evolved into thirteenth-century meditations that imagistically retained secular, naturalistic notes: "Traditions concerning the nightingales are long-lived, from the rape of Philomena in Ovid onwards: their medieval versions embrace the range of secular and divine passions, with the nightingale frequently representing both Christ and the believer's response, as well as the poet's voice. Structured meditations on Christ's death of the kind influentially modelled in Edmund of Abingdon's *Mirour de seinte eglise* . . . were often equated with the nightingale's singing at the different canonical hours" (*VLT*, p. 204). See too the introductory essay in Baird and Kane, eds. and trans., *Rossignol* (pp. 1–53), a medieval French translation of Pecham's poem. On the very popular *Mirour* (a French translation of Edmund's *Speculum ecclesiae*) as meditative model, see *VLT*, pp. 212–22. Edmund's sanctity is celebrated in the Jesus lyric *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12).

<sup>84</sup> Stressing its debate form and secularity, editors of *Owl* have barely considered how the poem might be related to the vibrant, aristocratic, meditative nightingale tradition; see, for example, the brief mention in Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 65–66n736–42; and the speculation in Reed, *Middle English Debate Poetry*, pp. 245–46. Wogan-Browne, however, writes of a "a common polyglot 'nightingale' discourse" existing "in and out of Latin, insular and continental Frenches and Englishes" and exerting "varying linguistic and cultural contacts" ("The Tongues of the Nightingale," p. 91). In her opinion, the corpus includes the English *The Thrush and the Nightingale* (contemporary with *Owl*) as well as the much later *Nightingale* by John Lydgate; she does not include *The Owl and the Nightingale*.

To return to the clues of authorship in Jesus 29, the stronger of the two claimants is Master Nicholas of Guildford, a name provocatively cited in two passages in *Owl*. First, Nicholas is said to have formerly been a wild adherent of the nightingale's ways but now he is a man of more sober judgment (lines 192–214). Second, Nicholas is recommended as someone deserving of clerical advancement but regrettably overlooked (lines 1760–78). Then the birds fly off, at poem's end, to seek Nicholas as the best judge of their debate (lines 1779–81).<sup>85</sup> These passages do not state that Nicholas is the poet but they hint at it. As Cartlidge observes, Nicholas is “a mystery to scholarship but plainly very familiar to those who first received the poem.”<sup>86</sup> In research published in 2010, after he had edited *Owl*, Cartlidge dissects a promising lead. Having convincingly argued that *Owl* is to be dated post-1272 (that is, after Henry III's death), Cartlidge locates a Nicholas of Guildford who was a king's clerk in the 1290s to 1320s.<sup>87</sup> He was presented to the living of Chesterton, Warwickshire, in 1297, dwelt in Oxford in 1322, and died around 1324. Records show him belonging to a circle of king's clerks that included, importantly, John Langton, Master of the Rolls, 1286–1292, later Lord Chancellor, 1292–1302. If this is the actual Nicholas, then references to the deceased King Henry in *Owl* ought to be reconsidered in light of this man's probable ties in the 1270s and 80s — connections that led him to an eventual West Midlands benefice and powerful allies in academic and royal circles. Might this king's clerk have had, in earlier days as a precocious poet, a motive to focus on women's feelings on love and marriage, so as to please Queen Eleanor and those of her circle?

The second man of Guildford is even more elusive. Without any knowledge of who he was, the presence of another “Guildford” in Jesus 29 certainly makes it seem that this place-name or family surname was recognizable to the Cotton and Jesus scribes and their anticipated audiences. On blank space on fol. 155v, at the end of *Passion*, Rev. Wilkins (the seventeenth-century owner of Jesus 29) recorded a passage from a leaf that had evidently been damaged and become detached from the book:

On parte of a broaken leafe of this  
 MS. I found these verses written,  
 whereby the Author may bee gues't at.  
     viz.  
 Mayster Iohan eu greteþ . of Guldeuorde þo.  
 And sendeþ eu to Seggen . þat synge nul he no.  
 Ac on þisse wise he wille endy his song:  
 God Louerd of heuene . beo vs alle among:  
 AMEN.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> In *Owl*, Nicholas is styled as a “Master,” that is, a man with a university education, implicitly “a parish priest at Portesham in Dorset,” an advowson “held by the nearby Benedictine abbey of Abbotsbury” (Cartlidge-Composition, p. 257).

<sup>86</sup> Cartlidge, “The Date,” p. 230.

<sup>87</sup> Cartlidge, “Nicholas of Guildford.” The revised date signifies that *Owl* is not so old as previously thought, and that it is close, within a decade or so, of its two scribes' own temporal milieus. On Nicholas's identity and the authorship question, see especially Atkins, pp. xxxviii–xlvi; Stanley, pp. 20–22; Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 101–02; and, most recently, Kerby-Fulton, *The Clerical Proletariat*, pp. 41–48. I agree with Cartlidge that there is a strong case for dating *Owl* post-1272 and for dating Jesus and Cotton accordingly.

<sup>88</sup> Master John of Guildford greets you thus, / And approaches you to say that he won't sing, / But in this manner he'll end his song: / God, Lord of heaven, be among us all. / Amen (translation mine).

Multiple discussions of this inserted passage have not resolved who John was or even what the passage indicates.<sup>89</sup> No one knows where the damaged “broaken leafe” (now long gone) was originally positioned in the book. Its placement is perhaps indicated by where Wilkins added the note, that is, before or after *Passion* (which fills the first quire), whose meter it matches. Or, possibly, the “broaken leafe” refers to a later folio, one that is now discernibly lost. Other unknowables arise from this passage. Wilkins “gues’t” John of Guildford to be “the Author,” but of what? Were the couplets drawn from a longer poem, or did they stand alone? Were they in the hand of the scribe, the corrector, or an early owner? (The punctuation suggests the scribe’s hand.) *Passion* precedes *Owl*, so might these lines name the *Owl* poet — a friend or relative of Nicholas? None of these questions has a clear answer. The two Guildford men named in Jesus 29 remain enigmas. Yet Nicholas, who is named within *Owl*’s lines, remains the stronger candidate for authorship of the debate-poem.

We are not likely to ever know the name of this English nightingale’s author, but to glean a sense of the cultural ambience that summoned its making, many signs steer us into the fluid, multilingual, secular, and elite settings that fed literary activity in the thirteenth century. What Cartlidge has urged of readers is clearly true: “The sources and analogues of *The Owl and the Nightingale* . . . need to be sought in French and Latin as well as in English.”<sup>90</sup>

**The French Authors: Chardri, William the Clerk of Normandy, and Sauvage d’Arras.** All of the Anglo-French items in Jesus 29 have authors whose names are known by attributions found in their works. Of Chardri, the most prominent presence, nothing is recorded outside his oeuvre of three poems totaling nearly 7,000 lines, preserved in the Jesus and Cotton manuscripts: *The Life of the Seven Sleepers*, *The Life of Saint Josaphaz*, and *The Little Debate*.<sup>91</sup> “Chardri” seems to be the pen name of an unidentifiable churchman (not a friar) named Richard who lived and wrote in the late twelfth to early thirteenth century for an aristocratic audience.

Of the second French author, William the Clerk of Normandy, more is known because his surviving literary corpus, larger and more dispersed than Chardri’s, contains hints as to his life and environs.<sup>92</sup> Writing in French not Anglo-Norman, William resided in the diocese of Lichfield, was married, and had children. The text found in Jesus 29 is an allegorical debate, *The Four Daughters of God*, extracted from the prologue of a longer work: the Clerk’s *Life of Tobie* (pre-1227), dedicated to William, prior of Kenilworth, a house of regular canons. The Clerk’s earliest, most popular work was *The Divine Bestiary* (ca. 1210–1211), dedicated to a patron named Raoul, thought to be Ralph of Maidstone, who in 1223 was treasurer of Lichfield Cathedral, then bishop of Hereford, 1234–1239 — and possible early mentor of young Thomas of Hales.<sup>93</sup> William the Clerk wrote many long religio-didactic poems in the period 1210–1238. The subject of the

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<sup>89</sup> See especially Sisam, “The Broken Leaf”; and Hill-Addenda, pp. 99–102.

<sup>90</sup> Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. xxx. He identifies several analogues in Latin and French secular debate literature (pp. xxxi–xl); see the Explanatory headnote to *Owl*.

<sup>91</sup> Dean, nos. 265, 532, 534. On Chardri as author, see Chardri, *The Works*, trans. Cartlidge, pp. 7–11; and Chardri, *La Vie des Set Dormanz*, ed. Merrilees, p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> Dean, nos. 468 (*Tobie*), 702–05, 579. See Reinsch, ed., “La vie de Tobie”; and Dean, “A Missing Chapter.” The extract is lines 1–344. On the item in Jesus 29, see Hill-History, pp. 203–04; Hill-Addenda, p. 104; Hill-Part2, p. 272; and Cartlidge-Composition, pp. 250–51, 257, 259.

<sup>93</sup> On *The Divine Bestiary* (Dean, no. 702), see Mead, “17. Guillaume le Clerc de Normandie, *Le Bestiaire divin*.”

Jesus 29 extract — the debate of Justice and Mercy, Peace and Truth — was very popular and had already appeared most famously in Robert Grosseteste’s *Castle of Love* (ca. 1215).<sup>94</sup>

Sauvage, the third French poet in Jesus 29, has a shadowy identity. He is perhaps the “Sauvage d’Arras who was responsible for a *chanson* and the *Dit de Dame Guile* and who is thought to have died in 1305.”<sup>95</sup> His *Doctrinal* (ca. 1267) appears in the second, all-French half of Jesus 29, occupying six folios that immediately precede the final fifty that hold Chardri’s poems. A text that deals with courtly virtues and manners, the *Doctrinal* was popular in France and England, surviving in some thirty copies. Its original language was Continental French, and Jesus 29 is one of just a few Anglo-Norman copies. Another is MS Digby 86, a trilingual miscellany of similar provenance and date (Worcestershire, ca. 1280).<sup>96</sup> The intended reception for the *Doctrinal* was, according to Cartlidge, clearly “the laity and, in particular, . . . the aristocracy”; Sauvage’s topic “evokes the demands of life in a noble household, and in this sense it is a ‘courtly’ rather than a religious text.”<sup>97</sup>

All in all, the French contents of Jesus 29 — the well-circulated works by William the Clerk and Sauvage, the more narrowly disseminated Anglo-French corpus of Chardri — indicate an anthologist’s desire to include didactic subjects in popular forms of allegorical debate, hagiographical narrative, and courtly instruction, all suitable for a lay elite audience.

**The Practical Prose: Shires and Assisa.** Two anonymous prose texts of practical reference, one in English, one in Latin, interrupt the flow of poetry in Jesus 29. Both come at the end of the English sequence before the French *Four Daughters of God* and the English *Eleven Pains of Hell*. *The Shires and Hundreds of England* opens with a rubric and large ornate initial, showing that it belongs to the scribe’s overall plan. *Assisa panis Anglie* fills blank space on a recto. While the hand is the scribe’s same spacious script, this bit of Latin, the only instance aside from rubricated titles, might be a filler designed to keep a useful item on hand. But it is also possible that these two items are intentionally joined: what is most notable about seeing them together is their stated, shared, legalistic Englishness.

*Shires* is probably the oldest text in Jesus 29. It describes the geographical length and breadth of England (categorized by jurisdictional law), itemizes the nation’s episcopal sees, and records the hidages of its shires. Hill detects internal evidence — mainly outdated descriptors — that establish an original date of 1086–1133.<sup>98</sup> The version in Jesus 29 has been modernized, a normal practice for the scribe. Cartlidge characterizes *Shires* as “a handy geographical mnemonic . . . at odds with the literary character” of Jesus.<sup>99</sup> The Latin *Assisa* on the pricing of bread, another reference text, dates from after 1256, the year it took force as a legal statute under Henry III.<sup>100</sup> The *Assisa* protected consumers from pricing abuses by bakers.<sup>101</sup> It is the kind of text that would be kept in lay households as well as monasteries, serving as a way to control bakers’

<sup>94</sup> Dean, no. 622. See Boulton, trans., *Piety and Persecution*, pp. 61–89; and *VLT*, pp. 40–45. See also Dean, no. 685.

<sup>95</sup> Hunt, “*Le Doctrinal Sauvage* — Another Manuscript,” p. 1. See Dean, no. 244; and Sakari, ed., *Doctrinal Sauvage*. On the item in Jesus 29, see Hill-Addenda, p. 105; and Cartlidge-Composition, pp. 257–58. For a questioning of the date, see Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. xxxn67.

<sup>96</sup> On this manuscript, see the essays in Fein, ed., *Interpreting MS Digby 86*.

<sup>97</sup> Cartlidge-Composition, pp. 257–58.

<sup>98</sup> Hill-History, pp. 206–07. See also Hill-Part2, p. 274n45; and Hill-Addenda, p. 105.

<sup>99</sup> Cartlidge-Composition, p. 259.

<sup>100</sup> Hill-History, p. 204; and Cartlidge-Composition, p. 259.

<sup>101</sup> Cartlidge-Composition, p. 259: as a price-setting scale, it “correlates the weight of a farthing loaf with the market value of a quarter of grain.”

charges — a swindling problem named in *A Little Sooth Sermon* (lines 21–26). Such disputes continually plagued the diocese of Hereford and became an issue that led to public quarreling between the citizens of Hereford and Bishop Swinfield in 1262.<sup>102</sup> According to Hill's theory, the Jesus scribe worked within Swinfield's familia. But, by an alternative theory, Scahill notes that *Assisa* "would be appropriate to, say, a gentle household as a centre of reference and authority, as well as of grain production," and adds that *Shires* might well have been included for a similar reason.<sup>103</sup>

With the exception of Thomas of Hales — and a possible clerk of Guildford — the authors of Jesus 29's English poems remain anonymous, their vital ties having disappeared long ago. In contrast, the French authors of Jesus 29 are identifiable. Taken whole, the contents of Jesus 29 represent a scribe's assemblage of English and French works drawn from West Midland exemplars, authored by a mixture of religious professionals: friars, lay clerks, canons, secular priests. As a compilation of both older and recent works, it illustrates the ready movement of vernacular texts amongst churchmen, cloistered or not, and the further flow of such texts to a laity receptive of instruction and entertainment. Some items speak to secular life (*Owl*, *Proverbs*). Others emanate from the imperative of preachers — saving souls — delivered as apocalyptic warnings, meditative prayers, or gentle homilies to individuals or communities in want of spiritual counsel.

#### AN ENGLISH VERSE ANTHOLOGY: ARRANGEMENTS AND PATTERNS

Aflame with warnings of death, hell, and Doomsday, the English verse of Jesus 29 has garnered a "decidedly austere" reputation.<sup>104</sup> A deeper look, however, yields substantial nuance, variety, and even cheer and humor in the collection. Influenced by *Owl*'s presence, Annette Kehnel defines Jesus 29 as mainly a literary book, a "poetic anthology."<sup>105</sup> John Frankis terms Jesus a "neat anthology for churchmen," "strikingly literary" in its nature; he pinpoints tonal differences between the English and French parts: English lyrics brandish "evangelical puritanism," while French texts adhere to "religious sobriety and conformity."<sup>106</sup> Scahill detects in Jesus 29 the "strong compilatory tendency" that marked its period and region:

The thirteenth century was an age of compilations of all kinds, and the impulse which led to the making of its great *summae* is reflected also in the Jesus manuscript. The drawing together of diverse texts, not simply between the covers of the one volume, but in what appears to be a single enterprise, was an important aspect of vernacular literary activity in the South-West Midlands during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>107</sup>

Viewed as a coherent anthology, the Jesus lyrics reel modern readers into patterns of thought and sensibilities from the thirteenth century, fine-grained and shaded from religious to secular.

In overall shape, the sequence begins with the Passion of Jesus and ends with the punishments of sinners in hell. Here is the eschatological logic of salvation history, with a soul's final end depicted as damnation — a deterrent warning. Set inside these first and last items are the second and penultimate poems,

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<sup>102</sup> Hill-Part2, p. 273. See Capes, ed., *Register of Richard de Swinfield*, p. ix.

<sup>103</sup> Scahill, "The Friar," p. 10.

<sup>104</sup> Chardri, *The Works*, trans. Cartlidge, p. 4. See also Sisam, "The Broken Leaf," p. 343 (a "serious and edifying collectio[n]").

<sup>105</sup> Kehnel, "Poets, Preachers and Friars Revisited," p. 96.

<sup>106</sup> Frankis, "The Social Context," pp. 183, 181.

<sup>107</sup> Scahill, "The Friar," p. 11, specifically comparing Jesus 29 to Harley 2253.

an inner frame based on debate: the irresolvable wrangling of opposite birds set in the natural world; the debate and accord of the Four Daughters of God set in heaven. The first contest brandishes a lively vernacular English idiom, the second is recounted in the more subdued register of William the Clerk's French.

Another approach to seeing the sequence whole is to note the linguistic stress on "Englishness" in the three long opening works: a rubric announces that *Passion* is in English, then *Owl* features the language at high voltage, then a rubric announces *Poema Morale* as "another treatise in English." The English medium is self-consciously front and center, and capped most emphatically when the scribe includes, near the end, the prose *Shires*, which literally delineates the mapped borders of England, followed by *Assisa*, which records an English law. Trilingualism visibly returns in the last three items: the Latin *Assisa panis Anglie*, French *Four Daughters*, and English *Eleven Pains* (with French/Latin rubrics). Each hell-pain serves as a warning to English people in English.

Embedded in the sequence are groupings — mainly pairings — that sustain the feel of an anthology. At least two pairs seem to show single authorship. *Doomsday* and *Death* occur side by side in every manuscript that holds them, and they match tonally and metrically. *Song of the Annunciation* is appended as *cantus* to the end of *Love Rune*, an apt coda to the longer work's sophisticated allusions to Gabriel's message, intimating that the pairing is composed by Thomas of Hales himself.<sup>108</sup> Another set of poems, paired as *contrafacta*, are songs sung to the same tune but opposed in meaning: *Death's Wither-Clench* and *An Orison to Our Lady*. Here the authors are probably different: one has reformed an existing death lyric to convert it to religious piety.<sup>109</sup>

Other pairings are thematic. The aphoristic *Signs of Death* and *Three Sorrowful Tidings* are copied together without a visible break, and both admonitions on mortality serve visually on the page as a preface to *The Proverbs of Alfred*. The *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr* similarly acts as a musical introit to the next lyric, *On Serving Christ*, which celebrates the English saint's heroic martyrdom. *An Orison to Our Lord* is matched to *A Homily on Sooth Love* with a shared theme of patient forbearance; both items may stem from the pen of Thomas of Hales, to judge by style, content, and (for *Homily*) meter. As already mentioned, the dramatic, expansive opening items, *Passion* and *Owl*, if taken to be a deliberate pairing, may elliptically gesture toward a thirteenth-century courtly fashion, in Latin and French, for guided, wide-ranging meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ, styled by their authors as lyric "nightingales."

### THE JESUS 29 SEQUENCE: AN INDEX OF TOPICS

Fitting the many topics of the Jesus poems into a single box is impossible, but taken together, they paint a lively social and intellectual milieu for *The Owl and the Nightingale*. Reading the bird-debate in Jesus 29 — where it resides in a sustained display of English word-art — refutes how *Owl* has been traditionally regarded as an inexplicable phenomenon, without precedent, without context. When read amid the Jesus sequence, *Owl* gains a historical groundedness, while *still* being an astonishing specimen of vernacular originality. The Jesus manuscript affirms *Owl's* status as a virtuoso performance that glories in its English medium and is *situated* in just that way.

<sup>108</sup> See Levy, "The Annunciation"; and compare Thomas's *vita* of Mary (Horrall, ed., *The Lyf of Oure Lady*, pp. 47–51).

<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, this song pair follows *Owl* in the Cotton manuscript, presenting opposite musical exempla after the birds have defended their different musical styles, in effect, "the contrast of plainchant and polyphony" (Medcalf, "Literature and Drama," p. 102; see also Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, p. 208n5).

The following paragraphs provide a brief index of topics that appear often enough in the Jesus lyrics to become thematic threads. Inquisitive readers will find many others. The Jesus lyrics have a character of their own. It is not precisely like the blend of secular and religious love lyric, and the fluent trilingual exchanges, that make the later Harley Lyrics so distinctive. It is instead a kind of sturdily moralizing, confidently English bravura (linguistic, religious, political), with flashes of humor and wit, and, most of all, a pragmatic realism about how to thrive in life and what to fear most in the afterlife.

**Adam's Fall.** The original sinful condition of humankind is ever on the minds of poets who urge confession and repentance. "Ure forme-faderes gult" (Our first father's guilt) has ushered in every man and woman's sad fate of aging and death (*Poema Morale*, line 195). The poet of *A Little Sooth Sermon* preaches the doctrine of the Fall before colorfully painting portraits of human malfeasance. The poet of *On Serving Christ* stresses that Jesus died not for his own sins, but for Adam's, and as Adam's heirs we are headed to hell if we do not repent.

**Central Sovereignty.** Middle English poets often reveal core beliefs in how they structure poems symmetrically around an event or image fixed at the lyric's center.<sup>110</sup> Kingship, especially the sovereignty of Christ crucified, is often the pinnacle event for such structures. This device appears in *Love Rune* (Christ on the Cross, contrasted to Henry III's royal humility); *An Orison to Our Lord* (the Passion read doubly as torture and divine kingship); and *On Serving Christ* (another cross, creatively invoked in Saint Peter's upside-down crucifixion).<sup>111</sup> The single poet of *Doomsday* and *Death* uses this device to embed remedies for endpoint terror: in *Doomsday*, Mary's intercession; in *Death*, almsgiving. In *A Little Sooth Sermon*, a perverted Eucharist marks the poem's center. In *Holy Church*, the female Church suffers stoning in the middle *laisse*. In *Homily*, the sacrament of confession grounds the central turning-point.

**Childrearing.** Childrearing, particularly of unmannered little owlets, provides comic material in *Owl*, drawn from animal fables. *The Proverbs of Alfred* also concerns itself with instilling good habits in children so that they bring credit to their parents. After this thread closes *Proverbs*, the next item, *An Orison to Our Lord*, invokes a meditative, affective imagining of the Christ Child as a vulnerable youngster. *A Little Sooth Sermon* depicts the challenges faced by the parents of teenagers who ignore curfews and flaunt the rules.

**Comedy.** Despite its reputation for death and doom, the Jesus sequence is a treasure house of early Middle English comic verse. Most of the laughter erupts from the exuberant taunts and aggressive insults that fly in *Owl*, which, at more than 1,700 lines, occupies nearly a third of the sequence. On a smaller scale, yet also acute in human observation, are the village foibles painted by a moral satirist in *A Little Sooth Sermon*. *Will and Wit* is a funny epigram on wayward Will frustrating the ever-sensible Wit. Dark humor marks the personifications of Death in *Death's Wither-Clench* (Death lurks in your shoe). *Proverbs* and *Ten Abuses* preserve valuable instances of pithy, understated vernacular wit.

**Confession.** A tenet of the Christian faith in thirteenth-century England, post-Lateran IV (1215), was the necessity of confession. The author of *Passion* explains that confession is required for salvation: it destroys the Devil. Opening in the voice of an old man with rueful regrets, *Poema Morale* serves as a confessional aid, spurring a reader's mindfulness of his or her spiritual state. In *Saws*, readers are exhorted to "Makie we us

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<sup>110</sup> Spearing, "Central and Displaced Sovereignty."

<sup>111</sup> This shared feature suggests that Thomas of Hales authored not just *Love Rune*, where the device is prominent, but also, perhaps, some of the others, where it is more subtle.

clene and skere" (Let's make ourselves clean and pure) (line 28) by repenting all seven sins. *Homily* warns that doom is nigh for any who neglect confession, and *Eleven Pains* reinforces that warning by showing the unconfessed groaning and lamenting in hell.

**Courtly Aesthetics.** In introductory lines, the poet of *Passion* sets his religious poem in opposition to courtly romances of Charlemagne, yet he also restyles Roman soldiers as "knyhtes" (line 379). *Holy Church* suggests a chivalric defense of Holy Church, gendered as an abused female in need of rescue. *On Serving Christ* celebrates Saint Thomas in a spectacularly epic mode, blending the alliterative long line of Layamon's *Brut* with the *laisse* of French *chansons de geste*. Composed in a rich style, evocative of courtly values and fine aesthetics, *Love Rune* urges the soul's acceptance of Christ as her mystic Lover Knight.

**Death.** Jesus 29 merits its grim reputation as a gathering spot for early Middle English lyrics on death. The collection holds *Death's Wither-Clench*, a song that personifies Death; *Death*, a fearsome companion to *Doomsday*; *Saws*, a vivid imagining of the enshrouded corpse; and *Signs of Death*, a visceral, step-by-step enactment of dying. Two items focus on Christ's death on the Cross: *Passion* and *An Orison to Our Lord*. The *Passion* poet remarks upon Christ's fear of death. Likewise, mortal fears infect *Poema Morale*, *An Orison to Our Lady*, and *Three Sorrowful Tidings*. Even the comic *Owl* looks at mortality: how the owl is a harbinger of death, and what is the use of each bird postmortem. *On Serving Christ* takes a heroic stance on the subject of martyrdom. *Homily* sums up the material truth: "Crist us haveth of eorthe iwrouht; to eorthe he wule us sende" (Christ has created us from earth; to earth he will send us) (line 13).

**Debate.** In the English works, a debate mode is found only in *Owl*, but it is wrong to consider it absent from the rest of Jesus 29. A debate structure defines two French works: Chardri's *Little Debate* and *The Four Daughters of God* extracted from William the Clerk of Normandy's *Life of Tobie*. If one takes the whole English sequence as spanning *Passion* to *Eleven Pains*, then within that frame is another frame, the second and penultimate items: secular *Owl* and celestial *Four Daughters*. There are also one-sided speeches, the addressee silent but vividly imagined: in *Doomsday*, God speaks to the wicked and the good; in *Death*, a soul blames its body. Oppositional dialogue also marks *Passion's* gospel narrative, and *Eleven Pains* opens as a dialogue between a sinner and Satan.

**Doomsday.** In the poems of Jesus 29, the Last Judgment is a popular inflection point for terror and drama. *Doomsday* announces the signs and sights of the Last Day. The subject colors the final prayer of the fragment *Fire and Ice*. In *Poema Morale*, Doomsday is vividly imagined as the moment when all of a life's hidden secrets will be revealed, and the author of *On Serving Christ* declares that all people must expect to be judged for their deeds. A vivid scene of Judgment in *Saws* paints God addressing, in turn, the wicked and the good. In *Homily*, it is declared that the Doom will come down on all who fail to confess.

**England as Nation.** *Shires* explores England as a bordered nation with defined shires and episcopal sees. Interest in the concept of "England" and "the English people" lurks in other items. In *Proverbs*, King Alfred is "Englene hurde, / Englene durl yng" (shepherd of the English, / Beloved by the English) in "Englene londe" (the land of the English) (lines 6–8). Veneration is shown for English saints, particularly Saint Thomas (*Holy Church*, *Antiphon*, *On Serving Christ*). Besides Beckett, *Holy Church* venerates the Canterbury archbishops Stephen Langton and Saint Edmund Rich (older contemporaries of Henry III). King Henry is named thrice (once in *Owl*, twice in *Love Rune*), and in *Owl* some xenophobia arises in how savage men

of other nations are described. In the Jesus 29 sequence, a showcasing of the vernacular tongue merges emphatically with geography, law, and a religious sense of nation.<sup>112</sup>

**English Language.** The English sequence of Jesus 29 is an avowedly self-conscious display of the native vernacular that, when compared to French, appeared historically much less often in manuscripts. The first poem of Jesus 29 signals, with a French title, the thirteenth-century novelty of poetry in English: *La passyun Jhesu Crist en Engleys*. It ends, too, with a kind of linguistic manifesto: the apostles receive the Holy Spirit and accept the mandate to go forth and preach in different tongues. The message to preach Christianity in a new linguistic medium is thus a self-reflexive move suggestive of the sequence itself. Most rubrics are in Latin or French, as if either is the ruling matrix language. Two more announce, however, that English is on display: “in anglico” (*Poema Morale, Antiphon*). Praying to Thomas is said to be especially valuable because he knows English (*Antiphon*, line 8).

**Estates Satire.** The Middle English genre of estates satire is known best as the model for Chaucer’s General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. Small evocations of this lively motif — a satiric parade of people from different professions or social ranks — occur in various settings. In *Saws*, the poet, being serious and also a little comic, matches occupation traits to fates in hell. In *Holy Church*, the writer names each estate that abuses the Church, and in *Ten Abuses* the list signals how each estate wreaks havoc on the social order. The topos is cleverly deployed in *A Little Sooth Sermon*, where the estates graduate in style from generalized male stereotypes to recognizable neighbors, male and female. *Proverbs* lays out the conservative social model: God is supreme, a king must be wise, nobles must judge justly, and knights must keep order.

**Heaven and Hell.** A vivid sense of the extremes awaiting humans in the afterlife — hell’s pain or heaven’s bliss — colors the moral imagination of the Jesus poems. An eye-popping tour of hell is undertaken in *Eleven Pains*, based on the well-known Vision of Saint Paul. In a final personal gesture, the scribe prays that his soul be sent to heaven. *Poema Morale* paints horrific scenes of hell’s terrors succeeded by a telling of heaven’s joys, apportioned not equally but according to individual merit (lines 353–54). More imaginings of hell may be found in *Death*, where Satan has hideous horns and flaming nostrils, and *Saws*, where sinners lament and suffer hunger and thirst, heat and cold. Heaven is a rich dwelling suffused with love and harmony, where commoner and knight are equal, in *Homily*. Based in the physical here and now, *Owl* lacks these setpieces, yet the nightingale proudly claims that her song allows a foretaste of heaven.

**Kingship.** The general attitude is religious, hierarchical, and conservative: God is the supreme King. Ruling under God, the nation’s king must be wise, humble, and measured, not willful (*Ten Abuses, Proverbs*).<sup>113</sup> Henry III is the monarch who hovers in the political background of the Jesus lyrics. He is living and enthroned when named in *Love Rune* by Thomas of Hales (lines 41, 51), but deceased in *Owl* (line 1091) (the king named here is likelier to be Henry III than Henry II). Thomas’s royal compliment subjugates Henry to Christ (humbling the king’s power), and so too does *Passion* set Charlemagne beneath Christ. In

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<sup>112</sup> Elsewhere in Jesus 29, Chardri, too, pauses to praise England in the Anglo-French *Little Debate* (Chardri, *The Works*, trans. Cartlidge, p. 8). On the amorphous idea of “nation” in the thirteenth century, see Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, pp. 1–22; Pearsall, *Gothic Europe*, pp. 248–49; and essays in Lavezzo, ed., *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*.

<sup>113</sup> On concepts of kingship in this period, see Matthews, *Writing to the King*, pp. 47–51, and compare the category “England as Nation,” above.

*The Woman of Samaria*, it is affirmed that Jesus is the Messiah. *An Orison of Our Lord* locates God's sovereign Kingship in his Son's patient acceptance of pain.

**Law.** Legal wrangling, rhetorical ingenuity, and closely parsed logic form the comic essence of *Owl*, lasting until the debaters fly off to seek outside judgment. The jurisdictional divisions of England — West Saxon law, Danelaw, and Mercian law — are spelled out in *The Shires and Hundreds of England*. Following that geographical account is a Latin statute on the pricing of bread, named specifically as English (*Assisa panis Anglie*). Legal authority informs *Proverbs*, with Alfred acting as the wise, law-bound arbiter of social order.<sup>114</sup> Lawlessness is bemoaned in *Holy Church*, and, in a more local and comic manner, in *A Little Sooth Sermon*. On the idea of God as divine Judge, see the category "Doomsday."

**Love Lyric.** The transfer of secular love language to religious song is rare in Jesus 29, especially in comparison to the lyrics of the later Harley 2253 manuscript. Songs to God and the Virgin adopt the worshipful stance of salutation, and dwell at an awed distance from the divine addressee, as in *An Orison to Our Lord*, *An Orison to Our Lady*, *The Five Joys*, and the two Annunciation hymns. The chief locus for an emotional transfer of the language of secular love-longing to God is *Love Rune*. *Homily* stresses God's love for humanity and the love that mortals owe to him in return, but here the attitude is that of a community, not an individual. Traditional strains of secular love lyric are evoked in *Owl*, in the nightingale's spirited defense of how her song heartens and soothes lovers.

**Mary.** Marian devotion runs as a hopeful lifeline through the Jesus lyrics' pessimism. Veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mother offers an intercessory remedy to death. The poet of *Death* states this relationship directly by placing Mary's aid at the center of the poem. In like manner, *An Orison to Our Lady* transforms its immediate predecessor, *Death's Wither-Clench*, by stating the Marian remedy for dying; they are *contra-facta*, opposite in content, joined by the same tune. Straightforward devotions appear in a poem on Mary's Five Joys and two on the Annunciation. One of the Annunciation hymns is paired with *Love Rune*, a poem modeled in part on Mary as handmaiden and Gabriel as God's emissary. *A Little Sooth Sermon* utters a final prayer to Mary to set right the troubles of humanity caused by Adam's Fall. Alongside this ameliorative devotional strain, the Jesus lyrics also project an interest in the concerns of secular women (see the category "Women" below).

**Maxims for Good Living.** Sententious advice for prospering is to be valued, repeated, stored in memory, assiduously collected. The items that most display this cultural love are the lengthy *Poema Morale* (religious adages) and *Proverbs of Alfred* (secular adages), with the French *Doctrinal Sauvage* included to offer tips on virtuous manners. The Jesus sequence boasts an exceptional cache of mnemonic maxims wrought in catchy rhythms: *Weal, Will and Wit*, *Ten Abuses*, *Signs of Death*, and *Three Sorrowful Tidings*. And, of course, *Owl* preserves a slew of Alfred-ascribed sayings, while modeling how proverbs can be used not only for self-improvement but also for self-defense.

**Passion.** Two poems meditate on the Crucifixion of Christ: *Passion* and *An Orison to Our Lord*. The first is a long, occasionally homiletic, biblical paraphrase. By opening with *Passion*, the sequence presents the promised salvation for repentant Christians, counterbalancing the message of many later poems on death and doom. In contrast to them, *Passion* shows an audience the signs of resurrection: an empty tomb and Jesus's ascent to heaven. At the far end of the sequence, *An Orison to Our Lord* and *Homily* revisit the topic:

<sup>114</sup> See Yeager, *From Lawmen to Plowmen*, pp. 117–18.

first, *Orison* sets an intense, affective focus on the Crucifixion as a desecration of holy flesh (a paradoxical victory), and both poems stress that Jesus accepted suffering without resistance. The Christ-like virtue of patient submission to evil persecution is lauded, too, in *On Serving Christ*.

**Saint Thomas.** A religio-patriotic desire to venerate a paramount English martyr, Thomas of Canterbury, arises in three items. Two are overtly paired: *Antiphon* and *On Serving Christ* — a sung introit with a miraculous origin story, and then a tribute to Thomas in alliterative verse, honoring his acceptance of martyrdom in the heroic manner of Jesus and Saints Peter, Lawrence, and John the Baptist. Another item, *Holy Church*, establishes Thomas in a lineage of exemplary, uncorrupted holy men: three popes, himself, and two later archbishops of Canterbury: Stephen Langton and Edmund Rich. Another work, *Shires*, records all the episcopal sees of England.

**Seven Sins.** The doctrine of the Seven Deadly Sins is rarely invoked in the Jesus lyrics, and never as a formal enumeration. It comes up in *Saws*, lines 79–85, where the sins are rattled off casually, and in *Owl*, lines 1395–1408, where sins of the spirit are distinguished from sins of the flesh. There are also general depictions in *A Little Sooth Sermon* and *Homily*.

**Three Sorrowful Tidings.** The Three Sorrowful Tidings belong to a collective store of wisdom. The distressing news is that “I must die,” “I do not know when,” and “I do not know where my soul will go.” The formula crops up many times, most succinctly in the brief maxim *Three Sorrowful Tidings*. It is echoed, as well, in *Poema Morale*, *Saws*, *Death’s Wither-Clench*, *Annunciation*, and *Proverbs*. At the slightest echo, a listener’s memory fills in the rest. The sentiment derives from a public corpus of lyric expression, repeated and adapted in many settings.

**Ubi Sunt.** Elegaic yearnings for a courtly past with strains of *ubi sunt* — “where are they now?” — surface in a few lyrics. Most notable is the famous passage in *Love Rune* that begins: “Hwer is Paris and Heleyne, that weren so bryht and feyre on bleo?” (Where are Paris and Helen, so beautiful and fair in face?) (line 33). In *Death*, the soul asks the body, “Hwer beoth alle thine freond, . . . thine disches myd thine swete sonde?” (Where are all your friends, . . . your dishes amid your pleasant banquets?) (lines 49, 53). *On Serving Christ* varies the trope by telling the proud they will miss their fine things when they meet their doom on Doomsday. The poet of *Poema Morale* explains that in heaven fine trappings are gone because no worldly wealth exists there: “Al the murehthe that me us bihat, al hit is God one” (All the joy promised to us, it’s all from God alone) (line 360).

**Wealth.** Many passages image forth the opulent clothing of the proud, misguided rich, which will come to nothing on Doomsday (see the category “*Ubi sunt*” above). Less predictable maxims on worldly wealth and prosperity occur, however, in *Weal* and *Proverbs*. In *Weal*, one hears a statement on social inequality, how wealth is cruelly unfair to those who lack it. In *Proverbs*, some typical messages are: wisdom and friends count more than wealth; property is temporary and derives from God; wealth gained in youth will aid a man in old age. Such advice is pragmatic, if not always consistent, and it does not stray from the worldly mindset of *Proverbs*. In *Holy Church*, a contemptible love of marks and pounds, silver and gold overthrows the Church by simony and corruption. Meanwhile, thievery abounds in the antics of the townsfolk in *A Little Sooth Sermon*.

**Women.** The Jesus lyrics display an intriguing investment in female subjects. This interest, while infrequent in the whole sequence, is emphatic and original when it does occur. The poet of *Passion* sensitively portrays Mary Magdalene at Christ’s tomb. *The Woman of Samaria* deftly treats Christ’s meeting with the Samaritan

woman at the well. Both biblical paraphrases examine women's moments of emotional intimacy with Jesus. A third work latched to female desire — pious and heartfelt — is *Love Rune*, styled as a wooing poem to bring a maiden to Christ, her truest Lover. In quite an opposite fashion, a subset of Alfred's *Proverbs* on women and marriage are infected with cultural misogyny.<sup>115</sup> *A Little Sooth Sermon* shows a wayward girl's flirtatious dalliance and accidental pregnancy. *Eleven Pains* takes the rewards of sin further by showing the women who eternally suffer hell's Pain 5 and Pain 6. The freshest, most extended discourse on female experience, in love and marriage, occurs in the provocative final third of *Owl*. Beside all of these arresting instances in Jesus 29 stands, too, a solid body of Marian verse (see the category "Mary" above).

## CONCLUSION

Jesus 29 is a fortuitous accident of survival from the English West Midlands of the thirteenth century. But what should we make of this literary document? Its physical features present us with only piecemeal clues as to who crafted it, who wanted it made, how each item came to be selected and arranged, and how each one has a history of its own. Even its story of survival is fragmentary: what were its exemplars, where and when did it become a book, where did it reside for over two centuries, who rescued it after the Dissolution, and how did it arrive in Wilkins's hands before he donated it to Jesus College in Oxford?

From the same region, the West Midlands, we have other provocative survivals, to which Jesus 29 is joined in literary history. Earlier than Jesus 29: the Worcester Fragments, Layamon's *Brut*, *Ancrene Wisse*, the *Katherine Group*. Contemporaneously: the other important trilingual miscellanies, each one distinctly of its own character, Cotton Caligula A.ix, Digby 86, and Cambridge, Trinity College, B.14.39. And later on: the extraordinary, magnificent Harley 2253. These literary documents are more than mere shards; they are whole books. Set beside historical texts and records, they supply some of our best insights upon lives and passions, fears and beliefs in a region that witnessed vigorous textual production and exchange — a region roiling, too, with religio-political upheavals in the 1250s and 60s (the Second Barons' War, its build-up and aftermath), which imprinted trauma upon inhabitants' collective memory.<sup>116</sup>

What is most new, right now, in modern research on Jesus 29 are its revised dating (later than 1272); *Owl*'s plausibly revised dating (also later than 1272, the year of Henry III's death); the revelation that Nicholas of Guildford could have been a king's clerk with Oxford connections; records showing that Thomas of Hales acted, mid-century, as friar-counselor to Queen Eleanor; the concomitant adjacency of elite meditative "nightingales" with the making of *Owl* and *Love Rune*; and the correlation of Carne's monastic surveys to sites of keen interest, especially Halesowen and Amesbury. These new data start to persuasively nudge Jesus 29 (certainly its two best texts) toward an aristocratic circle of readers, quite plausibly occupied by royals and bishops, alongside the friars and royal clerks who mingled with them, making texts and manuscripts under patronage, so as to spiritually counsel elites and entertainingly cater to their tastes.

While Jesus 29 is a volume of careful planning and appealing mise-en-page, it does not in any obvious way approach the aesthetics of aristocratic display one looks for in books made under royal commission. Moreover, half of it is in English. Even so, the Jesus scribe has preserved *Love Rune* with its halfway-point compliment to royalty prominently displayed. It thus seems to retain a vestigial trace of a lofty tier of patronage for which the friar once wrote. Judging by Jesus 29's generous layout and beautiful colored-ink

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<sup>115</sup> See Yeager, *From Lawmen to Plowmen*, p. 118.

<sup>116</sup> See Hines and Julian-Jones, "Below Malvern," pp. 269–73.

display, Scahill infers that its recipients were “members of some substantial household.”<sup>117</sup> Perhaps the more glorious manuscript was MS X, the lost exemplar for *Owl* and *Chardri*, partially mirrored in *Jesus* and *Cotton*. But it is not entirely impossible, either, that *Jesus 29* is, itself, an attractive, compact book of English and French verse that was read for enjoyment and spiritual enrichment by queen dowager Eleanor, granddaughters Mary and Eleanor, and other nuns in Amesbury Priory.

In our present understanding of the expanse of poetry and tidbits of prose in *Jesus 29*, it now has to be acknowledged that an intriguing network of potential and real historical affiliations — alongside hints of political dissensions that plagued the day — has become discernible and is still too lightly examined. In his lifetime, Thomas of Hales crossed paths of familiarity with Hereford Bishop Ralph of Maidstone, Oxford Franciscan Adam Marsh, and English Queen Eleanor of Provence. The association with Maidstone calls up the diocese headed later by Richard Swinfield, with whom Hill tentatively associates the *Jesus* scribe. The Marsh connection readily leads to the fiercely intellectual, religio-political zeal of Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln and forceful proponent for ecclesiastical reform, as called for in *When Holy Church Is Under Foot*.<sup>118</sup> Thomas’s ties to the royal family — not only Eleanor but also the king honored in *Love Rune* — implicitly set him among more celebrated authors like Matthew Paris and John of Howden, and alongside the influential Marsh and Grosseteste, who were also close to Simon de Montfort. Three poems written to defend Holy Church and honor Saint Thomas intimate that a proud sense of Englishness, tied to the Church’s independence from onerous papal and royal demands for revenue, lurks in the book’s rare notes of political resistance and complaint.

The web of literary, religious, political, and historical threads in the *Jesus* manuscript justifies many more investigations of each of its items and all of its making. With the *Jesus 29* sequence of English lyrics reedited and newly translated, it is my hope that what this rare document adds to our comprehension of early Middle English literary vitality in a trilingual landscape will become a story more fully told.

#### NOTE ON THE PRESENTATION OF TEXTS

*Transcriptions.* Medieval letter-forms are converted to modern forms in accordance with METS practice: *i/j*, *u/v*, *vv/w*, *th* (for thorn and eth), *g/gh/y* (for yogh), *w* (for wynn). Word breaks are modern. Unambiguous scribal corrections (e.g., inserted or canceled letters) are not recorded in the Textual Notes. However, substantive corrections, such as inverted words or lines, are noted. Aberrations in layout (e.g., two lines accidentally copied on a single line, and then corrected in subsequent lines) are also noted.

Recorded in the Textual Notes (but not duplicated in the transcriptions) are accent marks on vowels (*ó, é, á, ý*) found in MS *Jesus 29*. The accent marks may indicate vowel length, oral delivery, or nothing in particular. They are not inserted with regularity and are actually rather infrequent. They do not appear in the *Cotton MS*. The accents — a slash slanting upward to the right — look identical to the way *i* is normally dotted.

Abbreviations are silently expanded. The *Jesus* scribe’s abbreviations *ihc* and *ihu* are expanded to *Jhesu* (in accordance with Morris’s practice). Various expansions of *ihc* by previous editors are not listed in the Textual Notes. When the scribe spells out the name in full, he writes *Iesus*.

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<sup>117</sup> Scahill, “The Friar,” p. 10.

<sup>118</sup> See Mayr-Harting, *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain 1066–1272*, pp. 264–66.

Corrections made by a contemporary corrector are recorded in the Textual Notes. On the occasional appearance of this later hand “not long after the manuscript was written,” see N. R. Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, pp. xviii–xix.

*Punctuation and caesuras.* Punctuation is modern, yet it is determined in part by close observation of the scribe’s system of punctuation, which appears in all of Jesus 29’s English texts (reproduced in Morris). It seems meant to indicate how the poetry is to be read aloud.<sup>119</sup> Accordingly, I have been guided by scribal punctuation in determining where caesuras should fall. Caesuras in long lines of poetry (usually septenaries) are indicated by extra spacing.

*Colored capitals and scribal sections.* The meters of the Jesus lyrics exhibit much variation, and the scribe presents each poem with deliberation and care. He is strikingly attentive to graphic detail: the length of lines; the placement, size, and color of capitals; and the demarcation of stanzas or variable-length groupings of lines. Colored capitals mark section divisions of irregular length in two long poems composed in short-line couplets: *Owl* and *Eleven Pains* (arts. 2, 28). These large colored capitals are detailed in the Textual Notes.

For items that follow uniform stanza structures (arts. 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 21, 26), the scribe marks stanza openings with one-line-high capitals in alternating red and blue. He uses the same method to denote variable-length divisions in four works composed in long-line couplets (arts. 1, 3, 5, 25) and two works composed in *laissez* (arts. 12, 18). This edition records these scribe-marked divisions by means of double spacing. Where colored capitals are only one line high and adhere to the pattern of alternating red and blue ink, they are not listed in the Textual Notes. Aberrations from these regular patterns are listed. For *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), the double-couplet groupings are editorial.

*Article numbers.* The items in this edition, numbered arts. 1–8, 10–28, include every English text preserved in MS Jesus 29, with the addition of *Will and Wit* from London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix (art. 9) because its presence on a folio now missing from Jesus 29 is virtually certain. Omitted from this edition are instances of Latin prose (*Assisa panie Anglie*) and French verse (*The Four Daughters of God*) occurring at the end of the sequence, between *The Shires and Hundreds of England* (art. 27) and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28). For the full contents of the Jesus and Cotton manuscripts, see Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, pp. ix–xi.

*Lacunae.* Because two folios holding English verse are missing, lacunae occur in arts. 8, 10, 20, 21. Imperfect beginnings and endings are indicated in this edition by dotted lines. Lines missing from the end of *An Orison to Our Lady* (art. 8) are supplied from the Cotton manuscript. *Will and Wit* (art. 9) is also supplied from the Cotton manuscript. An internal gap of three lines, indicated by dotted lines, occurs in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4).

*Foliation.* Material from the manuscript is cited in the left margin by folio number, recto or verso (“r” or “v”). Where folios are ruled in two columns and the writing is continuous from the first to second column, as in arts. 2 (*Owl*) and 28 (*Eleven Pains*), column designators (“a” or “b”) are also supplied. One poem — *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4) — is written across columns, so columns are not designated for this piece.

<sup>119</sup> See Fein, “Designing English,” p. 46.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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*Titles.* The modern titles given to the Middle English and translated texts generally conform to titles that have become those most commonly used in the critical literature on these poems. Their creation is guided, too, by incipits supplied by the scribe, wherever they appear. Several works have acquired alternative titles, and an attempt has been made to establish the better one: for example, *The Saws of Saint Bede*, not *Sinners Beware*; *Poema Morale*, not *The Conduct of Life*; *Homily on Sooth Love*, not *The Duty of Christians*; and so on. Titles are frequently discussed in the Explanatory headnotes to individual poems.

*Variant readings.* The Textual Notes record the variants and editorial choices among editors of the Jesus 29 poems. Variants from other manuscripts and from editions not based on Jesus 29 are not recorded. The only exception to this rule occurs when readings from Cotton Caligula A.ix (the second witness to many of the poems, derived from a shared exemplar) are relevant to editorial choices made in this edition. Poems found in both manuscripts, Jesus and Cotton, are marked "(C)" in the Textual Notes.



## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

fol. 144r      *Ici cumence la passyun Jhesu Crist en Engleys.*

*Incipit prologus*

Ihereth nu one lutele tale    that ich eu wille telle,  
As we vyndeth hit iwrite    in the godspelle —  
Nis hit nouht of Karlemeyne    ne of the duzeper,  
Ac of Cristes thuwinge    thet he tholedede her.

5                Al volk wes todreved,    so schep beoth in the wolde;  
Lute ymunde hi hedde of Gode,    heore heorten weren so colde.  
He thet is and ever wes    in hevene myd his Fadere,  
Ful lowe he alyhte    for bryngen heom togadere.

10              Thurst and hunger, chele and hete,    this beoth stronge pyne;  
Theos he tholedede al vor us,    that turnde water to wyne.  
Thrytty wyntre and more    he wes among monkunne,  
Seoththe that Mayde hyne yber,    al withute sunne.

15              Tho he hedde so longe ibeo    ine wrecche lyve thisse,  
He wes swythe oflonged    to his Fader blysse,  
Nouht for than that he nedde    in his god cunnesse,  
Ac he wolde that we myd him,    bothe more and lesse.  
Heo habbe scolde, and so we muwe,    ne therfth ther non adrede.  
Yf we us wyteth from heued-sunne    and doth al by his rede,  
The Louerd thet alle thing ischop    to there blysse us brynge.  
20              Nu bigynneth ure tale —    nys hit no lesyng.

*Her biginneth Cristes throwynge .i. sa Passyun.*

Levedi, thu bere that beste child    that ever wes ibore;  
Of the he makede his moder,    vor he the hedde ycore.  
Adam and his ofsprung    al hit were furlore  
Yf thi Sune nere —    iblessed thu beo thevore.

25              After that he was yvolled    in the Flum Jurdan  
Of the prophete    that hatte Seynt Johan.



## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

fol. 144r      *Here begins the Passion of Jesus Christ in English.*

*Prologue*

Listen now to a little tale    that I'll tell you,  
As we find it written    in the gospel —  
It's not about Charlemagne    or the twelve peers,  
But rather about Christ's suffering    that he endured here.

5            All folk were scattered,    like sheep in the meadow;  
They barely thought about God,    their hearts were so cold.  
He who is and always was    with his Father in heaven,  
He descended very low    to bring them together.

10           Thirst and hunger, cold and heat,    these are rough pains;  
He suffered all these for us,    who turned water to wine.  
For thirty winters and more    he was among mankind,  
After the Virgin bore him,    entirely without sin.

15           When he'd been long enough    in this wretched life,  
He was very eager    for his Father's bliss,  
Not because he was insufficient    in his divine nature,  
But because he wanted us with him,    both rich and poor.  
He had, and thus we have,    no need to be afraid.  
If we avoid mortal sin    and do all by his counsel,  
May the Lord who created all    bring us to that bliss.  
20           Now begins our tale —    it does not lie.

*Here begins Christ's suffering in his Passion.*

Lady, you bore the best child    who was ever born;  
He made you his mother,    for he had chosen you.  
Adam and all his offspring    would have been lost  
Had your Son not existed —    you are blessed therefore.

25           After that he was baptized    in the River Jordan  
By the prophet    who was named Saint John.

The Holy Gost hyne ledde up into the wolde  
For to beon yvonded of Sathanas then olde.

30  
fol. 144v  
Ther he wes fourty dawes al withute mete;  
Tho he hedde heom yvast, tho luste hym ete.  
Ther hym com Sathanas, that is ful of hete;  
Mid his false wordes he gon myd him to speke.

35  
A thre cunne wise he vondi hyne bigon,  
As he vondede Adam and hyne overcom:  
Mid yvernesse and prude and yssyng wes that on.  
He nuste nouht that he wes bothe God and mon.

40  
Tho seyde Jhesu Crist, thet is Godes Sune,  
“Ga abak, Sathanas! To hwan artu ycume?”  
Anon he hyne bylevede more to vondy,  
And ther comen engles hym to servy.

45  
Tho he bygon to prechi. Wel mylde weren his dede.  
He ches hym twolve yvere myd him vor to lede;  
Summe hi weren wyse and duden al bi his rede,  
Ac on hyne bitrayede, that et of his brede.

50  
Alle men he tauhte to holde treowe luve:  
Erest to God Almyhti that is us alle abuve;  
Seththe to luyve his evenyng al so hymseolve wolde,  
And everuich beo to othre bothe treowe and holde.

55  
Muchel volk hym vulede. Wyte ye for-hwon?  
Summe to beon hole of uvele thet wes heom on;  
Summe for beon yvedde of lykamyche vode;  
And summe al for uvele and for none gode.

60  
Men he helde, and wymmen, a vele kunne wise:  
The blynde he makede loki and the dede aryse;  
Dumbe speke, deve ihere, and the holte gon.  
Swich leche bivore hym ne com her never non!

65  
The Gywes and the Faryseus therof hi hedden onde —  
That swich leche wes ycume into heore londe.  
Hi seyden, “He is a smythes sune. Ne beo we noht his frend!  
Alle his wndres that he doth is thurch thene Vend.”

Vor alle the gode that he heom dude, hi yolde him luthre mede.  
Me seyth, “His hwile he vorleost that doth for the quede.”

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

The Holy Ghost led him into the wilderness  
In order to be tempted by Satan the old.

30  
fol. 144v  
He was there forty days entirely without food;  
Because he had fasted, he wanted to eat.  
There came to him Satan, full of hatred;  
With his false words he started to talk to him.

35  
In three different ways he tempted him,  
Just as he'd tempted Adam and overcame him:  
Through gluttony and pride and avarice too.  
He didn't know he was both God and man.

40  
Then said Jesus Christ, who is God's Son,  
"Depart, Satan! Why have you come?"  
Immediately he left him to go tempt others,  
And there arrived angels to serve him.

45  
Then he started to preach. Quite gentle were his actions.  
He chose for himself twelve comrades to be led by him;  
Some of them were wise and did all by his counsel,  
But one of them betrayed him, who ate of his bread.

He taught all people to uphold true love:  
First toward God Almighty who's above all of us;  
Next to love his neighbor as he would himself,  
And to be to each other both true and loyal.

50  
Many folk followed him. Do you know why?  
Some to be rid of evil that was in them;  
Some to be fed with bodily food;  
And some just for evil and for no good.

55  
Men he healed, and women, in different ways:  
He caused the blind to see and the dead to rise;  
The dumb speak, the deaf hear, and the lame walk.  
Such a physician before him had come never here!

60  
The Jews and the Pharisees were jealous of that —  
That such a physician was come into their land.  
They said, "He is a carpenter's son. We're not his friends!  
All the miracles he works are done by the Fiend."

For all the good he did them, they rewarded him poorly.  
As men say, "He loses his labor who serves the wicked."

- fol. 145r      Also dude Jhesu Crist:    vor ueve he dude god;  
 Thervore hi, at then ende,    schedden his swete blod.
- 65              Tho he com toward Jerusalem    a Palme Suneday,  
 Ne hedde he none robe    of fowe ne of gray,  
 Ne he nedde stede    ne no palefray,  
 Ac rod uppe on asse,    as ich eu segge may.
- 70              As he com into the bureh,    so rydinde,  
 The children of the tune    comen syngynde.  
 "Iblessed," hi seyde, "mote he beo."    The cumeth on Godes nome.  
 The Gywes and the Fariseus    therof hi hedde grome.
- 75              Tho he com to the temple    and wolde prechi,  
 He vunde thereynne chepmen    that were mody.  
 Theyh hi were prute,    he heom ut drof;  
 The byspes and the maystres,    hi were swythe wroth.
- 80              And hym anon axede    hwy he so dude.  
 Ure Louerd heom onswerede    anon yne the stude:  
 "Hit is iwrithe that myn hus    is bede-hus icleped,  
 And ye theovene dich    hit habbeth ymaked."
- 85              The maystres of the temple,    hi were swithe prute,  
 For to undernyme ure Louerd,    hi were ever abute —  
 If he ouht prechede    toyeynes there lawe —  
 Thet heo hynne myhte wreye    and don of lyf-dawe.
- 90              As hit neyhlecheth    to heore muchele feste —  
 Of alle the twelf moneth    that wes the alre meste —  
 Hi nomen heom to rede    at heore motyng  
 Hw hi myhten ure Louerd    to the dethe bryng.
- 90              At the Schere Thursday,    as ye mawen ihere,  
 Tho ure Louerd wes isethe    to his supere,  
 He byheold abute    myd swithe veyre chere,  
 And seyde to his disciples    that tho myd hym were:  
 "On me scal bitraye    that nu is ure yvere;  
 Iwis, hym were betere    that he ibore nere."
- fol. 145v  
 96              Everuych lokede to othre;    hi were sore ofdredde.  
 Hi nuste never bi hwich of heom    he hit iseyd hedde.
- 100              Tho quethen his disciples,    on after on:  
 "Louerd," hi seyden alle,    "hwo is so hardy mon  
 That durre the bytraye,    of us everuych on?  
 We willeth to the dethe    alle myd the gon."

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

- fol. 145r      Just so did Jesus Christ: he did good for evil men;  
Therefore, in the end, they shed his precious blood.
- 65              When he came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday,  
He had no robe of variegated or gray fur,  
He had no fine horse and no palfrey,  
But he rode upon an ass, as I tell you.
- 70              As he came into the village, riding thus,  
The town's children came singing.  
"Blessed," they said, "is he." They come in God's name.  
The Jews and the Pharisees were angry about that.
- 75              When he came into the temple in order to preach,  
He found therein merchants who were arrogant.  
In spite of their pride, he drove them out;  
The bishops and masters, they were enraged.
- 80              And they soon asked him why he'd acted so.  
Our Lord answered them soon in the place:  
"It is written that my house is called a prayer-house,  
And a den of thieves you have made it."
- 85              The masters of the temple, they were very proud.  
To capture our Lord, they lay always in wait —  
If he were ever to preach against their law —  
So that they could accuse him and take his life.
- 90              On Holy Thursday, as you may hear,  
When our Lord was seated at his supper,  
He looked about with a gentle expression,  
And said to his disciples who were then with him:  
"One will betray me who's now our comrade;  
Indeed, it'd be better for him if he hadn't been born."  
fol. 145v      Each looked at the others; they were frightened.  
96              They didn't know which of them he'd said it about.
- 100              Then his disciples asked, one after another:  
"Lord," they all said, "who's the man so audacious  
That he'd dare betray you, the one who's among us?  
We desire unto the death to go all with you."

- Tho seyde ure Louerd Crist, that is ful of blysse:  
 "Nymeth gode yeme that ye nouht ne mysse:  
 Hwam ich biteche that bred that ich on wyne wete,  
 He me schal bitraye tonyht er he slepe."  
 105 He hit bitauhte Judas that alle hit myhte iseo,  
 Ther he wes bivoren him and set on his kneo.  
 He hit et blutheliche and lokede ful brode,  
 And the Veond him on bicom myd therylke snode.
- 110 Judas tho onswerede, and spek myd ure Dryhte:  
 "Mayster, am ich thilke that the wile so dyhte?"  
 "Thu hit seyst," queth ure Louerd, "and dest al thine mihte."  
 And he hym ut iwende al bi thuster nyhte.
- 115 He com to the Gywes ther heo togadere were,  
 Al hymseolf one — nedde he nenne yvere —  
 And chepte heom to sullen ure Helare.  
 Hi were swithe blythe for there cheffare.
- 120 He queth to the Gywes: "If ich so ispede  
 That ich bitraye Jhesu, hwat schal beon my mede?"  
 "Thrytty panewes," hi seyden, "Hi beoth alle irede."  
 "Cumeth mid me," queth Judas, "and ich eu wile lede.
- 125 Cumeth swithe myd me, bothe yonge and olde;  
 Thene that ich cusse, vaste ye hyne holde  
 And ledeth hyne warlyche — he con wndres monye.  
 If he nuthe eu askapeth, eu schal sore schomye."
- 125 After thet Judas Skariot him wes ut igon.  
 Ure Louerd nom his apostles, everuychon,  
 fol. 146r And forth myd him ledde to the Munt of Olyvete,  
 Ther he to heom wordes spek myd his muthe swete.
- 130 "Ye seggeth alle," queth ure Louerd, "ye willeth myd me deye;  
 Tonyht eu schal scomye that ye me evere yseye.  
 Hit is write in the bok ther me hit may rede.  
 Vele wintre hit is ago the prophete hit seyde:  
 'Beo the seopheorde aquold and of lyve bireved,  
 Thenne scule sone his seop alle beon todreved.'  
 135 After that ich from dethe eft aryse beo;  
 Ich wile bivoren eu alle cumen to Galyle."
- Tho queth Seynte Peter, theyh alle ofschomed beo:  
 "Ne schal me never schomye, Louerd, for theo."  
 "Peter," queth ure Louerd, "nu thu seyst so.

- Then said our Lord Christ, who is full of bliss:  
“Pay close attention so you don’t miss it:  
He to whom I hand the bread that I wet in wine,  
He will betray me tonight before he sleeps.”  
105 He handed it to Judas so that all could see it,  
Where he was in front of him and sat at his knee.  
He ate it pleurably and looked all about,  
And the Fiend came into him with that very morsel.
- Judas then spoke, saying to our Lord:  
110 “Master, am I the one who will treat you so?”  
“You say so,” said our Lord, “and do all you’re able.”  
And he removed himself out into the dark night.
- He came to the Jews where they were together,  
All alone by himself — he had no companion —  
115 And made a bargain to sell our Savior.  
They were very pleased with their purchase.
- He said to the Jews: “If I may so succeed  
That I betray Jesus, what shall be my reward?”  
“Thirty pennies,” they said, “They’re all ready.”  
120 “Come with me,” said Judas, “and I will lead you.
- Come quickly with me, both young and old;  
The one whom I kiss, you must hold him tightly  
And lead him warily — he works many wonders.  
If he now escapes you, you’ll be badly humiliated.”
- 125 After that Judas Iscariot went away.  
Our Lord took his apostles, every one,  
fol. 146r And led them with him to the Mount of Olives,  
Where he spoke to them with his sweet mouth.
- “All of you say,” said our Lord, “you desire to die with me;  
130 Tonight you’ll be ashamed that you ever saw me.  
It’s written in the book where men may read it.  
Many winters ago the prophet said it:  
‘When the shepherd is killed and robbed of life,  
Then soon will his sheep be entirely scattered.’  
135 Afterwards from death I will rise again;  
I will before all of you come to Galilee.”
- Then said Saint Peter, as though abashed:  
“I will never shame myself, Lord, on your account.”  
“Peter,” said our Lord, “now you say so.

- 140 Er hit beo day tomorewe, al other hit schal go.  
 Thu ne knowest nouht thiseolve, ac ich the yknowe,  
 Thu me schalt thryes fursake er the cok crowe.”
- “Louerd,” queth Seynte Peter — iwis, hym wes ful wo —  
 “Theyh ich to the dethe schulle myd the go,  
 145 Other into prysune, hwether hit wile byvalle,  
 Ic nele never the vorsake.” And so hi seyden alle.
- Tho hi hedden al this iherd, heo were ful sori.  
 Ure Louerd myd heom iwende to Gethsemany.  
 Seththe he to heom seyde — iblessed mote heo beo:  
 150 “Sytteth her the hwile ich go to abidde me.”  
 He nom Seynte Peter, Seynt Jame, and Seynt Jon.  
 He wes ofdred of the deth, that is God and mon —  
 Wel ouhte we beon aferd if we wyse were,  
 And ure sunnes bete the hwile we beoth here!
- 155 Jesus from heom iwende the wrp of o ston,  
 And gon hyne to abidde al himseolf on.  
 “Vader,” he seyde, Jhesu Crist, “if hit may so beo,  
 Of this ilche calche nu forber thu me.  
 fol. 146v If ich hine schal drynke, iworthe thine wille.”  
 160 He wyste that the Gywes hyne thouhte spille.
- As ure Louerd hine ybed, he bigon to swete,  
 That blod orn adun of hym, dropes swythe grete.  
 Ther com of hevene on engel and stod hym vaste by;  
 Hyne vor to gladye he wes ful redi.  
 165 Tho he hedde hyne ibede one gode stunde,  
 He com to his apostles and heom aslepe funde.
- “Slepestu,” he seyde, “Symon?” He wes on of the thre.  
 “Ne myhtestu one tyde wakien myd me?  
 Wakieth and ybiddeth eu, alle togadere,  
 170 That ye ne cumen in vondinge, up to myne Vadere.  
 The tyde is wel neyh icume, ich do eu to understonde,  
 And monnes Sune bith bitauht in sunvulle honde.
- Ariseth up,” he seyde, “and ute we heonne go.  
 Ther him cumeth Judas, that is my fulle ivo.  
 175 He me hafth tonyht isold. Ever wrthe him wo,  
 And alle that other bitraye, nu and evermo.”
- Nedde he bute that word iseyd, Judas him com thrynge  
 Mid Gyues and myd Phariseus from heore motyng,

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

- 140            Before daylight tomorrow,    it shall go otherwise.  
                 You know not yourself,    but I do know you,  
                 You shall forsake me thrice    before the cock crows.”
- “Lord,” said Saint Peter —    truly, he was upset —  
                 “Although even to death    should I go with you,  
145            Or else into prison,    whatever befalls,  
                 I will never forsake you.”    And so said they all.
- When they’d heard all this,    they were quite anxious.  
                 Our Lord went with them    to Gethsemane.  
                 Next he said to them —    blessed may they be:  
150            “Sit here while I go    to pray by myself.”  
                 He took Saint Peter,    Saint James, and Saint John.  
                 He was frightened of death,    he who’s God and man —  
                 Well ought we be afraid    if we are wise,  
                 And conquer our sins    while we are here!
- 155            Jesus went from them    a stone throw’s length,  
                 And left them to pray    all by himself.  
                 “Father,” he, Jesus Christ, said,    “if it may so be,  
                 From this very chalice    spare me now.  
fol. 146v        If I must drink it,    thy will be done.”  
160            He knew that the Jews    plotted to kill him.
- As our Lord prayed,    he started to sweat,  
                 So that blood flowed down him,    very large drops.  
                 An angel came from heaven    and stood firm nearby;  
                 To give him comfort    he was fully ready.  
165            After he’d said his prayer    a good while,  
                 He came to his apostles    and found them asleep.
- “Do you sleep,” he said, “Simon?”    He was one of the three.  
                 “Couldn’t you one time    stay awake with me?  
                 Wake up and offer prayer,    all together,  
170            That you not enter into temptation,    up to my Father.  
                 The time has drawn very near,    understand,  
                 When man’s Son will be handed    into sinful hands.
- Rise up,” he said,    “and we will go from here.  
                 There does Judas approach,    my wicked foe.  
175            He has sold me tonight.    May he be wretched,  
                 And all who betray others,    now and forevermore.”
- Barely had he said that    when Judas hurried to him  
                 With Jews and with Pharisees    from their meeting,

- 180 Mid speres and myd staves and othe vele thinge.  
Lutle luvē hi beren to then hevene Kyngē.
- Jesus com toyeynes heom myd alle his ivere,  
And he to heom seyde, "Hwam ye seche here?"  
Heo hym onswerede, "Jhesum Nazaren."  
Jhesu heom to seyde, "Lo, ich hit em.
- 185 Yf ye me secheth, her ich am yfunde.  
Leteth theos bileven hol and isunde;  
Ne schullen hi nouht yete tholie none wnde."  
The Gywes myd thon worde veollen to the grunde.
- fol. 147r  
191 Judas com avoreward, thet al that baleu wrouhte,  
Mid Gywes and other volke that he myd hym brouhte.  
"Heyl," he seyde, "Mayster," to Jhesu that hi souhte,  
And hyne myd muthe custe as he non uvel ne thouhte.
- 195 "Freond," seyde Jhesu Crist. "To hwan ertu ycume?  
Mid thine valse cosse thu trayest monnes Sune."  
The Gywes up asturte, that leyen in the grunde,  
And nomen anon Jhesu Crist and hyne vaste bunde.
- 200 Seynte Peter hedde o swerd, and he hit ut drouh  
And smot of Malkes ere and nouht hyne ne slouh.  
Tho iseyh Jhesu Crist that Peter so dude,  
"Put in," he seyde, "thi sweord anon in the stude;  
Ne mot ich nouht drynke, Peter, vor the,  
Thene calch that my Vader haveth yveve me."
- 205 Seoththe him spek Jhesu Crist — iheried beo his mihte —  
And seyde to the Gywes nolde he nowiht vyhte:  
"Mid sweordes and myd bottes ye beoth her icume  
So me doth to theove that schal beon ynume.
- 210 Uyche day in the temple wes myne ywune  
To techen eu Godes lore, ther ye were summe.  
Nes tho non so hardy that on me leyde honde,  
Bute nu, by nyhte, thet is for muchel onde."
- Peter iseyh the Gywes ure Louerd vaste bynde.  
Anon he drouh hyne abak and eode heom byhynde;  
Leste he were iknowe, he wes swithe ofdred.  
Notheles he wolde iwite hwuder he were iled.

- 180 With spears and staves and many other things.  
They bore little love for heaven's King.
- Jesus came toward them with all his comrades,  
And he said to them, "Whom do you seek here?"  
They answered him, "Jesus Nazarene."  
Jesus said to them, "Lo, I am he.
- 185 If you seek me, here I am found.  
Let these others stay whole and sound;  
They don't need to suffer any wounds."  
The Jews at that word fell to the ground.
- fol. 147r Judas came forward, who'd created all that grief,  
191 With Jews and other folk whom he'd brought with him.  
"Hail," he said, "Master," to Jesus whom they sought,  
And kissed him with his mouth as if he meant no evil.
- "Friend," said Jesus Christ. "Why have you come?  
With your false kiss you betray man's Son."  
195 The Jews leapt up, who had lain on the ground,  
And soon seized Jesus Christ and bound him fast.
- Saint Peter had a sword, and he drew it out  
And smote off Malchus's ear but didn't slay him.  
When Jesus Christ saw what Peter had done,  
200 He said, "Put aside your sword from this spot now.  
Must I not drink, Peter, for you,  
The chalice that my Father has given to me?"
- Next Jesus Christ spoke — praised be his might —  
And said to the Jews that he'd not resist at all:  
205 "With swords and with clubs have you come here  
To treat me like a thief who has to be caught.
- Every day in the temple it was my custom  
To teach you God's lore, where you gathered.  
Then no one was so rash as to lay hands on me,  
210 But now, by night, it's done very hostilely."
- Peter saw the Jews bind fast our Lord.  
Soon he drew himself back and went behind them;  
Lest he be known, he was deeply frightened.  
Nonetheless he wanted to know where he'd be led.

- 215           The Gywes nomen Jhesu Crist   and forth hine ledde —  
 Of all his apostles,   nenne help he nedde;  
 Alle heo hyne bylevede,   so sore hi weren ofdredde,  
 As ure Louerd therbyvore   heom iseyd hedde.
- 220  
 fol. 147v       Heo brouhte hyne to Kayphas   al wythute ivere;  
 Heo wes heore biscop   in then ylke yere.  
 Of alle his disciples,   ne vulede hym never on  
 Bute Seynte Peter   and on yong mon.  
 Jon hedde enne mantel   of cendal hym abute.  
 He wende in myd Jhesu Crist,   and Peter stod therute —
- 225           For he wes iknowe,   he wes more bold.  
 He stod bi the fure   and wermd hym for the cold.  
 He bed thene dureward   lete in his ivere;  
 Hi wolden heore Louerdes dom   iseon and ihere.
- 230           The dureward hine in lette   al wythute mede;  
 Peter stod myd thon othre   and wermede hym at the glede.  
 Summe of thet ther weren   ykeneu Seynt Jon  
 And nom him by the mantel   that he hedde upon.  
 He bilevede his mantel   in thes Gywes hond,  
 And, himseolf al naked,   at there dure ut wond.
- 235           Er he were him atbroke,   him thuhte ful long  
 For the dute of the deth   is swithe strong.
- 240           Tho ure Louerd wes ibrouht   byvore Kayphas,  
 Thet mayster and byscop   in than yere was,  
 The princes and the Phariseus   hi were swithe blythe.  
 Tho heo iseyen Jhesu Crist,   hi thouhte hyne do of lyve.  
 A veole kunne wise   hi lowen him upon  
 To bryngen hyne to dethe.   Hi nusten vor-hwon.
- 245           Ther aysen tweyne   and bigunne to speke,  
 Thes seyde hwat he wolde   the temple al tobreke,  
 That the Kyng Salomon   makede ful yere,  
 And thene thridde day   himseolf a new a areare:  
 “This we iherde;   herof we bereth witsesse.”  
 Tho onswerede   the more and the lasse:  
 “Theyh he nedde no more ydo,   he ouhte hit forbeode!
- 250           Al his wndres that he doth   is thureh thene quede!”
- fol. 148r       Cayphas spek to Jhesu Crist —   he thouhte hine derye:  
 “Ne herestu hwat theos seggeth?   Hwy neltu onswerye?”  
 Jhesu hym wes stille.   Nolde heo nowyht speke.  
 He mihte, if he wolde,   ful sone hyne awreke.

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

- 215           The Jews seized Jesus Christ   and led him forth —  
From all his apostles,   he had no help;  
All of them left him,   so great was their fear,  
Just as beforehand our Lord   had told them.
- 220  
fol. 147v       They brought him to Caiphas   without any company;  
He was their bishop   in that same year.  
Of all his disciples,   not one followed him  
Other than Saint Peter   and one young man.  
John wore a mantle   of sendal upon him.  
He went in with Jesus Christ,   and Peter stood outside —  
225       Because he was known,   he was the more daring.  
He stood by the fire   and warmed himself from the cold.  
He entreated the gatekeeper   to let in his comrade;  
Their Lord's trial he wanted   to see and hear.
- 230           The gatekeeper let him in   without any fee;  
Peter stood with others   and warmed himself by the coals.  
Some of those who were there   knew Saint John  
And grabbed him by the mantle   that he wore.  
He left behind his mantle   in the Jews' hands,  
And, being wholly naked,   ran out their door.  
235       Before he broke free,   it seemed a long time,  
For the fear of death   is very strong.
- 240           When our Lord was brought   before Caiphas,  
Who was a master and bishop   in that year,  
The leaders and the Pharisees   were quite pleased.  
When they saw Jesus Christ,   they plotted to kill him.  
In many different ways   they blamed him  
To bring him death.   They knew not for what cause.
- 245           There arose two   who began to speak,  
Saying that he intended   to destroy the temple,  
Which King Solomon   had made long ago,  
And on the third day   he'd build a new one:  
"This we heard;   of this we bear witness."  
Then responded   the great and the lowly:  
"Even if he's done nothing further,   he should stop it!  
250       All the wonders he performs   are done by evil!"
- fol. 148r       Caiphas spoke to Jesus Christ —   he hoped to hurt him:  
"Don't you hear what they say?   Why won't you answer?"  
Jesus was quiet.   He wouldn't speak at all.  
He could, if he wanted,   be suddenly avenged.

- 255           Seoththe he hym axede   of his techinge,  
 And of his disciples,   and feole other thinge.
- Ure Louerd hym onswerede   myd swythe veyre speche:  
 “Ofte in the temple   ich wes iwuned to preche  
 Al by lyhte daye,   ther men hit mihte ihere.
- 260           And thu and othre ynowe   that weren thine ivere,  
 Hwat ich to heom seyde,   wel wyten heo —  
 Iwyte at heom that hit iherde,   and nouht ne axe me.”
- Ther leop forth o gadelyng,   as ye mawen ihere,  
 And smot anon Jhesu Crist   anunder that ere.
- 265           “Hit is the byscop,” he queth,   “schaltu so onswerie!  
 He is the hexte of there lawe!   We hyne willeth werie!”  
 Jhesu to hym seyde   and yef hym onswere:  
 “If ich habbe uvele iseyd,   witnessse thu myht bere,  
 And if ich habbe wel ispeke,   therof thu nym gome,  
 270           And nouht me vor to beten   al wythute dome.”
- The Gywes that heolde Jhesu Crist   muchele schome him dude,  
 Blyndfellede and spatten him on   in then ilke stude,  
 And smyten under that ere,   and thus to him seyde:  
 “Hwo is that the smot tho?   Constu hit arede?”
- 275           Muchele schendnesse   hi duden ure Dryhte;  
 For bryngen hyne to dethe   hi duden heore myhte.
- Peter stod bi the fur;   he wes swithe ofdred!  
 He iseyh hw Jhesu Crist   wes uvele biled.  
 Ther com o schelchene gon   that wes myd Kayphas;  
 280           Heo bywste the dure   ther al that mot was.  
 Heo byheold Peter   and seyde to heom that sete:  
 “Iwis, thes is myd Jhesu   thene valse prophete!”
- Peter tho onswerede:   “Ne yknowe ich hyne nouht.  
 Never er ich hyne ne yseyh.   Thu ert mysbythouht.”
- fol. 148v  
 286           Sone herafter   on other ther com gon,  
 And seyde: “Siker thu ert myd him,   a Galilewis mon.”  
 “Mon,” queth Seynte Peter,   “Y not hwat seyst thu.  
 Ne ikneu ich hyne   nevere ne yseyh bute nu.”  
 Tho onswerede on other   thet wes hire yvere;
- 290           He wes Malkes kunesmon   thet Peter smot of that ere:  
 “Iwis, thu were myd Jhesu Crist   in the leyhtune.  
 Ich iknowe the ful wel.   Ther he wes ynume.”

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

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- 255           Afterwards he asked him   about his teachings,  
                  And about his disciples,   and many other things.
- Our Lord answered him   with very gentle speech:  
                  “Often in the temple   I was accustomed to preach  
                  During the daylight,   where men could hear it.
- 260           And you and many others   who were your comrades,  
                  What I said to them,   know it well —  
                  Learn from those who heard it,   and don’t ask me.”
- There leapt forth a scoundrel,   as you may hear,  
                  And he suddenly struck Jesus Christ   under the ear.
- 265           “He’s the bishop,” he said,   “so you must respond!  
                  He’s chief of the law!   We will defend him!”  
                  Jesus spoke to him   and gave him an answer:  
                  “If I’ve spoken evil,   you may bear witness,  
                  And if I’ve spoken well,   pay attention to it,
- 270           But don’t strike me   before a legal decision.”
- The Jews who held Jesus Christ   did him much shame,  
                  Blindfolded and spat on him   in that very place,  
                  And struck him under the ear,   and spoke to him thus:  
                  “Who struck you then?   Can you figure it out?”
- 275           Much dishonor   they did to our Lord;  
                  To bring him to death   they applied their power.
- Peter stood by the fire;   he was deeply afraid.  
                  He saw how Jesus Christ   was vilely treated.  
                  There came a handmaid   who was with Caiphas;  
280           She guarded the door   where the meeting occurred.  
                  She beheld Peter   and said to those seated:  
                  “Truly, he is with Jesus   the false prophet!”
- Peter then replied:   “I know nothing about him.  
                  Never before have I seen him.   You’re mistaken.”
- fol. 148v  
286           Soon after that   someone else came there,  
                  And said: “Surely you’re with him,   a Galilean.”  
                  “Man,” said Saint Peter,   “I don’t know what you mean.  
                  I never knew him   or saw him before now.”
- 290           Then answered another   who was their comrade,  
                  A kinsman of Malchus   whose ear Peter had cut off:  
                  “Yes, you were with Jesus Christ   in the garden.  
                  I know you very well.   He was apprehended there.”

- Peter atsok and seyde: "Awaryed mote heo beo  
 That ever hyne iknewe. Ich segge vor me."  
 295 Nedde he bute thet word iseyd, the cok crowe bigon.  
 Jhesu hyne bywende and lokede him upon.  
 Peter anon therafter hyne understod  
 Hwat his Louerd hedde iseyd. He wes sori-mod.
- Anon he ut iwende and bigon to wepe.  
 300 Theyh he hedde his Louerd fursake, he thoughte for to bete.  
 Anon, an ernemorewe so sone so hit wes day,  
 Hi comen alle togadere, as ich eu seggen may.  
 The Gywes and al that other volk hi weren swithe vouse,  
 And brouhten ure Louerd Crist to heore mothuse.  
 305 Heo him to seyden: "Nu thu ert her ibrouht.  
 Say us nuthe if thu ert Crist that we habbeth isouht."
- Ure Louerd heom onswerede: "Theyh ich eu segge soth,  
 Ye nelleth me nouht ileve, ich hit wot inouh.  
 If ich eu ouht axi, ye nelleth me nouht telle,  
 310 Ne lete me gon quite. Ye thencheth me to quelle.  
 Thervore ich ine hevene schal sytte by myne Vadere,  
 And seththe cumen and deme eu alle togadere."  
 Tho sayden hi alle: "Thenne ertu Godes Sune?"  
 "Ye hit seggeth, for ich hit am. Thervore ich am ynume."
- This iherde Kayphas. His weden he tobrek,  
 And sethth to then volke theos wordes he spek:  
 "Hwat abyde ye nuthe to habben mo wytnesse?  
 fol. 149r Alle ye habbeth this iherd, the more and the lesse.  
 Hw he haveth her ispeke. Hwat is eur red?"  
 320 Alle hi onswerede: "He is wrthe to beo ded."
- Seththe hi alle aysen up and forth hyne ledde;  
 Of the Kynge of hevene none reuthe hi nedde.  
 "Heo brouhten hyne to Pylates, thet wes heore herre.  
 Herkne nu," hi seyden, "we nelleth the nouht bicherre.  
 325 Thesne mon, we funde, vorbeoden ure lawe  
 That we nu and ure eldre heolde by olde dawe.  
 Muchel of ure volke he haveth iturnd therfrom;  
 He seyth that he is Godes Sune and is a dedlich mon,  
 And he vorbeod Cesares gavel of alle kunnes thing.  
 330 He yelp tovore us alle that he is ure king."
- Pilates queth to Jhesu Crist: "Seye thu me soth,  
 Yf thu ert Gywene Kyng other hi habbeth woh."

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

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Peter denied and said: "Cursed be  
Anyone who knew him. I speak for myself."  
295 As he uttered that word, the cock crowed.  
Jesus turned toward him and looked at him.  
After that Peter suddenly understood  
What his Lord had said. He was full of regret.

Immediately he ran out and started to weep.  
300 Though he'd forsaken his Lord, he wanted to make amends.  
Soon, in the early morning just as it was daylight,  
They came all together, as I tell you.  
The Jews and all other folk were very eager,  
And brought our Lord Christ to their meeting-house.  
305 They said to him: "Now that you've been brought here.  
Tell us now whether you're Christ whom we've sought."

Our Lord answered them: "If I tell you the truth,  
You won't believe me, I'm certain.  
If I ask you anything, you'll tell me nothing,  
310 And not let me go free. You plan to kill me.  
Therefore in heaven I shall sit by my Father,  
And afterwards come and judge you all together."  
They all said: "Then are you God's Son?"  
"You say it, for I am it. Thus am I named."

315 Caiphas heard this. He tore his clothes,  
And then to the people he spoke these words:  
"Why should you wait to have more witnesses?  
fol. 149r All of you have heard this, more or less,  
How he's spoken here. What is our verdict?"  
320 All of them answered: "He deserves to die."

Then they all rose up and led him forth;  
For the King of heaven they felt no compassion.  
They brought him to Pilate, their superior.  
"Listen now," they said, "we will not deceive you.  
325 This man, we find, has broken our law  
That we and our elders have anciently held.  
Many of our people he's turned from it;  
He says he's God's Son but is a mortal man,  
And he forbade tribute to Caesar of any kind.  
330 He boasted before us all that he's our king."

Pilate said to Jesus Christ: "Tell me the truth,  
Whether you're King of the Jews or whether they're wrong."

- “Thu hit seyst,” queth ure Louerd, “that ich am Godes Sune,  
I not for hwiche gulte hi me habbeth inume.”
- 335 Pilates him ut iwende therafter ful sone.  
He seyde: “Hwat haveth thes mon ido that is ibrouht to me?”  
The Gywes him onswereden: “If he nedde mysdo,  
Nere he nouht for us inume ne ibrouht the to.”  
Pylates heom to seyde: “After eure lawe,
- 340 That ye nu habbeth and heolde bi olde dawe,  
Demyth hyne nuthe other leteth hyne beo.  
Nenne gult of dethe ich on hym iseo.”
- The Gywes onswerede: “After ure lawe,  
We ne mote nenne mon do of lyf-dawe.”
- 345 Pilates eft iwende him in ther ure Louerd stod.  
The Gywes were ful bysie to scheden his blod.  
Pilates clepede ure Louerd, and thus hym seyde to:  
Thu ert Gywene Kyng, theyh hi the schome do.”
- Ure Louerd him onswerede — iblessed mote he beo:  
“Hwether seystu hit thiseolf, other othre hit seyde by me.”
- 350 fol. 149v Pilates hym onswerede: “Am ich Gyu thenne?  
The bysyes the me bitauhte and mo of thine menne.  
Hwat havestu ido? For hwan ertu inume?”  
Jhesu him onswerede, Seynte Marie Sune,
- 355 “Yf mi kyneriche were ine worlde thisse,  
Mine men wolde wythstonde, wite thu myd iwisse,  
That ich nere nouht bitauht in Gywene honde,  
Ac my kyneriche is in other londe.”
- Pilates tho him seyde: “Thenne ertu kyng?”
- 360 “Thu hit seyst,” queth ure Louerd. “Nabbe ich non evenyng.  
Ich theron am ibore and to this world icume;  
And bere witnesse of sothe: thervore, ich am inume.  
Alle that beoth in sothe, ihereth myne word,  
And heo wel atholdeth, and leggeth ine hord.”
- 365 Tho seyde Pilates him to: “Hwat is sothnesse?”  
Ure Louerd ne onswerede, more ne lesse.  
Pilates eft ut eode and bilevede Jhesus,  
And com to than volke and seyde to heom thus:  
“I ne vynde nenne gult in thisse monne.
- 370 Hit is eur kustume to habbe quyt enne

“You say it,” spoke our Lord, “that I’m God’s Son,  
I don’t know for what crime they’ve taken me.”

335 Pilate went out very soon after that.  
He said: “What’s this man done who’s brought to me?”  
The Jews answered him: “If he’d done no wrong,  
He’d not have been taken by us nor brought to you.”  
Pilate said to them: “According to your law,  
340 Which you now have and have anciently held,  
Judge him now or else leave him alone.  
No guilt worthy of death do I see in him.”

The Jews answered: “According to our law,  
We may no man condemn to death.”  
345 Pilate went again to where our Lord stood.  
The Jews were eager to shed his blood.  
Pilate called our Lord, and said to him thus:  
“You are King of the Jews, but they shame you.”

Our Lord answered him — blessed may he be:  
350 “You either say it yourself, or else it’s said by me.”  
fol. 149v Pilate answered him: “Am I then a Jew?  
The bishops handed you to me and some of your men.  
What have you done? For whom are you taken?”  
Jesus answered him, Saint Mary’s Son:

355 “If my kingdom were of this world,  
My men would have resisted, know truly,  
And I wouldn’t be held in Jewish hands,  
But my kingdom is of another land.”

Pilate said to him: “Then are you king?”  
360 “You say it,” spoke our Lord. “I have no equal.  
I am born for that purpose and come to this world;  
And bear witness to truth: for that, I am taken.  
All who dwell in truth, hear my words,  
And heed them well, and store them up.”

365 Then Pilate said to him: “What is truth?”  
Our Lord did not answer, more or less.  
Pilate went away again and left Jesus,  
And came to the folk and spoke to them thus:  
“I don’t find any guilt in this man.  
370 It’s your custom to acquit one

At eure muchele feste everuyche yere.  
Schal ich there Gywene Kyng lete gon al skere?"

And hi alle gradden Pilates upon:  
"Nouht hyne," hi seyden, "ac yef us Barraban!"  
375 Barraban wes a theof; thervore he wes inume  
And myd other theoves ido ine prysune.

Pilates nom tho Jhesu Crist and hyne heyhte bete  
That al his swete likame of blode gon to swete.  
The knyhtes hyne nomen and in hyne ledde,  
380 And duden al of his clothes thet he on hym hedde;  
Seththe hi nomen a red cloth and duden him abute,  
And one yerd on his hond, and gunnen him alute;  
fol. 150r Of one wrase of thornes he wrythen hym one crune,  
Of than alre kennuste that grewen in the tune.  
385 Hi setten heo on his heued and vaste ther tobeote.  
On everyche halve that blod gon ut yeote.  
Seththe hi knowede and seyde, "Hayl, Gywene King,"  
And smyten under that ere, ne sparede hi no thing.

Pilates eft ut eode and to the Gywes seyde:  
390 "Lo, her ich brynge thisne mon and tovore eu lede;  
Ich nenne gult ne vynde on him, i do eu to understonde."  
He wuste thet he wes inume vor heore muchel onde.

Ure Louerd ber his crune and com him ut gon.  
"Lo," seyde Pilates, "her is thes ilke mon."  
395 The byspes and thet other volk gradden him upon.  
"Do a rode! Do a rode!" hi seyden hyne anon.

Pilates tho onswerede and thus heom seyde to:  
"Nymeth hym euseolve and on rode do."  
The Gywes hym onswereden: "We habbeth ure lawe.  
400 Therafter, he schal beo idon ut of lyf-dawe;  
Vor he maketh him Godes Sune, we holdeth hyne amed."  
Pilates theos word iherde. Tho wes heo more ofdred.  
He iwende eft ayeyn thar he wes ere,  
And axede tho Jhesu Crist hwenene heo were.

Ure Louerd ne yef nenne onswere ac stod him al stille.  
He myhte sone hyne awreke if hit were his wille.  
He ne onswerede hym nowiht — iblessed beo he.  
405 Pilates to hym seyde: "Thu ne spekest nouht with me;

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

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At your great festival every year.  
Shall I the King of the Jews release all free?"

375 And they all cried out upon Pilate:  
"Not him," they said, "but give us Barrabas!"  
Barrabas was a thief; on that account he was taken  
And with other thieves imprisoned.

Pilate took then Jesus Christ and ordered him scourged  
Until his entire precious body began to sweat blood.  
380 The knights took him and led him in,  
And took off all the clothes that he had on him;  
Then they took a red cloth and put it on him,  
And a rod in his hand, and began to bow to him;  
fol. 150r From a wreath of thorns they formed a crown for him,  
Of the sharpest of all that grew in town.  
385 They set it on his head and violently fastened it there.  
On every side blood gushed out.  
Then they kneeled and said, "Hail, King of the Jews,"  
And struck him under the ear, spared him nothing.

Pilate then went out and said to the Jews:  
390 "Lo, here I bring this man and lead him before you;  
I don't find any guilt in him, I want you to understand."  
He knew he'd been taken because they were envious.

Our Lord bore his crown and was put on display.  
"Lo," said Pilate, "here is the very man."  
395 The bishops and other people cried out upon him.  
"Crucify him! Crucify him!" they said immediately.

Pilate then answered and said to them thus:  
"Take him yourselves and put him on the cross."  
400 The Jews answered him: "We have our law.  
According to it, he must be condemned to death;  
Because he calls himself God's Son, we consider him mad."  
Pilate heard this word. Then he was more frightened.  
He went out again to where he stood before,  
And then asked Jesus Christ where he was from.

405 Our Lord gave no answer but stood completely silent.  
He could've avenged himself had it been his will.  
He didn't answer him at all — blessed may he be.  
Pilate said to him: "You do not talk to me;

- 410 Nostu that ich habbe myhte on rode to do the?  
And ich habbe myhte to lete the quyte beo?"
- Ure Louerd him onswerede: "Neddestu none myhte  
Me vor do to dethe, myd wowe ne myd ryhte,  
Bute hit were the iyeve, wite thu to iwisse,  
Of him that is us alle abuve in heveryche blysse.  
fol. 150v Vor than he more sunne hafth nuthe, of me,  
416 He that me bitrayde and seththe bitauhte the."
- Therafter Pilates thouhte to leten hyne go,  
Ac the Gywes him seyden: "Ever wurthe heom wo.  
If thu thysne bilevest and hine letest so,  
420 Nertu nouht Cesares freond ac ert his ivo.  
Everuych mon that maketh hym king, we hit seggeth the.  
He wythseyth Cesare. No king nys bute he."
- Pilates ladde ut ure Louerd; he nolde no leng abyde —  
Thet wes a longe Vryday at thare sixte tide —  
425 And seyde to thon Gywes: "Lo, her eur kyng."  
"Do hine away!" hi gredden. "Anhong an hying!"
- Pilates heom onswerede and thus heom seyde to:  
"Wille ye that eur king on rode beo ido?"  
The bispes tho onswereden and seyden to him thar:  
430 "We nabbeth nenne other king bute Cesar."
- Pilates nom tho ure Louerd and heom bitauhte on honde.  
Heo hine bitauhte knyhtes that duden him muchele schonde.  
The knyhtes thet hine ledden bitauhten him the rode  
Theron he deth tholede and bouhte us myd his blode.  
435 He ber heo on his schuldre toward than ilke stude  
That hatte Kalvarie, theron hi hine dude.
- Tho he wes on the rode idon, the Gywes were ful gled.  
Hi nome twey theoves that weren myd him iled.  
Thene enne hi honge in one half for to don him teone,  
440 And on bi that other half, and Jhesu heom bitweone.  
Ure Louerd tho this seyde, that is ful of soth:  
"Vader, voryef heom thisne gult; hy nuten hwat hi doth."
- Tho Jhesu wes uppe the rode that tholede pyne strong.  
The knyhtes nome his clothes to delen heom among.  
445 Tho funden heo his curtel, that he wes al ihol.  
Hi nolden therof makie nones cunnes dol,

410                   Don't you know I have the power   to crucify you?  
                      And I have the power   to let you go free?"

                      Our Lord answered him:   "You don't have the power  
                      To put me to death,   either wrongly or rightly,  
                      Except as it's given to you,   know truly,  
                      By him who's over all of us   in heaven's bliss.  
fol. 150v           The one who has greater sin   now, regarding me,  
416                   Is he who betrayed me   and then handed me to you."

                      After that Pilate wanted   to let him go,  
                      But the Jews told him:   "Keep punishing him.  
                      If you believe this   and therefore release him,  
420                   You're not Caesar's friend   but rather his foe.  
                      Every man who says he's a king,   we tell you about it.  
                      He defies Caesar.   There's no king but he."

                      Pilate led out our Lord;   he would not delay —  
                      It was on Good Friday   at the sixth hour —  
425                   And said to the Jews:   "Lo, here's your king."  
                      "Take him away!" they cried out,   "Hang him at once!"

                      Pilate answered them   and said to them thus:  
                      "Do you want your king   to be crucified?"  
                      The bishops then answered   and said to him there:  
430                   "We have no other   king beside Caesar."

                      Pilate then took our Lord   and handed him over.  
                      He handed him to knights   who shamed him greatly.  
                      The knights leading him   gave him the cross  
                      Whereon he suffered death   and bought us with his blood.  
435                   He bore it on his shoulder   toward that very spot  
                      Named Calvary,   where they led him.

                      When he was put on the cross,   the Jews rejoiced.  
                      They took two thieves   who were led with him.  
                      One hung high on one side   to be subjected to torture,  
440                   And one on the other side,   and Jesus between them.  
                      Our Lord then said this,   full of truth:  
                      "Father, forgive them this guilt;   they know not what they do."

                      Then Jesus was on the cross   suffering hard pain.  
                      The knights took his clothes   to divide among themselves.  
445                   When they found his cloak,   it was all whole.  
                      They didn't want   to divide it in any way,

- fol. 151r      Ac hi casten heore lot    hwes he scolde beo.  
 Hi nolden hyne nouht delen    a-to ne a-threo.
- 450            The princes and thet other volk    hokerede him upon.  
 Thes hi seyde haveth iheld    mony en other mon  
 Crist thet other havest iheld,    Kyng of Yrahel.  
 “Help nu thiseolve    for thu myht ful wel.  
 Yf thu ert so myhti    so thu seyst that thu beo,  
 Lyht adun of the croyz    that we hit alle iseo.”
- 455            On of the theoves    that him heng by,  
 He seyde to ure Louerde    and gon him hokeri:  
 “Crist, help thiseolve,    and eke help us.”  
 The other him onswerede,    and to him seyde thus:
- 460            “Thu nert, wrecche, of Gode ofdred    that her ert anhonge.  
 We after ure gultes    mede habbeth yvonge;  
 Thes thet uppe the rode    is nevere uvel ne dude.”  
 He seyde to ure Louerde    anon in the stude:
- 465            “Louerd,” he seyde, “thench on me,”    and bigon to syche,  
 “Hwenne thu cumest to hevene    ther is thi kyneriche.”  
 Jhesu him onswerede:    “Soth, ich segge the,  
 Today in paradyse    thu schalt beo myd me.”
- 470            Pilates wrot himseolf    a wryt al on hyng:  
 Thar is Jhesu of Nazareth,    the Gywene Kyng.”  
 Monye Gywes hit radden    and were swythe grym.  
 Hit wes iwryten en Ebreu,    on Gryv, and Latyn.
- 475            The bispes of the Gywes    seyden Pilates to:  
 “Thu ne schuldest nouht thi wryt    habben iwryte so,  
 Ne wryt thu nouht    ‘Her is there Gywene Kyng.’  
 Theyh he seyde that he hit wes,    hit is lesyng.”
- fol. 151v      Pilates tho onswerede    and thus heom seyde to:  
 480            “Thet ich wrot beo iwryte;    ne may hit no mon undo.”  
 Hit wes welneyh mydday    tho thusternesse com  
 In alle midden-herde,    fort thet hit wes non.  
 The sonne bilevede hire lyht,    and the mone al so,  
 That huding-cloth todelde    in the temple a-to.
- Jhesu him gon clepyen    myd stefne vul stronge:  
 “Vader, ich myne soule    biteche in thyne honde.”  
 Tho he hedde so yseyd    that scop the sunne and mone,  
 He deyede thereafter    wel swithe sone.

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

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- fol. 151r      So they cast their lots    for whose it would be.  
They didn't want to divide it    into two or three.
- 450            The leaders and the other folk    mocked him.  
They said this cross had held    many another man  
Whom others had called Christ,    King of Israel.  
"Help yourself now    by your mighty power.  
If you're as powerful    as you say you are,  
Come down off the cross    so that we can see all of it."
- 455            One of the thieves    who hung beside him,  
He spoke to our Lord    and began to mock him:  
"Christ, help yourself,    and also help us."  
The other one answered him,    saying this to him:
- 460            "You, wretch, are unafraid of God    who's hung here.  
For our crimes we've    received the punishment;  
This one on the cross    has never committed sin."  
He spoke to our Lord    soon in that spot:
- 465            "Lord," he said, "remember me,"    and started to sigh,  
"When you come to heaven    where your kingdom is."  
Jesus answered him:    "Truly, I say to you,  
Today in paradise    you will be with me."
- 470            Pilate himself wrote    a sign very quickly:  
"Here is Jesus of Nazareth,    King of the Jews."  
Many Jews read it    and were very angry.  
It was written in Hebrew,    Greek, and Latin.
- 475            The bishops of the Jews    said to Pilate:  
"You shouldn't have written    your sign this way,  
Nor written    'Here is the King of the Jews.'  
Although he claimed he was,    it is a lie."
- fol. 151v      Pilate answered them    and said to them thus:  
480            "What I wrote is written;    none may undo it."  
It was close to midday    when darkness fell  
Over all middle-earth,    until it was noon.  
The sun abandoned its light,    and the moon too,  
So that the veil split    in two in the temple.
- Jesus cried out    in a very strong voice:  
"Father, my soul I    commend to your keeping."  
Once he'd said this,    he who created sun and moon,  
He died after that    very soon.

- 485           Thet iseyh centurio,   that ther bisydes stod,  
Hw ure Louerd gon deye,   that bouhte us myd his blod.  
He seyde to the knyhtes   that weren his ivere:  
“Iwis, thes mon wes Godes Sune   that we iseoth here.”
- 490           The Gywes to Pilates comen   and thus him seyden to:  
“We biddeth that heore thyes   beon tobroken a-to,  
And seoththe let heom don adun   of the waritreo,  
Vor ure muchele feste   tomorewe schal beo.”
- 495           Of then one theove hi breken   his thyes a-to,  
And of his yvere   hi duden al so.  
Tho heo comen to Jhesu Crist   and seyen hine ded,  
Ne breken hi nouht his thyes —   the bok hit forbed.
- 500           Hi bitauhte one knyhte   a sper on his hond  
And setten to his syde;   hit wes sarp and long.  
He schef hit myd strenkthe   that to his heorte hit com.  
Bothe blod and eke water   therafter ut ron.
- 505           The ilke that hit iseyh,   he wrot this godspel:  
“Tha he soth segge.   We leveth hit ful well.”  
Tho hit wes wel neyh eve,   Joseph ther com gon,  
Of Arymathia —   he wes a riche mon.  
He com to Pilates   and sayde to him thus:  
“Yef me thes prophetes body   that hatte Jesus.”  
Tho heyhte Pilates   that body him biteche  
Of ure Louerd Jhesu Crist,   that is soule leche.
- 510           Joseph nom ure Louerd   adun of the rode  
And wond him on o cheysil cloth,   thet bouhte us mid his blode.  
fol. 152r   Seoththe he hyne leyde   in one thruh of stone  
That he hedde newe imaked   to himself one.  
He hwelfde at thare sepulchre dure   enne grete ston.  
Seththe he wende forth his wey   hwer he hedde to gon.
- 515           Thene other day thereafter   that Jhesu Crist wes ded,  
The Gywes and the Phariseus   nomen alle enne red.  
Hi comen to Pilates,   then maystre of the londe.  
“Louerd,” hi to hym seyde,   “we beoth understonde  
Thes ilke swike seyde,   for hwan we beoth unblythe,  
520           ‘Ich wile thene thridde day   aryse from dethe to lyve.’
- Let wite the sepulchre   fort thene thridde day  
That his disciples hine ne stele   and beren hyne away,  
And seggen to the volke   thet beoth of ure lawe,

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

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- 485           The centurion saw,   standing nearby,  
How our Lord died,   who bought us with his blood.  
He said to the knights   who were his companions:  
“Indeed, this man was God’s Son   whom we see here.”
- 490           The Jews came to Pilate   and said to him thus:  
“We ask that their thighs   be broken in two,  
And then let them be brought down   from the gallows,  
For our great festival   will be tomorrow.”
- 495           Of one thief they broke   his thighs in two,  
And of his companion   they did likewise.  
When they came to Jesus Christ   and saw him dead,  
They didn’t break his thighs —   the book forbade it.
- 500           They gave to a knight   a spear in his hand  
To strike his side;   it was sharp and long.  
He stabbed it hard   till it went into his heart.  
Both blood and water   flowed out from it.
- 505           The same one who saw it,   he wrote this testimony:  
“He told the truth.   We believe it completely.”  
When it was almost evening,   Joseph came there,  
From Arimathea —   he was a rich man.  
He came to Pilate   and said to him thus:  
“Give me the body of this prophet   named Jesus.”  
Then Pilate ordered   the body be given to him  
Of our Lord Jesus Christ,   the soul’s physician.
- 510           Joseph took our Lord   down from the cross  
And wound him in linen,   who bought us with his blood.  
fol. 152r   Afterwards he laid him   in a grave of stone  
That he’d newly made   for himself alone.  
He rolled to the sepulchre door   a large stone.  
Then he went on his way   to where he needed to go.
- 515           On another day after   Jesus had died,  
The Jews and the Pharisees   conferred together.  
They came to Pilate,   governor of the land.  
“Lord,” they said to him,   “we understand  
That this deceiver said,   for which we’re unhappy,  
520           ‘On the third day I will   arise from death to life.’
- Let us guard the sepulchre   until the third day  
So that his disciples not steal   and bear him away,  
And then say to the folk   who are of our faith,

- 525 'He is aryse from dethe thet Gywes hedden islawe,  
Thenne wrth the laste dwele — wurse to alegge  
Thene the vorme were, hwatevere men segge."
- Pilates heom onswerede, that wes icume of Rome:  
"Goth nu and wyteth hyne wel hyedliche and sone."  
The Gywes tho vorth wende, and nomen heore knyhtes  
530 To witen the sepulchre bothe a day and nyhtes.  
Seththe hi dude heore sel upe thene ston.  
Lutel hi wiste wrecches hw hit sculde gon.
- The Gywes weren wode that yeven thene red,  
And wende holde Jhesu Crist theyh he were ded.  
535 Nu wolden heo hyne atholden — that scop alle thing  
Ne tobrek he helle dure! — and overcom heore King.
- Jesus, tho his wille wes, aros from dethe to lyve.  
Theyh hyne biwusten knyhtes, voure other vyve,  
Hwy nolden hi hine atholden so the Gywes redde,  
540 Ne hi ne myhten hyne iseon, so hi weren ofdredde.  
Of then engel thet ther com tho hi iseyen that lyht.  
Hi vellen so hi were ded, anon vorth riht.
- fol. 152v Jesus Crist, thet suo aros thurh his muchele myhte  
And com into this mydden-erd sunfulle men to ryhte,  
545 Lete us so ure lyf in this world dihte  
That we mote alle cumen to than eche lyhte.
- Bidde we alle, leove men, God that is so hende  
That he of the Holy Gost so ure heorte atende,  
That we mote at ure scrift thane Veond schende  
550 That myd fule sunnes us thencheth alle a blende,  
And yef that eche lif that nevere ne haveth ende  
Hwanne ure soule unbynd of lykamyche bende.
- Her is hwon Jhesu Crist aros from dethe to lyve.*
- Seoththe Crist from dethe aros, thet is of sunnes clene,  
The vorme that he myd spek wes Marie Maudeleyne.  
555 Tho heo com to his buryles hyne for to seche,  
Heo wende that the Gywes hedde furstole ure soule leche.  
Marie stod withute the dure and sore wepe bigon  
Tho heo ne funde nouht Jhesu Crist, thet wes hire leofmon.  
He adun stupede and lokede myd eye  
560 If heo, of ure Louerde, ouht ther iseye.  
Tho seyh heo ther twey engles myd hwite clothes and swote;

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

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525 'He's risen from death whom the Jews ordered killed,'  
Then carry out a final deception — to claim something worse  
Than happened before, whatever men say."

They were answered by Pilate, who'd come from Rome:  
"Go now and guard it attentively and quickly."  
530 The Jews then went forth, taking their knights  
To guard the sepulchre both day and night.  
Later they sealed it up with a stone.  
Little did those wretches know what would happen.

The Jews were foolish to give that order,  
And expected to hold Jesus Christ as if he were dead.  
535 Now they thought to confine him — he who created all  
Immediately broke hell's door! — and overcome their King.

Jesus, by his will, arose from death to life.  
Even though knights guarded him, four or five,  
540 They couldn't keep him as the Jews had ordered,  
Nor might they see him, so they were afraid.  
Then from the angel coming there they saw the light.  
They fell as if dead, right there at once.

fol. 152v Jesus Christ, who raised himself by his mighty power  
And came to this middle-earth to redeem sinful men,  
545 Let us be so that our life in this world be arranged  
That we may all come to the eternal light.

Let us all, beloved men, pray to God who's so gracious  
That by the Holy Ghost he kindle our hearts,  
550 So that we may by our confession destroy the Fiend  
Who with foul sins thinks to blind us completely,  
And grant that each life may never have an end  
When our soul is unbound from fleshly bonds.

*Here is when Jesus Christ arose from death to life.*

After Christ arose from death, clean of sin,  
The first to whom he spoke was Mary Magdalene.  
555 When she came to his tomb in order to seek him,  
She thought that the Jews had stolen our soul's doctor.  
Mary stood outside the door and began to weep sadly  
When she didn't find Jesus Christ, her beloved.  
She bent down and searched with her eyes  
560 Whether she, of our Lord, might see anything.  
Then she saw there two angels in white clothes and fragrant;

- The on set at the heuede, the other at the vote.  
 "Wymmon, hwi wepestu?" hi seyden hire to.  
 "For hi habbeth myne Louerd, I not hwer ido."  
 565 Marie hire drouh abak and lokede heo bihynde.  
 Tho yseyh heo Jhesu Crist, thet heo ther wende vynde.  
 Ure Louerd hire gon axi: "For hwi and for hwan  
 Wepestu, and hwam thu seche? Say me, wymmon."  
 Marie him onswerede and thus him seyde to:  
 570 "The Gywes habbeth mynne Louerd of thisse stude ido.  
 Ich not never hwydere hi habbeth hyne ibrouht.  
 Thervore ich am ful sori and habbe hyne isouht.  
 Havestu hyne away ibore? Seye me, gode mon,  
 fol. 153r And ich hyne vecche wille al myseolf on."  
 575 Heo nuste nouht that he hit wes thet ure bendes tobrek.  
 Heo wende hit were the leyhtunward that to hire spek.  
 Jesus tho nemde, "Marie," and cudde hwat he wes.  
 Marie in hire lyve nevere so blythe nes.  
 Heo clepede hyne "Mayster," thet is, "Rabony,"  
 580 And fel to his fote and bed hym mercy.  
 Jhesu spek to Marie and hire tho forbed  
 That heo attryne ne scolde his honde ne his fet.  
 "Ich ne astey nouht yete up to myne Vadere,  
 Ac go to myne brothren ther hi beoth togadere.  
 585 Saye heom that ich astye to mynes Vader riche,  
 Ther is my Vader and eke heore, and joye ever ilyche."  
 After thet Jhesu Crist myd Marie hedde ispeke,  
 Heo nolde vor none thinge his heste tho tobreke.  
 Heo com to his disciples ther hi togadere were.  
 590 Never of tydinge hy er so glad nere!  
 Heo seyde to heom the wordes thet hire heyhte Jhesu,  
 And that "he wes from dethe aryse and to me seyde thus."  
 Tho hi this iherde, hi were swythe blythe  
 That ure Louerd wes aryse from dethe to lyve.
- 595 As heo stode and speken and weren at wenyng  
 Of ure Louerdes aryste and fele other thinge,  
 Ure Louerd Jhesu Crist, the wes ibore of the meyde,  
 He stod amydde heom alle and to heom thus seyde:  
 "Sibsumnesse eu beo among. Ne beo ye nouht ofdredde.  
 600 Ich hit am that her bivore eu alle myd me ledde."  
 Hi weren aferd and offruyht, and no wunder nes.  
 Heo wenden thet hit were a gost that among heom wes.  
 Jhesu to heom seyde: "Of hwan beo ye offerde?  
 And beoth in eure heorte thouhtes fele arerde,  
 605 Iseoth nuthe bothe myne vet and ek myne honde,

One sat at the head, the other at the foot.  
“Woman, why do you weep?” they said to her.  
“Because they’ve taken my Lord — I don’t know where.”  
565 Mary drew back and looked behind her.  
Then she saw Jesus Christ whom she’d gone there to find.  
Our Lord asked her: “Why and for whom  
Do you weep, and whom do you seek? Tell me, woman.”  
Mary answered him and said to him thus:  
570 “The Jews have taken my Lord from this place.  
I don’t know where they’ve brought him.  
Therefore I’m very sad and have sought him.  
Have you borne him away? Tell me, good man,  
fol. 153r And I’ll fetch him all by myself.”  
575 She didn’t know it was he who’d broken our bonds.  
She thought it was the gardener speaking to her.  
Jesus then said, “Mary,” and revealed who he was.  
In all her life Mary was never so joyful.  
She called him “Master,” that is, “Rabbi,”  
580 And fell at his feet and asked his mercy.  
Jesus spoke to Mary and then told her  
That she must not touch his hands or his feet.  
“I’ve not yet ascended up to my Father,  
But go to my brethren where they’re gathered.  
585 Tell them that I ascend to my Father’s kingdom,  
Where my Father and his own are, and joy unceasingly.”  
After Jesus Christ had spoken with Mary,  
She wouldn’t for anything break his commandment.  
She came to his disciples where they were gathered.  
590 Never of tidings were they ever so glad!  
She told them the words Jesus had told her,  
And that “he was risen from death and said thus to me.”  
When they heard this, they were jubilant  
That our Lord had arisen from death to life.

595 As they stood and spoke and were in doubt  
Of our Lord’s resurrection and many other things,  
Our Lord Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin,  
Stood among them all and said to them thus:  
“Peace be among you. Don’t be afraid.  
600 It is I who’s here before all of you whom I led.”  
They were afraid and terrified, and it was no wonder.  
They thought it was a ghost who was among them.  
Jesus said to them: “Of whom are you afraid?  
And if now in your heart many questions arise,  
605 See now both my feet and also my hands,

- fol. 153v      That ich hit am Jhesu Crist    that her myd eu stonde.  
Hondleth nu and iseoth    that gost naveth none bon —  
Ne vleys ne bon nouther,    as me is upon.”  
Tho he hedde so yseyd,    he dude more yet.
- 610            He schewede heom his honde    and so he dude his fet.  
Yet heo hit ny levede,    the more ne the lesse.  
Ac thuhte muche wunder,    of heore gladnesse.  
Ure Louerd Jhesu Crist    myd heom bigon to speke:  
“Habbe ye ouht here    that mon may of ete?”
- 615            Hi hym bivore brouhten    of one visse ibred  
And ek enne hunycomb.    Hi weren swithe gled.  
Ure Louerd nom and et therof    tovore heom everuychone,  
And sewede that he wes aryse    myd fleysse and myd bone.
- 620            Aveole kunne wise    ure Louerd him tok on  
To schewen his apostles    thet he wes God and mon.  
Seoththe that he wes aryse    from dethe to lyve —  
Thet us alle bouhte    myd his wndes fyve.  
Ofte he heom myd spek    ther hi weren togedere  
Er he wolde astyen    to hevene to his Vedere.
- 625            He heyhte heom “holde treowe luve    everych to othre,  
As ich habbe eu yluved,    for ye beoth all brothre.”
- 630            Ure Louerd heom bleu upon,    thet alle thing con dyhte  
Undervongeth, he seyde,    the Holi Gostes myhte:  
“Theo that ye aleseth here    of heore sunnes bende  
Hi schulle beon unbunden    ever buten ende;  
And theo that ye her byndeth    ine lyve thisse  
Hi beoth ever ibunde,    wyteth ye myd iwisse.”
- 635            Tho ure Louerd astye wolde    from eorthe to hevene,  
He seyde to his apostles —    hi weren elleovene:  
“Herkneth alle to me,    the more and the leste.  
Ich eu wille senden on    mynes Fader biheste.  
Sytteth in the burewe,    and ich eu wille dihte
- fol. 154r      Fort ye beon byweved    of heveliche myhte.”
- 640            He seoththe heom ut ledde    into Bethany,  
And myd his swete honde    gon heom blessy.  
Tho he heom hedde iblessed,    that scop the sunne and mone,  
He astey to hevene    thereafter ful sone.  
Hi stoden and biheolden    hw he to hevene asteyh,  
Mid his swete moder —    he wes hire heorte neyh.

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

- fol. 153v      And that I'm Jesus Christ    who stands among you.  
Observe now and see    that a ghost has no bones —  
Neither flesh nor bone,    as are upon me.”  
After he'd said this,    he did even more.
- 610            He showed them his hands    and likewise his feet.  
But they believed it not,    neither more nor less.  
Yet they marveled much,    in their happiness.  
Our Lord Jesus Christ    began to speak with them:  
“Do you have anything here    that one can eat?”
- 615            They brought before him    a roasted fish  
And also a honeycomb.    They were overjoyed.  
Our Lord took and ate thereof    before every one of them,  
And showed that he'd arisen    with flesh and with bone.
- 620            In very many ways    our Lord exerted himself  
To show his apostles    that he was God and man,  
After he arose    from death to life —  
He who bought us all    with his five wounds.  
Often he spoke with them    when they were together  
Before he wished to ascend    to heaven to his Father.
- 625            He commanded them to “hold true love    for one another,  
As I've loved you,    because you're all brothers.”
- 630            Our Lord breathed upon them,    he who rules all,  
To receive, he said,    the Holy Ghost's power:  
“Those whom you release here    from their sinful bonds  
Shall be unbound    forever without end;  
And those whom you bind here    in this life  
Are always bound,    know this truly.”
- 635            When our Lord was ready to ascend    from earth to heaven,  
He said to his apostles —    they were eleven:  
“All listen to me,    the highest and the lowest.  
I will send you out on    my Father's behest.  
Remain in the city,    and I'll make you ready  
fol. 154r    Until you are girded    in heavenly might.”
- 640            Afterwards he led them out    into Bethany,  
And with his precious hand    began to bless them.  
When he had blessed them,    he who created sun and moon,  
He rose to heaven    very soon after that.  
They stood and beheld    how he rose to heaven,  
With his blessed mother —    he was close to her heart.

- 645            Ther stoden twei veyre men;    neren hi nouht ihud,  
 Ac were myd hwite clothes    swythe veyre iscrud.  
 And hi to heom seyden:    “Men of Galile,  
 Toward thare hevene,    hwat biholde ye?  
 The ilke sulve Jhesu    that is from eu ynume
- 650            He wile hymself eftsone    hider to eu cume  
 Mid fleysse and myd bone,    as he heonne ywende.  
 He wile eft hider cume —    theos word he eu sende.”
- Tho heo this iherden,    hi turnden heom ayeyn  
 Mid muchele gladnesse    eft to Jherusalem,  
 655            And weren in the temple,    God heryinde  
 And thene King of hevene,    ever blessynde.
- At thon heye undarne    a Witsuneday  
 Ther hi were togadere,    as ich eu segge may,  
 And heryeden ure Louerd Crist    and heore bede sunge.
- 660            The Holy Gost heom com upon    in fury tunge.  
 So sone so hi weren    of the Holy Goste attende,  
 Heo arysen alle togadere    and ut heom iwende  
 And speken Godes Wordes.    Hi weren swithe gled.  
 Of none monne in eorthe    nere hi tho ofdred.
- 665            Tho were in Jherusalem,    as ich me understonde,  
 Men wunynde    of alle kunnes londe.  
 Tho heo iherden the apostles    Godes lore teche,  
 Everuych ther understod    his icunde speche.  
 Heo seyden heom bitwene:    “Hwat may this beo?  
 fol. 154v    Theos men that we heren speke,    hi beoth of Galile,  
 671            And we iherden heom heryen    in heore preching  
 After ure tunge    then heoveliche Kyng.”
- Seoththe in alle londes    hi eoden vor to prechen,  
 And for to fully that folk,    and Godes lawe techen.
- 675            Hi nolden tho bileve,    vor kayser ne vor kyng,  
 Ne vor nore pyne,    heore prechyng.  
 Thervore heo iwenden    into alle londes  
 And fullede kinges,    eorles, and bondes,  
 And alle men and wymmen    that wolde to heom cume
- 680            And bileven on Jhesu Crist    thet is Godes Sune.
- Thervore the Veond of helle    hedde muchel onde  
 Vor hi bynomen him saulen    in water and in londe.  
 Thervore he hine bithouhte    hw he don myhte  
 And ever wes abute    bi daye and bi nyhte

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

- 645            There stood two fair men;    they couldn't be missed  
                 Because they were in white clothes    fairly shrouded.  
                 And they spoke to them:    "Men of Galilee,  
                 Looking toward heaven,    what do you see?  
                 The very same Jesus    who is taken from you
- 650            Will himself soon    come here to you  
                 In flesh and in bone,    just as he went forth.  
                 He'll come here again —    he sends you this message."
- When they heard this,    they turned again  
                 With much rejoicing    back to Jerusalem,  
655            And went into the temple,    praising God  
                 And the King of heaven,    always rejoicing.
- At mid-morning    on Whitsunday  
                 They were there together,    as I may tell you,  
                 And praised our Lord Christ    and sang their prayers.
- 660            The Holy Ghost came upon them    in fiery tongues.  
                 As soon as they were    kindled by the Holy Ghost,  
                 They arose all together    and went out  
                 And spoke God's Word.    They were jubilant.  
                 Of no man on earth    were they then afraid.
- 665            Then there were in Jerusalem,    as I understand,  
                 Men dwelling    from all different lands.  
                 When they heard the apostles    teach God's lore,  
                 Everyone there understood    his native speech.  
                 They said among themselves:    "How may this be?  
fol. 154v    These men whom we hear speak,    they're from Galilee,  
671            And yet we heard them praise    in their preaching  
                 According to our language    the heavenly King."
- Afterwards into all lands    they went forth to preach,  
                 And to baptize the people,    and to teach God's law.
- 675            They wouldn't then forsake,    not for any kaiser or king,  
                 Nor for any pain,    their preaching.  
                 Therefore they traveled    into all lands  
                 And baptized kings,    earls, and servants,  
                 And all men and women    who wished to come to them
- 680            And believe in Jesus Christ    who is God's Son.
- On that account the Fiend of hell    felt much jealousy  
                 Because they took souls from him    everywhere.  
                 Therefore he plotted    what he might do  
                 And was always lurking about    by day and by night

- 685 Vor bryngen heom to dethe thet spek myd his ycorene.  
 That wes Nerun and Dacyen and mo thet beoth vorlorene.  
 Theos nomen the apostles and heom to dethe dude,  
 And ure Louerd heom underveng anon i the stude.
- 690 Nu hi beoth ine blisse myd thon hevene Kynge —  
 That is heore mede vor heore prechinge.  
 Bidde we alle Jhesu Crist vor heore erndinge,  
 That he ure saule to thare blisse brynge.  
 Vor his swete moder luve, of hwam he vleyss nom,  
 He habbe mercy of us that is God and mon,  
 695 And lete us so her libben in thisse wrecche lyve,  
 That we moten to him cume, for his wundes fyve.  
 And he that haveth this rym iwryten, beo hwat he beo,  
 God in thisse lyve hyne lete wel itheo,  
 And alle his iveren, bothe yonge and olde.
- 700 God heom lete heore ordre trewliche her holde,  
 That hi mote togadere cume to heveriche blysse
- fol. 155r Hwanne hi schullen toparty ut of lyve thisse.  
 He thet alle thing ischop, this us graunty,  
 Vor his leve moder luve Seynte Mary,
- 705 And heo ure erende bere, so is hire ywune,  
 Mid alle other halewe, to hire swete Sune. Amen.

## 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

---

685            To bring to death    whoever spoke with his chosen ones.  
                 Then Nero and Decius    and more who were lost,  
                 They seized the apostles    and put them to death,  
                 And our Lord received them    soon in that place.

                 Now they're in bliss    with heaven's King —  
690            That's their reward    for their preaching.  
                 Let us all pray to Jesus Christ    for their intercession,  
                 That he may our souls    bring to that bliss.  
                 For his blessed mother's love,    from whom he took flesh,  
                 May he have mercy on us    who is God and man,  
695            And allow us so to live here    in this wretched life,  
                 That we may come to him,    for his five wounds.  
                 And he who's written this rhyme,    be what he may,  
                 God in this life    allow him to thrive,  
                 And all his comrades,    both young and old.

700            God allow them their order    truly to maintain here,  
                 So that they may together    come to heavenly bliss

fol. 155r      When they depart    out of this life.  
                 He who created all things,    grant us this,  
                 For love of his dear mother    Saint Mary,  
705            And may she bear our message,    as is her custom,  
                 With all the other saints,    to her precious Son. Amen.





## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

fol. 156ra      *Here begins the debate between the nightingale and the owl.*

I was in a valley in summer  
In a very secluded spot.  
I heard an owl and a nightingale  
Conduct a great disputation  
5 Argued stiff and stark and strong,  
At times soft, at times loud,  
And each puffed against the other  
And let out all that resentment,  
And spoke of the other's habits  
10 In the worst ways they could imagine,  
And, most of all, about the other's song  
They pressed very fierce arguments.

NIGHTINGALE      The nightingale began to speak  
From inside a grove of beech trees,  
15 Sitting on a lovely bough  
Thickly adorned with blossoms,  
In a dense, thick hedge,  
Mixed with reeds and green sedge.  
The branch made her all the more happy,  
20 So she sang a range of tunes:  
It seemed as if the melody was  
A harp's or pipe's instead of hers;  
It seemed as if it emerged from  
A harp or pipe instead of a throat!

OWL      Nearby stood an old stump  
26 Where the owl sang her hours  
Amid ivy growing all around.  
It was the owl's dwelling place.

NIGHTINGALE      The nightingale saw her,  
30 Examined and surveyed her,  
And felt disdain for that owl,  
For she's considered ugly and foul.  
fol. 156rb      "Evildoer," she said, "fly away!"

- 35 Me is the wurs that ich the iseo.  
 Iwis, for thine wle lete  
 Wel ofte ich my song furlete;  
 Min heorte atflyhth and falt my tunge  
 Hwenne thu art to me ithrunge.  
 Me luste bet speten thane singe  
 40 Of thine fule howelynge.”
- OWL                    Theos ule abod for hit wes eve —  
 Heo ne myhte no leng bileve,  
 Vor hire heorte wes so gret  
 That wel neyh hire fnast atset —  
 45 And warp a word tharafter longe:  
 “Hw thynk the nu bi mine songe?  
 Wenestu that ich ne kunne singe  
 The ich ne cunne of wrytelinge?  
 Ilome thu dest me grome  
 50 And seist me bothe teone and schome.  
 If ich the heolde on myne vote—  
 So hit bitide that ich mote! —  
 And thu were ut of thine ryse,  
 Thu scholdest singe onother wise!”
- NIGHTINGALE        The nihtegale yaf onsware:  
 56 “If ich me loki with the bare  
 And me schilde wit the blete,  
 Ne recche ich nouht of thine threte;  
 If ich me holde in myne hegge,  
 60 Ne recche ich never hwat thu segge.  
 Ich wot that thu art unmilde  
 With heom that ne muwe from the schilde,  
 And thu tukest wrothe and uvele  
 Hwar thu myht over smale vowele.  
 fol. 156va        Vorthi thu art loth al fowel-cunne,  
 66 And alle heo the dryveth heonne,  
 And the biscrycheth and bigredeth,  
 And wel narewe the byledeth.  
 And ek forthe the sulve mose  
 70 Hire thonkes wolde the totose!  
 Thu art lodlich to biholde,  
 And thu art loth in monye volde:  
 Thi body is scort; thi swere is smal;  
 Grettire is thin heued ne thu al;  
 75 Thin eyen beoth col-blake and brode  
 Ryht so hi weren ipeynt myd wode —

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

- I'm worse off for the sight of you.  
35 Indeed, because of your awful face  
I too often abandon my own song;  
My heart jumps and my speech fails  
When you press close to me.  
I'd much prefer to spit than sing  
40 Your wretched yowling."
- OWL                    The owl held off till evening —  
She mightn't desist any longer,  
For her heart was so swollen  
She could barely breathe —  
45 And she finally sputtered a speech:  
"What do you think now of my song?  
Do you assume I'm unable to sing  
Because I'm unable to warble?  
You always cause me harm  
50 And both insult and shame me.  
If I could just grab you by my foot —  
Just let it happen that I could! —  
And if only you were off your branch,  
You'd sing another tune!"
- NIGHTINGALE        The nightingale answered:  
56 "So long as I'm alert in open country  
And shield myself from exposure,  
I could care less about your threats;  
So long as I stay in my hedge,  
60 I don't ever care what you say.  
I know full well you're ungentle  
Toward those unprotected from you,  
And that you inflict violence and abuse  
Wherever you can against small birds.  
fol. 156va        That's why all birdfolk hate you,  
66 And why they drive you away,  
And screech and squawk about you,  
And tightly throng around you.  
And also that's why even the titmouse  
70 Is determined to tear you to pieces!  
You're hideous to look at,  
And you're loathly in many ways:  
Your body's short; your neck's small;  
Your head's bigger than the rest of you;  
75 Your eyes are coal-black and as big  
As if they were painted with woad —

80            Thu starest so thu wille abyten  
               Al that thu myht myd clyvre smyten!  
               Thi bile is stif and sarp and hoked  
               Riht as on ewel that is croked —  
               Tharmyd thu clechest euer among,  
               And that is on of thine song!  
               Ac thu threstest to myne vleysse —  
               Mid thine clevres woldest me meysse!  
 85            The were icundere to one frogge,  
               That sit at mulne under cogge;  
               Snayles, mus, and fule wihte  
               Beoth thine cunde and thine rihte.  
 90            Thu sittest a day and flyhst a niht,  
               Thu cuthest that thu art unwiht.  
               Thu art lodlich and unclene —  
               Bi thine neste ich hit mene  
               And eke bi thine fule brode:  
               Thu vedest ou heom a wel ful vode!  
 95            Wel wostu that hi doth tharynne —  
               Hi fuleth hit up to the chynne!  
               Heo sytteth thar so hi beo bysne.  
               Hwarbi men seggeth a vorbysne:  
 fol. 156vb  
 100            ‘Dehaet habbe that ilke best  
               That fuleth his owe nest.’  
               That other yer a faukun bredde;  
               His nest nowiht wel he ne bihedde.  
               Tharto thu stele in o day  
               And leydest tharon thi fule ey.  
 105            Tho hit bycom that he hayhte  
               And of his eyre briddes wrauhste,  
               Heo brouhte his briddes mete,  
               Biheold his nest, iseyh hi ete.  
               He iseyh, bi one halve,  
 110            His nest ifuled in the ut halve.  
               The faukun wes wroth with his bridde,  
               And lude yal, and sturne chidde:  
               ‘Seggeth me hwo haveth this ido!  
               Eu nas never icunde therto!  
 115            Hit wes idon eu a lothe custe!  
               Seggeth me if ye hit wiste!’  
               Tho queth that on, and queth that other:  
               ‘Iwis, hit wes ure owe brother —  
               That yeonde that haveth that grete heued —  
 120            Way that he nys tharof byreved!

80 You stare as if you plan to bite  
Whatever you can strike with talons!  
Your beak's stiff and sharp and curved  
Just like a crooked fleshhook —  
You clack with it incessantly,  
And that is one of your songs!  
And you threaten my very flesh —  
With your claws you'd mash me!

85 A frog'd be more natural for you,  
As it squats under a millwheel;  
Snails, mice, and other vermin  
Are more natural and proper for you.  
You roost by day and fly by night,  
Which shows how evil you are.  
You're loathsome and unclean —  
Here I'm referring to your nest  
And your filthy brood as well:  
You raise them with dirty habits!

95 You know what they do in there —  
They soil it right up to the chin!  
They sit there as if they're blind.  
There's a proverb about that:  
fol. 156vb 'Shame on that creature  
100 Who soils its own nest.'  
One year a falcon was breeding;  
She failed to guard her nest carefully.  
You crept in there one day  
And laid your filthy egg in it.

105 When the time came for hatching  
And chicks emerged from their eggs,  
She brought her chicks food,  
Watched the nest, saw them eat.  
She noticed that, to one side,  
110 Her nest was soiled at the far edge.  
The falcon was angry with her chicks,  
Yelled loud, and sternly chided:  
'Tell me who's done this!  
You never used to do this!

115 A filthy habit's been done to you!  
Tell me what you know about it!  
Then said one, and said another:  
'Truly, it was our own brother —  
The one there with the big head —  
120 It's a pity no one's cut it off!

- 125           Werp hit ut myd the vyrste  
               Thet his nekke him toberste!  
               The faukun levede his ibrinne  
               And nom that fule brid amydde,  
               And warp hym of than wilde bowe,  
               That pie and crowe hit todrowe.  
               Therby men seggeth a byspel,  
               Theyh hit ne beo fulliche spel:  
               ‘Al so hit is bi than un gode  
 130           That is icumen of fule brode  
               And is ymeynd with freomonne.  
               Ever he cuth that he com thenne —  
 fol. 157ra   That he com of than adel eye —  
               Theyh he a freo neste leye.  
 135           Theyh appel trendli from the treo  
               Thar he and other myde grewe,  
               Theyh he beo tharfrom bicume,  
               He cuth hwenene he is icume.’”
- Theos word ayaf the nihtegale,  
 140           And after thare longe tale  
               Heo song so lude and so scharpe  
               Ryht so me grulde schille harpe.  
 Owl           Theos ule luste thiderward,  
               And heold hire eyen netherward,  
 145           And sat toswolle, and tobolewe,  
               So heo hedde one frogge iswolwe,  
               For heo wel wiste and was iwar  
               Thar heo song hire a bysemar.  
               And natheles heo yaf ondsware:  
 150           “Hwy neltu fleon into bare,  
               And schewi hwether unker beo  
               Of brihtur hewe, of fayrur bleo?”  
 NIGHTINGALE   “No! Thu havest scharpe clawe!  
               Ne kepe ich noht that thu me clawe!  
 155           Thu havest clyvres swithe stronge;  
               Thu twengest tharmid so doth a tonge.  
               Thu thoutest — so doth thine ilyche —  
               Mid fayre worde me biswike.  
               Ich nolde don that thu me raddest;  
 160           Ich wiste wel that thu me misraddest.  
               Schomye the vor thine unrede!  
               Unwryen is thi swikehede!  
               Schild thi swikedom from the lyhte,  
               And hud that wowe among the ryhte.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

Throw him out immediately  
So that his neck will break!  
The falcon believed her chicks  
And took that ugly chick by the middle,  
125 And threw it off that leafy branch,  
And magpies and crows tore it apart.  
There's a fable told about this,  
Though not a full-length story:  
'So will it go for the villain  
130 Who comes from a rotten family  
And mixes with worthy men.  
He always shows where he came from —  
fol. 157ra That he emerged from a rotten egg —  
Even if he might lie in a worthy nest.  
135 Even if an apple might roll from the tree  
Where it grew up amid others,  
In spite of being quite far from it,  
It displays where it came from.'"

The nightingale spoke these words,  
140 And after that long speech  
She sang as loud and high-toned  
As a resonant harp being strummed.  
OWL The owl listened to this,  
And kept her eyes lowered,  
145 And sat puffed up, swollen with rage,  
As if she'd swallowed a frog,  
Because she knew and recognized  
That she sang at her with mockery,  
Yet nonetheless she answered:  
150 "Why don't you fly out into the open,  
And show which of us two is  
Of brighter hue, of fairer color?"  
NIGHTINGALE "No! You have sharp claws!  
I'd rather not be clawed by you!  
155 You've got really strong talons;  
You use them like tongs to grip with.  
You expect — as your kind does —  
To trick me with flattery.  
I won't do what you tell me to do;  
160 I'm well aware that you lie to me.  
Shame on you for your bad advice!  
Your deception is exposed!  
Protect your evil from the light,  
And hide that wickedness with good.

- 165                   Hwanne thu wilt thu unriht spene,  
 Loke that hit ne beo isene,  
 fol. 157rb       Vor swikedom haveth schome and het  
                   If hit is ope and underyete.  
                   Ne spedestu nouht mid thin unwrenche,  
 170                   For ich am war and can blenche.  
                   Ne helpeth noht that thu bo to thriste:  
                   Ich wolde vyhte bet myd liste  
                   Than thu mid al thine strengthe.  
                   Ich habbe, on brede and ek on lengthe,  
 175                   Castel god on myne ryse.  
                   ‘Wel fyht that wel flyhth,’ seyth the wise,  
                   Ac lete we away theos cheste,  
                   For suche wordes beoth unwreste,  
                   And fo we on myd rihte dome,  
 180                   Mid fayre worde and myd some.  
                   Theyh we ne beon at on acorde,  
                   We mawe bet myd fayre worde,  
                   Withute cheste and bute vyhte,  
                   Playde mid sothe and mid ryhte,  
 185                   And may ur eyther hwat he wile  
                   Mid rihte segge and myd skile.”
- Owl                   Tho quath the ule, “Hwo schal us seme?  
                   That cunne and wille riht us deme?”
- NIGHTINGALE    “Ich wot wel,” quath the nyhtegale,  
 190                   “Ne tharf therof beo no tale:  
                   Mayster Nichol of Guldevorde.  
                   He is wis and war of worde;  
                   He is of worde swythe gleu.  
                   And him is loth evrich untheu.  
 195                   He wot insyht in euche songe —  
                   Hwo singeth wel, hwo singeth wronge —  
                   And he con schede from the rihte  
                   That wowe, that thuster from the lyhte.”
- Owl                   The ule one hwile hi bihouhte,  
 200                   And after than this word upbrouhte:  
 fol. 157va       “Ich graunti wel that he us deme,  
                   For theyh he were hwile breme,  
                   And leof hym wre nihtingale  
                   And other wyhte gent and smale,  
 205                   Ich wot he is nuthe acoled.  
                   Nis he vor the nouht afoled  
                   That he, vor thine olde luve,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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- 165            When you try to practice your villainy,  
                 Be certain it's not obvious,  
fol. 157rb      For evil brings shame and hatred  
                 Only if it's open and observed.  
                 You won't win with your bad tricks,  
170            For I'm alert and can dodge.  
                 It doesn't help to be too pushy:  
                 I can fight better with cleverness  
                 Than you can with all your strength.  
                 I have, in width and also in length,  
175            A good castle on my branch.  
                 'He fights well who flees well,' say the wise,  
                 But let's cease this quarreling,  
                 For such words are worthless,  
                 And let's take a sensible course,  
180            With polite speech and civil concord.  
                 Even if we're not in agreement,  
                 We'll do better with polite speech,  
                 With no quarreling or fighting,  
                 Pleading truthfully and correctly,  
185            And let each of us say what she likes  
                 With good oral arguments and with skill."
- Owl                   Then the owl said: "Who will decide for us?  
                 Who understands and will judge us fairly?"
- NIGHTINGALE      "I know who," said the nightingale,  
190            "There's no need to debate that:  
                 Master Nicholas of Guildford.  
                 He's wise and careful with words;  
                 He's extremely prudent of speech,  
                 And he loaths every vice.  
195            He possesses insight into every song —  
                 Who sings well, who sings wrong —  
                 And he can distinguish truth  
                 From falsehood, darkness from light."
- Owl                   The owl reflected awhile,  
200            And eventually uttered this statement:  
fol. 157va      "I fully agree to his judging us,  
                 For even though he was once impetuous  
                 And beloved to him were nightingales  
                 And other creatures delicate and small,  
205            I know that he's now cooled down.  
                 He's not so beguiled by you  
                 That he, for an old affection held for you,

- Me adun legge and the abuve.  
 Ne schaltu never so him queme  
 210 That he vor the fals dom deme.  
 He is nu ripe and fast-rede;  
 Ne luste hym nu to non unrede;  
 Nu him ne lust namore pleye;  
 He wile gon a rihte weye.”
- NIGHTINGALE      The nihtegale wes al ware —  
 216 Heo hedde ileorned wel ihware.  
 “Ule,” heo seyde, “seye me soth,  
 Hwi dostu that unwihtes doth?  
 220 Thu singest a nyht and nouht a day,  
 And al thi song is ‘waylaway’!  
 Thu miht mid thine songe afere  
 Alle that hereth thine ibere.  
 225 Thu scrichest and yollest to thine fere  
 That hit is grysligh to ihere.  
 Hit thincheth bothe wise and snepe  
 Nouht that thu singe ac that thu wepe!  
 230 Thu flyhst a nyht and noht a day —  
 Tharof ich wundri, and wel may,  
 For uych thing that schonyeth riht  
 Hit luyveth thuster and hateth lyht;  
 And euych thing that luveth misdede  
 Hit luveth thuster to his dede.  
 A wis word, theyh hit beo unclene,  
 Is fele monne a muthe imene,  
 fol. 157vb For Alvred King hit seyde and wrot:  
 236 ‘He schuneth that hine ful wot.’  
 Ich wene that thu dost also,  
 For thu flyhst nyhtes evermo.  
 240 And other thing me is a wene:  
 Thu havest a nyht wel bryhte sene;  
 Bi daye thu art stare-blynd  
 That thu ne syst bouh of lynd;  
 A day thu art blynd other bisne!  
 245 Tharby men seggeth a vorbisne:  
 ‘Riht so hit farth bi than un gode  
 That nouht ne isyhth to none gode  
 And is so ful of uvele wrenche  
 That him ne may no mon aprenche,  
 And con wel thene thustre way  
 250 And thane bryhte lat away.’

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210            Would denigrate me and favor you.  
              You'll never charm him so much  
              That he'd judge falsely in your favor.  
              He's now mature and steady of purpose;  
              He now has no desire for indiscretion;  
              He's no longer inclined to frivolity;  
              He will take the right path."

NIGHTINGALE        The nightingale was fully prepared —  
216            She possessed lore from everywhere.  
              "Owl," she said, "tell me truly,  
              Why do you do what evil ones do?  
              You sing by night and not by day,  
220            And your whole song's 'wailaway'!  
              By your song you're bound to frighten  
              Everyone who hears your racket.  
              You screech and yell at your mate  
              In a manner grisly to hear.  
225            It seems to both wisemen and fools  
              That you don't sing but only weep!  
              You fly by night and not by day —  
              I wonder about that, and really have to,  
              For anything that shuns goodness  
230            Loves darkness and hates light;  
              And anything that loves sin  
              Loves darkness for its actions.  
              There's a wise proverb, though it's filthy,  
              Spoken by a lot of people,  
fol. 157vb        For King Alfred said and wrote it:  
236            'He who's fouled himself stays away.'  
              I know that's what you do as well,  
              For you always fly by night.  
              And something else occurs to me:  
240            You have sharp eyesight by night;  
              By day you're so utterly blind  
              That you can't see a linden bough;  
              By day you're blind and sightless!  
              There's a proverb about that:  
245            'So does it fare for the villain  
              Who's up to no good  
              And so full of evil malice  
              That no one can escape him;  
              He understands the dark path  
250            And avoids the well-lit one.'

So doth that beoth of thine cunde —  
Of lihte nabbeth hi none imunde.”

- Owl  
 255           Theos ule luste swithe longe  
               And wes ofteoned swithe stronge.  
 Heo quath: “Thu hattest ‘nihtegale,’  
 Thu mihtest bet hote ‘galegale’  
 Vor thu havest to monye tale!  
 Let thine tunge habbe spale!  
 Thu wenest that thes day beo thin owe!  
 260           Let me nu habbe myne throwe!  
               Beo nu stille and let me speke!  
               Ich wile beo of the awreke!  
               And lust hw ich con me bitelle  
               Mid rihte sothe withute spelle.  
 265           Thu seyst that ich me hude a day —  
               Tharto ne segge ich nyk no nay —  
               And lust ich telle hwervore  
               Al hwi hit is and hwarevore:  
 fol. 158ra  
 270           Ich habbe bile stif and strong,  
               And gode clevres, scharp and longe,  
               So hit bycumeth to hauekes cunne.  
               Hit is myn hyhte and my wunne  
               That ich me drawe to mine cunde.  
               Ne may me no mon tharfor sende —  
 275           On me, hit is wel isene  
               For rihte cunde ich am so kene.  
               Vorthi ich am loth smale vowele  
               That fleoth bi grunde and bi thuvele;  
               Hi me bichirmeth and bigredeth,  
 280           And heore flockes to me ledeth.  
               Me is leof to habbe reste  
               And sitte stille in myne neste,  
               Vor nere ich never the betere  
               Theyh ich, mid changling and myd chatere,  
 285           Heom schende and myd fule worde,  
               So herdes doth, other mid sit-worde.  
               Ne lust me with the screwen chide,  
               Forthi ich wende from heom wide.  
               Hit is a wise monne dome,  
 290           And hi hit seggeth wel ilome,  
               That ‘me ne chide with the gidie  
               Ne with than ofne me ne yonie.’  
               At sum sythe herde i telle  
               Hw Alvred seyde on his spelle:

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So it is with those of your ilk —  
They care nothing at all for light.”

OWL                    The owl listened a long while  
And grew extremely angry.  
255                    She said: “You’re called ‘nightingale,’  
But a better name is ‘gabblegale’  
Because you talk too much!  
Give your tongue a rest!  
You think this day’s all your own!  
260                    Now let me have my turn!  
Be still now and let me talk!  
I’ll get my revenge on you!  
Listen to how I defend myself  
By true facts with no fiction.  
265                    You say I conceal myself by day —  
That fact I don’t deny —  
And listen while I explain  
Why it is and for what cause:  
fol. 157vb            I have a stiff and strong beak,  
270                    And good talons, sharp and long,  
As are proper for the hawk family.  
It’s my great joy and pleasure  
To take after my own species.  
No one can blame me for it —  
275                    In my case, it’s obvious  
That I’m fierce by my very nature.  
That’s why I’m hated by small birds  
Who flit by ground and in thickets;  
They scream and squawk at me,  
280                    And gather in flocks around me.  
I’d much rather remain at rest  
And sit quietly in my nest,  
For I’d never be any the better  
Were I, by scolding and haranguing,  
285                    To insult them with bad words,  
As herdsmen do, or with obscenities.  
I don’t want to quarrel with the rogues,  
So I give them a wide berth.  
It’s the opinion of a wise man,  
290                    And so it’s often said,  
That ‘one shouldn’t quarrel with fools  
Nor yawn with an oven.’  
I have heard how at one time  
Alfred said in his proverbs:

- 295 'Loke that thu ne beo thare  
 Thar changling beoth and cheste vare;  
 Let sottes chide, and forth thu go!  
 And ich am wis and do al so.  
 And yet Alvred seyde, another syde,
- 300 A word that is isprunge wide:  
 'That with the fule haveth imene,  
 Ne cumeth he never from him clene.'
- fol. 158rb Wenestu that hauek beo the wrse  
 The crowe bigrede him bi the mersche
- 305 And goth to him, myd heore chyrme,  
 Riht so hi wille with him schirme?  
 The hauek foleweth gode rede;  
 He flyhth his wey and let hi grede.
- 310 Yet, thu me seyst of other thinge,  
 And tellest that ich ne can nouht singe,  
 Ac al my reorde is wonyng,  
 And to ihere gryslych thing.  
 That nis nouht soth! Ich singe efne  
 Mid fulle dreame and lude stefne.
- 315 Thu wenest that eoch song beo grislich  
 That thine pipinge nis ilich.  
 Mi stefne is bold and nouht unorne,  
 Heo is ilich one grete horne,  
 And thin is iliche one pype
- 320 Of one smale weode, unripe.  
 Ich singe bet than thu dest —  
 Thu chaterest so doth on Yris prest!  
 Ich singe an efne a ryhte time,  
 And seththe hwenne hit is bedtime,
- 325 The thridde sythe a middel-nyhte,  
 And so ich myne songe adihthe.  
 Hwenne ich iseo arise veorre  
 Other day-rewe other day-steorre,  
 Ic do god myd myne throte
- 330 And warny men, to heore note.  
 Ac thu singest alle longe nyht  
 From eve that hit is dayliht,  
 And ever lesteth thin o song  
 So longe so the nyht is long,
- 335 And ever croweth thi wrecche crey  
 That he ne swiketh, nyht ne day.
- fol. 158va Mid thine pipinge thu adunest  
 Thas monnes eren thar thu wunest,

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295           ‘Take care not to be where  
              There’s wrangling and arguing;  
              Let fools quarrel, and go your way!’  
              And I am wise and do just that.  
              And Alfred said elsewhere, in additon,  
300           A saying that’s spread far and wide:  
              ‘He who mingles with someone filthy  
              Never walks away from him clean.’  
fol. 158rb    Do you think the hawk is any the worse  
              If a crow might caw at him by the marsh  
305           And swoop at him, screaming,  
              As if she means to attack him?  
              The hawk follows a sensible plan;  
              He flies on his way and lets her squawk.

              What’s more, you accuse me of something else,  
310           Saying that I cannot sing,  
              That my entire song’s a lament,  
              A dreary thing to listen to.  
              That is not true! I sing evenly  
              With full voice and loud sound.  
315           You think every song is dreary  
              If it’s not just like your own piping.  
              My sound is bold and not weak,  
              It’s like a gigantic horn,  
              And yours is like a tweet  
320           Made from a puny, half-grown reed.  
              I sing better than you do —  
              You chitter like an Irish priest!  
              In evening I sing at a proper time,  
              And later when it’s bedtime,  
325           And a third time at midnight,  
              And so I regulate my song.  
              When I see coming from afar  
              The rays of dawn or the morning star,  
              I do good with my throat  
330           And alert people, to their benefit.  
              But you sing all night long  
              From evening until dawn,  
              And your song always lasts  
              As long as the night,  
335           And always your wretched throat crows  
              Without ceasing, night and day.  
fol. 158va    With your piping you fill with noise  
              Those human ears dwelling near you,

340 And makest thi song so unwiht  
 That me ne telleth of the nowiht.  
 Evrych murethe may so longe leste  
 That heo schal liki wel unwreste,  
 For harpe, and pipe, and foweles song  
 Misliketh if hit is to long.  
 345 Ne beo the song ne so murie,  
 That he ne sal thinche unmurie  
 If he ilesteth over unwille.  
 So thu myht thi song aspille.  
 For hit is soth Alvred hit seyde,  
 350 And me hit may in boke rede:  
 'Evrich thing may lesen his godhede  
 Mid unmethe and overdede.'  
 Mid este thu the maist overquatie,  
 And overfulle makieth wlatie,  
 355 And everich murethe may agon  
 If me hit halt ever in on,  
 Bute one, that is: Godes riche,  
 That ever is swete, and ever iliche.  
 Theyh thu nyme of than lepe,  
 360 Hit is ever ful by hepe!  
 Wunder hit is of Godes ryche,  
 That ever spenth, and ever is iliche.

Yet, thu me seyst another schome —  
 That ich am on myne eye lome —  
 365 And seyst, for that ich fleo bi nyhte,  
 That ich ne may iseo bi lyhte.  
 Thu liest! On me, hit is isene  
 That ich habbe gode sene,  
 Vor nys no so dym thesternesse  
 370 That ich ever iseo the lesse.  
 Thu wenest that ich ne mwe iseo  
 fol. 158vb Vor ich bi daye nouht ne fleo.  
 The hare luteth al day,  
 Ac notheles iseo he may;  
 375 If hundes eorneth to himward,  
 He gencheth swithe awayward,  
 And hoketh pathes swithe narewe,  
 And haveth mid him blenches yarewe,  
 He huphth and start swithe cove,  
 380 And secheth pathes to the grove.  
 Ne scholde he, vor bo his eye,  
 So do if he the bet ne iseye!

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340           And make your song so grotesque  
          That they attach no value to it.  
          Every pleasure can last so long  
          That it comes to be disliked,  
          For harp, pipe, and birdsong  
          Grow tedious if they persist too long.  
345           However merry a song may be,  
          It shall be thought unmerry  
          If it lasts longer than desired.  
          Thus may you ruin your song.  
          For truly did Alfred say,  
350           And it can be read in books:  
          ‘Everything can lose its goodness  
          By lack of measure and excess.’  
          You can be glutted with delicacies,  
          And overindulgence causes nausea,  
355           And every enjoyment can diminish  
          If people pursue it constantly,  
          Except for one, that is: God’s kingdom,  
          Always pleasurable, always constant.  
          Even if you partake of that basket,  
360           It’s always full to overflowing!  
          Wondrous is God’s kingdom,  
          Always abundant, always constant.

          What’s more, you give me further insult —  
          That I am handicapped in eyesight —  
365           And say, because I fly by night,  
          That I cannot see by daylight.  
          You lie! In my case, it’s obvious  
          I have a keen sense of sight,  
          For there’s no darkness so dim  
370           That it makes me see less.  
          You think I’m unable to see  
fol. 158vb       Because I don’t fly by day.  
          The hare lies low all day,  
          But he can see nonetheless;  
375           If hounds run toward him,  
          He skirts away at top speed,  
          And swerves down narrow paths,  
          And keeps his tricks ready,  
          And hops and leaps swiftly,  
380           And seeks paths to the woods.  
          As for both eyes, he’d not be able  
          To do this if he couldn’t see well!

Ich may iseo so wel so on hare  
 Theyh ich bi daye sytte a dare —  
 385 Thar auhte men beoth in worre,  
 And fareth bothe neor and feorre,  
 And overvareth veole theode,  
 And doth bi nyhte gode neode,  
 Ich folewi thane ahte manne  
 390 And fleo bi nyhte in heore barme.”

NIGHTINGALE      The nyhtegale in hire thouhte  
 Atheold al this and longe thouhte  
 Hwat heo tharafter myhte segge,  
 Vor heo ne myhte noht alegge  
 395 That the ule hedde hire iseyd,  
 Vor ho spak bothe riht and red;  
 And hire ofthuhte that heo hadde  
 The speche so feor uorth iladde,  
 And wes aferd that hire answare  
 400 Ne wrthe nouht ariht ivare.  
 Ac notheles heo spak boldeliche,  
 Vor heo is wis that hardeliche  
 With his fo berth grete ilete  
 That he for arehthe hit ne forlete,  
 405 Vor suych worth bold if thou flyhst  
 That wile fleo if thou ne swykst —  
 fol. 159ra If he isihth that thou nart areh,  
 He wile of bore wurche bareh!  
 And forthi, they the nyhtegale  
 410 Were aferd, heo spak bolde tale.

“Hule,” heo seyde, “hwi dostu so?  
 Thu singest a wynter ‘wo-la-wo.’  
 Thu singest so doth hen a snowe —  
 Al that heo singeth hit is for wowe!  
 415 A wintre thou singest wrothe and yomere,  
 And ever thou art dumb a sumere!  
 Hit is for thine fule nythe,  
 That thou ne myht myd us be blithe,  
 Vor thou forbernest neyh for onde!  
 420 Hwenne ure blisse cumeth to londe,  
 Thou farest so doth the ille:  
 Everich blisse him is unwillie;  
 Grucching and luryng him beoth rade;  
 If he iseoth that men beoth glade,  
 425 He wolde that he iseye

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I can see just as well as a hare  
Even though I stay hidden all day —  
385       Wherever brave men go to war,  
          And travel both far and wide,  
          And overrun many countries,  
          And do good service at night,  
          I follow those brave men  
390       And fly by night in their company.”

NIGHTINGALE       In her mind the nightingale  
          Pondered all this and focused on  
          What she might say next,  
          Because she couldn't rebut  
395       What the owl had said to her,  
          For she'd spoken both truly and wisely;  
          And she regretted that she had  
          Let the argument progress so far,  
          And feared that her response  
400       Wouldn't be effectively argued.  
          But nevertheless she spoke boldly,  
          For he is wise who confidently  
          Bears a brave face before his foe  
          Instead of giving up out of fear,  
405       For one who'd be belligerent if you run  
          Will run away if you hold firm —  
fol. 159ra       When he sees you're not afraid,  
          He'll change from boar to gelded pig!  
          Therefore, even though the nightingale  
410       Was frightened, she spoke confidently.

          “Owl,” she said, “why be like this?  
          You sing in winter ‘woe-la-woe.’  
          You sing just like a hen in the snow —  
          All she can sing about is misery!  
415       In winter you sing angrily and mournfully,  
          And in summer you're mute!  
          With your wicked spitefulness,  
          You refuse to be joyful with us,  
          For you're virtually burning with anger!  
420       When our mirth arrives in the land,  
          You act like a mean-spirited guy:  
          Every pleasurable thing bothers him;  
          Grousing and scowling suit him;  
          If he sees people being joyful,  
425       He'd prefer to see instead

- Teres in everiche monnes eye.  
 Ne rouhte he theyh flockes were  
 Imeynd bi toppes and bi here.  
 Al so thu dost, on thire syde,  
 430 For hwanne snouh lith thikke and wide  
 And alle wihtes habbeth sorewe,  
 Thu singest from eve to amorewe.  
 Ac ich mid me alle blisse bringe;  
 Ech wiht is glad for myne thinge  
 435 And blesseth hit hwenne ich cume,  
 And hihteth ayeyn myne cume.  
 The blostme gynneth springe and sprede  
 Bothe in treo and ek in mede.  
 The lilie myd hire fayre wlite  
 440 Welcometh me, theyh thu hit wite,  
 Bid me myd hire fayre bleo  
 fol. 159rb That ich schulle to hire fleo.  
 The rose, also, myd hire rude,  
 That cumeth of the thorne wode,  
 445 Bit me that ich schulle singe  
 For hire luv one skentyng.  
 And ich so do, thureh nyht and day —  
 The more ich singe, the more ich may! —  
 And skente hi myd myne songe,  
 450 Ac notheles nouht overlonge.  
 Hwenne ich iseo that men beoth glade,  
 Ich nelle that hi beon to sade —  
 Hwenne is ido for hwan ich com,  
 Ich vare ayeyn and do wisdom;  
 455 Hwanne mon howieth of his sheve,  
 And falewi cumeth of grene leve,  
 Ich fare hom and nyme leve.  
 Ne recche ich nouht of wyntres teone!  
 Hwanne ich iseo that cumeth that harde,  
 460 Ich fare hom to myn erde  
 And habbe bothe luv and thonk  
 That ich her com and hider swonk.  
 Hwanne myn erende is ido,  
 Scholde ich bileve? Nay! Hwarto?  
 465 Vor he nys nother yep ne wis  
 That longe abid thar him no neod is.”  
  
 OWL           Theos ule luste and leyde an hord  
 Al this mot, word after word,  
 And after thouhte hw heo myhte

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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Tears in every person's eyes.  
He'd not care at all if herds  
Were mixed up by head and by hair.  
You behave just like that, for your part,  
430 Because when snow lies deep and wide  
And every creature's miserable,  
You sing evening to morning.  
But I bring abundant joy with me;  
Everyone's glad on my account  
435 And rejoices when I arrive,  
And looks forward to my coming.  
The flowers start to grow and bloom  
Both on trees and also in meadows.  
The lily with her fair complexion  
440 Welcomes me, as you know,  
Bidding with her lovely face  
fol. 159rb That I fly to her.  
The rose, too, with her complexion,  
Opening on the thorny stem,  
445 Requests that I sing  
A joyous song for her love.  
And so I do, all night and day —  
The more I sing, the more I can! —  
And amuse them with my singing,  
450 But not for an excessively long time.  
When I see that people are happy,  
I don't want them to feel too satisfied —  
When what I came for is all done,  
I return and do what's sensible;  
455 When men are intent on sheaves,  
And green leaves start to fade,  
I travel home and take my leave.  
I don't care at all for winter's misery!  
When I see harsh weather coming,  
460 I return home to my own country  
And receive both love and gratitude  
For having come and performed here.  
When my errand is completed,  
Should I stay on? No! For what?  
465 He is neither clever nor wise  
Who overstays where he's not needed."

OWL           The owl listened and stored up  
This argument, word for word,  
And then considered how she might

- 470            Onswere vynde best myd rihte,  
 Vor he mot ful wel him bithenche  
 That is aferd of playtes wrenche.
- “Thu ayssest me,” the ule seyde,  
 “Hwi ich a wynter singe and grede.
- 475            Hit is gode monne ywune,  
 And was from the worlde frume,  
 fol. 159va      That ech god mon his frend iknowe  
 And blissi myd heom sume throwe  
 In his huse at his borde
- 480            Mid fayre speche and fayre worde,  
 And hure and hure to Cristesmasse,  
 Hwenne riche and poure, more and lasse,  
 Singeth cundut nyht and day,  
 Ich heom helpe hwat ich may!
- 485            And ek ich thenche of other thinge  
 Thane to pleye other to singe —  
 Ich habbe herto god onsware,  
 Anon iredi and al ware!  
 Vor sumerestyde is al wlonk,
- 490            And doth mysreken monnes thonk  
 Vor he ne rekth noht of clennesses,  
 Al his thouht is of golnesse,  
 Vor none dor no leng nabideth,  
 Ac everich up other rideth.
- 495            The sulve stottes yne the stode  
 Beth bothe wilde and mare-wode,  
 And thu sulf art tharamong  
 Vor of golnysse is al thi song,  
 And, ayeyn thet thu wilt teme,
- 500            Thu art wel modi and wel breme.  
 Sone so thu havest itrede,  
 Ne myht thu leng a word iquethe  
 Ac pipest al so doth a mose,  
 Mid cokeringe mid stefne hose,
- 505            Yet thu singest wrse than the hey-sugge  
 That flyhth bi grunde among the stubbe.  
 Hwenne thi lust is ago,  
 Thenne is thi song ago al so.  
 A sumere chorles awaydeth
- 510            And vorcrempeth and vorbredeth —  
 fol. 159vb      Hit nys for luvē, notheles,  
 Ac is theos cherles wode res,  
 Vor hwanne he haveth ido his dede,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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470 Best find a defensible answer,  
For whoever's afraid of debating tricks  
Must remain mentally alert.

“You ask me,” said the owl,  
“Why I sing and call out in winter.  
475 It's the habit of good men,  
And has been since the world began,  
fol. 159va That each good man greet his friend  
And entertain him for a time  
In his house at his table  
480 With pleasant talk and pleasant words,  
And most of all at Christmastime,  
When rich and poor, high and low,  
Sing dancing songs night and day.  
I help them out as much as I can!  
485 And also I have different purpose  
Beyond having fun or singing —  
For this I have a good response,  
All ready and waiting!  
Because summertime is beautiful,  
490 Causing a man's thoughts to stray  
So that he cares nothing about chastity,  
His intent is wholly on lechery,  
For no animal hesitates long,  
But every one mounts the other.  
495 The very stallions in the stable  
Go wild and crazy for the mares,  
And you yourself are among them  
Because your song's all about lechery,  
And, pressing toward how you'll breed,  
500 You become quite bold and aggressive.  
As soon as you have copulated,  
You can no longer utter a word  
But chirp instead like a titmouse,  
Coughing in a hoarse voice,  
505 Singing worse than a hedge sparrow  
Flitting near the ground among the stubble.  
When your passion is depleted,  
Then is your voice depleted too.  
In summer churls become mad fools  
510 And get all twisted and perverse —  
fol. 159vb It's not out of love, though,  
But out of a churl's mad frenzy,  
For as soon as he's done the deed,

- 515 Ifalle is al his boldhede;  
Habbe he istunge under gore,  
Ne last his luve no leng more.  
Al so hit is on thine mode:  
So sone so thu sittest abrode,  
Thu forleost al thine wise.
- 520 Al so thu varest on thine ryse:  
Hwenne thu havest ido thi gome,  
Thi stefne goth anon to schome!  
Ac hwenne nyhtes cumeth longe  
And bryngeth forstes starke and stronge,
- 525 Thanne erest hit is isene  
Hwar is the snelle, hwar the kene;  
At than harde, me may avynde  
Hwo goth forth, hwo lyth bihynde.  
Me may iseon at thare neode,
- 530 Hwan me schal harde wike beode,  
Thanne ich am snel and pleye and singe,  
And hyhte me myd my skentinge.  
Of none wyntre ich ne recche  
Vor ich nam non aswunde wrecche!
- 535 And ek, ich froueri fele wihte  
That myd heom nabbeth non mihte;  
Hi beoth houhful and wel arme,  
And secheth yorne to then warme.  
Ofte ich singe for hem the more
- 540 For lutly sum of heore sore.  
Hw thinkth the? Artu inume?  
Artu myd rihte overcume?"
- NIGHTINGALE "Nay! Nay!" seyde the nihtegale,  
"Thu schalt ihere onother tale!
- fol. 160ra Yet nis theos speche ibroht to dome,  
546 Ac be stille and lust nu to me!  
Ich schal, mid one bare worde,  
Do that thi speche wrth forwurthe!"
- OWL "That nere noht riht!" the ule seyde.  
550 "Thu havest bicleped al so thu bede,  
And ich the habbe iyive onswere!  
Ac are we to unker dome fare,  
Ich wile speke toward the  
Al so thu speke toward me,
- 555 And thu me onswere if thu myht.  
Sey me nu, thu wrecche wiht,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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515 All his passion collapses;  
Once he's stung under a skirt,  
His love lasts no longer.  
Your tendency is just like that:  
Just as soon as you sit hatching,  
You lose all your melodies.  
520 You act just like that on your bough:  
When you've finished your game,  
Your voice is immediately ruined!  
Yet when nights grow long  
And bring frosts stark and cold,  
525 Only then may it be seen  
Where are the bold, where the fearless;  
In tough times, it shall be discovered  
Who goes forward, who lags behind.  
It shall be seen in time of need,  
530 When dutiful service is called for,  
That then I'm bold and entertain and sing,  
And rejoice to give my performance.  
Winter doesn't faze me at all  
For I'm not a puny weakling!  
535 Moreover, I comfort many creatures  
Who've got no strength of their own;  
They're anxious and quite miserable,  
And search desperately for warmth.  
I sing often especially for them  
540 So as to reduce some of their stress.  
How about it? Are you beaten?  
Are you overcome by truth?"

NIGHTINGALE "No! No!" said the nightingale,  
"You'll have to hear another side!  
fol. 160ra This debate still hasn't been judged,  
546 So be quiet and now listen to me!  
I will, with only a single argument,  
Cause your speech to mean nothing!"

OWL "That's not fair!" the owl said.  
550 "You've argued as you've liked,  
And I've given you an answer!  
But before we go to our judgment,  
I intend to argue against you  
Just as you've argued against me,  
555 And you may answer me if you can.  
Tell me now, you wretched creature,

Is in the eny other note  
 Bute thu havest schille throte?  
 Thu nart nouht to non other thinge  
 560 Bute thu canst of chateringe,  
 Vor thu art lutel and unstrong,  
 And nys thi ryel nowiht long.  
 Hwat dostu godes among monne?  
 Namo thene doth a wrecche wrenne!  
 565 Of the ne cumeth non other god  
 Bute thu gredest swich thu be wod,  
 And beo thi piping overgo,  
 Ne beoth on the craftes namo.  
 Alvred seyde, that wes wis  
 570 (He myhte wel, for soth hit is):  
 'Nis no mon for his bare songe  
 Leof ne wrth noht swithe longe,  
 Vor that is o furwrthe man  
 That bute singe naht ne can.'  
 575 Thu nart bute o furwrthe thing;  
 On the nys bute chateryng;  
 Thu art dym and of fule heowe,  
 And thinchest a lytel, soty clewe.  
 fol. 160rb  
 580 Thu nart fayr; ne thu nart strong;  
 Ne thu nart thikke; ne thu nart long;  
 Thu havest ymyst of fayrhede,  
 And lutel is thi godhede.  
 Another thing of the ich mene:  
 585 Thu nart feyr ne thu nart clene  
 Hwanne thu cumest to monne hawe,  
 Thar thornes beoth and ris idrawe  
 Bi hegge and bi thikke weode,  
 Thar men goth to heore neode.  
 590 Tharto thu draust, tharto thu wunst,  
 And other clene stude thu schunest.  
 Hwanne ich fleo nyhtes after muse,  
 Ich may the vinde at the run-huse  
 Among the wede, among the netle.  
 595 Thu syttest and singst bihinde seotle!  
 Thar me the may, ilomest, fynde  
 Thar men worpeth heore byhinde.  
 Yet, thu atwitest me myne mete,  
 And seyst that ich fule wyhtes ete,  
 Ac hwat etestu — that thu ne lye! —  
 600 Bute attercoppe and fule ulye

Do you have in you any use  
Besides possessing a shrill voice?  
You are good for nothing  
560 Other than your chattering,  
For you are little and weak,  
And your coat's not long at all.  
What good do you do among men?  
No more than does a paltry wren!  
565 No other good comes out of you  
Than making noise as if you're mad,  
And once your piping fades away,  
You've got no other skills.  
Alfred, who was wise, said  
570 (Well he might, for it's true):  
'Solely for singing is no one  
Loved or valued for very long,  
For that's a worthless person  
Who can do nothing but sing.'  
575 You're only a worthless creature;  
You're nothing but chattering;  
You're dark and dull in color,  
And look like a little, sooty yarnball.  
fol. 160rb You're not pretty; you're not strong;  
580 You're not broad; you're not tall;  
You've missed out on good looks,  
And small is your goodness.  
Another thing I impute about you:  
You're neither pretty nor clean  
585 When you visit men's enclosed yards,  
Where thorns exist and branches entwine  
Amid hedges and thick weeds,  
Where people go to relieve themselves.  
You head off toward it, you dwell there,  
590 And you avoid other clean spots.  
When I fly after mice by night,  
I might find you at the privy  
Among weeds, among nettles.  
You sit and sing behind the seat!  
595 There, most often, they'll find you  
Where people thrust out their bums.  
What's more, you blame me for my diet,  
And say I eat disgusting creatures,  
But what do you eat — don't deny it! —  
600 Other than spiders and filthy flies

And wurmes — if thu myht fynde  
 Among the volde of harde rynde?  
 Yet, ich can do wel gode wike,  
 For ich can loki monne wike,  
 605 And mine wike beoth wel gode  
 For ich helpe to monne vode:  
 Ich can nyme mus at berne  
 And ek at chireche in the derne,  
 For me is leof, to Cristes huse,  
 610 To clansi hit with fule muse —  
 Ne schal thar never come to  
 Ful wiht, if ich hit may ivo!  
 fol. 160va And if me lust, on my skenting,  
 To wernen other wunying,  
 615 Ich habbe at wode treon grete  
 Mid thikke bowe, nothing blete,  
 Mid ivi grene al bigrowe  
 That ever stont iliche iblowe,  
 And his heou never ne vorleost  
 620 Hwanne hit snywe ne frost.  
 Tharinne ic habbe god ihold —  
 A wintre warm, a sumere cold.  
 Thane myn hus stont briht and grene,  
 Of thine nys nowiht isene.  
 625 Yet, thu me telst of other thinge:  
 Of myne briddes seyst gabbinge  
 That heore nest nys nouht clene;  
 Hit is fale other wihte imene,  
 Vor hors a stable and oxe a stalle  
 630 Doth al that heom wile thar valle;  
 And lutle childre in the cradele —  
 Bothe cheorles and ek athele —  
 Doth al that in heore youhthe.  
 That hi vorleteth in heore duhthe.  
 635 Hwat can that yongling hit bihede?  
 Yf hit mysketh, hit mot nede.  
 A vorbisne is of olde iwurne:  
 ‘That neode maketh old wif eorne.’  
 And yet, ic habbe another onswere:  
 640 Wiltu to myne neste vare  
 And loki hw hit is idiht?  
 If thu art wis, leorny thu miht:  
 Mi nest is holeuh and rum amidde,  
 So hit is softest myne bridde;

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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And worms — whatever you can find  
In the crevices of rough bark?  
What's more, I can do useful service,  
For I can guard men's dwellings,  
605 And my service is very useful  
Because I help with men's food:  
I can catch mice in a barn  
And also in a church in the dark,  
For it pleases me to cleanse  
610 Christ's house of filthy mice —  
Evil creatures won't ever  
Enter there, if I can catch them!  
fol. 160va And if, for my amusement, I choose  
To reject other types of dwellings,  
615 I have large trees in the woods  
With thick boughs, not bare at all,  
But overgrown with green ivy  
That always stays leafy,  
And never loses its color  
620 When it snows or freezes.  
In there I find good shelter —  
Warm in winter, cool in summer.  
While my house stays bright and green,  
Yours is nowhere to be seen.  
625 What's more, you accuse me of other things:  
You slander my chicks  
By saying their nest is not clean;  
That it's shared among many creatures,  
For a horse in a stable and an ox in a stall  
630 Just do their business wherever it drops;  
And little children in cradles —  
Both churls and also nobles —  
Do all that in their infancy.  
They abandon that when they're older.  
635 How can a baby help it?  
If it dirties, it's by necessity.  
There's a proverb of great antiquity:  
'Need makes the old woman trot.'  
And still, I have another answer:  
640 Would you like to visit my nest  
And see how it's laid out?  
If you're wise, you might learn:  
My nest's hollow and roomy in the middle,  
Making it as soft as possible for my chicks;

- 645           Hit is ibroyde al abute,  
               Vrom the neste veor withute.  
 fol. 160vb    Tharto hi goth to heore neode,  
               Ac thu menest ich heom forbode.  
               We yeme nymeth of manne bure,  
 650           And after than we makieth ure.  
               Men habbeth, among othre iyende,  
               A run-hus at heore bures ende  
               Vor that hi nelleth to veor go,  
               And myne briddes doth al so.  
 655           Syte nu stille, chaterestre!  
               Nere thu never ibunde vastre —  
               Herto, ne vyndestu never answe.  
               Hong up thin ax! Nu thu miht fare!”
- NIGHTINGALE    The nihtegale, at thisse worde,  
 660           Was wel neyh ut of rede iworthe  
               And thouhte yorne on hire mode  
               Yf heo ouht elles understode—  
               Yf heo cuthe ouht bute singe—  
               That myhte helpe to other thinge.  
 665           Herto heo moste answe vynde,  
               Other mid alle beon bihinde,  
               And hit is strong to vyhte  
               Ayeyn sothe and ayeyn rihte.  
               He mot gon to al mid gynne  
 670           Hwan the horte beoth on winne,  
               And the man mot other segge —  
               He mot bihemme and bilegge —  
               If muth withute may biwreo  
               That me the horte nouht niseo.  
 675           And sone may a word mysreke  
               Thar muth schal ayeyn horte speke;  
               And sone may a word myssturte  
               Thar muth shal speke ayeyn horte.  
               Ac notheles, hyet upe thon,  
 680           Her is to red, hwo hyne con:  
               Vor never nys wit so kene  
               So hwanne red him is a wene;  
 fol. 161ra    Thanne erest cumeth his yephede  
               Hwenne hit is alremest on drede.  
 685           For Alvred seyde of olde quide  
               And hyet hit nis of horte islide:  
               ‘Hwenne the bale is alre-hekst,  
               Thenne is the bote alre-nest.’

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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645           It's latticed all around,  
Far outside the nest itself.  
This is where they go for their needs,  
fol. 160vb    But I forbid them from what you claim.  
We pay attention to human bowers,  
650           And we construct ours accordingly.  
Humans have, among other conveniences,  
A privy at the far end of their bedchambers  
Because they prefer not to wander far,  
And my chicks do the same thing.  
655           Sit still now, chattering girl!  
You've never been tied up more tight —  
To this, you'll never find an answer.  
Hang up your axe! Now be done!"

NIGHTINGALE    Upon hearing this, the nightingale  
660           Was just about out of ideas  
And quickly pondered whether  
There was something else she knew —  
Anything beyond singing —  
That might help in some way.  
665           She needed to find a response for this,  
Or else be completely behind,  
And it's hard to fight  
Against truth and right.  
One must turn to deception  
670           When the heart's in trouble,  
And one must talk another way —  
He must embroider and embellish —  
If the outward mouth is to conceal  
What can't be seen in the heart.  
675           An argument may suddenly go astray  
When mouth speaks against heart;  
An argument may suddenly go wrong  
When mouth speaks against heart.  
But nonetheless, even in spite of this,  
680           Here's some advice, whoever wants it:  
Never is a mind so keen  
As when the plan is in doubt;  
fol. 161ra    Mental acuity first arrives  
When it's the most frightened.  
685           For Alfred said in an old proverb  
That even now isn't forgotten:  
'When disaster's the highest,  
Then remedy's the nearest.'

690 Vor wit west among his sore  
 And for his sore hit is the more.  
 Vorthi nis never mon redles  
 Ar his horte beo witles.  
 Ac if he furleost his wit,  
 Thenne is his red-purs al toslyt —  
 695 If he ne con his wit atholde,  
 Ne vynt he red in none volde!  
 Vor Alvred seyde that wel cuthe,  
 Ever he spak mid sothe muthe:  
 ‘Hwenne the bale is alre-hekst,  
 700 Thenne is the bote alre-nexst.’

The nihtegale al hire howe  
 Mid rede hadde wel bitowe;  
 Among the harde, among the towehte,  
 Ful wel myd rede hire bithouhte,  
 705 And hedde onswere god ifunde  
 Among alle hire harde stunde.  
 “Ule, thu axest me,” heo seyde,  
 “If ich con eny other dede  
 Bute syngen in sumeretyde  
 710 And bringe blisse veor and wyde.  
 Hwyl axestu of craftes myne?  
 Beter is myn on than alle thine!  
 Beter is o song of myne muthe  
 Than al that thi kun kuthe!  
 715 And, lust, ich telle the hwarvore:  
 Wostu to hwan mon wes ibore?  
 To thare blisse of heveryche,  
 fol. 161rb Thar ever is song and murehthe ilyche.  
 Thider fundeth everich man,  
 720 That enything of gode can.  
 Forthi me syngth in Holy Chireche,  
 And clerekes gynneth songes wrche:  
 That mon ythenche, bi the songe,  
 Hwider he shal and thar ben longe;  
 725 That he the murehthe ne voryete,  
 Ac tharof thenche and bigete,  
 And nyme yeme of chirche-stefne  
 Hw murie is the blisse of hevene!  
 Clerekes, munekes, and canunes  
 730 Thar beoth thos gode wike-tunes  
 Ariseth up to middel-nyhte  
 And singeth of thon hevene lyhte,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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690           The mind waxes in its troubles  
And for its troubles is the greater.  
Thus is one never defenseless  
Unless his heart is witless.  
Should he lose his wits,  
His trick-bag's slit right open —  
695           If he can't hang onto his wits,  
He'll find no trick in its folds!  
For the very wise Alfred said,  
Who always spoke truly:  
'When disaster's the highest,  
700           Then remedy's the nearest.'

              The nightingale had applied  
All her thought to arrive at a plan;  
Among hardships, among challenges,  
She pondered hard to come up with a plan,  
705           And had found a good answer  
Among all her hard positions.  
"Owl, you ask me," she said,  
"Whether I know how to do anything  
Besides sing in summertime  
710           And bring happiness far and wide.  
Why do you ask about my skills?  
My one skill is better than all yours!  
One song from my mouth is better  
Than all that your kin's able to do!  
715           And, listen, I'll tell you why:  
Do you know why mankind was born?  
It was for the bliss of heaven's realm,  
fol. 161rb       Where always are song and mirth together.  
Every person aspires to go there,  
720           Who knows anything about good.  
That's why people sing in Holy Church,  
And clerks compose songs:  
So that people remember, by the song,  
Where they'll go and stay a long time;  
725           So that they don't forget the joy,  
But think about it and obtain it,  
And grasp from church-singing  
How joyful is the bliss of heaven!  
Clerks, monks, and canons  
730           From good religious communities  
Arise at midnight  
And sing about heaven's light,

- And preostes upe londe singeth  
 Hwenne the liht of day springeth;  
 735 And ich heom helpe hwat ic may!  
 Ich singe myd hem nyht and day,  
 And heo beoth alle, for me, the gladdere  
 And to the songe beoth the raddure.  
 Ich warny men to heore gode  
 740 That hi beon blythe on heore mode,  
 And bidden that hi moten iseche  
 That ilche song that ever is eche.  
 Nu thu myht, ule, sitte and clynge!  
 Her among nys no chateringe —  
 745 Ich graunti that thu go to dome  
 Tovore the sulve Pope of Rome!  
 Ac abid yete, notheles —  
 Thu schalt abyde onother bles:  
 Ne schaltu, vor Englonde,  
 750 At thisse worde me atstonde.  
 Hwy atwitestu me myne unstrengthe,  
 And myne ungrete and myn unlengthe,  
 And sayst that ich am nouht strong  
 Vor ic nam nother gret ne long?  
 fol. 161va  
 755 Ac thu nost never hwat thu menest,  
 Bute lese wordes thu me lenest,  
 For ic kan craft and ic kan lyste,  
 And tharfore ic am thus thriste!  
 Ich kan wit and song mony eine,  
 760 Ne triste ic to non other mayne,  
 Vor soth hit is that seyde Alvred:  
 ‘Ne may no strengthe ayeyn red.’  
 Oft spet wel a lute lyste  
 Thar mucche strengthe solde myste.  
 765 Mid lutle strengthe, thureh ginne  
 Castel and bureh me may winne;  
 Mid liste, me may walles felle,  
 And werpe of horse knyhtes snelle.  
 Uvel strengthe is lutel wrth,  
 770 Ac wisdom ne wrth never unwrth.  
 Thu myht iseo thurh alle thing  
 That wisdom naveth non evening:  
 An hors is strenger than a mon,  
 Ac for hit non iwit ne kon,  
 775 Hit berth on rugge grete semes,  
 And draht bi sweore grete temes,

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And priests in the land sing  
When the light of day dawns;  
735 And I help them however I can!  
I sing with them night and day,  
And all of them, because of me, are happier  
And more eager to sing the song.  
I give people a beneficial taste  
740 So that they'll rejoice in spirit,  
And encourage them to pursue  
The true song that lasts forever.  
Now may you, owl, sit and decay!  
About this there's no idle chatter —  
745 I'd let you go for judgment  
Before the Pope of Rome himself!  
But hold on a bit, nevertheless —  
You shall face another blast:  
You shall not, for all of England,  
750 Prevail against me in this point.  
Why criticize me for my weakness,  
My littleness and my shortness,  
And allege that I'm not strong  
fol. 161va Because I'm not large or tall?  
755 You never know what you're saying,  
But just allege lies about me,  
For I'm skilled and I'm shrewd,  
And that's why I'm so assertive!  
I'm smart and know many a song,  
760 And I don't depend on other strengths,  
For what Alfred said is true:  
'Strength cannot beat wisdom.'  
Often a bit of shrewdness succeeds  
Where great strength would fail.  
765 With a bit of strength, by trickery  
Castles and towns can be won;  
By shrewdness, walls can be felled,  
And brave knights thrown off horses.  
Violent strength is worth little,  
770 But wisdom never loses its value.  
You can see by every example  
That wisdom has no equal:  
A horse is stronger than a man,  
But because it has no intellect,  
775 It carries on its back heavy loads,  
And pulls by neck large plow reins,

And tholeth bothe yerd and spure,  
 And stont iteyed at mulne-dure,  
 And hit doth that mon hit hot;  
 780 And forthan that hit no wit not,  
 Ne may his strengthe hit ischilde  
 That hit nabuhth the lutle childe.  
 Mon doth, mid strengthe and mid witte,  
 That other thing nys non his fitte.  
 785 They alle strengthe at one were,  
 Monnes wit yet more were,  
 Vor the mon myd his crafte  
 fol. 161vb Overcumeth al eorthliche shaffe.  
 Al so, ic do, myd myne one songe,  
 790 Bet than thu alle yer longe.  
 Vor myne crafte, men me luvyeth;  
 Vor thine strengthe, men the schunyeth.  
 Telstu bi me the wrs forthan  
 That ic bute enne craft ne kan?  
 795 If twey men goth to wrastlinge,  
 And eyther other vaste thringe,  
 And the on can swenges swithe fele  
 And kan his wrenches wel forhele,  
 And the other ne can sweng bute anne  
 800 And the is god with eche manne,  
 And myd than one leyth to grunde  
 Anne after other a lutle stunde,  
 Hwat tharf he recche of a mo swenge  
 Hwenne the on him is so genge?  
 805 Thu seyst that thu canst fele wike,  
 Ac ever ich am thin unyliche.  
 Do thine craftes alle togadere,  
 Yet is myn on heorte betere.  
 Ofte, hwan hundes foxes driveth,  
 810 The kat ful wel him sulve liveth,  
 Theh he ne cunne wreynch bute anne.  
 The fox so godne ne can nanne,  
 They he cunne so vele wrenche  
 That he weneth eche hunde atprenche.  
 815 Vor he can pathes rihte and wowe,  
 And he can hongy bi the bowe  
 And so vorlest the hund his fore  
 And turnth eft ayeyn to the more.  
 The fox can crepe by the heye,  
 820 And turne ut from his forme weye,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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And suffers both stick and spur,  
And stands tethered at the mill door,  
And does what men order it to do;  
780 And because it has no wisdom,  
Its strength cannot protect it  
From having to submit to a little child.  
Man sees to it, by strength and wisdom,  
That no other thing is his equal.  
785 Even if all strengths were combined,  
Human wisdom would still be more,  
Because the human with his skillfulness  
fol. 161vb Dominates all earthly creatures.  
Likewise, with my single song, I do  
790 More good than you do all year long.  
For my skill, people love me;  
For your strength, people shun you.  
Do you thus tell me I am worse  
Because I have just one skill?  
795 If two men start to wrestle,  
And each presses the other hard,  
And one knows lots of throws  
And can conceal his tactics well,  
While the other knows a single throw  
800 That's effective against everybody,  
And with that one brings down  
One opponent after another with speed,  
Why should he care about a better throw  
When that one's so effective for him?  
805 You claim you can do many services,  
But I am entirely your opposite.  
Combine all your skills together,  
And yet is my one skill truly better.  
Often, when hounds chase foxes,  
810 The cat survives on his own quite well,  
Even though he knows just one trick.  
The fox knows nothing that's equally good,  
Even though he knows so many tricks  
That he thinks he'll escape each hound.  
815 For he knows paths straight and crooked,  
And he can hang from a branch  
So that the hound loses his track  
And turns back to the moorland.  
The fox can creep along the hedge,  
820 And turn off from his earlier route,

- fol. 162ra      And eftsome cume tharto;  
 Thenne is thes hundes smel fordo,  
 He not thurh the meynde smak  
 Hwether he schal vorth the abak.
- 825              If the vox miste of al this dwele,  
 At than ende he creophth to hole.  
 Ac natheles, myd al his wrenche,  
 Ne can he hine so bithenche —  
 They he beo yep and swithe snel —
- 830              That he ne leost his rede vel.  
 The kat ne can wrench bute anne,  
 Nother bi dune ne bi venne:  
 Bute he can clymbe swithe wel —  
 Tharmyd he wereth his greye vel!
- 835              Al so ich segge bi my seolve:  
 Beter is myn on than thine twelve.”
- Owl              “Abid! Abid!” the ule seyde,  
 “Thu gest al to mid swikelhede.  
 Alle thine wordes thu bileyst
- 840              That hit thinkth soth that thu seyst!  
 Alle thine wordes beoth isliked,  
 And so bisemed and biliked  
 That alle heo that hi avoth  
 Hi weneth that thu segge soth!
- 845              Abid! Abid! Me schal the yene!  
 Nu hit schal wrthe wel isene  
 That thu havest muchel ilowe  
 Hwenne thi lesing beoth unwrowe!  
 Thu seist that thu singest moncunne
- 850              And techest heom that hi fundeth heonne  
 Up to the songe that ever ilast.  
 Ac hit is alre wndre mest  
 That thu darst lye so opeliche.  
 Wenestu hi bringe so lyhtliche
- 855              To Godes riche, al singinde?  
 fol. 162rb      Nay! Nay! Hi schule wel avynde  
 That hi myd longe wope mote  
 Of heore sunnen bidde bote  
 Ar hi mote ever cume thare.
- 860              Ich rede thi that men beo ware  
 And more wepe than singe,  
 That fundeth to than hevene Kyng.  
 For nys no mon withuten sunne,  
 Forthi he mot, ar he wende heonne,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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fol. 162ra      And shortly afterwards come back to it;  
Then the hound is thrown off the scent,  
Not knowing from the mingled scents  
Whether he should go forward or back.  
825      If the fox exhausts all these ruses,  
In the end he creeps into a hole.  
But nonetheless, despite all his tricks,  
He's not able to plan so well —  
Even though he's clever and swift —  
830      That he doesn't lose his red fur coat.  
The cat knows only a single trick,  
By highland or by marshland:  
He simply knows how to climb well —  
Therefore he wears his grey fur coat!  
835      Just so do I proclaim of myself:  
Better is my one skill than your twelve.”

Owl              “Hold on! Hold on!” the owl said,  
“Your whole approach is dishonest.  
You manipulate all your words  
840      So that it seems what you're saying is true!  
All your words are smoothed over,  
And made so plausible and charming  
That everyone who hears them  
Thinks you're telling the truth!  
845      Hold on! Hold on! You'll be rebutted!  
Now it'll be made obvious  
That you've lied enormously  
When your lying is exposed!  
You claim that you sing to humans  
850      And teach them they're headed hence  
Up toward the song that lasts forever.  
But what's most remarkable is  
That you dare to lie so openly.  
Do you expect to bring them so easily  
855      To God's realm, all singing?  
fol. 162rb      No! No! They'll certainly find out  
That they must copiously weep  
And pray for release from their sins  
Before they can ever arrive there.  
860      So I advise folks to take heed  
And weep more than sing,  
In hope of reaching the King of heaven.  
Because no one is without sin,  
He must therefore, before going from here,

- 865 Mid teres and myd wope bete,  
 That him beo sur that er was swete.  
 Tharto ich helpe, God hit wot!  
 Ne singe ich heom no foliot  
 Vor al my song is of longinge
- 870 And ymeynd sumdel myd woninge,  
 That mon, bi me, hine bithenche  
 That he grony for his unwrenche;  
 Mid myne songe ich hine pulte  
 That he grony for his gulte.
- 875 If thu gest herof to disputinge,  
 Ich wepe bet than thu singe!  
 If riht goth forth and abak wrong,  
 Betere is my wop than thi song.  
 Theyh summe men beon thurhut gode,
- 880 And thurhut clene on heore mode,  
 Heom longeth heonne notheles;  
 That beoth her wo is hom thes,  
 Vor theyh hi beo heomselve iborewe,  
 Hi ne seoth her nowiht bute serewe.
- 885 Vor other men hi wepeth sore,  
 And for heom biddeth Cristes ore.  
 Ich helpe monne on eyther halve;  
 Mi muth haveth tweire kunne salve:  
 Than gode ich fulste to longinge,
- fol. 162va  
 891 Vor hwenne him longeth, ic him singe;  
 And than sunfulle ic helpe also,  
 Vor ic him teche hwar is wo.  
 Yet, ic the yene onother wise,  
 Vor hwenne thu sittest on thine rise,
- 895 Thu drahest men to fleyses luste  
 That wileth thine songes luste.  
 Al thu vorleost the murehthe of hevene,  
 For, tharto, navestu none stevene;  
 Al that thu singest is of golnesse,
- 900 For nys on the non holynesse!  
 Ne weneth no mon for thi pipinge  
 That eny preost in chirche singe.  
 Yet, ic the wile onother segge  
 If thu hit const ariht bilegge:
- 905 Hwi nultu singe onother theode,  
 Thar hit is muchele more neode?  
 Thu never ne singest in Irlonde,  
 Ne thu ne cumest in Scotlonde.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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865            Repent with tears and weeping,  
                Making sour what was once sweet for him.  
                I help them do that, God knows!  
                I don't sing to them to set a snare  
                Because my song's all about longing  
870            Mingled somewhat with mourning,  
                So that a man, by me, may realize  
                That he must bewail his bad deeds;  
                I pummel him with my song  
                So that he'll bewail his guilt.  
875            If you must go on disputing this point,  
                Then I weep better than you sing!  
                If right goes ahead and wrong behind,  
                My weeping is better than your song.  
                Even if some folks are utterly good,  
880            And utterly pure in their hearts,  
                They long to leave here nonetheless;  
                They're miserable that they're here,  
                For despite being saved themselves,  
                They see nothing here but sorrow.  
885            They weep bitterly for other people,  
                And on their behalf pray for Christ's mercy.  
                I help people of both kinds;  
                My mouth offers two types of remedy:  
                I aid the good man in his longing,  
fol. 162va    For when he longs, I sing to him;  
891            And I help the sinful man as well,  
                For I show him where misery lies.  
                What's more, I counter you another way,  
                Because when you sit on your branch,  
895            You entice into fleshly desire those folk  
                Who desire to hear your songs.  
                You entirely forfeit heaven's bliss,  
                For, regarding it, you don't give voice;  
                You sing only of lechery,  
900            For there's no holiness in you!  
                No one's reminded by your piping  
                Of a priest singing in church.  
                What's more, I pose another point for you  
                To see if you can explain it away:  
905            Why won't you sing in other lands,  
                Where there's so much more need?  
                You never sing in Ireland,  
                Nor do you visit Scotland.



## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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910           Why don't you travel to Norway,  
              And sing to men of Galloway?  
              The people there know little  
              About any song under the sun.  
              Why won't you sing to priests there  
              And teach them by your warbling  
915           And show them by your voice  
              How angels sing in heaven?  
              You behave like a lazy spring  
              That wells up beside a swift stream,  
              And lets the slope dry out,  
920           Flowing uselessly down it.  
              But I travel north and south;  
              In every land I'm well known:  
              East and west, south and north.  
fol. 162vb   I do my job very well,  
925           And warn people with my cries,  
              So that your beguiling song not mislead them.  
              I guide people with my song  
              So that they won't sin too long;  
              I advise them that they ought to quit  
930           So that they not deceive themselves,  
              For it's better that they weep here  
              Than have devils' company somewhere else."

NIGHTINGALE    The nightingale was furious  
              And also quite a bit embarrassed  
935           Because the owl had criticized her  
              For the place she sat and sang in:  
              Behind the bedchamber, among the weeds,  
              Where people go to relieve themselves;  
              And she sat and thought for a time,  
940           And knew well upon reflection  
              That wrath deprives a man of his wits,  
              For as King Alfred said:  
              "The hateful seldom end well,  
              And the wrathful seldom plead well" —  
945           Because wrath stirs up the heart's blood  
              Causing it to flow like a wild flood  
              And overwhelm the heart,  
              Until it has nothing but passion,  
              And so loses all its insight,  
950           And can't see what's true or right.  
              The nightingale considered this,  
              And allowed her anger to subside;

- He myhte bet speken isele  
 Than myd wraththe wordes dele.
- 955                    “Ule,” heo seyde, “lust nu hider:  
 Thu schalt falle; thi wey is slider.  
 Thu seyst ich fleo bihinde bure;  
 fol. 163ra       Hit is riht, the bur is ure.  
 Thar louerd liggeth and levedy,  
 960       Ich schal heom synge and sitte bi.  
 Wenestu that wise men forlete  
 Vor fule venne the rihte strete?  
 Ne sunne the later schyne,  
 Theyh hit beo ful in neste thine?  
 965       Schold ich, for one hole brede,  
 Furlete myne rihte stede  
 That ich ne singe bi the bedde,  
 Thar louerd haveth his lavedi bedde?  
 Hit is my rihte, hit is my lawe,  
 970       That to the hexste ich me drawe.  
 Ac if thu yelpst of thine songe —  
 That thu kanst yolle urothe and stronge —  
 And seyst thu wisest monkunne  
 That hi biwepen heore sunne,  
 975       Solde everuych mon wony and grede  
 Riht such hi weren unlede?  
 Scholde hi yollen al so thu dest,  
 Hi myhten afere heore preost.  
 Mon schal beo stille and noht grede;  
 980       He mot biwepe his mysdede.  
 Ac thar is Cristes heriyng  
 Thar me grede and lude singe;  
 Nis nother to lude ne to long,  
 At rihte tyme chirche song.  
 985       Thu yollest and wonest, and ic singe;  
 Thi stefne is wop, and myn skenting.  
 Ever mote thu yolle and wepen  
 That thu thi lif mote forleten,  
 And yolle mote thu so heye,  
 990       That ut tobersten bo thin eye!  
 Hwether is betere of tweyre twom:  
 fol. 163rb       That mon beo blithe other grom?  
 So beo hit ever, in unker sithe,  
 That thu beo sori and ich blithe.  
 995       Yet, thu ayschest hwi ic ne vare  
 Into other londe and singe thare.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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She might better speak calmly  
Than spew wrathful words.

955           “Owl,” she said, “now listen to this:  
You’re going to fall; your way’s slippery.  
You say I fly behind the bower;  
fol. 163ra    It’s true, the bower is ours.  
Wherever lord and lady lie,  
960           I’ll sing to them and perch nearby.  
Do you think that wise men abandon  
The right road just because of dirty mud?  
Or that the sun shines any the later  
Just because it’s dirty in your nest?  
965           Should I, just because of a board’s hole,  
Abandon my rightful place  
And not sing alongside the bed  
Where a lord sleeps with his lady?  
It is my duty, it is my lawful rule,  
970           To which I draw myself to the utmost.  
Just because you boast of your own song —  
That you’re able to yell angry and tough —  
And argue that you advise mankind  
To weep for their sins,  
975           Should everyone wail and screech  
As if they’re miserable?  
If they were to yell the way you do,  
They might frighten their priest.  
A person should be still and not screech;  
980           He must weep for his misdeeds.  
But wherever Christ is praised  
Is where they cry out and sing loudly;  
Church song at the proper time  
Is neither too loud nor too long.  
985           You yell and wail, and I sing;  
Your song is lament, and mine celebration.  
May you forever yell and weep  
Until your life is over,  
And may you yell so loud  
990           That both your eyes burst out!  
Which is the better of two states:  
fol. 163rb    To be happy or to be angry?  
May it forever be so, in our case,  
That you are sad and I am happy.  
995           What’s more, you ask why I don’t travel  
To another country and sing there.

- No! Hwat schold ich among heom do  
 Thar never blisse ne com to?  
 That lond nys god ne hit nys este,  
 1000 Ac wilderness hit is and weste,  
 Knarres and cludes hovenetinge.  
 Snou and hawel hom is genge;  
 That lond is grislich and unwele!  
 The men beoth wilde and unsele;  
 1005 Hi nabbeth nother grith ne sibbe.  
 Hi ne reccheth hw hi libbe:  
 Hi eteth fys and fleys unsode,  
 Suych wolves hit hadde tobroude.  
 Hi drinketh mylk and hwey tharto —  
 1010 Hi nuteth elles hwet hi do —  
 Hi nabbeth noht wyn ne beor,  
 Ac libbeth al so wilde deor,  
 Hi goth bytuht myd rowe felle,  
 Riht suych hi come ut of helle.  
 1015 They eny god man to heom come  
 (So hwile dude sum from Rome)  
 For heom to lere gode thewes  
 And for to lete heore unthewes,  
 He myhte bet sytte stille,  
 1020 Vor al his hwile he scolde spille!  
 He myhte bet teche ane beore  
 To bere scheld and spere,  
 Thane that wilde volk ibringe  
 That hi me wolde ihere singe.  
 1025 Hwat schold ich thar mid myne songe?  
 fol. 163va Ne singe ic heom never so longe,  
 Mi song were ispild uych del:  
 For heom ne may halter ne bridel  
 Bringe from here wode wyse,  
 1030 Ne mon mid stele ne mid ise.  
 Ac thar lond is este and god,  
 And thar men habbeth mylde mod,  
 Ic notye myd heom mine throthe,  
 For ic may do thar gode note,  
 1035 And bringe heom leve tydinge,  
 For ic of chirche songe singe.  
 Hit wes isayd in olde lawe,  
 That yet ilast thilke soth-sawe,  
 That 'Mon schal eryen and sowe  
 1040 Thar he weneth after god mowe,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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No! What would I do among those  
Who've never known happiness?  
That country isn't good or pleasant,  
1000 But instead it's wilderness and wasteland,  
Crag and rocky hills reaching to the skies.  
Snow and hail are what they're used to;  
That country is hideous and foul!  
The people are savage and miserable;  
1005 They don't live in peace or harmony.  
They don't care how they live:  
They eat raw fish and meat,  
Ripping it apart like wolves.  
They drink milk and whey with it —  
1010 They don't know what else to do —  
They don't have either wine or beer,  
But live just like wild animals,  
Going about clad in rough pelts,  
As if they've come out of hell.  
1015 If any good man visited them  
(As someone from Rome once did)  
To teach them to behave properly  
And abandon their vices,  
He'd be better off staying put,  
1020 For his time would be wasted!  
He'd do better to teach a bear  
How to hold shield and spear  
Than persuade that savage nation  
That they'd want to hear me sing.  
1025 What use would I be with my song?  
fol. 163va No matter how long I sang to them,  
My song would be entirely wasted:  
Neither halter nor bridle could  
Draw them from their savage ways,  
1030 Nor could a man with steel or iron.  
But where a country is pleasant and good,  
And the people have gentle ways,  
I put my throat to good use among them,  
For I may give them good service,  
1035 And bring them welcome tidings,  
Because I sing songs of the church.  
It was said in an old proverb,  
And the same saying still holds true,  
That 'A man must harrow and sow  
1040 Where he expects to reap some good,

For he is wod that soweth his sed  
Thar never gras ne springth ne bled.”

- Owl                   The ule wes wroth, to cheste rad;  
Mid thisse worde, hire eyen abraid:  
1045                   “Thu seyst thu witest monne bures,  
Thar leves beoth and fayre flures,  
Thar two yleove in one bedde  
Liggeth iclupt, and wel bihedde.  
Enes thu sunge ic wot wel hware  
1050                   Bi one bure and woldest lere  
The levedi to an uvel luve,  
And sunge bothe lowe and buve,  
And leredest hi to don schome  
And unriht of hire lichome.  
1055                   The louerd that sone underyat;  
Lym, and grune, and wel ihwat  
Sette and leyde the for to lacche.  
Thu come sone to than hacche:  
Thu were ynume in one grune —  
fol. 163vb           Al hit abouhte thine schine!  
1061                   Thu neddest non other dom ne lawe  
Bute myd wilde hors were todrawe!  
Vonde if thu myht eft mysrede  
Hwether thu wilt, wif the meyde —  
1065                   Thi song mai beo so longe genge  
That thu schalt hwippen on a sprengel!”
- NIGHTINGALE       The nihtegale, at thisse worde,  
Mid swerde and myd speres orde,  
If heo mon were, wolde vyhte  
1070                   Ac tho heo bet do ne mihte,  
Heo vauht myd hire wise tunge.  
“Wel viht that wel spekth,” seyth in the songe.  
Of hire tunge heo nom red.  
“Wel viht that wel spekth,” seyde Alvred.
- 1075                   “Hwat? Seystu this for myne schome?  
The louerd hadde herof grome.  
He wes so gelus of his wyve  
That he ne myhte, vo his lyve,  
Iseo that mon with hire speke  
1080                   That his heorte nolde breke.  
He hire bilek in one bure  
That hire was stronge and sure.

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For deluded is he who sows his seed  
Where grass or leaf never grows.”

OWL                   The owl was angry, ready to fight;  
When she heard this, her eyes bulged:  
1045                   “You say that you watch over people’s bowers,  
Where there are leaves and lovely flowers,  
Where two lovers in one bed  
Lie in embrace, well protected.  
I know where you once sang  
1050                   Beside a bower and wished to urge  
The lady into an illicit love affair,  
And sang both low and high,  
And taught her to do something shameful  
And improper with her body.  
1055                   The lord soon discovered that;  
Lime, snares, and all sorts of things  
He set and laid out in order to catch you.  
Soon you came to the window:  
You were caught in a snare —  
fol. 163vb           Your legs paid the price for it!  
1061                   Your only judgment and sentence  
Was to be torn apart by wild horses!  
See if you can ever again misadvise  
Whoever you please, wife or maiden —  
1065                   Your song will only succeed so far  
Until you end up fluttering in a snare!”

NIGHTINGALE       Upon hearing this, the nightingale,  
If she’d been a man, would have attacked  
With a sword and spear-point,  
1070                   But since she couldn’t do anything better,  
She fought with her clever tongue.  
“He fights well who speaks well,” says the song.  
She took counsel of her tongue.  
“He fights well who speaks well,” said Alfred.

1075                   “What? Do you say this to insult me?  
The lord got into trouble for this.  
He was so jealous of his wife  
That, for his life, he couldn’t  
Tolerate any man speaking to her  
1080                   Without his heart breaking.  
He locked her in a chamber  
That kept her tight and secure.

- Ic hadde of hire milce and ore,  
 And sori was for hire sore,  
 1085 And skente hi mid myne songe  
 Al that ic mihte, rathe and longe.  
 Vorthan, the knyht wes with me wroth,  
 Vor rihte nythe ic wes him loth.  
 He dude me his owe schome,  
 1090 Ac al hit turnde him eft to grome.  
 That underyat the Kyng Henri.  
 (Jhesu his soule do mercy!)  
 He let forbonne thene knyht  
 fol. 164ra That hadde ido suich unriht  
 1095 In so gode kynges londe,  
 For rihte nythe and ful onde,  
 Let thane lytel fowel nyme  
 And him fordeme lif and lyme.  
 Hit wes wrthsipe al myne kunne!  
 1100 Forthon, the knyht furles his wne,  
 And yaf for me an hundred punde,  
 And myne briddes seten ysunde,  
 And hedde seththe blisse and hihte,  
 And were blithe, and wel myhte,  
 1105 Vorthan ic wes so wel awreke.  
 Ever eft, ich dar the bet speke  
 For hit bitydde ene so.  
 Ich am the blithure evermo!  
 Nu ic may singe hwar ic wile,  
 1110 Ne dar me never eft mon agrulle.  
 Ac thu ermyng, thu wrecche gost,  
 Thu ne canst fynde ne thu nost  
 An holeh stoc hwar thu the miht hude,  
 That me ne twenge thine hude,  
 1115 Vor children, gromes, heme, and hine,  
 Hi thencheth alle of thine pine.  
 If hi mowe iseo the sitte,  
 Stones hi doth in heore slytte,  
 And the totorveth and toheneth,  
 1120 And thine fule bon toscheneth.  
 If thou art iworpe other iscote,  
 Thenne thou myht erest to note,  
 Vor me the hoth in one rodde,  
 And thou, myd thine fule codde  
 1125 And myd thine ateliche sweore,  
 Biwerest monne corn from deore.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

I felt sympathy and compassion for her,  
And pitied her unhappiness,  
1085 And entertained her with my song  
As much as I could, early and late.  
For that, the knight was angry at me;  
He hated me with sheer malice.  
1090 He inflicted on me his own shame,  
But it returned to him with trouble.  
King Henry learned about that.  
(Jesus have mercy on his soul!)  
He banished the knight  
fol. 164ra Who'd done such a crime  
1095 In the realm of so good a king,  
Who, for sheer malice and foul envy,  
Had planned the little bird's capture  
And condemned it to death.  
It was an honor to all my species!  
1100 As a result, the knight forfeited his riches,  
And paid for me a hundred-pound fine,  
And my chicks stayed safe and sound,  
And had bliss and joy afterwards,  
And were pleased, as well they might be,  
1105 Because I was so well avenged.  
Ever since, I've dared speak all the more  
Because it concluded in this way.  
I've been the happier ever since!  
Now I can sing wherever I like,  
1110 And no one dares annoy me again.  
But you wretch, you miserable soul,  
You've got no idea how to find  
A hollow trunk where you might hide,  
So that no one can pilch your hide,  
1115 For children, servants, peasants, farmhands,  
They all want to make you suffer.  
If they happen to see you sit,  
They fill their pockets with stones,  
And violently pelt and injure you,  
1120 And break your filthy bones to pieces.  
Once you've been struck or shot,  
Then for the first time you're put to good use,  
For they hang you on a stick,  
And you, with your stinking paunch  
1125 And with your ugly neck,  
Guard people's corn from animals.

- fol. 164rb Nis nouthen nouht thi lif ne blod,  
Ac thu art sheules swithe god  
Thar newe sedes beoth isowe.
- 1130 Pynnue, goldfynch, rok, ne crowe  
Ne dar never cumen ihende  
If thi buk hongeth at than ende.  
Thar treon schulleth a yer blowe,  
And yonge sedes springe and growe,
- 1135 Ne dar no fuoel tharto fonge  
If thu are tharover ihonge.  
Thi lif is ever luther and qued;  
Thu nart nouht bute ded!  
Nu thu myht wite, sikerliche,
- 1140 That thine leches beoth grisliche  
The hwile thu art on lyf-daye,  
Vor hwenne thu hongest, islawe,  
Yet hi beoth of the atradde,  
The foweles that the er bigradde.
- 1145 Mid rihte men beoth with the wrothe  
For thu singest of heore lothe;  
Al that thu singest, rathe other late,  
Hit is ever of mannes unhwate.  
Hwanne thu havest a nyht igrad,
- 1150 Men beoth of the wel sore aferd.  
Thu singst thar sum man sal beo ded.  
Ever thu bodest sumne qued:  
Thu singst ayeyn ayhte lure,  
Other of summe urendes rure;
- 1155 Other thu bodest huses brune,  
Other ferde of manne, other theves rune;  
Other thu bodest qualm of orve,  
Other that lond-folc wrth idorve,  
Other that wif leost hire make;
- 1160 Other thu bodest cheste and sake.  
Ever thu singest of manne harme!
- fol. 164va Thurh the, hi beoth sorie and arme.  
Thu ne singest never one sythe  
That hit nys for summe unsythe.
- 1165 Hervore hit is that me the suneth,  
And the totorveth and tobuneth  
Mid stave and stone, and turf and clute,  
That thu ne myht noware atrute.  
Dahet ever budel in tune
- 1170 That bedeth unwreste rune

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

fol. 164rb      Your life and blood are good for nothing,  
But you make a fine scarecrow  
Wherever seeds are sown.

1130      No sparrow, goldfinch, rook, or crow  
Ever dares to venture close  
If your carcass hangs at the boundary.  
Wherever trees blossom each year,  
And young seeds sprout and grow,

1135      No bird will dare to get at them  
If you're hung over them.  
Your life's always hateful and evil;  
You're worthless unless you're dead!  
Know now, for certain,

1140      That your looks are fearsome  
During the time you're alive,  
For when you've been hung up, slain,  
They're still terrified of you,  
The birds that formerly squawked at you.

1145      People justifiably feel hostile toward you  
Because you sing about what they hate;  
All that you sing, early or late,  
Dwells incessantly on human calamity.  
Whenever you screech at night,

1150      People are utterly terrified of you.  
You sing where someone will die.  
Always you foretell some disaster:  
You sing during loss of property,  
Or the ruin of some friend;

1155      Or you foretell a house's burning,  
Or an advancing army, or a thievish plot;  
Or you foretell a plague among cattle,  
Or that the populace will be harmed,  
Or that a wife will lose her husband;

1160      Or you foretell quarrels and conflicts.  
Always you sing of people's suffering!

fol. 164va      Because of you, they're sad and wretched.  
You don't ever sing at any time  
Unless it's about some bad luck.

1165      That's the reason why people shun you,  
And violently pelt and clobber you  
With stick and stone, turf and clod,  
So that you cannot escape anywhere.  
Cursed be always the town crier

1170      Who announces evil secrets

And ever bringeth uvele tydinge  
 And that speketh of uvele thinge!  
 God Almyhti wrthe him wroth  
 And al that wereth lynnene cloth!”

- Owl  
 1176           The ule nabod noht swithe longe  
 Ac yef answeare stark and stronge:  
 “Hwat?” queth heo. “Ertu ihoded,  
 Other thu cursest unihoded?  
 For prestes wike ic wot thu dest.  
 1180           Ich not if thu were preost;  
 Ich not if thu canst masse singe —  
 Inouh thu canst of mansynge!  
 Ac hit is for thine olde nythe,  
 That thu me acursedest other sithe!  
 1185           Ac tharto is lighthlych answeare:  
 ‘Drah to the!’ queth the kartere.  
 Hwi atwitestu me myne insihte,  
 And min iwit, and myne myhte?  
 For ich am witi, ful iwis,  
 1190           And wot al that to comen is:  
 Ich wot of hunger, of heregonge;  
 Ich wot if men sulle libbe longe;  
 Ic wot if wif lust hire make;  
 Ic wot hwar sal beo nith and wrake;  
 1195           Ic wot hwo sal beo anhonge,  
 Other elles fulne deth avonge;  
 If men habbeth batayle inume,  
 Ic wot hwather sal beo overcume;  
 fol. 164vb  
 1200           Ic wot if qualm sal cumen on orve,  
 And if deor schulle ligge astorve;  
 Ic wot if tren schulle blowe;  
 Ic wot if corn schulle growe;  
 Ic wot if huses schulle berne;  
 Ic wot if men sulle eorne other erne;  
 1205           Ic wot if sea sal schipes drenche;  
 Ic wot if smithes sale uvele clenche.  
 And ic con muchele more:  
 Ic con ynouh in bokes lore,  
 And ek ic can of the godspelle  
 1210           More than ic wile the telle,  
 Vor ic at chireche cume ilome  
 And muchel leorny of wisdomme.  
 Ic wot al of the toknyngge,  
 And of other vale thinge.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

And always brings bad news  
That speaks of calamitous things!  
May he gain the wrath of God Almighty  
And all who wear linen cloth!”

OWL  
1176           The owl did not pause for long  
But gave a bold and vigorous answer.  
“What?” she said. “Are you ordained,  
Or do you curse unordained?  
1180 I think you’re performing a priest’s job.  
I didn’t know you were a priest;  
I didn’t know you could sing mass —  
You know plenty about excommunicating!  
On account of your ancient grudge,  
You’ve cursed me once again!  
1185 But there’s an easy retort for that:  
‘Pull harder!’ said the carter.  
Why criticize me for my insight,  
My intelligence, and my power?  
For I am clever, certainly,  
1190 And know all that is here to come:  
I know of famine, of invasion;  
I know if people will live long;  
I know if a wife will lose her mate;  
I know where there’ll be war and ruin;  
1195 I know who will be hanged,  
Or else suffer horrible death;  
If men have joined in battle,  
I know which side will be beaten;  
fol. 164vb I know if disease will infect cattle,  
1200 And if animals will lie dead;  
I know if trees will blossom;  
I know if grain will grow;  
I know if houses will burn;  
I know if men will walk or ride;  
1205 I know if the sea will drown ships;  
I know if smiths will badly rivet.  
And I know much more:  
I know a good deal of book-learning,  
And I also know about the gospel  
1210 More than I’m willing to tell you,  
For I frequently go to the church  
And learn a great deal of wisdom.  
I know all about prophecy,  
And about many other things.

- 1215            If eny mon schal rem abide,  
                  Al ic hit wot ar hit ityde.  
                  Ofte, vor myne muchele witte,  
                  Wel sori-mod and wroth i sytte;  
                  Hwanne ic iseo ther sum wrecchede
- 1220            Is cumynde neyh, inoh ic grede.  
                  Ic bidde ther men beon warre  
                  And habbe gode redes yare,  
                  Vor Alvred seyde a wis word  
                  (Uych mon hit scholde legge on hord):
- 1225            'If thu isyst her heo beo icume,  
                  His strengthe is him wel neyh binume.'  
                  And grete dundes beoth the lasse  
                  If me ikepeth myd iwarnesse,  
                  And fleo schal toward misyenge
- 1230            If thu isihst hw fleo of strengre,  
                  For thu myht blenche and fleo  
                  If thu isihst heo to the teo.  
                  Thauh eny mon beo falle in edwite,  
                  Hwi schal he me his sor atwite?
- 1235            Thauh ic iseo his harm bivore,  
   fol. 165ra    Ne cumeth hit nouht of me tharfore.  
                  Thah thu iseo that sum blynd mon  
                  That nanne rihtne wey ne con  
                  To thare diche his dwele voleweth,
- 1240            And falleth and tharonne sulieth,  
                  Wenestu, thah ic al iseo,  
                  That hit for me the rather beo?  
                  Al so hit fareth bi mine witte:  
                  Hwanne ic on myne bowe sitte,
- 1245            Ic wot and iseo swithe brihte  
                  That summe men cumeth harm thar-rihte.  
                  Sal he, thar he nowiht not,  
                  Hit wite me vor ic hit wot?  
                  Sal he his myshap wyten me
- 1250            Vor ic am wisure than he?  
                  Hwanne ic iseo that sum wrechede  
                  Is manne neyh, inouh ic grede  
                  And bidde inouh that hi heom schilde  
                  Vor toward heom is harm unmylde;
- 1255            Ac thah ic grede, lude and stille,  
                  Al iwurth Godes wille.  
                  Hwi wulleth men of me mene  
                  Thah ic mid sothe heo awene?

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

1215            If anyone should suffer a hue and cry,  
                  I know all about it before it happens.  
                  Often, because of my deep insight,  
                  I sit vexed and sorrowful in heart;  
                  Whenever I see that something bad  
1220            Is about to happen, I call out loudly.  
                  I advise people to be vigilant  
                  And to have good plans ready,  
                  For Alfred uttered a wise saying  
                  (Everyone should memorize it):  
1225            'If you see beforehand that it's coming,  
                  Its strength is virtually robbed from it.'  
                  So heavy blows are lessened  
                  If one anticipates them with alertness,  
                  And an arrow will go astray  
1230            If you see how it flies from the string,  
                  For you might be able to duck and run  
                  When you see it coming toward you.  
                  If someone falls into disgrace,  
                  Why should he blame his shame on me?  
1235            Even if I see his harm in advance,  
fol. 165ra      It doesn't therefore come from me.  
                  Even if you see some blind man  
                  Incapable of taking a straight path  
                  Heading roundabout toward a ditch,  
1240            And falling in and getting muddy,  
                  Do you think, even if I saw it all,  
                  It happened any sooner because of me?  
                  That's how it is with my insight:  
                  When I sit upon my branch,  
1245            I know and see very clearly  
                  That someone will come to harm sometime.  
                  Should he, knowing nothing about it,  
                  Blame me because I do know about it?  
                  Should he blame me for his distress  
1250            Because I am wiser than he is?  
                  Whenever I see that some calamity  
                  Draws toward humans, I call out plenty  
                  And warn them enough to protect themselves  
                  Because serious harm is headed toward them;  
1255            But even if I call out, loud or quiet,  
                  It all happens according to God's will.  
                  Why do men wish to complain about me  
                  If I trouble them with what's true?

- 1260 Thah ic hi warny al that yer,  
 Nis heom tharvore harem the ner.  
 Ac ich singe vor ich wolde  
 Ther hi wel understonde scholde  
 That sum unsel heom is ihende.  
 Hwen ic myn huyng to heom sende,
- 1265 Naveth mon no sikerhede  
 That he ne may wene and adrede  
 That sum unhap neih him beo,  
 Thah he ne cunne hit iseo.  
 Forthi seyde Alvred swithe wel  
 (And his word wes godspel)  
 That 'everich mon the bet him beo,  
 Ever the bet he him biseo.'
- fol. 165rb Ne triste no mon to his wele  
 To swithe, thah he habbe vele.
- 1275 Nis noht so hot that hit nacoeth,  
 Ne noht so hwit that hit ne solet,  
 Ne noht so leof that hit nalotheth,  
 Ne noht so glad that hit nawretheth;  
 Ac everich thing that eche nys
- 1280 Agon schal and al this worldes blis.  
 Nu thu miht witen redeliche  
 That ever thu spekest gidiliche,  
 For al thu me seyst vor schame  
 Ever the-solve hit turneth to grome.
- 1285 Go so hit go, at eche fenge  
 Thu vallest myd thin owe swenge!  
 Al that thu sayst for me to schende  
 Hit ys my wrthsipe at than ende.  
 Bute thu wille bet agynne,
- 1290 Ne schaltu bute schame iwynne."
- NIGHTINGALE The nyhtegale sat and syhte,  
 And hauhful was and wel myhte,  
 For the ule so ispeke hadde  
 And hire speche so iladde
- 1295 Heo wes houhful and erede  
 Hwat heo tharafter hire seyde,  
 Ac notheles heo hire understod.  
 "Hwat?" heo seyde. "Ule, artu wod?  
 Thu yelpest of selliche wisdome;
- 1300 Thu nustest hwenne hit the come  
 Bute hit of wicchecrafte were.  
 Tharof, thu wrecche, most the skere

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

1260 Even if I warned them for an entire year,  
The harm's not therefore any closer to them.  
But I sing to them because I want  
Them to understand clearly  
That some misfortune is at hand.  
When I direct my hooting at them,  
1265 No person has any assurance  
That he may not expect or fear  
That some misfortune is nigh to him,  
Even though he himself might not see it.  
That's why Alfred said very aptly  
1270 (And his word was gospel)  
That 'the better off each man is,  
The more ought he plan ahead.'  
fol. 165rb No one should trust in wealth  
Too much, however much he has.  
1275 Nothing's so hot it doesn't grow cold,  
Nor so white it doesn't grow dirty,  
Nor so beloved it doesn't grow odious,  
Nor so pleasant it doesn't grow irksome;  
But everything that's not everlasting  
1280 Must pass away with all this world's joy.  
Now may you readily understand  
That you always talk foolishly,  
Because all you've said to insult me  
Always rebounds to harm yourself.  
1285 However it goes, with every bout  
You fall down by your own swing!  
Everything you say to revile me  
Goes to my credit in the end.  
Unless you go about it better,  
1290 You won't win anything but shame."

NIGHTINGALE        The nightingale sat and sighed,  
And was anxious with good reason,  
For the owl had so well spoken  
And so well laid out her case  
1295 That she was anxious and unsure  
About what she'd say to her next,  
But nonetheless she gathered her thoughts.  
"What?" she said. "Owl, are you crazy?  
You boast of your wondrous wisdom;  
1300 You don't know how it comes to you  
Unless it be by witchcraft.  
Of that, you wretch, you'll need exoneration

- 1305 If thou wilt among manne beo,  
 Other thou most of londe fleo  
 Vor alle theu that therof cuthe,  
 Heo weren ifurn, of prestes muthe,  
 Amansed, such thou art yette —  
 The wicchecrafte never ne lete!  
 Ic the seyde nu lutel ere,  
 1310 And thou askedest if ich were  
 fol. 165va A bysemare to preoste ihoded,  
 Ac the mansyng is so ibroded  
 Thauh no preost a londe nere  
 A wrecche natheles thou were,  
 1315 For everich child the clepede 'fule,'  
 And everiche man 'a wrecche ule.'  
 Ic habbe iherd, and soth hit is,  
 The mon mot beo wel sturre-wis  
 And wite inoh of hwiche thinge cume,  
 1320 So thou seyst that is iwune.  
 Hwat constu, wrecche thing, of storre,  
 Bute that thou bihaitest hi ferre,  
 Al so doth mony deor and man  
 Theo of suyche nowiht ne can?  
 1325 On ape may on bok biholde,  
 And leves wende, and eft folde,  
 Ac he ne con the bet tharvore  
 Of clerkes lore, top ne more.  
 They thou iseo the steorre, al so,  
 1330 Nertu the wisere never the mo.  
 Ac yet, thou fule thing, me chist  
 And wel grimlyche me atwist  
 That ic singe bi manne huse,  
 And theche wyve breke spuse.  
 1335 Thou lvest iwis, thou fule thing!  
 Thurh me, nes never isend spusing,  
 Ac soth hit is ich singe and grede  
 Thar levedis beoth and feyre meide,  
 And soth hit is of luvē ic singe,  
 1340 For god wif may in spusinge  
 Bet luyen hire owe were  
 Than onother, hire copinere.  
 And mayde may luvē cheose  
 That hire treuschipe ne forleose,  
 1345 And luyē mid rihte luvē  
 Thane that schal hire beo bove.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

---

1305            If you want to remain among humans,  
                 Or else you'll have to flee the country  
                 Because all who have knowledge of that  
                 Were long ago, by priest's edict,  
                 Put under curse, as you are still —  
                 Never have you given up witchcraft!  
1310            I explained this to you just a bit ago,  
fol. 165va      When you mockingly asked me  
                 Whether I'm ordained as a priest,  
                 But cursing is so widespread  
                 That even with no priests in the land  
                 You'd still be a miserable wretch,  
1315            For every child calls you 'filthy,'  
                 And every man 'a wretched owl.'  
                 I have heard, and it's true,  
                 That one must be learned in astrology  
                 To understand what might happen,  
1320            Just as you say is customary with you.  
                 What do you know, wretch, about stars  
                 Apart from gazing at them in the distance,  
                 Just as do many animals and humans  
                 Who know nothing about such things?  
1325            A monkey can look at a book,  
                 Turn over the leaves, and shut it again,  
                 But by no means does it thus make him  
                 Knowledgeable of clerks' lore, not at all.  
                 Even if, likewise, you see the stars,  
1330            You are none the wiser for it.  
                 And still, you foul thing, you chide me  
                 And upbraid me very sternly  
                 For singing close to people's houses  
                 And teaching wives to commit adultery.  
1335            You lie for sure, you filthy thing!  
                 By my doing, wedlock's never been wrecked,  
                 But it's true that I sing and call out  
                 Where there are ladies and lovely girls,  
                 And it's true that I sing about love,  
1340            Because in marriage a good wife  
                 Does better to love her own husband  
                 Instead of another, her lover.  
                 And a girl may choose love  
                 So as not to lose her honor,  
1345            And love with a virtuous love  
                 The man who will be her lord.

- fol. 165vb      Suyche luve ic theche and lere;  
 Tharof beoth al myne ilere.  
 Thauh sum wif beo of neysse mode —  
 1350      Vor wymmen beoth of softe blode —  
 That heo, vor summe sottes lore  
 The yorne bit and syketh sore,  
 Misnyme and misdo sume stunde,  
 Schal ic tharvore beo ibunde?  
 1355      Yef wymmen luvyeth for unrede,  
 Witestu me heore mysdede?  
 If wymmmon thencheth luvye derne,  
 Ne may ic myne songes werne.  
 Wymmmon may pleye under clothe  
 1360      Hwether heo wile wel the wrothe;  
 And heo may do bi myne songe  
 Hwether heo wile wel the wronge,  
 Vor nys a worlde thing so god  
 That ne may do sum ungod  
 1365      If me hit wile turne amys.  
 Vor gold and seolver god hit is,  
 And natheles tharmyd thu myht  
 Spus-bruche bugge and unryht.  
 Wepne beoth gode grith to holde,  
 1370      And, natheles, tharmyd beoth men aquolde  
 Ayeynes riht of alle londe  
 Thar theoves hi bereth an honde.  
 Al so hit is bi myne songe:  
 Thah heo beo god, me hine may mysfonge  
 1375      And drawe hine to sothede  
 And to othre uvele dede.  
 Ah schaltu, wrecche, luve tele?  
 Beo hwich heo beo, uich luve is fele,  
 Bitwene the mon and wymmone;  
 1380      Ah if heo is atbroyde, theonne  
 He is unvele and forbroyde!  
 Wroth wurthe him the Holy Rode  
 The rihte icunde so forbreydeth!  
 Wunder hit is that heo ne awedeth,  
 fol. 166ra      And so heo doth, vor heo beoth wode  
 1386      That bute neste goth to brode!  
 Wymmmon is of neysse fleysse,  
 And fleysstes lustes is strong to queysse;  
 Nis wunder non thah he abide,  
 1390      Vor fleysstes lustes hi maketh slide.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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- I teach and instruct such love;  
fol. 165vb My entire song is about it.  
Even if a wife has a tender heart —  
1350 For women are soft by nature —  
So that she, by the teaching of some fool  
Who earnestly begs and deeply sighs,  
Goes astray and errs for a time,  
Must I be held responsible for that?  
1355 If women love ill-advisedly,  
Do you blame me for their misdeeds?  
If a woman considers a secret love,  
I cannot withhold my songs.  
A woman may play under bedsheets  
1360 Whether her intentions are good or ill;  
And she may make use of my song  
Whether her intentions are right or wrong,  
For there's nothing so good in the world  
That it might not perform some evil  
1365 If someone wants to turn it awry.  
For gold and silver are good,  
Yet nonetheless by them you might  
Purchase adultery and crime.  
Weapons are good for keeping peace,  
1370 Yet, despite that, men are killed by them  
In violation of all countries' laws  
Whenever thieves bear them in hand.  
It is just like this with my song:  
Even though it's good, one can misuse it  
1375 And apply it to folly  
And other wicked actions.  
But, wretch, is it love you blame?  
No matter what, every love is proper  
Between a man and a woman;  
1380 But if it's forcibly diverted, then  
It is wicked and corrupt!  
May anyone perverting nature this way  
Have the Holy Cross's wrath!  
It's a wonder she doesn't go insane,  
fol. 166ra And perhaps she does, for she's crazy  
1386 To start hatching outside the nest!  
A woman is frail of flesh,  
And fleshly desires are hard to suppress;  
It's no wonder if she carries on,  
1390 For fleshly desires make her slip.

- Ne beoth heo nouht alle forlore  
 That stumpeth at the fleysse more,  
 Vor mony wymmon haveth mysdo  
 That aryst up of the slo.  
 1395 Ne beoth noht ones alle sunne,  
 Vorthan hi beoth tweire ikunne:  
 Sum arist of fleysse luste,  
 And sum of the gostes custe.  
 1400 Thar fleys draht nu men to drunkenesse,  
 And to wlonkhede and to golnesse,  
 The gost mysdoth thurh nyth and onde,  
 And seththe myd murehthe of monne shonde,  
 And wunneth after more and more,  
 And lutel rekth of milce and ore,  
 1405 And styhth on heyh thur modynesse,  
 And overhoweth thane lasse.  
 Sey me soth, if thu hit wost:  
 Hwether doth wurse, fleys the gost?  
 Thu myht segge, if thu wult,  
 1410 That lasse is thes fleyes gult:  
 Mony mon is of his fleysse clene  
 That is myd mode Deovel imene.  
 Ne schal no mon wymman bigrede  
 And fleysse lustes hire upbreyde;  
 1415 Such heo mahte beo of golnesse  
 That sunegeth wurse in modinesse.  
 Hwet, if ic schulde a luv bringe  
 Wif other mayde, hwanne ic singe,  
 Ic wolde with the mayde holde.  
 1420 If thu const aryht atholde,  
 Lust nu, ic segge the hwarvore  
 fol. 166rb Up to the toppe from the more:  
 If mayde luveth derneliche,  
 Heo stumpeth and falth icundeliche,  
 1425 Vor thaih heo sumwhile pleye,  
 Heo nys noht feor ut of the weye;  
 Heo may hire guld atwende  
 A rihte weye, thurh chirche-bende,  
 And may eft habbe to make  
 1430 Hire leofmon withute sake,  
 And gon to him bi dayes lyhte  
 That er bistal on theoster nyhte.  
 That yongling not hwat such thing is;  
 His yonge blod hit draht amys,

She might not be entirely lost  
Who finds the flesh a stumbling-block,  
For many a woman has misbehaved  
And risen up from the mire.  
1395 Not all sins are exactly alike,  
For they consist of two types:  
Some arise from the flesh's desire,  
And some from the spirit's inclination.  
While the flesh draws men to drunkenness,  
1400 And to pomposity and to lechery,  
The spirit sins through malice and envy,  
And later by pleasure in men's disgrace,  
And hungers for more and more,  
And cares little for pity and mercy,  
1405 And rises high through arrogant pride,  
And then lords it over lesser folk.  
Tell me truly, if you know:  
Which does worse, flesh or spirit?  
You might say, if you like,  
1410 That the flesh is less culpable:  
Many a man is chaste in his flesh  
Who in his spirit is the Devil's friend.  
No one ought to call out a woman  
And upbraid her for fleshly desires,  
1415 Such that she'd be blamed for lechery  
By someone sinning worse in pride.  
Still, when I sing, if I were to urge  
A wife or a maiden toward love,  
I would choose the maiden.  
1420 If you can grasp it correctly,  
Listen now, I'll tell you why  
fol. 166rb From beginning to end:  
If a maiden falls in love secretly,  
She stumbles and falls by way of nature,  
1425 For although she may play for awhile,  
She's not gone far off the path;  
She can free herself from her guilt  
In a proper way, with a church-bond,  
And afterwards have as her mate  
1430 Her lover without being blamed,  
And go by daylight to him whom  
She'd crept to earlier in the dark of night.  
That child doesn't know what such a thing is;  
Her young blood leads her astray,

- 1435           And sum sot man hit tyhth tharto  
 Mid alle than that he may do.  
 He cumeth and fareth and beod abid,  
 And he bistarte another sid,  
 And bisekth ilome and longe.
- 1440           Hwat may that child thah hit misfonge?  
 Hit nuste never hwat hit was!  
 Vorthi, hit thouhte fondi thas,  
 And wyte iwis hwich beo the gome  
 That of the wilde maketh tome.
- 1445           Ne may ic, vor reuthe, lete —  
 Hwanne ic iseo the tohte ilete  
 The luvē bring on the yunglinge —  
 That ic of murehthe him ne singe.  
 Ic theche heom bi myne songe
- 1450           That suyche luvē ne last noht longe,  
 For my songe lutle wile ileste,  
 And luvē ne doth noht bute reste  
 On such childre and sone ageth,  
 And falth adun the hote breth.
- 1455           I singe myd heom one throwe;  
 Biginne an heyh and endi lowe,  
 And lete mine songes falle  
 A lutle wile adun myd alle.
- fol. 166va  
 1460           That mayde wot hwenne i swike  
 That luvē is myne songes iliche,  
 Vor hit nys bute a lutel breth,  
 That sone cumeth and sone geth.  
 That child bi me hit understond,  
 And his unred to rede iwend,
- 1465           And syhth wel bi myne songe  
 That dusy luvē ne last noht longe.  
 Ac wel ic wile that thu hit wite:  
 Loth me beoth wifes utschute,  
 Ac wif may of me nyme yeme
- 1470           Ic ne singe noht hwen ic teme.  
 And wif auh lete sottes lore,  
 Thauh spusyng bendes byndeth sore.  
 Wunder me thinkth stark and sor  
 Hw eny mon so haveth for
- 1475           That his heorte myhte dryve  
 To do hit to othres mannes wyve,  
 Vor other hit is of twam thinge,  
 Ne may the thridde no mon bringe:

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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- 1435           And some besotted man draws her into it  
                  By every means in his power.  
                  He comes and goes and persists,  
                  And he sits close to her,  
                  And beseeches often and long.
- 1440           What may the child do if she should err?  
                  She never knew what it was!  
                  For that reason, she set out to try it,  
                  And find out the nature of the sport  
                  That makes a wild man tame.
- 1445           Out of pity, I cannot refrain —  
                  When I see the drawn expression  
                  That love brings to a young girl —  
                  From singing to them about joy.  
                  By my song I teach them
- 1450           That such love doesn't last long,  
                  For my song lasts but a little while,  
                  And love does nothing but alight  
                  On such children and soon depart,  
                  And its hot breath tapers down.
- 1455           I sing with them for a moment;  
                  I start high and end low,  
                  And let my songs taper down  
                  A little while, fading altogether.
- fol. 166va     The maiden understands when I finish
- 1460           That love is just like my songs,  
                  For it's nothing but a little breath,  
                  That soon comes and soon goes.  
                  The child learns it from me,  
                  And turns from folly to good sense,
- 1465           And sees clearly from my singing  
                  That foolish love doesn't last long.  
                  But I very much want you to know this:  
                  I hate a wife's extramarital excess,  
                  And a wife may take note of me
- 1470           That I do not sing when I'm breeding.  
                  A wife ought to shun a fool's speech,  
                  Even if her marriage binds too severely.  
                  It seems to me shocking and awful
- 1475           That any man might go so far  
                  As to propose in his heart  
                  To do it to another man's wife,  
                  For it leads to one of two things,  
                  And no one can imagine a third:

- 1480 Other the louerd is wel auht,  
 Other aswunde and nys nouht.  
 If he is wrthful and auht mon,  
 Nele no mon that wisdom can,  
 Hure of his wive, do him schome,  
 Vor he may him adrede grame,  
 1485 And that he forleose that ther hongeth  
 That him eft tharto noht ne longeth.  
 And thah he that nouht ne adredeth,  
 Hit is unriht and gret sothede  
 To mysdo one gode manne,  
 1490 And his ibedde from him spanne.  
 If hire louerd is forwurthe,  
 And unorne at bedde and at borde,  
 Hw myhte thar beo eny luv  
 Hwenne a cherles buk hire lay buve?  
 1495 Hw may ther eny luv beo  
 fol. 166vb Hwar such mon gropeth hire theo?  
 Herbi, thu miht wel understonde  
 That on is a reu, othres schonde,  
 To stele to othres mannes bedde,  
 1500 Vor if auht man is hire ibedde,  
 Thu myht wene that the mystide  
 Hwanne thu lyst bi hire side,  
 And if the louerd is a wrecche,  
 Hwych este myhtestu thar vecche?  
 1505 If thu bithenchest hwo hire ofligge,  
 Thu myht myd wlate the este bugge!  
 Ich not hw may eny freomon  
 Vor hire sechen after than;  
 If he bithenkth bi hwam he lay,  
 1510 Al may the luv gon away.”
- Owl           The ule wes glad of suche tale.  
 Heo thouhte that the nyhtegale,  
 Thah heo wel speke at the frume,  
 Hadde at than ende mysnume,  
 1515 And seyde, “Nu ich habbe ifunde  
 That maydenes beoth of thine imunde:  
 Mid heom thu holdest and heom biwerest,  
 And overswithe thu hi herest.  
 The lavedies beoth to me iwend  
 1520 To me hire mone heo send,  
 For hit ityd ofte and ilome  
 That wif and were beoth unisome,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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1480            Either her lord's a very worthy man,  
Or else he's inadequate and worthless.  
If he's an honorable, worthy man,  
No sensible man will want to do  
Him shame, least of all through his wife,  
Because he'd be afraid of injury,  
1485            Lest he lose what hangs there,  
Causing him to never again desire that way.  
And even if he's not afraid of this,  
It is wrong and very stupid  
To do wrong to a good man,  
1490            And seduce his wife away from him.  
If her lord is inadequate,  
And has little to offer in bed and at table,  
How could there be any love  
When a churl's belly lies on top of her?  
1495            How could there be any love  
fol. 166vb        Where such a man gropes her thigh?  
By this, you may well understand  
By one path lies harm, by the other disgrace,  
When stealing into another man's bed,  
1500            Because, if her husband's a worthy man,  
You can expect to come to grief  
When you're lying by her side,  
And if her lord's a wretch,  
What pleasure might you gain from it?  
1505            If you think about who sleeps with her,  
You must buy pleasure with disgust!  
I don't know how any worthy man  
Would want to pursue her after that;  
If he thinks about by whom she lies,  
1510            His love may suddenly go away."

OWL                   The owl was pleased by this speech.  
She thought that the nightingale,  
Even though she'd spoken well at first,  
Had made an error at the end,  
1515            And she said, "Now I've found out  
That maidens are of interest to you:  
You take their side and defend them,  
And you praise them excessively.  
But ladies turn toward me  
1520            And direct their laments to me,  
For it happens over and over  
That a wife and husband are at odds,

- And therfore that were gulte:  
 That leof is other wymmmon to pulte,  
 1525 And speneth on thare al that he haveth,  
 And syweth thare that noht naveth,  
 And haveth at om his riche spuse,  
 Wowes west, and lere huse,  
 Wel thunne isrud and ived wrothe,  
 1530 And let heo bute mete and clothe.  
 Hwenne he cumeth hom eft to his wyve,  
 Ne dar he noht a word ischire.  
 fol. 167ra He chid and gred such he beo wod,  
 And ne bringth hom non other god.  
 1535 Al that heo doth him is unwille,  
 Al that heo speketh hit is him ille,  
 And ofte hwenne heo noht ne mysdeth,  
 Heo haveth the fust in the theth.  
 Nis no mon that ne may ibrynge  
 1540 His wif amys myd suche thinge;  
 Me hire may so ofte mysbeode  
 That heo do wile hire owe neode.  
 La, God hit wot, heo nah iwelde  
 Thah heo hine make cukeweld!  
 1545 For hit ityt ilome and ofte  
 That his wif is neysse and softe,  
 Of fayre bleo and wel idiht,  
 Thi hit is the more unryht  
 That he his luve spene on thare  
 1550 That nis wurth on of hire heare!  
 And suche men beoth wel manyfolde,  
 That wif ne cunne ariht holde:  
 Ne mot no mon with hire speke;  
 He weneth heo wile anon to breke  
 1555 Hire spusyng if heo loketh  
 Other with monne veyre speketh.  
 He hire bilukth myd keye and loke.  
 Tharthurh, is spusing ofte ibroke  
 Vor if heo is tharto ibrouht  
 1560 He deth that heo nedde ear ithouht.  
 Dehaet that to swithe hit bispeke  
 Thah suche wives heom awreke!  
 Herof to me the levedies heom meneth  
 And wel sore me ahweneth;  
 1565 Wel neyh myn heorte wile tochine  
 Hwenne ic biholde heore pine.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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And on that account guilty deeds occur:  
The husband screws another woman,  
1525 And spends on her all that he has,  
And woos her when he has no right to,  
And keeps his proper wife at home,  
The walls bare, the house empty,  
Poorly dressed and badly fed,  
1530 And leaves her without food and clothing.  
When he comes back home to his wife,  
She doesn't dare utter a word.  
fol. 167ra He complains and shouts like a madman,  
And brings home no other goods.  
1535 Everything she does he dislikes,  
Everything she says irritates him,  
And often when she does nothing wrong,  
She gets a fist in the teeth.  
There's no man who won't lead  
1540 His wife astray by such means;  
She may so often be mistreated  
That she'll take care of her own needs.  
Ah, God knows, she can't help it  
If she makes him a cuckold!  
1545 For it happens over and over  
That his wife is gentle and soft,  
Of fair complexion and well dressed,  
So it's all the more wrong  
That he spends his love on one  
1550 Who's not worth even one of her hairs!  
And there are plenty of men like this,  
Who cannot treat a wife properly:  
No man's allowed to talk to her;  
He thinks she'll suddenly break  
1555 Wedlock if she should look at  
Or speak politely to a man.  
He keeps her under key and lock.  
Consequently, wedlock's often broken  
Because she's brought to that point where  
1560 She does what she'd never thought of before.  
A curse on anyone who grumbles a lot  
When such wives take their revenge!  
The ladies complain about it to me  
And upset me painfully;  
1565 My heart comes close to breaking  
When I see their suffering.

- Mid heom ic wepe swithe sore,  
 And for heom bidde Cristes ore —  
 That the levedi sone aredde  
 fol. 167rb And hire sende betere ibedde.  
 1571 Another thing ic may the telle,  
 And thu ne schalt, for thine felle,  
 Onswere non tharto fynde —  
 Al this sputing schal aswinde!  
 1575 Mony chapmon and mony knyht  
 Luveth and halt his wif ariht,  
 And so doth mony bondeman.  
 That gode wif doth after than,  
 And sarveth him to bedde and to borde  
 1580 Mid fayre dede and fayre worde,  
 And yorne vondeth hw heo mowe  
 Do thing that him beo iduwe.  
 The louerd into thare theode  
 Vareth ut on thare beyre neode,  
 1585 And is that gode wif unblithe  
 Vor hire louerdes houth-sythe,  
 And sit and sykth, wel sore oflonged,  
 And hire sore an heorte ongreth,  
 Al vor hire louerdes sake.  
 1590 Haveth dayes kare, and nihtes wake,  
 And swithe longe hire is the hwile,  
 And uych stape hire thinkth a mile.  
 Hwenne othre slepeth hire abute,  
 Ich one lust thar wyththute,  
 1595 And wot of hire sore mode,  
 And singe a nyht for hire gode;  
 And myn gode song, for hire thinge,  
 Ic turne sumdel to murnynge.  
 Of hure seorwe, ic bere sume,  
 1600 Vorthan ic am hire wel welcume.  
 Ic hire helpe hwat ich may  
 For ho geth hane rihte way.  
 And thu me havest sore igremed  
 That myn heorte is neyh alemed,  
 1605 That ic may unnethe speke!  
 Ac yet, ic wile forthurre reke.  
 fol. 167va Thu seyst that ic am monne loth,  
 And vich mon is with me wroth,  
 And me myd stone and lugge threteth,  
 1610 And me tobursteth and tobeteth,

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I weep bitterly with them,  
And pray for Christ's mercy on them —  
That he quickly rescue the lady  
fol. 167rb And send her a better bedmate.  
1571 And I'll tell you another thing,  
For which, to save your skin,  
You won't find an answer —  
All your disputing will die off!  
1575 Many merchants and many knights  
Love and treat their wives properly,  
And so do many peasants.  
The good wife does so in return,  
And serves him in bed and at table  
1580 With loving acts and loving words,  
And eagerly discovers how she might  
Do whatever is profitable to him.  
Into the country her lord  
Travels out on their behalf,  
1585 And the good wife is unhappy  
About her lord's distressing departure,  
And sits and sighs, in deep longing,  
And sorely anxious in her heart,  
Entirely for her lord's sake.  
1590 She's sad by day, awake by night,  
And the wait seems very long to her,  
And every step seems like a mile.  
When others are asleep around her,  
I alone listen there from outside,  
1595 And know about her deep sorrow,  
And sing at night for her good;  
And my good song, for her sake,  
I change somewhat into a lament.  
Of her misery, I bear it somewhat,  
1600 For which I'm very welcome to her.  
I help her as much as I might  
Because she follows the right path.  
But you've so sorely insulted me  
That my heart's nearly paralyzed,  
1605 And I can barely speak!  
Even so, I will carry on.  
fol. 167va You say that I am hated by humans,  
And everyone is angry at me,  
Threatening me with stones and sticks,  
1610 And violently hitting and beating me,

- And hwanne hi habbeth me ofslawe,  
 Heo anhoth me in heore hawe  
 Thar ich ascheule pie and crowe  
 From than that ther is isowe.  
 1615 Thah hit beo soth, ic do heom god,  
 And for heom ic schedde my blod.  
 Ic do heom god myd myne dethe.  
 Tharfore, the is wel unmethe  
 For thah thu ligge ded and clinge,  
 1620 Thi deth nys nouht to none thinge.  
 Ic not never to hwan thu myht,  
 For thu nart bute a wreche wiht!  
 Ah thah my lif me beo atschote,  
 The yet ic may do gode note.  
 1625 Me may, uppe smale sticke,  
 Me sette a wude ine the thikke,  
 And so may mon tolli him to  
 Lutle briddes and ivo,  
 And so me may myd me byete  
 1630 Wel gode brede to his mete.  
 Ah thu never mon to gode,  
 Lyves ne dethes, stal ne stode.  
 Ic not to hwan thu breist thi brod:  
 Lyves ne dethes, ne doth hit god."
- NIGHTINGALE      The nightegale iherde this  
 1636 And hupte uppe on blowe ris,  
 And herre sat thane heo dude er.  
 "Ule," heo seyde, "beo nu wer!  
 fol. 167vb Nule ic with the playdi namore,  
 1640 Vor her thu myst thi ryhte lore.  
 Thu yelpest that thu art monne loth,  
 And everuich wiht is with the wroth;  
 And myd yollinge and myd igrede,  
 Thu thinchst wel that thu art unlede.  
 1645 Thu seyst that gromes the ivoth  
 And heye on rode the anhoth,  
 And the totwiccheth and toschaketh,  
 And summe of the scheules maketh.  
 Me thinkth that thu forlest that game —  
 1650 Thu yelpest of thire owe schome!  
 Me thinkth that thu me gest an honde —  
 Thu yelpest of thine owe schonde!"  
 Tho heo hadde theos word icwede,  
 Heo sat in one fayre stude,

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And once they've killed me,  
They hang me on their hedge  
Where I scare away magpies and crows  
From what's sown there.  
1615 Even if this is true, I do them good,  
And for their sake I shed my blood.  
I do them good by my death.  
On this point, you're in difficulty,  
For when you lie dead and shrivel up,  
1620 Your death isn't anything to anyone.  
I can't even guess what use you might have,  
For you're merely a miserable creature!  
But yet when my life's passed out of me,  
I'm still able to do good service.  
1625 They can, upon a small stake,  
Set me in the thick of the forest,  
So they can lure toward them  
Little birds and make a catch,  
So they can obtain through me  
1630 Fine roast meat for their meals.  
But you never do any good for men,  
Alive or dead, nor afford any help.  
I don't know why you raise your brood:  
Alive or dead, it does no good."

NIGHTINGALE      The nightingale heard this  
1636 And hopped upon a flowering bough,  
And sat higher than she did before.  
"Owl," she said, "be careful now!  
fol. 167vb I won't argue any more with you,  
1640 For here you fail in your reasoning.  
You boast that people hate you,  
And every creature's angry with you;  
And with yelling and screeching,  
You acknowledge you're vile.  
1645 You say that boys catch you  
And hang you high on a pole,  
And violently pluck and shake you,  
And some make a scarecrow out of you.  
It seems like you're losing the game —  
1650 You boast of your own humiliation!  
It seems like you're handing me victory —  
You boast of your own shame!"  
After she'd said these words,  
She perched within a lovely spot,

- 1655           And tharafter hire stefne dihte  
 And song so schille and so brihte  
 That fur and neor me hit iherde.  
 Tharvore, anon to hire cherde  
 Thruysse and throstle and wodewale,
- 1660           And foweles bothe grete and smale,  
 Vorthan that heom thuhte that heo hadde  
 The ule overcome, forthan heo gradde  
 And sungen al so vale wise,  
 That blisse wes among the ryse,
- 1665           Riht so me gred the monne a schame  
 That taveleth and forleost that gome.
- OWL           Theos ule, tho heo this iherde,  
 "Havestu," heo seyde, "ibanned ferde?  
 And wiltu, wrecche, with me vyhte?
- 1670           Na! Nay! Navestu none mihte!  
 fol. 168ra       Hwat gredeth, heo that hider come?  
 Me thinkth thu ledest ferde to me.  
 Ye schulle wite ar ye fleo heonne  
 Hwuch is the strengthe of myne kunne,
- 1675           Vor theo that haveth bile ihoked  
 And clyvres scharpe and wel icroked  
 Alle heo beoth of myne kunrede,  
 And wolde cumen if ich bede!  
 The seolve cok that wel can vihte,
- 1680           He mot myd me holde with rihte,  
 Vor bothe we habbe stefne brihte  
 And sitteth under welkne bi nyhte.  
 Schulle ic up eu on utest grede,  
 Ich schal so stronge verde lede
- 1685           That oure prude schal avalle —  
 A tord ne yeve ic for eu alle!  
 Ne schal, ar hit beo fullich eve,  
 A wrecche vethere on eu bileve!  
 Ah hit wes unker voreward
- 1690           Tho we comen hyderward  
 That we tharto holden scholde,  
 Thar riht dom us yeve wolde.  
 Wultu nu breke foreward?  
 Ic wene dom the thinkth to hard.
- 1695           Vor thu ne darst domes abyde,  
 Thu wilt nu, wrecche, fihte and chide.  
 Yet, ich eu wolde alle rede,  
 Ar ich uthest up eu grede,

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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1655           And then readied her voice  
                  And sang so clear and so bright  
                  That it was heard far and wide.  
                  In response, there immediately came to her  
                  Thrushes, throstles, and woodpeckers,  
1660           And birds both large and small,  
                  For they believed that she had  
                  Vanquished the owl, for which they chirped  
                  And sang all sorts of melodies,  
                  So that there was bliss among the boughs,  
1665           Just as when people cry shame upon the one  
                  Who plays at dice and loses the game.

OWL                 This owl, when she heard this,  
                  Said, "Have you mobilized an army?  
                  And, wretch, do you plan to fight me?  
1670           No! No! You don't have the power!  
fol. 168ra         What are they shouting, those who come here?  
                  It appears you're leading an army against me;  
                  You'll learn before you fly from here  
                  How much is the strength of my kind,  
1675           For those who have hooked beaks  
                  And talons sharp and very curved  
                  Are all of my kindred,  
                  And would come if I call them!  
                  Even the cock, who can fight very well,  
1680           Could legitimately take my side,  
                  For both of us have clear voices  
                  And sit under the stars at night.  
                  If I raise a hue and cry against you,  
                  I'll command such a strong army  
1685           That your pride will collapse —  
                  I don't give a turd for the lot of you!  
                  Before it's all dark, there won't be  
                  A wretched feather left on any of you!  
                  But it was our agreement  
1690           When we came here  
                  That we'd uphold the terms  
                  As would give us a fair judgment.  
                  Will you now break the contract?  
                  I guess you think judgment's too risky,  
1695           For you don't dare face a judgment,  
                  Wretch, wanting now to fight and argue.  
                  What's more, I'd advise all of you,  
                  Before I raise a hue and cry against you,

- 1700           That eur fihtlak leteth beo  
 And gynneth rathe ayeyn fleo,  
 Vor, bi the clyvres that ic bere,  
 If ye abideth myne here,  
 Ye schulleth another wise singe  
 And cursy alle fihtinge,
- 1705           Vor nys of ou non so kene  
 That durre abide myn onsene.”  
 Theos ule spak wel baldelyche;  
 Vor thah heo nadde so hwatliche  
 Ivare after hire here,
- fol. 168rb  
 1711           Heo wolde natheles yeve answere  
 The nihtegale myd sweche worde,  
 For mony mon myd speres orde  
 Haveth lutle strengthe and mid his schelde,  
 Ah, natheles, in one felde,
- 1715           Thurh belde worde and myd ilete,  
 Deth his ivo for arehthe swete.
- WREN           The wrenne, for heo cuthe singe,  
 Thar com in thare moreweninge  
 To helpe thare nyhtegale.
- 1720           Vor theih heo hadde stefne smale,  
 Heo hadde gode throte and schille,  
 And fale monne song a wille.  
 The wrenne wes wel wis iholde,  
 Vor theih heo nere ibred a wolde,
- 1725           Heo wes itowen among mankunne,  
 And hire wisdom brouhte thenne.  
 Heo myhte speke hwar heo wolde,  
 Tofore the kinge thah heo scholde.  
 “Lusteth!” heo queth. “Leteth me speke!
- 1730           Hwat? Wille ye this pays tobreke  
 And do thanne kinge such schome?  
 Yet nys heo nouthur ded ne lome.  
 Hunke schal ityde harm and schonde  
 If ye doth grythbruche on his londe.
- 1735           Leteth beo, and beoth isome,  
 And fareth riht to eure dome,  
 And leteth dom this playd tobreke  
 Al so hit wes erure bispeke.”
- NIGHTINGALE    “Ich unne wel,” queth the nihtegale,  
 1740           “Ah, wrenne, nouht for thine tale,  
 Ac do for myre lauhfulnessse;

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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- 1700            That you back off from our quarrel  
                 And speedily start to fly away,  
                 For, by the talons I bear,  
                 If you should battle my army,  
                 You'll sing a very different tune  
                 And curse all fighting,  
1705            Because not one of you is so brave  
                 As to dare face my visible presence.”  
                 The owl spoke very forcefully;  
                 Even though she hadn't as quickly  
                 Fetched her own army,  
fol. 168rb     She nonetheless wanted to respond  
1711            To the nightingale with such words,  
                 Because many a man with his spear-point  
                 And his shield has little strength,  
                 But, nevertheless, on a battlefield,  
1715            By boasting words and brave countenance,  
                 Makes his enemy sweat for cowardice.
- WREN                    The wren, because she could sing,  
                 Arrived there in the morning  
                 To support the nightingale.  
1720            Even though she had a small voice,  
                 She had a good, resonant throat,  
                 And a song that many find delightful.  
                 The wren was considered very wise,  
                 For though she'd not been bred in the woods,  
1725            She'd been educated among humans,  
                 And brought her wisdom from there.  
                 She could speak wherever she liked,  
                 Even if she were in the king's presence.  
                 “Listen!” she said. “Allow me to speak!  
1730            What? Do you wish to break this peace  
                 And do such a dishonor to the king?  
                 He's not yet dead or crippled.  
                 You two will suffer harm and disgrace  
                 If you breach the peace in his country.  
1735            Let it be, and call a truce,  
                 And go directly to your judgment,  
                 And let the judgment break this dispute  
                 As was previously agreed to.”
- NIGHTINGALE        “I agree,” said the nightingale,  
1740            “But, wren, not because of your speech,  
                 But because of my respect for the law;

- Ic nolde that unrihtfulnesse  
 Me at then ende overcome.  
 Ic nam ofdred of none dome.
- 1745 Bihote ic habbe, soth hit is,  
 That Mayster Nichole that is wis  
 Bitwihen us deme schulle,  
 And yet ic wene that he wulle.
- fol. 168va Ah war myhte we hine fynde?"  
 WREN The wrenne sat in hore lynde.
- 1751 "Hwat? Nuhte ye," quath heo, "his hom?  
 Heo wuneth at Porteshom,  
 At one tune in Dorsete,  
 Bi thare see in ore utlete.
- 1755 Thar he demeth mony riht dom,  
 And diht and wryt mony wisdom,  
 And thurh his muthe and thurh his honde,  
 Hit is the betere into Scotlonde.  
 To seche hyne is lyhtlych thing;
- 1760 He naveth buten o wunying.  
 That is biscopen muchel schame  
 And alle than that of his nome  
 Habbeth iherd and of his dede.  
 Hwi nulleth hi nymen heom to rede
- 1765 That he were myd heom ilome  
 Vor teche heom of his wisdom,  
 And yeve him rente on vale stude  
 That he myhte ilome heom beo myde?"
- OWL "Certes," quath the ule, "that is soth.  
 1770 Theos riche men muchel mysdoth  
 That leteth thane gode man  
 That of so fele thinge can,  
 And yeveth rente wel mislyche  
 And of him leteth wel lyhtliche.
- 1775 With heore kunne, heo beoth mildre  
 And yeveth rente lutle childre!  
 So heore wit hi demeth adwole  
 That ever abit Mayster Nichole.  
 Ah ute we thah to hym fare,
- 1780 Vor thar is unker dom al yare."
- NIGHTINGALE "Do we," the nihtegale seyde,  
 "Ah hwo schal unker speche rede,  
 And telle tovore unker deme?"
- OWL Tharof, ic schal the wel iqueme,"

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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- I wouldn't want injustice  
To defeat me in the end.  
I'm not afraid of any judgment.
- 1745 I have sworn, it's true,  
That wise Master Nicholas  
Shall judge between us,  
And I still hope that he will.
- fol. 168va But where might we find him?"  
WREN The wren sat in a linden tree.
- 1751 "What?" she said. "Don't you know his home?  
He lives at Portesham,  
In a village in Dorset,  
Near the sea on an inlet.
- 1755 There he delivers many sound judgments,  
And composes and writes much that's wise,  
And by his words and his actions,  
Things are better as far as Scotland.  
It's not hard to find him;
- 1760 He's got only one place of residence.  
That's to the bishops' great shame  
And to all who've heard of  
His name and achievements.
- 1765 Why won't they decide among themselves  
To have him often among them  
To instruct them in his wisdom,  
And give him revenues from many places  
So he can often be among them?"
- OWL "Indeed," said the owl, "that's true.  
1770 These wealthy men are terribly wrong  
To neglect such a good man  
Who's capable of so many things,  
When they distribute revenues so unjustly  
And give him so little consideration.
- 1775 To their own families, they're more gentle  
And give revenues to little children!  
Thus do their own wits judge them to be wrong  
In how Master Nicholas continues to wait.  
But let's nonetheless visit him,  
1780 For that's where our judgment's at hand."
- NIGHTINGALE "Let's go," said the nightingale,  
"But who will read our pleadings,  
And speak before our judge?"
- OWL "On that matter, I'll please you well,"

- 1785  
fol. 168vb      Queth the ule, “for, al ende of orde,  
Telle ic con word after worde;  
And if the thinkth that ic misrempe,  
Thu stond ayeyn and do me crempe.”  
Mid thisse worde, forth hi ferden,
- 1790      Al bute here and bute verde,  
To Portesham ther hi bicomme.  
Ah hw heo spedde of heore dome  
Ne can ic eu namore telle —  
Her nys namore of thisse spelle!

*Explicit.*

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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1785            Said the owl, “for, from beginning to end,  
fol. 168vb      I can repeat it word for word;  
                  And if you ever think I go astray,  
                  You can object and make me stop.”  
                  With these words, off they went,  
1790            With neither host nor army,  
                  Till they arrived in Portesham.  
                  But of how they sped in their judgment  
                  I can tell you nothing more —  
                  There’s nothing more of this story!

*The end.*



### 3. POEMA MORALE

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fol. 169r

*Tractatus quidam in anglico*

Ich am eldre than ich wes, a winter and ek on lore.  
Ich welde more than ich dude. My wyt auhte beo more.  
Wel longe ich hadde child ibeo, a werke and eke on dede.  
Thah ich beo of wynter old, to yong ich am on rede.  
5 Unned lif ich habbe ilad, and yet, me thinkth, ich lede.  
Hwenne ich me bithenche, ful sore ich me adrede.

Mest al that ich habbe idon is idelnesse and chilce.  
Wel late ich habbe me bithouht bute God do me mylce.  
Veole idel word ich habbe ispeke seoththe ich speke cuthe,  
10 And feole yonge deden ido, that me ofthincheth nuthe.  
Al to lome ich habbe agult on werke and on worde.  
Al to muchel ich habbe ispend, to lutel ileyd an horde.

Best al that me likede er nu hit me myslyketh.  
The muchel foleweth his wil himseolve he biswiketh.  
15 Mon, let thi fol lust overgo, and eft hit the liketh!  
Ich myhte habbe bet ido hevede ich eny selhthe.  
Nu ich wolde, and I ne may, for elde ne for unhelhthe.  
Elde is me bistolen on er than ich hit wiste.  
Ne may ich biseo me bifore for smoke ne for myste.  
20 Erewe we beoth to donne god, uvel, al to thriste.  
More eye stondeth mon of mon than him to Cryste.

The wel ne doth hwile he may hit schal him sore reowe,  
Hwenne alle men repen schule that heo ear seowe.  
Dod to Gode that ye muwen the hwile ye beoth alyve.  
25 Ne lipne no mon to muchel to childe ne to wyve.  
The himseolve foryet for wive other for childe  
He schal cumen on uvele stude bute God him beo milde.

Sende uch sum god bivoren him the hwile he may to heovene.  
Betere is on almes bivoren thane beoth after seovene.  
30 Ne beo the leovere than thiseolf thi mey ne thi mowe.  
Sot is that is other mannes freond more than his owe.



### 3. POEMA MORALE

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fol. 169r

*Another treatise in English*

- I'm older than I was, in winters and in learning.  
I possess more than I did. My wit ought to be greater.  
I've been a child too long, in work and also in deed.  
Though I am old in winters, too young am I of wisdom.  
5 I've led a worthless life, and I lead one still, it seems.  
When I think of myself, I'm terribly afraid.
- Most everything I've done is idleness and childishness.  
I've thought of myself too late unless God grants me mercy.  
Many vain words I've said since learning to how to speak,  
10 And I've done many immature acts, which I now regret.  
All too often I've transgressed in deed and in word.  
All too much I've spent, laid too little aside.
- Everything that I once liked best now displeases me.  
He who stubbornly follows his will betrays himself.  
15 Man, repudiate your foul desire, and be glad in return!  
I might have behaved better had I had any discretion.  
Now I want to, but I can't, because of age and ill health.  
Age has snuck up on me before I knew it.  
I cannot see ahead for smoke and for mist.  
20 We're slow to do good, but evil, all too rash.  
Man remains more awed of man than he is of Christ.
- He who doesn't do well while able will bitterly regret it,  
When all men have to reap what they earlier sowed.  
Render to God what you must while you're alive.  
25 Let no man rely too much on child or on wife.  
Whoever forgets himself for the sake of wife or child  
Will come to an evil place unless God shows him mercy.
- Each sows some good in advance before he goes to heaven.  
Better is one alm beforehand than are seven afterwards.  
30 Don't love more than yourself your kinsman or kinswoman.  
He's a fool who's another man's friend more than his own.

Ne lipne no wif to hire were, ne were to his wyve.  
 Beo vor himseolve uych mon the hwile he beoth alyve.

fol. 169v  
 36 Wis is that himseolve bithenkth the hwile he mot libbe,  
 Vor sone willeth him foryete, the fremede and the sibbe.  
 The wel nule do hwile he may, ne schal he hwenne he wolde.  
 Mony monnes sore iswynk ofte habbeth unholde.  
 Ne scholde no mon don a virst ne slakien wel to donne  
 Vor mony mon bihoteth wel that hit foryeteth sone.

40 The mon that wile syker beo to habbe Godes blysse  
 Do wel himseolf the hwile he may — thenne haveth he hit myd iwisse!  
 Theos riche men weneth to beon syker thurh walles and thurh diche,  
 Ah heo doth heore ayhte in siker stude that sendeth hit to heoveriche,  
 Vor ther ne tharf he beon adred of fure ne of theve.  
 45 Thar ne may hit bynyme, the lothe ne the leove.

Ther ne tharf he beon ofdred of yefte ne of yelde.  
 Thider we sendeth and seolf bereth to lutel and to selde.  
 Thider we schulde drawen and don wel ofte and ilome.  
 Ne may ther non hit us bynymen myd wrongwise dome.  
 50 Thider we schulden drawen and don, wolde ye me ileve,  
 Vor ther ne may hit us bynyme, the king ne the schirreve.  
 Al the beste that we habbeth, thider we schulde sende,  
 Vor ther we hit myhte vinden eft and habben o buten ende!

He that her doth eny god to habbe Godes ore  
 55 Al he schal vynde ther, an hundred-folde more.  
 The that ayhte wile holde wel the hwile he may him wolde  
 Yeve hit for Godes luve — thenne doth he hit wel iholde!  
 Ure swynk and ure tylehthe is iwuned to swynde,  
 Ah heo that hit yeveth for Godes luve eft hit mowen ivynde.

60 Ne schal non uvel beon unbouht, ne no god unvorgulde.  
 Uvel we doth al to muchel, god lasse thane we scholde.  
 The that mest doth nu to gode, and te the leste to lathe —  
 Eyther to lutel and to muchel schal thunchen heom eft to bathe.  
 Ther me schal ure werkes weyen byvore heovene Kinge,  
 65 And yeven us ure swynkes lean after ure earnynge.

Everuych mon, myd that he haveth, may bugge heoveriche,  
 The riche and the poure bothe, ah nouht alle ilyche —  
 The poure myd his penye, the riche myd his punde —  
 That is the wunderlicheste ware that ever was ifunde!

### 3. POEMA MORALE

---

Let no wife trust in her husband, or husband in his wife.  
Every man must be for himself while he's alive.

fol. 169v  
36 Wise is he who thinks of himself while he possesses life,  
For they'll quickly forget him, strangers and kin.  
He who won't do well while he can, won't be able when he wants to.  
Many a man's hard exertions often earn hostility.  
No one ought to postpone or slacken from doing well,  
For many adamantly promise what they quickly forget.

40 The man who wants to be certain to gain God's bliss  
Should himself do good while he may — then he'll truly have it!  
Rich men consider themselves safe behind walls and moats,  
But he sets his wealth in a safe place who sends it to heaven,  
For there he needn't be afraid of fire nor of theft.

45 There no one can steal it, neither enemy nor friend.

There he needn't be fearful about rewards or payments.  
Thither do we send and bear ourselves too rarely and too seldom.  
Thither we should draw and advance over and over again.  
No one can deprive us of it with a wrongful judgment.  
50 Thither we should draw and advance, you must believe me,  
For no one can deprive us of it, neither king nor sheriff.  
All the best that we have we should send thither,  
For there we will find it again and have it always without end!

55 He who here does any good deeds to have God's mercy  
Shall find it all there, a hundred-fold more.  
He who'd closely guard his wealth while he's in control of it  
Ought to give it up for God's love — then does he guard it well!  
Our labor and our harvest are destined to waste away,  
But he who gives it up for God's love will find it again.

60 No evil will go unpaid for, nor any good go unrewarded.  
We do evil all too often, good less than we ought to.  
One now acts the most for good, another acts the least for evil —  
Either too little or too much, it'll later seem to them both.  
There will our works be weighed before the King of heaven,  
65 And our deeds' reward be given us according to our merit.

Each man, with what he has, may purchase heaven's kingdom,  
The rich and the poor both, but not all alike —  
The poor man with his penny, the rich man with his pound —  
It's the most splendid purchase that ever was found!

- 70  
fol. 170r
- And ofte God con more thonk    ye that yveth him lasse.  
Alle his werkes and his yeftes    is in ryhtwisnesse.
- Lutel lok is Gode leof    that cumeth of godewille,  
And lutel he let on muchel wowe    ther the heorte is ille.  
Heovene and eorthe he oversyhth —    his eyen beoth so brihte!  
75  
Sunne and mone, hevene and fur,    beoth theostre ayeyn his lyhte.  
Nis him forhole nowiht ne ihud,    so muchele beoth his myhte.  
Nis no so derne dede idon,    in so theostre nyhte.  
He wot hwat thencheth and hwat doth    alle quyke wyhte.  
Nis no louerd such is Crist,    ne King such ure Dryhte.
- 80  
Heovene, and eorthe, and al that is,    biloken is in his honde.  
He doth al that his wille is,    a watere and eke on londe.  
He makede fysses in the sea    and fuweles in the luft.  
He wit and wald alle thing    and schop alle schafte.  
He wes erest of alle thing    and ever byth buten ende.  
85  
He is on ewiche stude,    wende hwer thu wende.  
He is buven and binethen,    bivoren us and bihinde.  
The that Godes wille doth    ichwer may him fynde.
- Huych rune he iherth,    the wot alle dede.  
He thurhsyhth uych monnes thonk.    Wy, hwat schal us to rede,  
90  
The that breketh Godes hes    and gulteth so ilome?  
Hwat schulle we seggen other don    at the muchele Dome,  
The that luveth unryht    and heore lif uvele ledeth,  
We that never god ne duden,    then heveneliche demeth?  
Hwat schulle seggen other don,    ther engles heom drede?  
95  
Crist for his muchele myhte    hus helpe thenne and rede!
- Hwat schulle we beren us bivoren?    Mid hwan schulle we queme?  
Ther schule beon deovlen so veole    that wulleth us forwreye.  
Nabbeth heo nowiht foryete    of al that heo iseyen.  
Al that we mysduden here,    heo hit wulleth cuthe there,  
100  
Bute we habben hit ibet    the hwile we her were.  
Al heo habbeth in heore wryte    that we mysduden here.  
Thah we hit nusten,    heo weren ure ifere.
- Hwat schulleth horlinges don,    the swiken and the forsworene?  
Swithe veole beoth icleped,    and fewe beoth icorene.  
105  
Way, hwi were heo biyete?    Hwi weren heo iborene,  
That schulle beo to dethe idemed    and evermore forlorene?  
fol. 170v  
Huych mon himseolve schal her    biceopien and ek deme.  
His owene werkes and his thouht,    to witnesse hit schal teme.

### 3. POEMA MORALE

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70                   And often God will thank more   you who give him less.  
fol. 170r           All his deeds and his rewards   stem from righteousness.

                    Dear to God is a little gift   that comes of goodwill,  
                    But he cares little about misery   where the intent is foul.  
                    He observes heaven and earth —   his eyes are so bright!  
75                   Sun and moon, heaven and fire,   are dark against his light.  
                    Nothing is concealed or hidden from him,   so great is his power.  
                    No deed is done privately,   however dark be the night.  
                    He knows the thoughts and deeds   of every living creature.  
                    There is no lord like Christ,   no King like our Lord.

80                   Heaven, earth, and all that is,   are cared for in his hands.  
                    He does all according to his will,   on water and also on land.  
                    He makes the fishes in the sea   and the birds in the sky.  
                    He knows and rules all things   and shapes all creation.  
                    He existed before all things   and is ever without end.

85                   He abides in every place,   going wherever you go.  
                    He is above and below,   before us and behind.  
                    He who does God's will   may find him everywhere.

                    He hears each whisper,   knows all deeds.  
                    He pierces each man's thoughts.   Ah, what should we do,  
90                   Who break God's laws   and sin so frequently?  
                    What shall we say or do   at the great Doom,  
                    Who have loved perfidy   and led evil lives,  
                    We who never did good,   when judged in heaven?  
                    What shall we say or do,   where angels fear him?

95                   May Crist with his great might   help and guide us then!

                    What shall we bring before us?   How shall we be acceptable?  
                    There shall be so many devils   who will accuse us.  
                    They won't have forgotten any   of all that they've seen.  
                    All that we've done wrongly here,   they'll know it there,  
100                   Unless we had repented it   while we were here.  
                    They'll have in writing everything   we've done wrongly here.  
                    Although we didn't know it,   they were our companions.

                    What shall adulterers do,   the deceivers and the perjurers?  
                    So many will be summoned,   and few will be chosen.

105                   Ah, why were they begotten?   Why were they born,  
                    Who are to be doomed to death   and forever lost?

fol. 170v           Each man here shall himself   accuse and also judge.  
                    To his own actions and thoughts,   he will bear witness.

- 110 Ne may him no mon deme so wel, iwis, ne al so ryhte,  
 For non ne knoweth so wel his thonk, bute ure Dryhte.  
 Uych mon wot himseolve best, his werkes and his wille.  
 That lest wot he seyth ofte mest, and he that al wot is stille.  
 Nis no wisse al so muchel so monnes owe heorte,  
 For so seyth that unhol is himseolve hwat him smeorteth.
- 115 Uych mon schal himseolve deme to dethe other to lyve.  
 The wisse of his owe werk therto him schal dryve.  
 And al that ever mon hafth idon seththen heo com to monne —  
 Al so he hit iseye on boke iwryten hit schal him thinche thenne!  
 Ne schal no mon beon ydemed after his bigynnyng,  
 120 Ah dom schal tholyen uych mon after his endinge.  
 If the ende is uvel, al hit is uvel. God yef us god ende!  
 God yef us ure ende god, hwider that he us lende.
- The mon that never nule do god ne never god lif lede,  
 That Deth cume to his dure, he may sore adrede  
 125 That he ne muwe bidden ore, for that ityt ilome.  
 Vorthi is wis that bit ore and bet bivore the Dome.  
 Hwenne Deth is at the dure, wel late he bit ore.  
 Wel late he leteth that uvel thenne he ne may do na more.
- Bilef sunne hwil thu myht, and do bi Godes lore;  
 130 And do to Gode hwat thu myht, if thu wilt habben ore,  
 For we hit ileveth wel, and Dryhten seolf hit seyde.  
 On hwiche tyme so ever the mon ofthincheth his mysdede,  
 Other rather other later, milce he schal ymete,  
 Ah he that nouht naveth ibet muchel he haveth to bete.
- 135 Mony mon seyth, “Hwo rekth of pyne that schal habben ende?  
 Ne bidde ich no bet bute ich beo ilesed a Domesday of bende.”  
 Lutel wot he hwat is pyne, and lutel he hit iknoweth  
 Hwiche hete is thar the soule wuneth, hw bitter wynd ther bloweth.  
 fol. 171r Hedde he iwuned ther enne day other unnethe one tyde,  
 140 Nolde he for al the middel-erd another ther abyde!
- Swithe grimlych stench ther is, and wurth wythuten ende,  
 And hwo the enes cumeth ther ut may he never thenne wende.  
 Never ich in helle ne com, ne ther to cume ne recche,  
 Thah ich, al thes worldes weole, ther wende to vecche.  
 145 That seyden theo that weren ther — heo hit wisten myd iwisse:  
 Ther thurh seorewe of seove yer for sovenyhtes blysse,  
 And for the blysse that ende haveth endeles is the pyne.  
 Beter is worie wateres drung thane atter meynd myd wyne.

### 3. POEMA MORALE

---

110 No one else may judge him so well, indeed, nor so correctly,  
For no one else knows so well his thoughts, except for our Lord.  
Each man knows himself best, his works and his will.  
He who knows least often says most, and he who knows all is silent.  
There is no witness so great as a man's own heart,  
For whoever says he's unwell knows himself what pains him.

115 Each man shall condemn himself to death or to life.  
The witnessing of his own works shall drive him thereto.  
And all that one's ever done since growing to manhood —  
As if he sees it written in a book will it seem to him then!  
120 No man will be condemned according to his beginning,  
But each shall suffer judgment according to his ending.  
If the end is evil, all is evil. May God give us a good end!  
May God give us our good end, no matter where he assigns us.

He who never wills to do good nor ever to lead a good life,  
Before Death comes to his door, he'll be sorely afraid  
125 That he can't seek mercy, for that often happens.  
Therefore he's wise who seeks mercy and reforms before Doom.  
When Death is at the door, too late does he seek mercy.  
Too late does he abandon that evil when he can no longer act.

130 Give up sin while you're able, and do according to God's lore;  
And do for God whatever you may, if you want to have mercy,  
For we believe it deeply, and the Lord himself said it.  
At whatsoever moment a man repents his misdeeds,  
Either sooner or later, he shall meet with mercy,  
But he who hasn't reformed has much need to reform.

135 Many men say, "Who cares about pain that will end?  
I can't do better than pray to be released from bonds on Doomsday."  
He knows little of what pain is, and little does he know  
The heat where the soul dwells, how bitterly the wind blows there.  
fol. 171r Had he been there just one day or even one hour,  
140 He wouldn't for all of middle-earth endure any more!

Such a horrific stench is there, and existence without end,  
And whoever comes there once can never get out.  
I have never entered hell, nor do I care to go there,  
Even if, all this world's wealth, I went there to fetch.  
145 So say those who've been there — they know it for sure:  
There wholly the sorrow of seven years for seven days' bliss,  
And for a finite bliss one gains infinite sorrow.  
Dirty water is a better drink than poison mixed with wine.

- 150 Swynes brede is swete; so is of the wilde deore.  
 Al to deore he hit buth that yeveth tharvore his sweore.  
 Ful wombe may lihtliche speken of hunger and of festen,  
 So may of pyne, that not hwat hit is, that evermo schal lesten.  
 Hedde he ifonded summe stunde, he wolde seggen al other,  
 And lete, for Crist, beo wif and child, fader, suster, and brother.
- 155 Al he wolde other don and otherluker thenche.  
 Hwenne he bithouhte on helle-fur, that nothing ne may quenche,  
 Evre he wolde in bonen beon and in godnesse wunye;  
 With that, he myhte helle-fur ever fleon and schonye.  
 And lete sker al thes worldes weole and thes worldes blysse;  
 160 With that, he myhte to heovene cumen and beo ther myd iwisse.
- Ich wile eu seggen of the Dome, as ich eu er seyde.  
 On the Day and on the Dome, us helpe Cryst and rede.  
 Ther we muwen beon aferd and sore us ofdrede.  
 Ther uych schal seon him bifore his word and ek his dede.  
 165 Al schal beon ther theonne ikud: that er men lowen and stelen.  
 Al schal beon ther theonne unwrien: that men her wrien and helen.
- We schulleth alre monne lyf iknowe al so ure owe.  
 Ther schulle beon evenynges the riche and ek the lowe.  
 The Dom schal beon sone idon; ne lest he nowiht longe.  
 170 Ne schal him no mon menen ther of strengthe ne of wronge.  
 fol. 171v Theo schullen habbe harde dom that er weren harde —  
 Theo that uvele heolde wrecche men and uvele lawe arerde.
- Alle theo that beoth icumen of Adam and of Eve —  
 Alle heo schule thider cumen, and so we owen hit ileve!  
 175 Theo that habbeth wel idon, after heore mihte,  
 To heoveriche heo schulle vare forth myd ure Dryhte;  
 Theo that habbeth Feondes werk idon and therin beoth ifunde,  
 Heo schulle fare forth myd him into helle-grunde.
- Ther ho schulle wunyen o buten ore and ende.  
 180 Ne breketh nouht Crist eft helle-dure to lesen heom of bende.  
 Nys no seollich theh heom beo wo he mawe wunye ethe.  
 Nul never eft Crist tholye deth to lesen heom of dethe.  
 Enes Drihte helle brek, his freond he ut brouhte.  
 Himseolve he tholede deth for us; wel deore he us abouhte.
- 185 Nolde hit no mon do for me, ne suster for brother;  
 Nolde hit sone do for vader, ne no mon for other.  
 Ure alre Louerd, for us threlles, ipyned wes on rode.

### 3. POEMA MORALE

---

- 150 A swine's meat is sweet; so is that of wild deer.  
All too dearly does he buy it who gives his neck for it.  
A full stomach may speak lightly of hunger and of fasts,  
So too of pain, not knowing what it is, that will last forever.  
Were he to feel it for a moment, he'd say something else,  
And, for Christ, give up wife and child, father, sister, and brother.
- 155 He'd do everything differently and think differently.  
When he thought about hell-fire, which nothing can quench,  
He'd always be in prayer and dwell in goodness;  
By that means, he might hell-fire entirely escape and avoid.  
And he'd give up all this worldly wealth and worldly bliss;  
160 By that means, he might come to heaven and truly arrive there.
- I'll now tell you about the Doom, as I promised you earlier.  
On the Day and the Doom, may Christ help and guide us.  
There we must be afraid and deeply in dread.  
There each shall see before him his words and also his deeds.  
165 There shall all then be known: what they once lied about or stole.  
There shall all then be disclosed: what they here hid or concealed.
- Every man's life we will know just like our own.  
There shall be made equal the rich and also the poor.  
The Doom will be quickly performed; it won't last long.  
170 No one will make complaint there of violence or of wrong.  
fol. 171v Those shall have a harsh judgment who were harsh here —  
Those who evilly oppressed poor men and enacted evil laws.
- All those who are begotten of Adam and of Eve —  
All of them shall come thither, and so we ought to believe it!  
175 Those who've done well, according to their ability,  
To heaven's kingdom they'll travel forth with our Lord;  
Those who've done the Devil's work and are found therein,  
They'll fare forth with him into the pit of hell.
- 180 There they shall dwell forever without mercy or end.  
Christ won't ever again break hell-door to release them from bonds.  
It's no wonder if woeful are those who must dwell there forever.  
Christ will never again suffer death to release them from death.  
Once the Lord had breached hell, he brought out his friends.  
He himself suffered death for us; he paid very dearly.
- 185 No one would do it for another, not sister for brother;  
Son wouldn't do it for father, nor anyone for another.  
Our Lord of all, for us servants, was tormented on cross.

- Ure bendes he unbond and bouhte us myd his blode.  
 And we yeveth unnethe a stucche of ure brede.  
 190 We ne thencheth nouht that he schal deme the quyke and ek the dede.
- Muchel luve he us cudde, wolde we hit understonde.  
 That ure elderne mysduden, we habbeth harde on honde.  
 Deth com i this middel-erd thurh the Deofles onde,  
 And sunne and sorewe and muchel swynk, a watere and a londe.  
 195 Ure forme-faderes gult we abuggeth alle.  
 Al his ofsprung after him in harme is ifalle.
- Thurst and hunger, chele and hete, ache and unhelthe  
 Thurh him com in this myddel-erd, and othe unyselyhthe.  
 Nere no mon elles ded ne sek, ne non unhele,  
 200 Ah myhten libben evermo myd blysse and myd wele.  
 Lutel hit thincheth mony mon, ah muchel wes the sunne  
 For whon alle tholieth deth that comen of heore kunne.
- Ure sunne and ure sor us may sore ofthunche.  
 fol. 172r In sunnen we libbeth alle, and seorewe and in swynke.  
 205 Hwenne God nom so muche wreche for one mysdede,  
 We that ofte mysdoth, we mowen us sore adrede.  
 Adam and his ofsprung, for ore bare sunne,  
 Weren feole hundred wynter in pyne and on unwunne.
- And theo that ledeth heore lif myd unriht and myd wronge,  
 210 Bute hit Godes mylce beo, he beoth thar wel longe.  
 Godes wisdom is wel muchel, and al so is his myhte.  
 Nis his mylce nowiht lasse ah al by one wyhte.  
 More he one may foryeve than al volk agulte kunne.  
 Theyh seolf Deovel myhte habbe mylce if he hit bigunne.
- The that Godes mylce sekth, iwis he hit may fynde,  
 Ah helle kyng is oreles with thon that he may bynde.  
 The that doth his wille mest he schal habbe wrst mede.  
 His bath schal beo wallynde pich, his bed bernynde glede,  
 Al so ich hit telle, as wyse men us seyden,  
 220 And on heore boke hit iwryten is, that me may hit reden.  
 Ich hit segge for heom that er this hit nusten,  
 And warny heom with harme, if heo me wulleth lusten.
- Understondeth nu to me, edye men and arme.  
 Ich wille ou telle of helle-pyne, and warny of harme.  
 225 Thar is hunger and thirst, uvele tweye ivere.  
 Theos pyne tholieth ther that were mete-nythingses here.

### 3. POEMA MORALE

---

He unbound our bonds and bought us with his blood.  
And we offer barely a morsel of our bread.  
190 We don't consider how he shall judge the quick and also the dead.

Abundant love he showed us, were we to comprehend it.  
For what our elders did wrongly, we suffer in due course.  
Death came into this middle-earth by the Devil's malice,  
And sin and sorrow and great toil, on water and on land.  
195 Our first father's guilt we all pay for.  
All his descendents after him are fallen into harm.

Thirst and hunger, cold and heat, pain and disease  
Through him came into this middle-earth, and other miseries.  
Otherwise no one would be dead or sick, or no one unwell,  
200 But he might live forever with bliss and with happiness.  
To many a man it seems small, but great was the sin  
For which all suffer death who come of their kin.

Our sin and our suffering we might sorely regret.  
fol. 172r In sin we all live, and in sorrow and in toil.  
205 After God wreaked so much vengeance for one misdeed,  
We who often do wrong, we must be terribly afraid.  
Adam and his offspring, for merely one sin,  
For many hundred winters were in pain and in misery.

And those who lead their lives with evil and with wrong,  
210 Were it not for God's mercy, they'll be there a long time.  
God's wisdom is very great, and so is his power.  
His mercy is never any bit less for only one creature.  
He may forgive one by more than can all people sin.  
The Devil himself might have mercy if he sought it.

Those who seek God's mercy, certainly they can find it,  
215 But hell's king is merciless with those whom he binds.  
Whoever most follows his will will have worst reward.  
His bath will be boiling pitch, his bed burning coal,  
Just as I describe it, as wise men have told us,  
220 And in their book it is written, where one may read it.  
I'll explain it for those who haven't known it before,  
And protect them from harm, if they'll listen to me.

Understand me now, rich men and poor,  
I'll tell you about hell-pain, and protect you from harm.  
225 There is hunger and thirst, two evils together.  
Those suffer pain there who were food-misers here.

- Thar is wonyng and wop after ulche strete.  
 Ho vareth from hete to chele, from chele to thar hete.
- 230 Hwenne heo cumeth in hete, the chele heom thincheth lisse.  
 Thenne heo cumeth eft to chele; of hete heo habbeth mysse.  
 Eyther heom doth wo ynouh; nabbeth heo none lisse.  
 Heo nuten hwether heom doth wurse myd never none iwisse.  
 Heo walketh ever and secheth reste, ah heo hit ne muwe imete,  
 For heo nolde, hwile heo myhten, heore sunnen ibete.
- 235 Heo schecheth reste ther non nys, forthi ne muwen hi finde,  
 Ah walketh thar bothe up and dun, so water doth myd winde.  
 fol. 172v This beoth the that weren, her, mid hwom me heold feste,  
 And theo that Gode biheyhte wel and nolden hit ileste,  
 And theo that god werc bygunne and fulendy hit nolden.  
 240 Nu were her, nu were ther — heo nuste hwat heo wolden.
- Ther is pych that ever walleth that heo schulle habbe there,  
 Theo that ledeth heore lyf unwreste and eke false were.  
 Thar is fur an hundred-folde hature thane be ure.  
 Ne may hit quenche no saltwater, ne Avene strem ne Sture.  
 245 That is thet fur that ever barnth; ne may hit no mon quenche.  
 Tharinne beoth theo that her wes leof poure men to swenche;
- Theo that were swikelemen and ful of uvele wrenche,  
 And theo that ne myhte uvele do and was hit leof to thenche;  
 Theo that luvend reving and stale, and hordom and drunken,  
 250 And on Deoveles werke blutheliche swunken;  
 Theo that were so lese that me heom ne myhte ileven,  
 Med-yorne domesmen and wrongwise reven;
- The that wes leof other mannes wif and his owe leten,  
 And the that sunegeth ofte on drunken and on mete;  
 255 Theo that wrecche men bynymeth his eyhte and hit leyth an horde,  
 And lutel let on Godes bode and of Godes Worde;  
 Theo that almes nolde yeve there he iseyh the neode,  
 Ne his poure kunesmen at him ne myhte nouht spede;
- 260 The that nolde here Godes sonde thar he sat at his borde;  
 And was leof other mannes thing levere than beon schulde,  
 And weren al to gredi of seolver and of golde,  
 And luvenden untrewnesse that heo schulden beon holde,  
 And leten that hi scolden do, and duden that heo ne scholden —  
 Heo schulleth wunyen in helle the Veondes onwolde!

### 3. POEMA MORALE

---

- There is wailing and weeping in every direction.  
They shift from heat to cold, from cold to heat there.
- 230 When they enter heat, the cold seems a relief to them.  
Then they return again to cold; they have need of heat.  
Either gives them plenty of pain; they find no relief.  
They never know which feels worse with any certainty.  
They walk always and seek rest, but they can't come upon it,  
Because they wouldn't, when they could, repent their sins.
- 235 They seek rest where there's none, for they may not find it,  
But walk there both up and down, as water does in wind.  
fol. 172v They are those who were, here, the ones others trusted,  
And those who promised God well and wouldn't hold to it,  
And those who began good deeds and wouldn't complete them.
- 240 Now here, now there — they knew not what they wanted.
- There is the pitch that boils forever, which they shall have there,  
Those who led deceitful lives and also were false.  
There is fire a hundred times hotter than is ours.  
No saltwater may quench it, nor the river Avon or Stour.
- 245 That is the fire that burns eternally; no one can quench it.  
In there are those who enjoyed oppressing poor men;
- Those who were fraudulent and full of evil tricks,  
And those who couldn't do evil but enjoyed thinking about it;  
Those who loved plunder and theft, whoredom and drunkenness,
- 250 And for the Devil's works happily toiled;  
Those who were so false that none might believe them,  
Bribe-greedy judges and wicked reeves;
- Those who enjoyed other men's wives and neglected their own,  
And those who sin often in drinking and in eating;
- 255 Those who seize their wealth from poor men and hoard it,  
And attend little to God's bidding and to God's Word;  
Those who wouldn't give alms wherever they saw need,  
Nor might their poor kinsmen ever prosper by them;
- 260 Those who here ignored God's gifts when they sat at their table;  
Those who coveted other men's things more than they should,  
And were all too greedy for silver and for gold,  
And loved untruth when they should have been upright,  
And omitted what they should have done, and did what they shouldn't —  
They will dwell in hell under the Devil's authority!

- 265 The that were gaderares of thisse woldes ayhte,  
 And duden that the lothe gost heom tycede and tahte,  
 And alle theo the myd dusye wise Deovele her iquemeth —  
 Theo beoth nu in helle with him, fordon and fordemde,  
 fol. 173r Bute theo that ofthincheth her sore heore mysdede,  
 270 And heore gultes gunnen lete and betere lif to lede.
- Ther beoth neddren and snaken, evethen and fruden,  
 Ther tereth and freteth that uvele speketh, the nythfule and the prude.  
 Never sunne ther ne schineth, ne mone ne steorre.  
 Ther is muchel Godes hete and muchel Godes eorre.  
 275 Ever thar is muchel smech, theosternesse, and eye.  
 Nis ther never other lyht bute the swarte leye.
- Ther lyth the lodliche veond in stronge raketeye,  
 That is the that wes myd God in heovene swithe heye.  
 Ther beoth ateliche veondes and grysliche wyhtes.  
 280 Ther schule the wrecche soulen iseon that sunegeden bi sihtes.  
 Ther is the lothe Sathanas and Beelzebub the olde.  
 Ethe heo mwue beon adred, that heom schulde biholde.
- Ne may non heorte hit thenche, ne no tunge telle  
 Hw mucho pyne, hw veole veondes beoth in theostre helle.  
 285 For al the pyne that her is, nulle ich eu nouht lye,  
 Nis hit bute gome and gleo al that mon may her dreye,  
 And yet ne doth heom nothing so wo, in the lothe bende,  
 Ase that witen heore pyne ne schal habbe non ende.
- Thar beoth the hethene men that were lawelese,  
 290 Thet nes nouht of Godes forbode ne of Godes hese.  
 Uvele Cristene men beoth ther heorure nere,  
 Theo that, heore Cristendom, uvele heolden here.  
 Yet heo beoth a wrse stude anythe helle-grunde,  
 Ne schullen heo never cumen up, for marke ne for punde.
- 295 Ne may helpe ther, nouthur beode ne almesse,  
 For nys nother in helle ore ne foryeuenesse.  
 Nu schilde him uych mon, hwile he may, with the ilke pyne,  
 And warny uich his freond, so ich habbe myne.  
 Theo that schilde heom ne kunnen, ich heom wille teche.  
 300 Ich con beon eyther, if ich schal — lycome and soule leche.
- fol. 173v Lete we that God forbed alle monkunne,  
 And do we that he us hat, and schilde we us with sunne.  
 Luvye we God myd ure heorte and myd alle ure myhte.

### 3. POEMA MORALE

---

- 265            Those who were gatherers    of this world's wealth,  
And did what the loathsome spirit    enticed and taught them,  
And all those who unwisely    pleased here the Devil —  
Those are now in hell with him,    ruined and condemned,  
fol. 173r    Except for those who here repented    sorely of their misdeeds,  
270            And began to forsake their sins    and lead a better life.
- There are adders and snakes,    lizards and frogs,  
That tear and bite those who speak evil,    the envious and the proud.  
The sun never shines there,    nor does moon or stars.  
There is God's mighty anger    and God's mighty wrath.  
275            Always there is great smoke,    darkness, and terror.  
There is never any light    other than the dark fire.
- There lie the loathly fiends    in strong chains,  
Those who were with God    in heaven so high.  
There are hideous fiends    and terrible creatures.  
280            There shall be seen the poor souls    who sinned wittingly.  
There is loathsome Satan    and old Belzebug.  
They must be instantly terrified,    whoever beholds them.
- May no heart imagine it,    nor any tongue tell  
How much pain, how many fiends    are in dark hell.  
285            Regarding all the pain that's here,    I won't lie to you,  
It's mere game and mirth    that one may suffer here,  
And yet nothing else gives them such woe,    in those loathly bonds,  
As knowing that their pain    will never end.
- There are the heathens    who were faithless,  
290            Who didn't care about God's commands    nor about God's behests.  
Wicked Christian men are    their close companions,  
Those who, their Christianity,    maintain sinfully here.  
Now they're in a worse place    next to the pit of hell,  
And they'll never advance upward,    for penny or for pound.
- 295            Nothing may help them there,    neither prayers nor alms,  
For in hell there's neither    mercy nor forgiveness.  
May each man shield himself, while he can,    from that very pain,  
And warn each of his friends,    as I have warned mine.  
Those ignorant of how to shield themselves,    I'll teach them.  
300            I know how to be both, if I must —    healer of body and soul.
- fol. 173v    Let's relinquish what God forbade    all mankind,  
And do what he commands us,    and shield ourselves from sin.  
May we love God with our hearts    and with all our power.

- 305 Ure even Cristen as usself, for so us lerede Dryhte.  
 Al that me redeth and syngeth bivoren Godes borde,  
 Al hit hongeth and hald bi thisse twam worde.
- Alle Godes Lawe he fulleth, the Newe and ek the Olde,  
 That haveth theos ilke two luven and wel heom wile atholde.  
 310 Ah, soth ich hit eu segge, ofte we agulteth alle,  
 For strong hit is to stonde longe, and lyht hit is to falle;  
 Ah Dryhten Crist us yeve strengthe stonde that we mote,  
 And, of alle ure sunnen, us lete cume to bote.
- We wilneth after worldes ayhte, that longe ne may ileste,  
 And mest leggeth ure swynk on thing unstudeveste.  
 315 If that we swunken for Gode half that we doth for eyhte,  
 Nere we nouht so ofte bicherd ne so uvele bythouhte.  
 Yef we servede God so we doth earmynges,  
 We mihte habbe more of heovene than eorles other kynges.
- Ne mowe nouht weryen heom with chele ne with hunger,  
 320 Ne with elde ne with dethe, the eldure ne the yonge,  
 Ah ther nys hunger ne thirst, ne deth, ne unhelthe, ne elde.  
 Of this world we thencheth ofte, and therof al to selde.
- We schulde us bithenche wel ofte and wel ilome:  
 Hwat we beoth, to hwan we schulen, and of hwan we comen,  
 325 Hw lutle hwile we beoth here, hw longe elles-hware,  
 And after Gode wel wurche; thenne ne thuruue noht kare.  
 If we were wyse men, thus we schulde thenche.  
 Bute we wurthe us iwar, thes world us wile fordrenche.
- Mest alle men, he yeveth drynke of one Deofles schenche.  
 330 He schal him cunne schilde wel yef he him wole bithenche.  
 Mid Almyhtyes Godes luvete we us werie  
 With theos wrecche worldes luvete heo us ne derye.  
 fol. 174r Mid festen, and almesse, and beoden, were we us with sunne  
 Mid the wepnen that God haveth yeven to alle monkunne.
- 335 Lete we theo brode stret and thene wey grene  
 That lat the nyethe to helle of folke, and mo, ich wene.  
 Go we thene narewe wey, thene wey so schene.  
 Ther forth fareth lutel folk, and that is well ethsene.  
 The brode stret is ure wil, that is us loth to lete.  
 340 The that al feleweth his wil he fareth the brode strete.
- The narewe wey is Godes heste, that forth fareth wel fawe,  
 That beoth theo the heom schedeth wel with uych unthewe.

### 3. POEMA MORALE

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- 305           And our fellow Christian as ourself,   as the Lord teaches us.  
All that men read and sing   before God's altar,  
It all depends on and holds   to these two words.
- He will fulfill all of God's Law,   the New and the Old,  
Whoever has these two loves   and upholds them well.  
But, truly I tell you,   we all sin frequently,  
310           For it's arduous to stand long,   and it's easy to fall;  
But Lord Christ give us strength   that we may stand,  
And, for all our sins,   let us come to redemption.
- We yearn for the world's wealth,   which cannot last long,  
And we invest most of our toil   in transitory things.  
315           If we toiled for God's love by half   what we do for wealth,  
We'd not be so often misled   nor so poorly informed.  
If we served God   as we do poor wretches,  
We could have more of heaven   than earls or kings.
- They can't protect themselves   from cold or from hunger,  
320           Or from old age or death,   neither the old nor the young,  
But no hunger or thirst is there,   no death, ill health, or old age.  
We think of this world often,   and of there all too seldom.
- We should think of ourselves   constantly and repeatedly:  
What we are, where we shall go,   and from whence we came,  
325           What a short while we're here,   how long elsewhere,  
And toil directly for God;   then we need have no care.  
If we were wise men,   thus would we think.  
Unless we remain alert,   this world will drown us.
- To most every man, it offers a drink   from the Devil's draught.  
330           He will shield himself well   if he thinks of himself.  
With Almighty God's love   we ought to guard ourselves  
From love of this wretched world,   so that it not injure us.  
fol. 174r       With fasts, alms, and prayers,   let's guard ourselves from sin  
With the weapons that God has given   to all mankind.
- 335           Let's depart from the broad street   and the leafy way  
That leads nine-tenths of folk to hell,   and more, I think.  
Let's go by the narrow way,   the way so glorious.  
Few folk travel there,   and that is easily seen.  
The broad street is our willfulness,   which we hate to give up.  
340           He who follows only his will   travels the broad street.
- The narrow way is God's law,   upon which very few travel,  
Those who protect themselves well   from every vice.

- Theos goth unnethe ayeyn the cleo, ayeyn the heye hulle.  
Theos leteth awei al heore wil for Godes hestes to fulle.
- 345 Go we alle thene wei, for he us will brynge,  
Mid the fewe feyre men, byvoren heovene Kinge.  
Ther is alre murehthe mest, myd englene songe.  
Wel edy wurth thilke mon that ther byth undervonge.  
The lest haveth murehthe he haveth so muche, ne bit he namore!
- 350 Hwoso theo blisse for thisse foryet, hit may him rewe sore.
- Ne may no pyne ne no wone beon in heovene riche,  
Thah ther beon wonynges feole, and other unyliche.  
Summe habbeth lasse murehthe, and summe habbeth more,  
Uych after that he dude her, and after that heo swunken sore.
- 355 Ne wrth ther bred ne wyn, ne nones kunnes este.  
God one schal beon eche lif and blisse, eche reste.
- Ther nys nouter fou ne grey, ne konyng ne hermyne,  
Ne oter ne acquerne, beuveyr ne sablyne.  
Ne ther ne wurth, ful iwis, worldes wele none.
- 360 Al the murehthe that me us bihat, al hit is God one.  
Nis ther no murehthe so muchel so is Godes syhte.  
He is soth sunne and briht, and day bute nyhte.
- He is uyche godes ful. Nys him nowiht withute.  
Nis heom nones godes wone that wuneth hym abute.
- fol. 174v  
366 Ther is weole bute wone, and reste bute swynke.  
Hwo may thider cume and nule, hit schal hym sore ofthinche.  
Ther is blysse bute teone, and lif withute dethe.  
Theo that schulle wunye ther, blithe muwen heo beon ethe.
- 370 Ther is yonghede buten ealde, and hele buten unhelthe.  
Ther nys seorewe ne no sor, never non unhelthe  
Seoththe me Dryhten iseo so he is, myd iwisse.  
He one may beon, and schal, englene and monne blisse.
- Theo schulen of him more iseon that her him luvede more,  
And more iseon and iwytten his milce and his ore.
- 375 On him, heo schullen fynden al that mon may luste,  
And on lyves bec iseon al that heo her nusten.  
Crist seolf one schal beon inouh to alle derlinges.  
He one is more and betere than alle wordliche thinges.
- Inough hi habbeth that hyne habbeth, that all thinges weldeth.
- 380 Him to seonne murie hit is, so fayr he is to biholde!  
God is so swete and so muchel in his godnesse

### 3. POEMA MORALE

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They go with difficulty upon the cliff, upon the high hill.  
They let go of all their willfulness to fulfill God's law.

345 Let's all go that way, for it will bring us,  
With a few fair men, before heaven's King.  
There's the highest joy of all, amid angels' song.  
Fortunate be that very man who's received there.  
The least has such abundant joy, he mightn't ask for more!  
350 Whoever forgets about this bliss, he'll regret it sorely.

No pain and no want may exist in heaven's kingdom,  
But there are various ways of life, of different kinds.  
Some have less joy, and some have more,  
According to what they did here, and how hard they worked.  
355 There's no bread or wine there, or other sorts of pleasure.  
God alone will bring eternal life and bliss, eternal rest.

There's no variegated or gray fur, nor fur of rabbit or ermine,  
Nor of otter or squirrel, nor of beaver or sable.  
There isn't there, truly, any worldly wealth.  
360 All the joy promised to us, it's all from God alone.  
And there's no joy so great as the sight of God.  
He's the true and bright sun, and day without night.

He's full of every good. He lacks in nothing.  
They are deprived of no kind of good who dwell about him.  
fol. 174v There is wealth without want, and rest without toil.  
366 Whoever may come there and will not, he'll sorely regret it.  
There's bliss without suffering, and life without death.  
Those who shall dwell there, they'll be eternally happy.

370 There's youth without age, and health without disease.  
There's neither sorrow nor grief, nor any disease  
When men see the Lord as he is, in truth.  
He alone is, and shall be, the bliss of angels and men.

They shall see more of him who here loved him more,  
And see and know more his grace and his mercy.  
375 In him, they shall find all one can desire,  
And see in life's book all that here they didn't know.  
Christ alone will be enough for all dear followers.  
He alone is more and better than all worldly things.

380 He possesses enough whoever has him, who rules all things.  
To look upon him is joyous, so fair he is to behold!  
God is so gracious and abundant in his goodness

Al that wes, and is, is wel wurse and lasse,  
Ne may no mon hit segge, ne wyten myd iwisse,  
Hu muchele murehthe habbeth heo, that beoth in hevene blisse.

385 To thare blisse bringe us God, that lesteth buten ende,  
Hwenne he ure saule unbind of lichomliche bende.  
Crist us lete such lif lede and habbe her such ende  
That we mote to him cume hwenne we heonne wendeth. Amen.

390 Bidde we nu, leove freond, yonge and ek olde,  
That he that this wryt wrot, his saule beo ther atholde. Amen.

### 3. POEMA MORALE

---

That all else that was, and is, is much worse and less,  
Nor may anyone express it, or comprehend truly,  
How much joy they have, who are in heaven's bliss.

385 To that bliss may God bring us, who rules without end,  
When he unbinds our souls from their bodily bonds.  
May Christ grant us to lead such a life and have here such an end  
That we may come to him when we go from here. Amen.

390 Pray we now, dear friend, young and also old,  
That he who wrote this writ, his soul be admitted there. Amen.



#### 4. SAWES OF SAINT BEDE

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- fol. 175r      Theos Holy Gostes myhte  
Us helpe and rede and dihte  
                    And wisse us and theche  
To wyten us wyth than Unwihte,  
5                That bi daye and bi nyhte  
                    Thencheth us to bipeche.
- He maketh us don sunnen,  
And habben of monkunne  
                    Swithe muchel onde,  
10                And thencheth us iwynne  
And wunye us withinne  
                    And us habben an honde.
- Ac bidde we Crist yorne  
That he that heom werne  
15                For his holynesse,  
For the that to heom turneth  
In helle heo schulle forberne  
                    On eche sorynesse.
- Ah ich hit segge and swerie  
20                If we ure Suppen herye  
                    And luyeth hyne swithe,  
He us wille werye  
That feondes us ne derye  
                    That fulle beoth of nythe.
- 25                Ne schulle we nouht beo here  
Swithe vale yere;  
                    Forthi, er we wende,  
Makie we us clene and skere  
That we, englene ivere,  
30                Mawe beon o buten ende.
- That is in heovene blysse  
Heo cumeth ther, myd iwisse,  
                    That luyeth Godes lore;



#### 4. SAWES OF SAINT BEDE

---

fol. 175r      May the Holy Ghost's power  
Help and advise and guide us  
                    And direct and teach us  
To protect us from the Enemy,  
5               Who by day and by night  
                    Plots to deceive us.

                    He causes us to sin,  
And has of mankind  
                    Such great envy,  
10             And plots to conquer us  
And dwell within us  
                    And control us.

                    But we pray sincerely to Christ  
That he ward him off  
15             By his holiness,  
For whoever turns to him  
Shall burn in hell  
                    In eternal sorrow.

                    But I say it and affirm  
20             That if we praise our Creator  
                    And love him deeply,  
He will defend us  
So that we're unharmed by fiends  
                    Full of envy.

25             We won't be here  
For very many years;  
                    Therefore, before we go,  
Let's make ourselves clean and pure  
So that, together with angels, we  
30             May dwell without end.

                    Whoever's in heaven's bliss  
Comes there, truly,  
                    By loving God's lore;

- 35           Hwo that, for lyve thisse,  
               Therof schal mysse  
                           Hit schal him reowe sore.
- Hit seyth in the godspelle  
               Ne may no tunge telle  
                           The blisse that ther is evere,  
 40           Ne of thare pyne of helle —  
               Tharto we beoth to snelle —  
                           Away heo ne endeth nevere.
- In helle beoth the pynen  
               That maketh heorte chynen —  
 45           The stude is swithe unwele  
               Ther no lyht ne shineth;  
               Ne non other attryneth  
                           To helpe ne to hele.
- fol. 175v   Her is chele and hete  
 50           And hunger unymete  
                           And thurst elles to kene;  
               Wikede beoth the sete,  
               And the wurmes eke  
                           That doth the saule teone.
- 55           Thar is wop and wonyng  
               And muche bymenyng  
                           That heo ibore were,  
               And thar nys no yeyncherryng,  
               Ne thar nys non endyng  
 60           The enes cumeth there.
- Thi we auhte nyme gome  
               Her, er we thider come,  
                           And serve heovene Kinge,  
               Bisechen hym ilome  
 65           That he us at the Dome  
                           From thare pyne us bryng.
- Ute we sunnen lete,  
               And nyme scryft and bete  
                           Of ure misdede.  
 70           To donne he beoth swete;  
               Thy us is ethgete  
                           Helle that is unlede.

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

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- 35           Whoever, on account of this life,  
              Misses out on that  
                          Will regret it sorely.
- It says in the gospel  
              That no tongue may express  
                          The joy that's always there,  
40           Nor the pain of hell —  
              There we'll go too soon —  
                          It never ever abates.
- In hell there's the pain  
              That cleaves a heart —  
45           The place is so unholy  
              That no light may shine there;  
              No one approaches anyone else  
                          To help or bring remedy.
- fol. 175v    Here is cold and heat  
50           And immeasurable hunger  
                          And also keen thirst;  
              The setting is wicked,  
              And so are the worms  
                          That torture the soul.
- 55           There's weeping and lamentation  
              And much bemoaning  
                          That they were born,  
              And there's no returning,  
              Nor any respite  
60           For those who come there.
- Thus we ought to take heed  
              Here, before we go thither,  
                          And serve heaven's King,  
              Beseech him often  
65           That he may at the Doom  
                          Deliver us from that pain.
- Let us forsake sins,  
              And take schrif and repent  
                          Our misdeeds.  
70           It's sweet to commit sin;  
              Thus we easily receive  
                          Miserable hell.

- 75           Theo seven heued-sunne  
               That we ofte beoth inne  
                           The saule willeth amerre.  
               Heo beoth of swikele kunne.  
               Ther-myd the Wytherwynne  
                           Us alle thencheth bicharre.
- 80           Prude and modynesse,  
               Ne arhhede ne sorynesse,  
                           And nythe and ek onde,  
               Wraththe and swikelnesse,  
               Hordom and yvernesse —  
                           Theos we auhte understonde.
- 85           Theos beoth sunnen seovene  
               That bryngeth ut of heovene  
                           Swithe vele manne;  
               The weyes beoth unevene.  
               With wepynde stefne,  
                           To helle he schulle thenne.
- 90           Nu weneth monye riche  
               To beon englene ilyche  
                           For heore prude clathe;  
               Therefore heo schule siche  
               And in helle smyche  
                           Acoryen hit ful wrathe.
- fol. 176r   He weneth, for heore ayhte,  
               To heovene beo cuthlethe;  
                           Ah bute heo hit ryht dele,  
               Of heovene heo beoth bipahte  
               And thane Veonde bycauhte  
                           For heore mucche weole.
- 100           Nu weneth, ek, thes wrecche  
               That he ne thurue recche  
                           For he ayhte nabbeth,  
               Ac Sathanas the frecche  
               The saule wule drecche  
                           Hwanne he agult habbeth.
- 105           The ryche, myd iwisse,  
               Wel myhte cume to blisse  
                           If he hit wolde ofservie.
- 110           The ryche, myd iwisse,  
               Wel myhte cume to blisse  
                           If he hit wolde ofservie.

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

---

- 75           The seven-headed sin  
              That we're frequently in  
                      Will ruin the soul.  
              Its nature is deceitful.  
              By its means the Adversary  
                      Plots to beguile all of us.
- 80           Pride and arrogance,  
              Sloth and despair,  
                      Malice and envy,  
              Wrath and deceit,  
              Lechery and greed —  
                      These we must understand.
- 85           These are the seven sins  
              That exclude from heaven  
                      Very many a man;  
              The ways are crooked.  
              With a weeping voice,  
90           He'll go to hell then.
- Now many rich folk expect  
              To be like angels  
                      In their proud clothes;  
              Therefore they'll sigh  
95           And in hell-smoke  
                      Pay for it wretchedly.
- fol. 176r    They think, for their possessions,  
              To be famous in heaven;  
                      But unless they act virtuously,  
100           They'll be tricked out of heaven  
              And then seized by the Fiend  
                      To their great sorrow.
- Now the poor think, too,  
              They needn't fear anything  
105           Because they have nothing,  
              But fierce Satan  
              Will harrass the soul  
                      When it transgresses.
- The rich man, indeed,  
110           Might well come to bliss  
                      If he merits it.



#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

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- The poor man might well lose,  
Unless he his poverty  
Endures humbly.
- 115 Some of these monks  
Who gather treasure  
Think they'll enjoy it;  
But when Death comes,  
It's all taken from them,  
120 And they're delivered to the Devil.
- The priest who sings mass  
Motivated by his greed  
And selfishness —  
Unless he gives alms,  
125 Into eternal sorrow  
He'll bring his soul.
- These knights are so powerful  
Whenever they've killed  
Their Christian fellows,  
130 But ancient Satan  
Will take hold of the soul  
And make it feeble.
- These orators are very eloquent,  
Who wear red and green  
135 And judge all injustice;  
They will, but don't know it,  
Have torture in hell  
Where devils roar.
- These merchants, many in town,  
140 Are very extravagant;  
They don't care what they promise  
So long as they make a profit.  
For this, unyielding Satan  
Will injure the soul.
- fol. 176v  
146 Among all men on earth,  
The husbandman works hardest  
And profits most justly;  
If he can understand it  
And commits to tithing,  
150 He may come to heaven.

- Ah for al his sore swynke,  
 In helle he may adrynke  
                     If he steleth Cristes theothinge.  
 Sur hit schal him thinche  
 155 Deop in helle stunche  
                     His saule he may bringe.
- Theos prude levedies  
 That luyeth drywories  
                     And breketh spusyng —  
 160 For heore lecherye,  
 Nulleth here sermony  
                     Of none gode thinge.
- Heo draweth heore wede  
 Mid seolkene threde,  
 165                    Ilaced and ibunde;  
 Ah he that beoth nu leathe.  
 Remen heo schule and grede  
                     Deope in helle-grunde.
- Munekes and nunnen  
 That heom wyte ne kunnen  
                     From sucche lecherye —  
 Heo schule to helle cume;  
 Alle heore clothes buve  
                     Ne schule heom warantye.
- 175 Sothliche, betere heom were  
 That heo ibore nere  
                     Thenne thider schulen wende.  
 Soth is that ich eu lere:  
 Hwoso enes cumeth there,  
 180                    He wrth ther buten ende.
- Ah we weneth lyvie  
 And longe sunegie,  
                     And eft, at thon ende,  
 Alle ure sunnen endye,  
 185 Biwepen and bireusy,  
                     And so to heaven wende.
- Ah ne beo nouht to thryste  
 Ne therto nouht ne truste,  
                     Theruppon ich eu lere,

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

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- But despite his hard work,  
He may drown in hell  
    If he steals Christ's tithing.  
It'll seem bitter to him  
155 When deep in hell's stench  
    He's brought his soul.
- These proud ladies  
Who love illicit affairs  
    And break marriage vows —  
160 Because of their lechery,  
They won't listen to sermons  
    About anything good.
- They sew their clothes  
With silken threads,  
165      Laced and bound;  
But now they're hideous.  
They'll call out and cry  
    Deep in hell-pit.
- Monks and nuns  
170 Failing to guard themselves  
    From such lechery —  
They'll come to hell;  
All their garments above  
    Won't protect them.
- 175 Truly, it'd be better for them  
Never to have been born  
    Than to go there.  
What I teach you is true:  
Whoever comes there once,  
180      He'll dwell there forever.
- But we expect to live  
And sin a long while,  
    And later, at the end,  
185 To cease all our sinning,  
Weep and repent,  
    And so go to heaven.
- But don't be too confident  
Nor trust in that at all,  
    As I teach you about it,

- 190 For nes non that wiste,  
Bute himseolve Criste,  
Hwenne his ende-day were.
- fol. 177r Sothliche, hwenne we beoth dede,  
Everych schal vo the mede  
195 After his ernynge;  
Bute we us birede,  
The gost hit schal ivrede  
And fareth to pynynge.
- 200 Hwenne bali me byndeth  
On here me hyne biwindeth,  
And bryngeth hine on eorthe,  
The wurmes hine ifyndeth;  
To axe heo hyne gryndeth —  
Tharto we schule iwurthe.
- 205 He lyth and roteth lowe,  
Naveth he that beo his owe,  
Of ayhte ne of londe.  
Ne naveth he mey ne mowe  
That durre one throwe  
210 Bi hym sitte ne stonde.
- Sothliche, nakede and bare,  
With wope and with kare,  
We come to thisse lyve;  
Al so we schule fare,  
215 And al ure prude thare  
Vorleten and bileven.
- Herof we owe thenche,  
And ure sunnen aquenche  
Mid beden and myd almesse,  
220 And cunnen atblenche  
From Sathanases wrenche  
And from his swikelnesse.
- 225 Thah we beon falle in sunne,  
Ne ligge we noht therinnne,  
Ah ute we up aryse  
And schenden ure Wytherwine  
That thencheth us to bigynne —  
Thenne doth we as the wise.

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

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- 190            For no one knows,  
                Except Christ himself,  
                        When his death-day is.
- fol. 177r      Truly, when we're dead,  
195            Each will receive a reward  
                        According to his merit;  
                Unless we take counsel,  
                The soul will suffer it  
                        And travel to pain.
- 200            When men bind the body  
                And shroud it in a haircloth,  
                        And give it to the earth,  
                The worms find it;  
                To ashes they grind it —  
                        Thus will we become.
- 205            He lies and rots below,  
                And has nothing of his own,  
                        No property or land.  
                He has no kinsman or kinswoman  
                Who dares for a second  
210                       Sit or stand by him.
- Truly, naked and bare,  
                With weeping and with care,  
                        We come into this life;  
                Just so shall we go forth,  
215            With all our pride there  
                        Forsaken and left behind.
- Here we must reflect,  
                And subdue our sins  
                        With prayer and alms,  
220            And learn how to escape  
                From Satan's guile  
                        And from his deceit.
- Though we be fallen in sin,  
                We mustn't lie therein,  
225                       But instead rise out of it  
                And thwart our Adversary  
                Who plots to ensnare us —  
                        Then do we act wisely.

- 230 Ute we leten us schryve  
 And thene Veond ut of us dryve.  
                     Ne tharf us noht schomye —  
 Ne beoth noht on thisse lyve  
 Wymmen ne wapmen fyve  
                     That ofte ne sunegie.
- 235 Ah thes modie gume  
 And theos levedies, at the frume,  
                     Heo dyhteth heom unwreste;  
 And theos gedelynges summe,  
 Hwenne heo to schrifte come,  
 240 Heo beoth schomevaste.
- fol. 177v Nule heo the sothe telle  
 245 Thah me scholde heom aquelle,  
                     Ne unwreo heore misdede;  
 Forthi, heo schule in helle  
 Ever schrinke and swelle  
                     And fo ther luthre mede.
- Hwo nule hyne her rede  
 And unwreo his misdede  
                     To the preoste one,  
 250 He schal eft lude grede —  
 The quike and ek the dede,  
                     Iheren hi schulen uychone.
- Thenne schal him schome sore;  
 The schome him thyncheth more  
 255 Than muchel of his pyne.  
 Bute he do bi preostes lore  
 And yeorne bidde Godes ore,  
                     Ne schal him no god attryne.
- 260 At the Munte of Olyvete  
 We schulle us eft alle ymete,  
                     The gode and the unwreste;  
 The day wurth mylde and swete,  
 And bytter heom that lete  
                     To donne Godes heste.
- 265 Ther cumeth God myd his rode,  
 His honde and his syde al ablode,  
                     And scheweth hu he us bouhte.

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

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- 230            Let us make confession  
              And then drive the Fiend from us.  
                          We needn't be ashamed —  
              In this life there aren't  
              Even five women or men  
                          Who don't commit sin often.
- 235            But these proud men  
              And these ladies, above all,  
                          They're poorly prepared;  
              And some of these rascals,  
              When they come to shrift,
- 240                            They're ashamed.
- They won't tell the truth  
              Even if threatened to die,  
                          Nor expose their misdeeds;  
fol. 177v        For that, they'll go to hell  
245            Forever to cramp and swell  
                          And take painful rewards there.
- Whoever won't take counsel  
              And expose his misdeeds  
                          Alone to the priest,  
250            He'll later cry out loudly —  
              The quick and even the dead,  
                          They shall all hear.
- He'll then be utterly ashamed;  
              He'll think more about the shame  
255                            Than about his pain.  
              Unless he follows the priest's counsel  
              And eagerly prays for God's mercy,  
                          No good will come to him.
- 260            At the Mount of Olives  
              We shall all meet again,  
                          The good and the wicked;  
              The day will be mild and sweet,  
              And bitter for those who fail  
                          To do God's command.
- 265            God will come there with his cross,  
              His hands and side all bloody,  
                          Showing how he bought us.

- 270 Offerd thenne beoth the gode,  
And wo is thenne the overmode,  
That er tharof ne rouhte.
- 275 “Loke,” seyde God nuthe,  
“Hwat ich for ou outhē,  
And hwat ich gon tholye.  
Lutel thonk ye me cuthe —  
Mid heorte ne myd muthe  
Nolde ye me thonkie.”
- 280 He seyde thenne to his gode,  
A spek myd milde mode:  
“Mine god, ye me fedde  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 285 And schrudden and wel bihedden,  
And leyden in softe bedde  
Tho ic among eu eode.  
Forthi, ich eu wulle aredde  
From Sathanas the unledde,  
For her ye habbeth neode.”
- 290 The gode seyth thenne:  
“Louerd, hwer and hwenne  
Dude we the god dede?”  
“Tho ye yeve thene pouere monne,  
Tho he help nedde nenne  
Bute as he for me bed.”
- 295 fol. 178r He seyth thenne to the wrecchen:  
“Ye nolden of me recchen  
For hunger ich swal tharute;  
Ye nolden me in vacchen —  
Ye weren euseolve wrecchen,  
300 So modi and so prute.”
- 305 He gredeth thanne heye,  
The wrecches and the unsleye  
That luvede the unredes:  
“Louerd, myd ure eye  
Never we the ne yseyen  
Hwenne thu neode heddest.”



- He seyth thenne: "Myne  
 Poure, unhole hyne  
                     To eure dure come;  
 310       For chele hy gunne hwyne;  
                     For hunger hi hedde pyne;  
                     Ye nolden nyme gome."
- "Therof ye nolde hede  
 Ne yeven of eure brede,  
 315       Of drenche ne of clothe.  
                     To day ye schuleth yfrede  
                     And underfo luthre mede,  
                     For ye me beoth ful lothe."
- "Myne gode," he sayth myd iwisse,  
 320       "Today ye schulle myd blysse  
                     To heveryche wende.  
                     And ye to thesternesse  
                     And to eche sorynesse,  
                     And ther beo buten ende."
- He yeorreth and heo gredeth;  
 The feondes heom forth ledeth —  
                     Bothe lychom and saule —  
 And beteth heom and schredeth,  
 And luthre heom biledeth  
 330       Mid pykes and myd eaule.
- The saule seyth to the lychome:  
 "Acursed wurthe thi nome,  
                     Thin heaued, and thin heorte!  
 Thu us havest iwroht thes schome!  
 335       And alle thene eche grome  
                     Us schal ever smerte!"
- The gode, the milde, and the clene —  
 Thah heo iseon alle ymene  
                     Al that kun that we of come —  
 340       Nulleth heo never ene  
                     Byreusy ne bimene  
                     Ne tharto nyme gome.
- Ah wolde we us wel dihte  
 And leden ure lyf myd rihte  
 fol. 178v       The hwiles we beoth here,  
 345

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

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- He will say then: "My  
Poor, infirm servants  
                  Came to your door;  
310 They moaned for the cold;  
They felt pain for hunger;  
                  You didn't care."
- "You didn't attend to them  
Or give of your bread,  
315                   Nor of drink or clothes.  
Today you'll take note  
And receive evil reward,  
                  For you're hateful to me."
- "My good ones," he'll say indeed,  
320 "Today you'll joyfully  
                  Go to heaven.  
And you to darkness  
And eternal sorrow,  
                  And be there forever."
- 325 They will yell and cry out;  
The fiends will lead them forth —  
                  Both body and soul —  
And beat them and shred them,  
And torture them foully  
330                   With spikes and with awls.
- The soul will say to the body:  
"Cursed be your name,  
                  Your head, and your heart!  
You've caused us this shame!  
335 And all this eternal torture  
                  Will make us hurt forever!"
- The good, the gentle, and the pure —  
Although they see all together  
                  All the kind we come from —  
340 They'll never at all  
Feel sorry or have pity  
                  Nor have any care there.
- If we prepare ourselves well  
And lead our lives righteously  
fol. 178v 345                   While we're here,

Ich hit eu segge and plyhte,  
A Domesday we myhte  
    Beon engles ivere.

350

Bidde we ure Dryhte  
That day scop and nyhte,  
    That do ure saule bote,  
That we, in hevene lyhte  
Among than englen bryhte,  
    Wunyen and beo mote. Amen.

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

---

I say it to you and affirm,  
On Doomsday we may  
    Be together with angels.

350      Let us pray to our Lord  
Who created day and night,  
        To remedy our souls,  
So that we may, in heaven's light  
Among the bright angels,  
        Dwell and be joined. Amen.



## 5. THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

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fol. 178v

*Incipit de muliere Samaritana.*

Tho Jhesu Crist an eorthe was, mylde weren his dede;  
Alle heo beoth on Boke iwryten, that me may heom rede.  
Tho he to monne wes iboren of thare swete Marie  
And wes to ful elde icumen, he venk to prechie,  
5 A lutel tefor the tyme that he wolde deth tholye.  
He neyleyhte to one bureh that hatte Samarie.

5

Al so he thiderward, sumthing neyhleyhte.  
He sende his apostles byvoren, and het heom and tauhte  
Heore in and heore bilevyngre, greythi that heo schulde.  
10 Heo duden heore Louerdes hestes ase theines heolde.  
Al so heo weren agon the apostles everuychone,  
Jesus at ore walle reste himseolf alone.

10

Ase he ther reste, ase weri wei were,  
Thar com gon o wymmon alone buten ivere.  
15 Ase heo wes er iwuned, heo com myd hire stene,  
And Jhesu to thare wymmon bigon his thurst to mene.  
“Yef me drynke, wymmon,” he seyde myd mylde muthe.  
Theo wymmon him onswerede al so to mon unkuhte:  
“Hwat artu that drynke me byst? Thu thinchest of Judelonde?  
20 Ne mostu drynke underfo none of myne honde.”

15

20

Tho seyde Jhesu Crist: “Wymmon, if thou understode  
Hwo hit is that drynke byd, thou woldest beon of other mode —  
Thou woldest bidde that he the yeve drynke that ilast evere;  
fol. 179r The that ene drynketh therof ne schal him thurst nevere.”

fol. 179r

“Louerd,” tho seyde the wymmon, “yef me tharof to drynke  
25 That ich ne thurve more to thisse welle swynke.”  
Heo nuste hwat heo mende; heo wes of wytte poure.  
Heo nuste noht that heo spek of than Holy Gostes froure.

25

“Sete adun,” queth Jhesu Crist, “wymmon, thine stene.  
30 Go and clepe thine were and cumeth hider ymene.”

30



## 5. THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

---

fol. 178v

*Here begins the woman of Samaria.*

When Jesus Christ was on earth, his acts were merciful;  
They're all recorded in the Bible, where men may read them.  
When he was born to mankind from blessed Mary  
And grown to adulthood, he began to preach,  
5 A little before the time that he'd suffer death.  
He approached a town that was called Samaria.

As he went toward it, something approached.  
He sent his apostles ahead, and bid and directed them  
To their inn and lodging, that they should arrange it.  
10 They performed their Lord's bidding as loyal disciples.  
As soon as were gone all of the apostles,  
Jesus beside a well rested alone by himself.

As he rested there, for the way was tiring,  
There came a woman alone without companions.  
15 As was her usual manner, she came with her earthen pot,  
And Jesus to the woman began to mention his thirst.  
"Grant me drink, woman," he said gently.  
The woman answered him as if to a stranger:  
20 "Who are you who asks drink of me? Are you from Judea?  
You shouldn't receive drink at all from my hand."

Then Jesus Christ said: "Woman, if you understood  
Who is requesting that drink, you'd change your mind —  
You'd ask that he give you the drink that lasts forever;  
fol. 179r Anyone who drinks it will never be thirsty."

25 "Lord," said the woman then, "give me that drink  
So that I needn't anymore work at this well."  
She didn't know what he meant; she was poor of wit.  
She didn't know that he spoke of the Holy Ghost's comfort.

30 "Set down," said Jesus Christ, "woman, your earthen pot.  
Go and call your husband and come here together."

“I nabbe,” heo seyde, “nenne were. Ich am myseolf alone.  
Nabbe ich of wepmonne nones kunnes ymone.”

35 “Wel thu seyst,” quath Jhesu Crist, “were that thu navest nenne.  
Fyve thu havest ar thisse iheued, and yet thu havest enne,  
And the that thu nuthe havest, and hevedest summe throwe —  
He is another wyves were, more than thin owe.”

40 “Louerd,” heo seyde, “hwat art thu? Ich wot, myd iwisse,  
That thu me havest soth iseyd of alle wordes thisse.  
Thi of one thing sey me iredynesse,  
Bitwene this twam volke, me thuncheth a wundernesse?”

45 For alle theo men that wunyeth in Samaryes tune,  
Alle heo biddeth heom to Gode anuppe thisse dune;  
And alle thilke that beoth withinne Jherusalem,  
Nohwere bute in the temple ne weneth God iqueme.”  
50 “Ilef me, wymmon,” quath Jhesu Crist, “and tharof beo understonde:  
That schal cume the ilke day and nu he is neyh honde.  
That ne beo never the mon in so feorre londe,  
If he myd swete thouhtes bith that he ne bith understonde —  
Thah he nouthen ne beo anuppe thisse dune  
Ne in the heye temple of Jerusalemes tune —

Ye nuten hwat ye biddeth that of Gode nabbeth imone,  
For al eure bileve is on stokke other on stone.  
Ac theo that God iknoweth heo wyten, myd iwisse,  
That hele is icume to monne of folke Judaysse.”

55 “Louerd,” heo seyde, “nu quiddeth men that cumen is Messyas.  
The King that wurth, and nuthen is and ever yete was —  
fol. 179v Hwenne he cumeth, he wyle us alle ryhtleche,  
For he nule ne he ne con nenne mon bipeche.”

60 “Ich hit am,” quath Jhesu Crist, “that with the holde speche;  
That Messyas am icleped, and am thes worldes leche.”  
Mid thon comen from the bureh the apostles everuychone,  
And wundrede that Jhesu wolde speke with thare wymmon one.

65 Ah theyh heom thuhte wonder no thing heo ne seyde.  
Ac the wymmon anon hire stene adun leyde,  
And orn to thare bureh anon, and dude heom to understonde  
Of one mihtye wihte that cumen is to londe —

“I don’t have,” she said, “any husband. I’m all by myself.  
I don’t have with a man any contact at all.”

35 “You say truly,” said Jesus Christ, “that you have no husband.  
“Five you’ve had before now, and presently you have one,  
And he whom you now have, you’ve had for some time —  
He is another woman’s husband, more than your own.”

40 “Lord,” she said, “who are you? I know, with certainty,  
That you’ve told the truth about me in all these words.  
About one thing will you give me an explanation,  
Between two peoples, which seems curious to me?

All men who live in the city of Samaria,  
They all pray to God upon this mountain;  
And all those who are in Jerusalem,  
Only in the temple think it pleasing to God.”

45 “Believe me, woman,” said Jesus Christ, “and learn from this:  
That very day will come and now it’s near at hand.  
Whatever faraway land a man might be in,  
If he sincerely prays for what he doesn’t understand —  
Whether he be on this mountain  
50 Or in the high temple of Jerusalem city —

You don’t know what you pray for unless you’re joined with God,  
For all your belief is in sticks or in stones.  
But those who know God recognize, with certainty,  
That salvation comes to mankind from the Jewish people.”

55 “Lord,” she said, “now men say that the Messiah has come.  
The King that shall be, and now is and ever yet was —  
fol. 179v When he comes, he will rectify us all,  
For he will not and cannot deceive anyone.”

60 “I am he,” said Jesus Christ, “who speaks with you;  
I am called the Messiah, and am the world’s physician.”  
Then from the town came all the apostles,  
Who marveled that Jesus would speak with the woman alone.

65 But marvelous to them was no thing that he said to her.  
Yet the woman quickly put down her earthen pot,  
And quickly ran to town, and made them understand  
That a powerful man has arrived on earth —

- To alle that heo myhte,   iseon other ymete,  
Heo gradde and seyde:   “Ich habbe iseye thane sothe prophete!  
Ich wene wel that hit beo Crist   of hwam the prophete sayde.”  
70   Thurh Jhesu Cristes milce   and thureh his wyssynge,  
Monye ther bylevede   on the heye Kinge,  
And urnen ut of the bureuh   myd wel muchel thrynge,  
And comen to Jhesu thar he set,   and beden his blessynge.
- Tho bylevede that folk   mucheles the more  
75   For his mylde speche   and for his mylde lore,  
And thus was thes bureuh ared   ut of helle sore,  
And bylevede on Almihty God   nuthe and evermore.

## 5. THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

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To all whom she might, seen or met,  
She cried out and said: "I've seen the true prophet!  
I know well that it is Christ of whom the prophet spoke."  
70 By Jesus Christ's mercy and by his teaching,  
Many there believed in the high King,  
And ran out of the town in a great throng,  
And came to Jesus where he sat, and sought his blessing.

Then those people believed the more deeply  
75 Because of his merciful speech and his merciful teaching,  
And thus was this town delivered out of painful hell,  
And believed in Almighty God now and forever.



## 6. WEAL

---

fol. 179v

Weole, thu art a waried thing;    unevene constu dele.  
Thu yevest a wrecche weole ynouh,    noht thurh his hele.  
Wyth freomen thu art ferly feid    with sauhte, and make heom sele.  
The poure i londe naveth no lot    with riche for to mele.



## 6. WEAL

---

fol. 179v

Wealth, you're a cursed thing; unjustly do you deal.  
You give a wretch wealth enough, but nothing for his well-being.  
With gentlemen you're curiously joined in peace, and give them joy.  
The poor of the land get no portion by which to mingle with the rich.



## 7. DEATH'S WITHER-CLENCH

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- fol. 179v      Mon may longe lyves wene,  
Ac ofte him lyeth the wrench;  
Feyr weder turneth ofte into reyne  
And wunderliche maketh his blench.  
5      Tharvore, mon, thu the bythench  
Al schal falwy thi grene.  
Waylaway! Nys king ne quene  
That ne schal drynke of Dethes drench.  
10      Mon, er thu falle of thi bench,  
Thyne sunne thu aquench.
- Nis non so strong, ne sterk, ne kene  
That may ago Dethes wyther-blech —  
fol. 180r      Yung and olde, briht and schene,  
Alle he ryveth on o streng.  
15      Fox and ferlych is his wrench —  
Ne may no mon thar-toyeynes.  
Waylaway! Threting ne bene,  
Mede, liste, ne leches drench.  
20      Mon, let sunne and lustes thine.  
Wel thu do and wel thu thench!
- Do bi Salomones rede,  
Mon, and thenne thu schalt wel do.  
Do as he the tauhte and seyde  
That thin endinge the bringeth to.  
25      Thenne ne schaltu never mysdo,  
Ac sore thu myht the adrede.  
Waylaway! Such weneth to lede  
Long lif and blysse underfo,  
Ac Deth luteth in his scho  
30      Hym stilliche to fordo.
- Mon, hwi nultu the biknowe?  
Mon, hwi nultu the biseo?  
Of fule fulthe thu art isowe;  
Wurmes fode thu schalt beo.



## 7. DEATH'S WITHER-CLENCH

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- fol. 179v      Man may plan to have a long life,  
But often the reverse happens;  
Fair weather often turns to rain  
And suddenly changes its course.
- 5                Therefore, man, consider how  
All your green will wither.  
Wailaway! There's no king or queen  
Who won't drink of Death's potion.  
Man, before you fall off your bench,  
10                Quench your sinfulness.
- There's none so strong, hardy, or lively  
That he may avoid Death's counterblow —
- fol. 180r      Young and old, handsome and fair,  
All of them he strikes violently.
- 15                His trick is cunning and terrifying —  
No one may strive against it.  
Wailaway! Threats are worthless,  
As are bribes, schemes, and potions.  
Man, abandon sin and your bad desires.
- 20                You must do well and think well!
- Do according to Solomon's advice,  
Man, and then will you do well.  
Do as he taught you and explained  
What your ending brings you to.
- 25                Then will you never misdo,  
But sorely afraid might you be.  
Wailaway! Whoever plans to lead  
A long life and receive bliss,  
Still Death lurks in his shoe
- 30                To quietly undo him.
- Man, why won't you remember?  
Man, why won't you see yourself?  
You are sown with foul filth;  
You'll become the food of worms.

- 35 Her navestu blisse dayes thre,  
Ac thi lif al thu last in wowe.  
Weylawey! Deth the schal adun throwe  
Ther thu wenest heyust to steo.  
In deth schal thi lyf endi,
- 40 And in wop al thi gleo.
- World and Weole the biswiketh —  
Iwis, heo beoth thine ifo.  
If the World with Weole the slyketh,  
That is for to do the wo;
- 45 Tharefore let lust overgo,  
And eft hit the liketh.
- fol. 180v Weylawey! Sore he him biswiketh  
That, for one stunde other two,  
Wurcheth him pyne evermo.
- 50 Mon, ne do thu nouht swo!

## 7. DEATH'S WITHER-CLENCH

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35            Here you don't have three days' bliss,  
              But you'll suffer your whole life in woe.  
              Wailaway! Death will toss you down  
              Just where you think to climb the highest.  
40            In death will you end your life,  
              And all your joy in weeping.

              World and Wealth deceive you —  
              Indeed, they are your foes.  
              If the World tricks you with Wealth,  
              That's done so as to bring you woe;  
45            Therefore let bad desires pass by,  
              And later on you'll be pleased.

fol. 180v    Wailaway! Sorely is he deceived  
              Who, because of a moment or two,  
              Falls into pain forevermore.  
50            Man, don't you ever do so!



## 8. AN ORISON TO OUR LADY

---

- fol. 180v      On hire is al my lif ilong  
Of hwam ich wille synge  
And heryen hire ther-among.  
Heo gon us bote brynge  
5      Of helle pyne that is strong —  
Heo brouhte us blysse that is long  
Al thureh hire childthinge.  
Ich bidde hire on my song:  
Heo yeve us god endyng  
10      Thauh we don wrong.
- Thu eart hele, and lyf, and liht,  
And helpst al monkunne.  
                  Thu us havest ful wel idiht.  
                  Thu yeve us weole and wunne.  
15      Thu brouhdest day, and Eve nyht —  
He brouhte wo, thu brouhdest ryht;  
                  Thu almesse, and heo sunne.  
                  Bisyh to me, Levedi bryht,  
                  Hwenne ich schal wende heonne —  
20      So wel thu myht.
- Al thes world schal ago  
                  With seorhe and with sore;  
                  And al this lyf we schulleth forgo,  
                  Ne ofthinche hit us so sore.  
25      This world nys bute ure ifo.  
                  Tharfore ich thenche hire atgo,  
                  And do bi Godes lore.  
                  This lyves blysse nys wurth a slo.  
                  Ich bidde God thin ore,  
30      Nu and evermo.
- [fol. 246v]      To longe ich habbe soth ibeo.  
                  Wel sore ich me adrede.  
                  Iluded ich habbe gomen and gleo,  
                  And prude and feire wede —



## 8. AN ORISON TO OUR LADY

---

- fol. 180v      All my life depends on her  
Of whom I'll sing  
And praise in this way.  
She brought us a remedy
- 5                For hell-pain that's strong —  
She brought us lasting bliss  
All by her childbearing.  
I pray to her in my song:  
May she give us a good end
- 10              Even if we've done wrong.
- You are health, life, and light,  
And help all mankind.  
You've made us well prepared.  
You give us happiness and joy.
- 15              You brought day, and Eve night —  
She brought woe, you brought right;  
You relief, and she sin.  
Look after me, bright Lady,  
When I depart from here —
- 20              As well as you might.
- All this world will pass away  
With sorrow and with grief;  
And we must forfeit all this life,  
And not regret it too sorely.
- 25              This world's nothing but our foe.  
Therefore I plan to let it go,  
And act according to God's lore.  
This life's joy's not worth a plum.  
I pray God for your mercy,
- 30              Now and forevermore.
- [fol. 246v]    Too long I've been a fool.  
I'm very much afraid.  
I've loved play and fun,  
And pride and fine clothes —

- 35            Al that is dweole, wel i seo.  
              Tharfore ich thenche sunne fleo  
              And alle mine sot dede.  
              Ich bidde hire to me biseo,  
              And helpe me and rede,  
40            That is so freo.
- Agult ich habbe, weilawei!  
              Sunful, ich am an wrecche.  
              Awrec the nu on me, Levedi,  
              Er Deth me honne fecche;  
45            Do nim the wreche — ich am redi!  
              Other let me liven and amendi  
              That no feond me ne drecche.  
              For mine sunnes, ich am sori.  
              Of this world ich ne recche.  
50            Levedi, merci! Amen.

## 8. AN ORISON TO OUR LADY

---

35            That's a delusion, I clearly see.  
              Therefore I plan to flee from sin  
              And all of my foolish deeds.  
              I pray that she look after me,  
              And help and advise me,  
40            Who is so gracious.

              I've done wrong, wailaway!  
              Filled with sin, I'm a wretch.  
              Avenge yourself now on me, Lady,  
              Before Death fetches me from here;  
45            Take your vengeance — I am ready!  
              Or let me live and repent  
              So that no fiend may trouble me.  
              For my sins, I am sorry.  
              About this world I don't care.  
50            Lady, have mercy! Amen.



## 9. WILL AND WIT

---

[fol. 246v]

Hwenne-so Wil Wit oferstieth,    thenne is Wil and Wit forlore;  
Hwenne-so Wil his hete hieth,    ther nis nowiht Wit icore.  
Ofte Wil to seorhe sieth    bute yif Wit him wite tofore,  
Ac hwenne-so Wil to wene wrieth,    the ofo of Wisdom is totore.



## 9. WILL AND WIT

---

[fol. 246v]

Whenever Will overcomes Wit, then are Will and Wit lost;  
Whenever Will pursues his ardor, then there's no Wit chosen at all.  
Often Will comes upon sorrow unless Wit warns him beforehand,  
But whenever Will turns to speculation, Wisdom's cap is torn to pieces.



## 10. THE ANNUNCIATION

---

fol. 181r

.....  
"Of thine swete wordes, ich am swithe gled.  
Ich am Godes wenche; ful wel ich habbe isped.  
Al his wille beo ifuld, as thu iseyd."

5

Bidde we thilke Louerd, wende hwer we wende,  
That to the swete mayde Gabriel gon sende,  
That for his swete moder lue, that feyr is and hende,  
Bringe us to the blisse that lesteth buten ende. Amen.



## 10. THE ANNUNCIATION

---

fol. 181r

.....  
“Of your gracious words, I am very glad.  
I am God’s handmaid; I have fared very well.  
May all his will be fulfilled, just as you’ve said.”

5

Let us pray to this Lord, going where we go,  
Who sent Gabriel to the blessed virgin,  
For love of his blessed mother, who’s fair and gentle,  
He may bring us to the bliss that lasts without end. Amen.



## 11. THE FIVE JOYS OF OUR LADY SAINT MARY

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fol. 181r

*Her bigynneth the vif blyssen of ure Levedi Seynte Marie.*

Levedy, for thare blisse that thou heddest at the frume  
Thou thou wistest myd iwisse that Jhesu wolde beo thi Sune —  
The hwile we beoth on lyve thisse, sunnen to don is ure wune;  
Help us nu that we ne mysse of that lif that is to cume.

5

Moder, blithe were thou thou hwanne thou iseye heoven King,  
Of the ibore withute wo, that scop the and alle thing.  
Beo ure scheld from ure Ivo, and yef us thine blessing,  
And biwyte us evermo from alle kunnes suneging.

10

Levedi, al myd rihte thou were gled and blithe  
Thou Crist thureh his myhte aros from dethe to lyve,  
That alle thing con dihte, and wes iboren of wyve.  
He make us clene and bryhte for his wundes fyve.

15

From the Munt of Olyvete, thou thi Sone to heovene steyh,  
Thou hit byheolde myd eye swete, for he wes thin heorte neyh —  
Ther he haveth imaked thi sete in o stude that is ful heyh,  
Ther the schulen engles grete, for thou ert bothe hende and sleyh.

20

The King that wes of the ibore, to heovene he the vette,  
To thare blisse that wes forlore, and bi hymseolve sette,  
Vor he hedde the icore; wel veyre he the grette.  
Blythe were thou thervore thou engles the imette.

Moder of milce and mayde hende, ich the bidde as I con,  
Ne let thou noht the world us blende, that is ful of ure ivon,  
Ac help us at ure lyves ende, thou that bere God and mon,  
And us alle to heovene sende hwenne we schulle this lif forgon.

fol. 181v

26

Jhesu, for thire moder bene, that is so veyr and so bryht,  
Al so wis, so heo is quene of heovene and eorthe, and thet is ryht,  
Of ure sunnes make us clene, and yef us that eche lyht,  
And to heovene us alle imene, Louerd, thou bryng, for wel thou miht.



## 11. THE FIVE JOYS OF OUR LADY SAINT MARY

---

fol. 181r

*Here begin the five joys of our Lady Saint Mary.*

Lady, for the joy that you had in the beginning  
When you knew with certainty that Jesus would be your Son —  
In the time while we're in this life, doing sin is our habit;  
Help us now so that we not miss out on the life that is to come.

5

Mother, then you were joyful when you saw heaven's King,  
Born from you painlessly, who'd created you and all things.  
Be our shield against our Foe, and give us your blessing,  
And keep us forevermore from all types of sinning.

10

Lady, quite rightly were you glad and joyful  
When Christ by his might arose from death to life,  
Who can direct all things, and was born of woman.  
He makes us clean and bright by his five wounds.

15

From the Mount of Olives, when your Son rose to heaven,  
You beheld it sweetly with eye, for he was near your heart —  
Where he'd made your seat in a place that's very high,  
Where angels will greet you, for you're both gracious and wise.

20

The King born from you, to heaven he fetched you,  
To the joy that had been lost, and set you beside himself,  
For he had chosen you; courteously he greeted you.  
You were joyful therefore when angels welcomed you.

Mother of mercy and gentle virgin, I pray to you as I'm able,  
Don't allow the world to blind us, which is full of our foes,  
But help us at our lives' end, you who bore God and man,  
And send us all to heaven when we must forfeit this life.

fol. 181v

26

Jesus, for your mother's petition, who is so fair and bright,  
And wise, too, for she's queen of heaven and earth, and that's good,  
Make us clean of our sins, and give us that eternal light,  
And all together to heaven bring us, Lord, for well you might.



## 12. WHEN HOLY CHURCH IS UNDER FOOT

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fol. 181v

*Hwon Holy Chireche is under vote*

Hwile wes Seynte Peter icleped Symon.  
Tho queth ure Louerd him to, “Thu schalt hoten ‘Ston.’  
Ich wile myne Chireche sette the upon.”  
Theo that heo schulde biwite nu beoth hire ivon!  
5 Of alle hire forme freond, nu naveth heo non —  
Tharfore is hire wurthsype wel neyh al agon!

5

Tho her wes Symon, and nu is symonye,  
That muchel del haveth amerd of there clergie.  
Bidde we ure Louerd Crist that hire warantye,  
10 For his swete moder luvē Seynte Marie.

10

Soththe, wes Seynte Peter pope ine Rome,  
Ther is that heued — and auhte to beon — of the Cristendome.  
Clement and Gregorie, that him after come,  
Hi hedden teone and seorewe ofte and ilome,  
15 For hi heolden Cristes men myd sib and myd some,  
And eke Holi Chireche withuten theowedome.

15

Tho heo stod ful vaste and seoththe sume stunde.  
Nu me kasteth hire to myd markes and myd punde  
Of seolvre and of golde, to vellen heo to grunde.  
20 Nis nu non that wile, for hire, tholie deth ne wunde.

20

Soththe, Seynt Thomas tholede deth al myd unrihte;  
The Archebisscop Stephne for hire gon to fyhte;  
And Seynt Admund, soththe, ful veyre hire dihte.  
For holden hire wurschipe, hi duden al heore myhte.

25

Nu is Holy Chireche uvele under honde.  
Al hire weorreth that wuneth ine londe —  
Bispes and clerekes, knyhtes and bonde,  
Kynges and eorles to hire habbeth onde.

fol. 182r

And the seolve pope that heo biwyte scholde —  
30 Habbe he the yeftes of seolver and of golde,

30



## 12. WHEN HOLY CHURCH IS UNDER FOOT

---

fol. 181v

*When Holy Church is under foot*

Saint Peter was once called Simon.  
Our Lord said to him, "You shall be called 'Rock.'  
My Church I will establish upon you."  
Those who ought to protect her are now her foes!  
5 Of all her former friends, she now has none —  
Therefore her honor is well nigh all gone!

5

Simon was once here, and now there's simony,  
Which has damaged many of the clergy.  
We pray that our Lord Christ rescue her,  
10 For love of his blessed mother Saint Mary.

10

In truth, Saint Peter was pope in Rome,  
Where the head is — and ought to be — of Christendom.  
Clement and Gregory, who came after him,  
They had trouble and sorrow again and again,  
15 Because they kept Christians in peace and accord,  
And also Holy Church out of bondage.

15

Then she stood firm and afterwards for a time.  
Now they cast at her with marks and pounds  
Of silver and gold, to topple her to the ground.  
20 There's none now willing, for her, to suffer death or wound.

20

In truth, Saint Thomas suffered death quite unjustly;  
Archbishop Stephen went to battle for her;  
And Saint Edmund, in truth, defended her valiantly.  
To maintain her honor, they did all they could.

25

Now Holy Church is in evil hands.  
All war against her who inhabit the land —  
Bishops and clerks, knights and bondsmen,  
Kings and earls feel hatred toward her.  
And the very pope who ought to protect her —  
30 Should he gain gifts of silver and gold,

fol. 182r

30

Markes and pundes, myd rihte other myd wronge —  
Heo let heom alle iwurthe that beoth so swythe stronge.

35      Away, that heo bi ure daye so is under vote!  
Bidde we alle Jhesu Crist that hyre sende bote  
For his swete moder luve, that is so veyr and swote,  
That we in thisse lyve hit iseon mote. Amen.

## 12. WHEN HOLY CHURCH IS UNDER FOOT

---

Marks and pounds, by right or by wrong —  
He lets powerful men do as they please.

35 Alas, that in our time she is thus under foot!  
Let us all pray to Jesus Christ to send her help  
For love of his sweet mother, who's so fair and sweet,  
That we in this life may witness it. Amen.



### 13. DOOMSDAY

---

fol. 182r

*Incipit de die iudicii.*

Hwenne ich thenche of Domesday, ful sore ich may adrede.  
Ther schal, after his werk, uych mon fongen mede.  
Ich habbe Crist agult with thouhtes and wyth dede.  
Louerd Crist, Godes Sune, hwat is me to rede?

5

That fur schal cumen in this world on one Sone-nyhte  
Vorbernen al this middel-erd so Crist hit wolde dihte —  
Bothe in watre and in the londe — the flures that beoth brihte!  
Iherd beo thu, Louerd, so muchel beoth thine mihte!

10

The engles in the daye-rewe bloweth heore beme.  
Thenne cumeth Ure Louerd Crist his domes for to deme.  
Ne helpeth hit nouht thenne to wepen ne to remen —  
That haveth lutel idon that God were iqueme.

15

From that Adam wes ischapen to come Domesday,  
Monye of thisse riche that werede fough and grey,  
And ryden uppe stede and uppon palefrey,  
Heo schulleth at the Dome suggesten “weylawey.”

20

Ne schulleth heo nouthur vyhte myd schelde ne myd spere,  
Mid helme ne myd brunye, ne myd non other gere;  
Ne schal ther no mon other myd wise wordes were.  
Bute, heore almesdede heore erynde schal bere.

fol. 182v

Heo schulleth iseon the Lavedi that Jhesu Crist ofkende;  
Bitwene hire armes, sweteliche he wende.  
The hwile that we mihte, to lute we hire sende;  
That makede the Qued — so fule he us blende!

25

Heo schule iseon thene Kyng that al this world wrouhte  
And uppe on the rode myd stronge pyne abouhte.  
Adam and his ofsprung, in helle he heom souhte —  
To bidden his milce, to late we beoth bithouhte!



## 13. DOOMSDAY

---

fol. 182r

*Here begins the Day of Judgment.*

When I think of Doomsday, I'm utterly terrified.  
There will, for his actions, each man receive his due.  
I've sinned against Christ in thought and in deed.  
Lord Christ, God's Son, what should I do?

5

Fire will come into this world on a Saturday night  
To burn up this whole middle-earth as Christ orders it —  
Both on water and on land — the beautiful flowers!  
Praised be you, Lord, so great is your might!

10

The angels at dawn blow their trumpets.  
Then comes our Lord Christ to give his judgments.  
It then won't help at all to weep or cry out —  
For those who've done little pleasing to God.

15

From the creation of Adam to the advent of Doomsday,  
Many of these rich folk wearing variegated and gray fur,  
And riding on horse and on palfrey,  
They will at the Judgment say "wailaway."

20

They cannot fight either with shield or with spear,  
With helmet or with corselet, or with any other gear;  
Nor will anyone there be defended by wise words.  
Instead, their almsdeeds will bear their message.

fol. 182v

They will see the Lady who bore Jesus Christ;  
Between her arms, sweetly he went.  
During the time we might, we called her too seldom;  
That was caused by the Devil — so wickedly he blinds us!

25

They shall see the King who made this whole world  
And who on the cross paid with intense pain.  
Adam and his offspring, in hell he sought them —  
To pray for his mercy, we remember too late!

30            Ther stondesth the ryhtwise    on his riht honde.  
              And the sunfule,    so atelyche, stondesth  
              Mid heore sunnen iwryten,    that is so muchel schonde.  
              Ther hit schullen yseon alle    that er weren alonde.

              Wyth the rihtwise    he speketh wordes swete:  
35            “Cumeth her, myne freond,    eure sunnes for to lete,  
              In myne Fader bure,    on ys imaked sete.  
              Ther ou schulen engles    ful sweteliche grete.”

              Wyth the sunfule,    al so, we mawen yhere:  
              “Goth, awaryede gostes,    feondes yvere,  
40            Into bernynde fur;    of lisse ye beoth skere  
              For ye oure sunnen    of thisse worlde bere.”

              Bidde we ure Lavedy,    swettust alle thinge,  
              That heo ure erende bere    to than heovene Kinge.  
              For his holy nome    and for hire erendynge,  
              That he ure saule    to heveryche brynge.

### 13. DOOMSDAY

---

30           There stand the righteous   at his right hand.  
              And the sinful,   so terrified, stand  
              With their sins written,   causing such shame.  
              There all shall see it   who before were on earth.

              To the righteous   he speaks gracious words:  
35           “Come here, my friend,   your sins abandoned,  
              Into my Father’s bower,   upon his prepared throne.  
              There angels will   greet you very sweetly.”

              To the sinful,   as well, we may hear:  
              “Go, cursed souls,   along with fiends,  
40           Into burning fire;   you’re deprived of relief  
              Because you bear   your wordly sins.”

              Let us pray to our Lady,   sweetest of all things,  
              That she bear our message   to heaven’s King.  
              By his holy name   and her intercession,  
              May he bring our soul   to the kingdom of heaven.



## 14. DEATH

---

- fol. 182v      Ihereth of one thinge    that ye owen ofthenche —  
Ye that weryeth that riche schrud    and sytteth on eure benche —  
Thah me kneoly ou byvore    and myd wyn schenche,  
From the dreorye Deth    ne may no mon atblenche.
- 5                Ye that sytteth ischrud    myd skarlet and myd palle,  
Wel sothe tythinge    ich ou wile telle:  
The Feond thencheth, iwis,    the saule for to quelle,  
As we hit fyndeth iwryten    in the godspelle.
- 10              Ah of one thinge    we schulle nymen gome —  
That we weren poure    tho we hider come.  
fol. 183r      We hit ihereth iwis    swithe ofte and ilome;  
The saule and the lycome,    selde heo beoth isome.
- 15              Hwenne that chyld bith iboren    and on eorthe ifalle,  
Nolde ich yeven enne peny    for his weden alle.  
Ah seoththen mony mon    byyet bures and halle;  
Forthi, the wrecche saule    schal into pyne falle.
- 20              Thenche we on the laste day,    that we schulle heonne fare  
Ut of thisse worlde    with pyne and with kare,  
Al so we hider comen    naked and bare,  
And of ure sunnen    yeven onsware.
- 25              Nabbe no mon so muchel;    al hit wile agon —  
His lond and his ayhte,    his hus and his hom.  
The sorye saule    maketh hire mon;  
Iwis, ne may atblenche    ure never non.
- 30              Thenne the latemeste day    Deth haveth ibrouht,  
Binymeth ure speche,    ure syhte and thouht;  
And in uyche lyme    Deth us haveth thurehsouht.  
Thenne beoth ure blisse    al iturnd to nouht.
- 30              Ne myhte no tunge telle,    that ever wes ibore,  
The stronge pyne of helle,    thauh he hedde iswore,



## 14. DEATH

---

fol. 182v      Listen to a thing    you must remember —  
You wearing rich clothes    and sitting on your bench —  
Even if they kneel before you    and pour out wine,  
From dreadful Death    no one can escape.

5                You sitting dressed    in scarlet and fine cloth,  
A very true message    I will tell you:  
The Fiend plots, surely,    to kill the soul,  
As we find it written    in the gospel.

10              But there's one thing    we ought to heed —  
That we were poor    when we came here.  
fol. 183r      We hear about it    all the time;  
The soul and the body,    they're seldom in agreement.

15              When a child is born    and falls to earth,  
I'd not give a penny    for all his clothes.  
But later many a man    buys bowers and halls;  
For that, a wretched soul    will fall into pain.

20              We must think of the last day,    when we'll go from here  
Out of this world    with pain and with care,  
Just as we came here    naked and bare,  
And for our sins    render an account.

No one possesses much;    it'll all go away —  
His land and his property,    his house and his home.  
The sorrowful soul    utters its lament;  
Indeed, we can't escape    ever at all.

25              Then on the last day    Death will advance,  
Stealing our speech,    our sight and mind;  
And in every limb    Death will enter us.  
Then will our joy be    turned all to nothing.

30              No tongue may describe,    that ever was born,  
The strong pain of hell,    even if he'd sworn to,

Er the saule and thet body a-two beon todrore,  
Bute Crist that lesede his folk that ther wes forloren.

35 Anon so the saule bith ifaren ut,  
Me nymeth the lycome and preoneth in a clut —  
That wes so mody and so strong and so swythe prud,  
And wes iwuned to weryen mony a veyr schrud!

40 Nu lith the cley-clot al so the ston,  
And his freondes stryveth to gripen his iwon;  
The sorie saule maketh hyre mon:  
Of alle hire erore freond nu naveth heo non.

fol. 183v Thenne seyth the saule with sorie chere:  
“Away, thu wrecche fole baly! Nu thu lyst on bere!  
Ich schal habbe, for the, feondes to ivere.  
Away, that thu eure to monne ischape were!

45 Ne schaltu never sytten on bolstre ne on benche  
Ne never in none halle thar me wyn schenche;  
For thine fule sunnen and for thin unywrenche,  
Hy schal thi wrecche saule to atelyche stenche.

50 Hwer beoth alle thine freond, that fayre the bihehte,  
And feyre the igretten, bi weyes and bi strete?  
Nu heo wulleth, wrecche, alle the forlete;  
Nolden heo non herestonkes nu the imete.

55 Hwer beoth thine disches myd thine swete sonde?  
Hwer beoth thine nappes that the glyde to honde?  
Hwer is thi bred and thin ale, thi tunne and thi stonde?  
Nu thu schalt in the putte wunye myd the Wonde.

60 Ofte thu hevedest mihte to don al thine wille;  
Ever thu were abuten us bo vor to spille.  
Nu thu schalt, wrecche, liggen ful styllle,  
And ich schal thine gultes abuggen ful ille.

Hwi noldestu myd Criste maken us isauhte?  
Massen lete synge, of that he the bitauhte?  
Ever thu were abuten to echen thin ayhte.  
Forthi, we beoth, an ende, bothe bipauhte.

65 Selde wule me for the masse lete singe,  
Other in Holy Chireche don ey offringe;

## 14. DEATH

---

Before soul and body were drawn asunder,  
Until Christ redeemed his folk who there were lost.

35 As soon as the soul has departed,  
They take the corpse and sew it in a clout —  
Once so confident and strong and so very proud,  
And used to wearing many a fair garment!

40 Now the clay-clod lies just like a stone,  
And his friends strive to seize his possessions;  
The sorrowful soul utters his lament:  
Of all his former friends he doesn't have any.

fol. 183v Then the soul says in a sorrowful way:  
“Alas, you rotten foul belly! Now you lie upon bier!  
Thanks to you, I'll have fiends as companions.  
Alas, that you ever were shaped like a man!

45 Now you'll never sit on cushion or bench  
Or ever in any hall where they pour out wine;  
Because of your foul sins and your wickedness,  
Your lousy soul will hie to horrible stench.

50 Where are all your friends, who swore to you fairly,  
And greeted you fairly, on roads and on streets?  
Now they desire, wretch, all you've left behind;  
They'd not willingly want to meet now with you.

55 Where are your dishes amid your pleasant banquet?  
Where are your cups passed to you by hand?  
Where are your bread and ale, your barrel and your cask?  
Now you'll be in the pit dwelling with the Fiend.

60 You've often had power to do all your will;  
You were always intent to ruin us both.  
Now you will, wretch, lie very still,  
And for your sins I'll pay very sorely.

Why didn't you make us reconciled with Christ?  
Have masses sung, as he taught you?  
You were always intent on increasing your property.  
For that, we are, in the end, both deceived.

65 Seldom will they sing masses for you,  
Or in Holy Church give any offering;

- Me wule for thin ayhte, maken stryvynge,  
And pute the withuten of alle thine thinge.
- 70 Ly, awariede bodi, that never thu naryse!  
Hwenne ich thenche the upon, ful sore me may agryse.  
For ich schal bernen in fur and chyveren in yse,  
And ever beon in pynen a feole kunne wise.
- fol. 184r  
76 Nu schal thin halle myd spade beon iwrouht,  
And thu schalt therinne, wrecche, beon ibrouht;  
Nu schulle thine weden alle beon isouht;  
Me wule swopen thin hus, and ut myd the swofte!
- 80 Thi bur is sone ibuld that thu schalt wunyen inne;  
The rof and the virste schal ligge on thine chynne.  
Nu the schulle wurmes wunyen withinne;  
Ne may me heom ut dryven myd nones kunnes gynne.
- Nu is aferd of the mi mey and mi mowe;  
Alle heo wereth the weden that er weren thin owe,  
And thu schalt nu in eorthe liggen ful lowe.  
Way, hwi noldestu her of thisse beon iknowe?
- 85 Nu schal forrottyen thine teth and thi tunge,  
Thi mawe and thi milte, thi lyvre and thi lunge,  
And thi throtebolle that thu mide sunge.  
And thu schalt in the putte vaste beon ithrunge.
- 90 Hwer beoth thine theynes that the leove were?  
Of alle thine riche weden nu thu art al skere.  
Beo thu in the putte wrmes ifere;  
Hit bith sone of the al so thu never nere.
- 95 Al that ich hatede hit thuhte the ful god;  
That makede the qued that the bistod.  
Hevedestu thi wille, thu were al wod;  
And ich am wrecche saule ful sori-mod.
- 100 Nu thu schalt byleven, and ich mot fare nede.  
For alle thine gultes, fongen i schal mede —  
That is hunger and chele and furbernynde glede —  
And so me wule Sathanas ful atelyche brede!
- Ich am sori inouh, bi day and bi nyht,  
Ich schal to thestre stude ther never ne cumeth liht.

## 14. DEATH

---

To gain your property, they'll argue a claim,  
And dispossess you from all your things.

70 Lie, cursed body, who'll never rise up!  
When I think of you, I'm utterly terrified.  
For I'll burn in fire and shiver in ice,  
And always be in pain in very many ways.

fol. 184r  
76 Now will your hall be built with a spade,  
And therein will you, wretch, be brought;  
Now will your clothes be entirely sought after;  
They'll sweep your house, and out with the sweepings!

80 Quickly built is your bower that you will dwell in;  
The roof and the ceiling will lie on your chin.  
Now will worms dwell inside you;  
One can't get them out by any kind of trick.

Now your kinsman and kinswoman are afraid of you;  
They all wear the clothes that formerly were your own,  
And now in earth you'll lie very low.  
Alas, why wouldn't you here take heed of this?

85 Now entirely will rot your teeth and your tongue,  
Your stomach and your spleen, your liver and your lung,  
And your windpipe that you sing with.  
And you will into the pit be thoroughly flung.

90 Where are your servants who were dear to you?  
Now you're without all your rich clothes.  
You are in the pit together with worms;  
It'll soon be as if you never were.

95 All that I hated you considered good;  
That caused the harm that happened to you.  
Unless you had your will, you went berserk;  
And I'm a miserable soul all sorry in mood.

100 Now you'll remain, and I must needs go.  
For all your guilt, I'll receive the reward —  
Hunger and cold and fiery coals —  
And so will Satan very horribly roast me!

I am plenty sorry, by day and by night,  
That I'll go to the dark place where light never comes.

- Ther ich schal imete mony o ful wiht,  
 Ne schal ich never iseo Crist that is so bryht.
- 105 In a bytter bath ich schal bathe naked  
 Of pych and of brunston — wallynde is imaked!  
 fol. 184v Ther is Sathanas the Qued, redi wyth his rake,  
 And so me wile forswolewe, the furberrynde drake!
- 110 Thah al that fur in this world togedere were ibrouht  
 Ayeynes thare hete, nere hit al nouht!  
 Wo is hym alyve that therinne is ibrouht!  
 Away theos ilke pyne thu havest me bysouht.
- 115 Hwo iseye thene Qued hw lodlich heo beo —  
 Hornes on his heved, hornes on his kneo?  
 Nis no thing alyve that so atelich beo!  
 Wo is heom in helle that hine schulleth iseo!
- 120 He yoneth myd his muthe, and stareth myd his eye;  
 Of his neosturles cumeth the rede leye;  
 That fur springeth him ut of everuyche breye —  
 He moste deye for kare hwoso hine iseye!
- Al so beoth eyepettes as bruthen led;  
 That fur springeth him of wunderliche red.  
 Ne may no tunge telle hw lodlich is the Qued;  
 Hwoso lokede him on for kare he mihte beo ded!"
- 125 Holde we us clene ut of hordom;  
 Masses leten singe, and almesdede don,  
 And with Holy Chireche maken us isom.  
 Thenne muwe we quemen Crist at the Dom.
- 130 The Kyng that al this world scop thurh his holy mihte  
 Biwite ure saule from than Uvele Wihte,  
 And lete us hatye that wouh and luyve that ryhte,  
 And bringe ure saule to heoveriche lyhte. Amen.

## 14. DEATH

---

There I'll encounter many a foul creature,  
And I'll never see Christ who's so bright.

105 I will bathe naked in a bitter bath  
Of tar and brimstone — its boiling is prepared!  
fol. 184v There is Satan the Devil, ready with his jaws,  
And thus will he devour me, the fire-burning dragon!

110 Were all this world's fire to be brought together  
Beside this heat, it'd be like nothing!  
Woe to anyone living who's brought therein!  
To avoid this very pain you prayed for me.

115 Who tells of the Evil One how ghastly he is —  
Horns on his head, horns on his knees?  
There's nothing alive that's equally hideous!  
Woe to whoever will see him in hell!

120 He gapes with his mouth, and glares with his eyes;  
Out of his nostrils come red flames;  
Fire bursts out of him from every eyebrow —  
Whoever sees him must die for horror!

The eye-pits are like boiling lead;  
Fire bursts out of him fantastically red.  
No tongue may tell how loathly is the Evil One;  
Whoever looks at him may be dead for horror!"

125 Let us remain clear of whoring;  
Let us have masses sung, and perform almsdeeds,  
And with Holy Church make our peace.  
Then we may please Christ at the Judgment.

130 May the King who created all this world through his holy might  
Guard our soul from the Evil Creature,  
And cause us to hate that wrong and love that right,  
And bring our soul to heavenly light. Amen.



## 15. TEN ABUSES

---

fol. 184v      Hwan thu sixst on leode —  
King that is wilful,  
And domesmon nymynde,  
Preost that is wilde,  
5      Biscop slouh,  
Old mon lechur,  
Yong mon lyere,  
Wymmon schomeles,  
Child unthewed,  
10      Thral unbuhsun,  
Athelyng brytheling,  
Lond withuten lawe —  
Al so seyde Bede,  
“Wo there theode.”



## 15. TEN ABUSES

---

fol. 184v      When you behold people —  
King willful,  
Judge greedy,  
Priest wild,  
5      Bishop slothful,  
Old man lecher,  
Young man liar,  
Woman shameless,  
Child untaught,  
10      Servant disobedient,  
Nobleman scoundrel,  
Land without law —  
Just as Bede said,  
“Woe be the nation.”



## 16. A LITTLE SOOTH SERMON

---

- fol. 185r      Herkneth alle gode men,    and styлле sitteth adun,  
And ich ou wile tellen    a lutel soth sermun.  
Wel we wuten alle,    they ich ou nouht ne telle,  
Hw Adam ure vorme-fader    adun feol into helle.
- 5                Schomeliche he forles    the blisse that he hedde  
To yvernesse and prude —    none neode he nedde!  
He nom than appel of the treo    that him forbode was,  
So reuthful dede idon    never non nas!
- 10                He made him into helle falle,  
And, after him, his children alle.  
Ther he wes, fort ure Drihte  
Hyne bouhte myd his myhte.  
He hine alesede myd his blode  
That he schedde upon the rode.
- 15                To dethe he yef him for us alle  
Tho we weren so strong atfalle.
- Alle bakbytares,    heo wendeth to helle,  
Robbares and rewares    and the monquelle,  
Lechurs and horlyngs,    thider schulleth wende,
- 20                And ther heo schulle wunye    ever buten ende.
- Alle theos false chapmen,    the Feond heom wule habbe,  
Bakares and breowares,    for alle men heo gabbe.  
Lowe heo holdeth heore galun;    mid beorme heo hine fulleth,  
And ever of the purse    that seolver heo tulleth.
- 25                Bothe heo maketh feble    heore bred and heore ale —  
Habbe heo that seolver,    ne telleth heo never tale!  
Gode men, for Godes luve,    bileveth sucche sunne,  
For at then ende hit binymeth    heveriche wunne.
- 30                Alle preostes wives,    ich wot heo beoth forlore;  
Thes persones, ich wene,    ne beoth heo nouht forbore,  
Ne theos prude yonge men    that luvyeth Malekyn,  
fol. 185v      And theos prude maydenes    that luvyeth Janekyn.



## 16. A LITTLE SOOTH SERMON

---

- fol. 185r      Hearken all good men,    and sit down quietly,  
                  And I will tell you    a little true sermon.  
                  We all know well,    though I didn't tell you,  
                  How Adam our first father    fell down into hell.
- 5                Shamefully he forfeited    the bliss that he had  
                  To avarice and pride —    no need had he!  
                  He took the apple from the tree    forbidden to him,  
                  So pitiful a deed    was never done!
- 10                               He made him fall into hell,  
                  And, after him, all his children.  
                  There he was, until our Lord  
                  Bought them with his power.  
                  He freed them with his blood  
                  That he shed on the cross.
- 15                               He gave himself to death for us all  
                  When we were utterly fallen.
- 20                All backbiters,    they shall go to hell,  
                  Robbers and thieves    and the murderers,  
                  Lechers and whoremongers,    thither shall they go,  
                  And there they'll dwell    forever without end.
- All these false merchants,    the Fiend will have them,  
                  Bakers and brewers,    for they deceive all people.  
                  They measure their gallon low;    they fill it with froth,  
                  And always they wheedle    silver from the purse.
- 25                Both of them weaken    their bread and their ale —  
                  Once they have silver,    they don't care at all!  
                  Good men, for God's love,    abandon such sin,  
                  For in the end it forfeits    heavenly joy.
- 30                All priests' wives,    I know they'll be lost;  
                  These parsons, I think,    they'll not be spared,  
                  Nor these proud young men    who love Malkin,  
fol. 185v      And these proud maidens    who love Jankin.

At chireche and at chepyng, hwanne heo togadere come,  
Heo runeth togaderes and speketh of derne luve.  
35 Hwenne heo to chirche cumeth to thon holy daye,  
Everuych wile his leof iseo ther yef he may.

Heo biholdeth Watekin mid swithe gled eye;  
At hom is hire Paternoster, biloken in hire teye.  
40 Masses and matynes ne kepeth heo nouht,  
For Wilekyn and Watekyn beoth in hire thouht.

Robyn wule Gilothe leden to than ale,  
And sitten ther togederes and tellen heore tale.  
He may quyten hire ale and seoththe don that gome;  
An eve to go myd him no thincheth hire no schome.

45 Hire syre and hire dame threteth hire to bete;  
Nule heo furgo Robyn for al heore threte.  
Ever heo wule hire skere ne com hire no mon neyh,  
Forte that hire wombe up aryse an heyh.

50 Gode men, for Godes luve, bileveth oure sunne,  
For at thon ende hit binymeth heoveryche wunne.  
Bidde we Seynte Marie for hire milde mode,  
For the theres that heo weop for hire Sune blode.

Al so wis so he god is, for hire erendynge,  
To the blysse of heovene he us alle brynge. Amen.

## 16. A LITTLE SOOTH SERMON

---

35           At church and at market,   when they come together,  
              They whisper together   and speak of secret love.  
              When they come to church   on a holy day,  
              Each wants to see his sweetheart   there if he can.

40           She looks at Watkin   with a very flirty eye;  
              Her Paternoster is at home,   locked in her box.  
              She pays no attention   to masses and matins,  
              For Wilkin and Watkin   occupy her thoughts.

              Robin wishes to lead Giloth   to the alehouse,  
              And they sit together   and spin their tales.  
              He may pay for her ale   and later play that game;  
              To go with him at night   she thinks it no shame.

45           Her father and her mother   threaten to beat her;  
              She won't give up Robin   for all their threats.  
              Always will she claim   no man came near her,  
              Until it happens that her womb   rises up high.

50           Good men, for God's love,   abandon your sin,  
              For in the end it forfeits   heavenly joy.  
              Let us pray to Saint Mary   for her gracious manner,  
              For the tears she weeps   for her Son's blood.

              As wise as he is good,   through her intercession,  
              May he bring us all   to the bliss of heaven. Amen.



## 17. ANTIPHON OF SAINT THOMAS THE MARTYR IN ENGLISH

---

fol. 185v

*Incipit antiphona de sancto Thoma martyre in anglico.*

Haly Thomas of heoveriche,  
Alle apostles eveliche,  
The martyrs the understonde  
Godfullyche in heore honde.

5

Selcuth dude ure Dryhtin  
That he water wende to win.  
Thu ert help in Engelaunde,  
Ure stephne understonde.

10

Thu ert froure among monkunne —  
Help us nu of ure sunne. Euouae.



## 17. ANTIPHON OF SAINT THOMAS THE MARTYR IN ENGLISH

---

fol. 185v

*Here beings the antiphon of Saint Thomas the martyr in English.*

Holy Thomas of heaven's realm,  
Equal to all apostles,  
The martyrs welcome you  
Graciously into their hands.

5

Our Lord performed miracles  
When he turned water to wine.  
You're a help in England,  
Understanding our language.

10

You're a comfort among mankind —  
Help us now out of our sin. Euouae.



## 18. ON SERVING CHRIST

---

- fol. 185v      Hwi ne serve we Crist    and secheth his sauht  
Seoththe us wes at the font    fulluht bytaut?  
Ne beo we siker of the lif    onlepy nauht.
- fol. 186r  
5              Crist, kundeliche Kyng,    cuth thu thi mayht.  
Rihtwise Louerd    on rode wes rauht,  
And tholede dom vor his duthe,    that he wes ded strauht.  
Yef we habbeth werkes    yeynes thi wille wrauhht,  
Louerd, have merci of us,    that never ne faht.
- 10              Hwi ne beo we duhty men    and duten ure deden?  
Al we schullen asyen    and seo to the nede —  
Ther the crysme child for sunnes    sore schal drede —  
Iseon ure Louerd Crist,    that schal this world fede,  
Shown his wunden    so blodi tobleden,  
Nouht for his gultes,    bute for Adames deden,
- 15              Leste he schulde his duthe    from himseolve scheden.  
Leve we this for sayn    soth al so the Crede,  
As ich ihere bolde men    upe bok rede:  
“Ther ere feole to fordeme    in schynynde wede.”
- 20              Nis so wlonk under Crist    ridynde on stede,  
Ne theos crefty clerekes    that upe bok rede,  
For gold ne for seolver,    ne for glysynde wede,  
For al the weole and the wyn    that riche men fede,  
For seolk ne for cendal    ne for deore wedes,  
That ne schal at the Dome    beon demed of heore dedes.
- 25              Ther is the sunfulle    unsofte to beon;  
Hwer he not no wey    fyr for to fleon,  
And Adames eyres beoth    parted on thre,  
Ther is gronyng and grure    and gryslich gle.  
Biseche we the Louerd —    that weldeth the veo
- 30              As he, for monkunnes neodes,    don wes on the treo —  
And Seynte Marie the brude,    that bryht is and bleo,  
Leve that we moten at schrifte    ure sunnes unwreo.
- Hwi nule we thenchen    and beo tholemode  
For him that tholede for us    the wunden of blode?



## 18. ON SERVING CHRIST

---

- fol. 185v      Why don't we serve Christ    and seek his accord  
After we've been baptized    at the font?  
We're not secure at all    about our only life.
- fol. 186r  
5                Christ, lawful King,    you've shown your might.  
The righteous Lord    was stretched on the cross,  
Suffered punishment for his people,    stretched to death.  
If we've committed deeds    counter to your will,  
Have mercy on us, Lord,    who never resisted.
- 10                Why aren't we loyal men    and do your works?  
We shall all decline    and confront the need —  
The baptized child for sin    shall be sorely afraid —  
Upon seeing our Lord Christ,    who sustains this world,  
Display his wounds    all bloodily bleeding,  
Not for his own guilt,    but for Adam's deeds,
- 15                Lest his worthy people    be parted from him.  
Let's believe in this saying    as true as the Creed,  
As I hear good men    read from books:  
"There are many to condemn    in beautiful clothes."
- 20                Under Christ there's none so fine    riding a horse,  
Nor such clever clerks    reading from books,  
With gold or silver,    or glistening clothes,  
Or all the wealth and wine    that feeds rich men,  
Or silk or fine linen    or precious garments,  
Who at the Doom won't    be judged for their deeds.
- 25                There the sinful shall be    dealt with severely;  
They won't know which way    to flee the fire,  
And Adam's heirs shall be    divided into three groups,  
Where there's groaning and horror    and ghastly music.  
Pray we to the Lord —    who sets the fee
- 30                Because he, for mankind's need,    was put on the cross —  
And to Saint Mary the Lady,    who's bright and lovely,  
Allow us in confession    to expose our sins.
- Why won't we be mindful    and patient  
For him who suffered    bloody wounds for us?

- 35  
fol. 186v      Thayh we her hopen    ihosed and ischode,  
Heonne we schulle thrynge,    that er were so mode.  
Bileveth oure weorre,    warlawes wode!  
Al thes world is biheled    myd hethene-hode.  
Seynte Peter wes prynce    and pyned is on rode,
- 40  
For to volewen ure Fader    his wille that he stode,  
And we wyth sunnes geteth    saulene fode,  
Ye mowen iheren, fur drerlyke    me demeth this gode.
- Nu ye muwen iheren in chireche    bo syngen and rede  
Hw Seynte Laurence wes ibrouht,    bunde for to brede.
- 45  
So he wes ihyed    and hot on the glede.  
Ful derlike this deore mon    dute his dede,  
Leste he schulde his saule    horyen and schede  
In hethene helle,    ther hirdsype is gnede.  
Biseche we ure Louerde,    that schal this world fede,
- 50  
That he have mercy of us    of ure misdede.
- Seynte Johan is the beste    that ever wes iwrouht  
Seoththe God makede middel-erd    and mon myd his thouht.  
Thureh his sely sermun,    serewe him wes bythouht,  
The prophetes heved    to present me brouht,
- 55  
For to folewen ure Fader    so he haveth thouht —  
Hwo ysayh ever blisse    byterluker ibouht.
- Seynt Thomas wes biscop,    and barunes him quolde.  
Heo brutlede him ful breoly,    the beornes that were bolde,  
For he wolde the lawe    leoflyche holde,
- 60  
As God wyth his werkes    i this world stolde;  
For the luve of ure Fader    vihten he nolde.  
Ther he tholedde pyne,    as the peple me tolde,  
For the dute of the Dom,    he thet lif solde.  
Hwe schull ich,    thauh ure heorte beon in holde.
- 65  
Alle we schulle to the deth    dreoreliche gon,  
And bileven ure leove freond,    everuychon;  
Me graveth this gode    in greote and in ston,
- fol. 187r  
Ther wereth ure wlite    in wurmene won.  
Ne geyneth us no grene    ne no scarlat non,
- 70  
The robes of russet    ne of rencyan,  
Ne the ronke racches    that ruskit the ron —  
Bothe him schal rotye,    that body and the bon!  
Thayh thu frayny after freond,    ne fyndestu non;  
Bute, saule for seorewe    maketh hire mon.
- 75  
He that fulewede himseolve    in the Flum Jurdan,

## 18. ON SERVING CHRIST

---

35                    Although we hop about here    in our hose and shoes,  
fol. 186v            Later we'll be pressed,    who once were so proud.  
                      Give up your resistance,    insane sinners!  
                      All this world is covered    with heathen practices.  
                      Saint Peter was a spiritual ruler    and suffered on a cross,  
40                    Because to follow our Father    he directed his will,  
                      And we sinful ones gain    spiritual sustenance,  
                      As you may hear, for cruelly    they judged this good man.

                      Now in church you may hear    both sung and read  
                      How Saint Lawrence was brought,    tied up to be burnt.  
45                    Thus was he pushed    and made hot on the coals.  
                      Very dearly did this dear man    perform his death,  
                      Lest his soul he should    corrupt and destroy.  
                      In heathenish hell,    where loyal service is scarce  
                      Let us pray to our Lord,    who sustains this world,  
50                    That he have mercy on us    for our sins.

                      Saint John is the best one    ever created  
                      Since God made with his thought    middle-earth and mankind.  
                      For his wondrous message,    sorrow was planned for him,  
                      They brought the prophet's head    to be presented,  
55                    Because to follow our Father    he was determined —  
                      He who saw eternal bliss    paid the more bitterly.

                      Saint Thomas was a bishop,    and barons killed him.  
                      They violently cut him to pieces,    the men who were brazen,  
                      Because he wished to maintain    the law justly,  
60                    As God by his works    established in this world;  
                      For love of our Father    he didn't fight back.  
                      There he suffered pain,    as people have told me,  
                      In awe of Doomsday,    he delivered up his life.  
                      We each should,    though our hearts resist.

65                    We all must to death    miserably proceed,  
                      And abandon our dear friends,    every one;  
                      They bury this good man    in earth and in stone,  
fol. 187r            Where our beauty wastes away    in a wormy home.  
                      Of no use to us are gowns of green    or scarlet,  
70                    Or robes of gray wool    or mottled brown,  
                      Or strong hounds    that startle in the thicket —  
                      Both of them shall rot,    the body and the bone!  
                      Though you call out for friends,    you won't find any;  
                      Instead, the sorrowful soul    will utter her lament.  
75                    He who baptized himself    in the River Jordan,

Thureh the sybnesse of Seynt Johan,  
Thureh the riche blode the roche tochon,  
Louerd, have mercy of us everuychon. Amen.

## 18. ON SERVING CHRIST

---

By the kinship of Saint John,  
By the rich blood that broke rock asunder,  
Lord, have mercy on us, every one. Amen.



## 19. THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE RUNE

---

fol. 187r *Incipit quidam cantus quem composuit frater Thomas de Hales de ordine fratrum minorum ad instanciam cuiusdam puelle Deo dicite.*

A mayde Cristes me bit yorne that ich hire wurchen a luvē ron,  
For-hwan heo myhte best ileorne to taken onother soth lefmon  
That treowest were of alle berne, and best wyte cuthe a freo wymmon.  
Ich hire nule nowiht werne — ich hire wule teche as ic con.

5 Mayde, her thu myht biholde this worldes luvē nys bute o res,  
And is byset so felevolde, vikel and frakel and wok and les.  
Theos theines that her weren bolde beoth aglyden so wyndes bles;  
Under molde hi liggeth colde, and faleweth so doth medewe gres.

10 Nis no mon iboren o lyve that her may beon studevest,  
For her he haveth seorewen ryve, ne tyt him never ro ne rest;  
Toward his ende he hyeth blyve, and lute hwile he her ilest;  
Pyne and deth him wile ofdryve hwenne he weneth to libben best.

15 Nis non so riche, ne non so freo, that he ne schal heonne sone away.  
Ne may hit never his waraunt beo gold ne seolver, vouh ne gray;  
Ne beo he no the swift, ne may he fleo, ne weren his lif enne day —  
Thus is thes world, as thu mayht seo, al so the schadewe that glyt away.

This world fareth hwilynde: hwenne on cumeth, another goth.  
That wes before nu is bihynde; that er was leof nu hit is loth.  
Forthi he doth as the blynde that in this world his luvē doth.

fol. 187v Ye mowen iseo the world aswynde — that wouh goth forth, abak that soth.

21 Theo luvē that ne may her abyde, thu treowest hire myd muchel wouh  
Al so hwenne hit schal toglyde — hit is fals and mereuh and frouh,  
And fromward is uchon tide — hwile hit lesteth, is seorewe inouh.  
An ende, ne werie mon so syde, he schal todreosen so lef on bouh.

25 Monnes luvē nys buten o stunde: nu he luveth, nu he is sad;  
Nu he cumeth, nu wile he funde; nu he is wroth, nu he is gled;  
His luvē is her and ek alunde; nu he luveth sum that he er bed;  
Nis he never treowe ifunde — that him tristeth, he is amed!



## 19. THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE RUNE

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fol. 187r      *Here begins a certain song which Brother Thomas of Hales of the order of Minorites composed at the request of a young girl dedicated to God.*

A maid of Christ longingly asked me    to make a love rune for her,  
From which she might best learn    how to take another true lover  
Who is truest of all men,    and best able to protect a noblewoman.  
I won't deny her at all —    I will teach her as I am able.

5                Maid, here you may behold    that worldly love is but madness,  
And is afflicted so many times over,    fickle and vile and weak and false.  
These men who here were bold    have passed away like a gust of wind;  
Under earth they lie cold,    and wither as does meadow grass.

10              There is no man born alive    who can here be steadfast,  
For here he has many sorrows,    and he never attains peace or rest;  
Toward his end he hastens fast,    and a short while he here endures;  
Suffering and death will drive him away    when he hopes to prosper best.

15              There's none so rich, none so noble,    that he won't soon go from here.  
His insurance can never be    gold or silver, variegated or gray fur;  
However swift he is, he cannot flee,    nor guard his life a single day —  
Thus is this world, as you may see,    just like the shadow that glides away.

fol. 187v      This world changes constantly:    when one comes, another goes.  
He who was ahead is now behind;    who once was beloved now is despised.  
Therefore he acts like the blind man    who in this world seeks his love.  
You may see the world languish —    while grief advances, truth retreats.

21              The love that may not here abide,    you trust in it with much grief  
Until the time when it shall pass —    it is false and unstable and weak,  
And unruly in every season —    while it lasts, there's plenty of sorrow.  
In the end, however man guards himself,    he shall die like a leaf on bough.

25              Man's love lasts but a moment:    now he loves, now he is sated;  
Now he comes, now he will depart;    now he is angry, now he is glad;  
His love is here and also elsewhere;    now he loves some he formerly fought;  
He is never found to be true —    whoever trusts him, he is mad!

30 Yf mon is riche of worldes weole, hit maketh his heorte smerte and ake;  
 If he dret that me him stele, thenne doth him pyne nyhtes wake.  
 Him waxeth thouhtes, monye and fele, hw he hit may witen withuten sake.  
 An ende, hwat helpeth hit to hele? Al Deth hit wile from him take.

35 Hwer is Paris and Heleyne, that weren so bryht and feyre on bleo?  
 Amadas and Dideyne, Tristram, Yseude, and alle theo?  
 Ector with his scharpe meyne, and Cesar riche of wordes feo?  
 Heo beoth iglyden ut of the reyne so the schef is of the cleo.

40 Hit is of heom al so hit nere — of heom me haveth wunder itold!  
 Nere hit reuthe for to heren hw hi were with pyne aquold,  
 And hwat hi tholeden alyve here? Al is heore hot iturnd to cold —  
 Thus is thes world of false fere! Fol he is the on hire is bold.

Theyh he were so riche mon as Henry ure kyng,  
 And al so veyr as Absalon, that nevede on eorthe non evenyng,  
 Al were sone his prute agon — hit nere on ende wrth on heryng!  
 Mayde, if thou wilnest after leofmon, ich teche the enne treowe King.

45 A, swete, if thou iknowe the gode thewes of thisse childe —  
 He is feyr and bryht on heowe, of glede chere, of mode mylde,  
 Of lufsum lost, of trueste treowe, freo of heort, of wisdom wilde —  
 Ne thurhte the never rewe, myhtestu do the in his ylde!

50 He is ricchest mon of londe, so wide so mon speketh with muth;  
 fol. 188r Alle heo beoth to his honde, est and west, north and suth!  
 Henri, King of Engelonde, of hym he halt and to hym buhth.  
 Mayde, to the he send his sonde, and wilneth for to beo the cuth.

55 Ne byt he with the lond ne leode, vough ne gray ne rencyen;  
 Naveth he therto none neode — he is riche and weli man!  
 If thou him woldest luv beode and bycumen his leovemon,  
 He brouhte the to suche wede that naveth king ne kayser non!

60 Hwat spekestu of eny bolde that wrouhte the wise Salomon  
 Of jaspe, of saphir, of merede golde, and of mony onother ston?  
 Hit is feyrure of feolevolde — more than ich eu telle con!  
 This bold, mayde, the is bihote if that thou bist his leovemon.

Hit stont uppon a treowe mote that hit never truke ne schal;  
 Ne may no mynur hire underwrote, ne never false thene grundwal;  
 Tharinne is uich balewes bote, blisse and joye, and gleo and gal!  
 This bold, mayde, is the bihote and uych o blisse tharwythal.

19. THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE RUNE

---

30           If one is rich of worldly wealth,   it makes his heart sting and ache;  
If he dreads someone will rob him,   then worry keeps him awake at night.  
His thoughts grow, numerous and many,   how he may protect it without sin.  
In the end, what good is it to hide it?   Death will take it all from him.

              Where are Paris and Helen,   so beautiful and fair in face?  
Amadas and Idoine, Tristram,   Isolde, and all those?  
35           Hector with his powerful strength,   and Caesar rich of worldly wealth?  
They have vanished from the realm   as the sheaf is cut by the scythe.

              It is as if they never were —   I've been told wonders of them!  
Isn't it a pity to hear   how they were painfully killed,  
And what they suffered in life here?   All their hot is turned to cold —  
40           Thus is this world of false appearance!   Foolish is he who here is bold.

              Although he were as powerful a man   as Henry our king,  
And just as fair as Absolon,   who never on earth had an equal,  
All too soon was his pride gone —   in the end it wasn't worth a herring!  
Maid, if you long for a lover,   I'll teach you about the one true King.

45           Ah, sweet, if you knew   the good qualities of this noble youth —  
He is fair and handsome in appearance,   of glad face, of mild manner,  
Of lovely disposition, of true faith,   noble of heart, strong of wisdom —  
You'd never regret it   if you were to put yourself in his protection!

              He is the richest man on earth,   as far as men speak with mouths;  
50           Everything is at his command,   east and west, north and south!  
fol. 188r   Henry, King of England,   holds power from him and bows to him.  
Maid, to you he sends his message,   and desires to be known by you.

              He asks from you neither lands nor people,   nor fine furs or cloth;  
He has no need to do so —   he's a rich and prosperous man!  
55           If you would grant him love   and become his beloved,  
He would bring you to such a wedding   as never had king or emperor!

              What can you say of the castle   that the wise Solomon constructed  
Of jasper, of sapphire, of refined gold,   and of many other gems?  
It is fairer by many times —   more than I am able to tell you!  
60           This castle, maid, is promised to you   if you become his beloved.

              It stands upon a fine hill   where it won't ever fall;  
No miner may undermine it,   or ever cause the foundation to give way;  
Therein is remedy for every sorrow,   bliss and joy, and mirth and song!  
This castle, maid, is promised you   and every bliss belonging to it.

- 65            Ther ne may no freond fleon other,    ne non furleosen his iryhte;  
 Ther nys hate, ne wreththe nouthere,    of prude ne of onde of none wihte.  
 Alle heo schule wyth engles pleye,    some and sauhte in heovene lyhte.  
 Ne beoth heo, mayde, in gode weye    that wel luveth ure Dryhte?
- 70            Ne may no mon hine iseo    al so he is in his mihte  
 That may withuten blisse beo;    hwanne he isihth ure Drihte,  
 His sihte is al joye and gleo!    He is day withute nyhte!  
 Nere he, mayde, ful seoly    that myhte wunye myd such a knyhte?
- 75            He haveth bitauht the o tresur    that is betere than gold other pel,  
 And bit the luke thine bur,    and wilneth that thu hit wyte wel.  
 Wyth theoves, with reveres, with lechurs,    thu most beo waker and snel.  
 Thu art swetture than eny flur    hwile thu witest thene kastel.
- 80            Hit is ymston of feor iboren —    nys non betere under heovene grunde;  
 He is tofore alle othre icoren;    he heleth alle luve wunde.  
 Wel were alyve iboren    that myhte wyten this ilke stunde,  
 For habbe thu hine enes forloren,    ne byth he never eft ifunde.
- fol. 188v    This ilke ston that ich the nemne    “maydenhod” icleoped is.  
 Hit is o derewurthe gemme;    of alle othre, he berth that pris,  
 And bryngeth the withute wemme    into the blysse of paradis.  
 The hwile thu hyne witest under thine hemme,    thu ert swetture than eny spis.
- 85            Hwat spekstu of eny stone    that beoth in vertu other in grace —  
 Of amatiste, of calcydone,    of lectorie and tupace,  
 Of jasje, of saphir, of sardone,    smaragde, beril, and crisopace?  
 Among alle othre ymstone,    thes beoth deorre in uyche place!
- 90            Mayde, al so ich the tolde,    the ymston of thi bur  
 He is betere an hundred-folde    than alle theos in heore culur;  
 He is idon in heovene golde,    and is ful of *fyn amur*.  
 Alle that myhte hine wite scholde;    he schyneth so bryht in heovene bur!
- 95            Hwen thu me dost in thine rede    for the to cheose a leofmon,  
 Ich wile don, as thu me bede,    the beste that ich fynde con;  
 Ne doth he, mayde, on uvele dede    that may cheose of two that on,  
 And he wile, withute neode,    that thet wurse the betere let gon?
- 100            This rym, mayde, ich the sende,    open and withute sel.  
 Bidde ic that thu hit untrende,    and leorny bute bok uych del,  
 Herof that thu beo swithe hende,    and tech hit other maydenes wel:  
 Hwoso cuthe hit to than ende,    hit wolde him stonde muchel stel.

19. THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE RUNE

---

- 65            There may no friend leave another,    nor may any lose his rights;  
              There isn't hate, or anger either,    for pride or envy against anyone.  
              They all will play with angels,    united and accorded in heaven's light.  
              Isn't she, mayde, in a good way    who loves well our Lord?
- 70            No one is allowed to see him    as he is in his power  
              Who is without bliss;    when he sees our Lord,  
              His sight is full of joy and gladness!    He is day without night!  
              Were he not, maid, fully blessed    who might dwell with such a knight?
- 75            He has committed to you a treasure    that is better than gold or fine cloth,  
              And bids you lock your bower,    and desires that you guard it well.  
              Against thieves, against robbers, against lechers,    you must be alert and vigilant.  
              You are sweeter than any flower    while you defend your castle.
- 80            It is the gemstone borne from afar —    there's none better under heaven;  
              It is chosen before all others;    it heals all love wounds.  
              Fortunate are they born alive    who might keep this same condition,  
              For once you have lost it,    it is never again found.
- fol. 188v    This same stone that I describe to you    is called "virginity."  
              It is a precious gem;    among all others, it bears the prize,  
              And brings you without blemish    into the bliss of paradise.  
              While you guard it under your skirt,    you are sweeter than any spice.
- 85            What may you say of any stone    that abides in power or grace —  
              Of amethyst, of chalcedony,    of cock-stone and topaz,  
              Of jasper, of sapphire, of sardonyx,    emerald, beryl, and chrysoprase?  
              Among all other gemstones,    these are precious everywhere!
- 90            Maid, as I told you,    the gemstone of your bower,  
              He is better a hundredfold    than all these in their colors;  
              He is set in the gold of heaven,    and is full of *fin amour*.  
              All who'd know him ought to do so;    he shines bright in heaven's bower!
- 95            When you asked me for advice    in your choosing of a lover,  
              I will select, as you asked me,    the best that I'm able to find;  
              Does he not, maid, do an evil deed    who may choose one of two things,  
              If he should, without need,    pick the worse and neglect the better?
- 100          This poem, maid, I send to you,    openly and without seal.  
              I ask that you unroll it,    and learn each part of it without book,  
              So that you may be very expert in it,    and teach it well to other maidens:  
              Whoever knows it to the end,    it would afford him much help.

Hwenne thu sittest in longynge, drauh the forth this ilke wryt —  
Mid swete stephne thu hit singe, and do al so hit the byt.  
To the he haveth send one gretynge: God Almyhti the beo myd,  
And leve cumes to his brudthinge heye in heovene ther he sit!  
And yeve him god endynge that haveth iwryten this ilke wryt. Amen.

When you sit in longing, draw forth this same writ —  
In a sweet voice sing it, and do everything as it directs you.  
To you he has sent a greeting: God Almighty be with you,  
And allow you to come to his bridal chamber high in heaven where he sits!  
And give to him a good ending who has written this very writ. Amen.



## 20. SONG OF THE ANNUNCIATION

---

fol. 188v

*Item cantus*

From heovene into eorthe, God gretynge he sende  
Bi on archaungle that to Marye wende.  
Milde wes that mayde swete and swithe hende,  
And of fayre ibere.

5

Gabriel hire grette, thus quethinde:  
“Edy beo thu, mayde, thus wunyinde.  
Ther schal a child in the kenyen and springe,  
Ilef me, Marie.”

10

Marie him onswerede myd stephne swithe mylde:  
“Hw myhte hit iwurthe that ich were myd childe?  
Monnes imone on me ne may no mon fynde.”  
Ofdred wes that mayde.

.....



## 20. SONG OF THE ANNUNCIATION

---

fol. 188v

*A song*

From heaven to earth, God sent a greeting  
By an archangel who came to Mary.  
Mild was that maiden gentle and very gracious,  
And of fair demeanor.

5

Gabriel greeted her, saying thus:  
“Blessed be you, maiden, thus dwelling.  
There shall a child in you be conceived and born,  
Believe me, Mary.”

10

Mary answered him with a gentle voice:  
“How might it be that I am with child?  
Of my company with men may no one find.”  
Frightened was that maiden.

.....



## 21. FIRE AND ICE

---

fol. 189r

.....  
Naveth my saule bute fur and ys, and the lichome eorthe and treo.

Bidde we alle then heye Kyng that welde schal the laste Dom,  
That he us lete that ilke thing that we mowen his wille don,  
He us skere of the tything that sunfule schulle anunderfon,

5

Hwenne Deth heom lat to the murehthe that never ne byth undon. Amen.



## 21. FIRE AND ICE

---

fol. 189r

.....  
My soul has nothing but fire and ice, and the flesh earth and tree.

Let us all then pray to the high King who governs the final Doom,  
That he grant us that very thing by which we may enact his will,  
And let us escape the tiding the sinful ones receive,

5

When Death keeps them from the mirth never to be undone. Amen.



## 22. SIGNS OF DEATH

---

fol. 189r      Hwenne thin heou bloketh,  
                  And thi strengthe woketh,  
                  And thi neose coldeth,  
                  And thi tunge voldeth,  
5               And the byleveth thi breth,  
                  And thi lif the atgeth,  
                  Me nymeth the, nuthe wrecche;  
                  On flore me the streccheth,  
                  And leyth the on bere,  
10              And bipreoneth the on here,  
                  And doth the ine putte wurmes iverē —  
                  Theonne bith hit sone of the al so thu never nere.



## 22. SIGNS OF DEATH

---

fol. 189r      When your hue grows pale,  
                  And your strength weakens,  
                  And your nose grows cold,  
                  And your speech fails,  
5               And your breath leaves you,  
                  And your life departs from you,  
                  They take you now, poor man;  
                  They stretch you on the floor,  
                  And lay you on the bier,  
10              And sew you up in a haircloth,  
                  And put you in a pit with worms —  
                  Then soon it will be as if you never were.



## 23. THREE SORROWFUL TIDINGS

---

fol. 189r      Uychē day me cumeth tydinges threo,  
For wel swithe sore beoth heo:  
The on is that ich schal heonne;  
That other, that ich noth hwenne;  
5                The thridde is my meste kare —  
That ich not hwider ich scal fare.



## 23. THREE SORROWFUL TIDINGS

---

fol. 189r      Each day three musings come to me,  
                  And they're of great sorrow:  
                  One is that I'll go from hence;  
                  The other, that I don't know when;  
5               The third is my greatest care —  
                  That I don't know whither I will fare.



## 24. THE PROVERBS OF ALFRED

---

fol. 189r

*Incipiunt documenta regis Alvredi.*

1

At Sevorde sete theynes monye,  
Fele biscopes, and feole bok-ilered,  
Eorles prute, knyhtes egleche.

5

Thar wes the Eorl Alvrich,  
Of thare lawe swithe wis,  
And ek Ealvred, Englene hurde,  
Englene durlyng —  
On Englene londe he wes kyng.

10

Heom he bigon lere,  
So ye mawe ihure,  
Hw hi heore lif lede scholden.  
Alvred he wes in Englene lond  
And king wel swithe strong.  
He wes king and he wes clerek.

15

Wel he luvede Godes werk.  
He wes wis on his word, and war on his werke.  
He wes the wysuste mon  
That wes Englelonde on.

2

20

*Thus queth Alvred, Englene frouer:*  
“Wolde ye, mi leode, lusten eure louerde;  
He ou wolde wyssye wisliche thinges:  
Hw ye myhte worldes wrthsipes welde,  
And ek eure saule somnen to Criste.”  
Wyse were the wordes the seyde the King Alvred.

3

fol. 189v

26

“Mildeliche ich munye, myne leove freond,  
Poure and riche, leode myne,  
That ye alle adrede ure Dryhten Crist.  
Luvyen hine and lykyen, for he is Louerd of Lyf;  
He is one god over alle godnesse;



## 24. THE PROVERBS OF ALFRED

---

fol. 189r

*Here begin the proverbs of King Alfred.*

1

At Shefford sat many thanes,  
Many bishops, and many book-learned,  
Proud earls, brave knights.

5

There was Earl Alfrich,  
So wise in their law,  
And also Alfred, shepherd of the English,  
Beloved by the English —  
Of the land of the English he was king.

10

He taught them,  
As you may hear,  
How their lives they ought to lead.  
Alfred was in the land of the English  
A very powerful king.

15

He was king and he was scholar.  
Well did he love God's work.  
He was wise in word, and careful in work.  
He was the wisest man  
In England.

2

20

*Thus says Alfred, comforter of the English:*  
"Be willing, my people, to listen to your lord;  
He wishes to teach you wise things:  
How you might worldly honor possess,  
And also your soul join to Christ."  
Wise were the words then said by King Alfred.

3

fol. 189v

26

"Mildly do I admonish, my dear friends,  
Poor and rich, my people,  
That all of you should fear our Lord Christ.  
Love and please him, for he is Lord of Life;  
He is the one good over all goodness;

30 He is one gleaw over alle glednesse;  
 He is one blisse over alle blissen;  
 He is one monne, mildest mayster;  
 He is one folkes fader, and frouer;  
 He is one rihtwis, and so riche king  
 35 That him ne schal beo wone nouht of his wille,  
 The hine her on worlde wrthie thencheth."

4

*Thus queth Alvred, Englene vrouer:*  
 "Ne may non ryhtwis king under Criste seolven  
 Bute if he beo in boke ilered,  
 40 And he his wyttes swithe wel kunne,  
 And he cunne lettres lokie himseolf one  
 Hw he schule his lond laweliche holde."  
*Thus queth Alvred.*

5

45 "The eorl and the ethelyng  
 Ibureth, under godne king,  
 That lond to leden  
 Myd lawelyche deden.  
 And the clerek and the knyht  
 He schulle demen evelyche riht,  
 50 The poure and the ryche  
 Demen ilyche.  
 Hwych so the mon soweth,  
 Al swuch he schal mowe;  
 And everuyches monnes dom to his owere dure churreth.  
 55 Than knyhte bihoveth kenliche on to fone  
 For to werie that lond with hunger and with heriunge,  
 That the Chireche habbe gryth,  
 And the cheorl beo in fryth  
 His sedes to sowen,  
 60 His medes to mowen,  
 And his plouh beo idryve.  
 To ure alre bihove  
 This is thes knyhtes lawe. Loke he that hit wel fare."

## 24. THE PROVERBS OF ALFRED

---

30 He is the one joy over all joyfulness;  
He is the one bliss over all blissfulness;  
He is the one man, mildest master;  
He is the one father of folk, and source of comfort;  
He is the one justice, and so powerful a king  
35 That he shall lack nothing of what he desires,  
Who here in this world intends to honor him.”

4

*Thus says Alfred, comforter of the English:*  
“There can be no just king under Christ himself  
Unless he be learned in books,  
40 And able to use his intelligence,  
And can read letters to examine on his own  
How his land he should maintain lawfully.”  
*Thus says Alfred.*

5

45 “The earl and the noble atheling  
Are obliged, under a good king,  
To lead the land  
With lawful deed.  
And they must fairly judge  
The clerk and the knight,  
50 Judge even-handedly  
The poor and the rich.  
What a man sows,  
So must he reap;  
And every man’s judgment returns to his own door.  
55 The knight is obliged to bravely undertake  
To defend the land from hunger and invasion,  
So the Church has protection,  
And the peasant in the field  
May sow his seeds,  
60 Mow his meadows,  
And drive his plow.  
We all ought to know  
This is the knight’s duty. He must see that it goes well.”

6

*Thus queth Alvred:*

- 65 "The mon the on his youhthe yeorne leorneth  
 Wit and wisdom, and iwriten reden,  
 He may beon on elde wenliche lortheu;  
 And the that nule one youhthe yeorne leorny  
 Wit and wysdom, and iwriten rede,  
 70 That him schal on elde sore rewe.  
     Thenne cumeth elde,  
     And unhelthe,  
     Thenne beoth his wene  
     Ful wrothe isene;  
 75 Bothe heo beoth biswike and eke hi beoth aswunde."  
*Thus queth Alvred.*

7

- fol. 190r "Wythute wysdome, is weole wel unwurth,  
 81 For they o mon ahte huntseventi acres,  
 And he hi hadde isowen alle myd reade golde,  
 And that gold greowe so gres doth on eorthe,  
 Nere he, for his weole, never the further  
 Bute he him, of frumthe, freond iwrche,  
     For hwat is gold bute ston  
     Bute if hit haveth wis mon?"  
 85 *Thus queth Alvred.*

8

- "Ne scolde never yong mon howyen to swithe,  
 Theih him his wyse wel ne lykie,  
 Ne theih he ne welde al that he wolde,  
 For God may yeve, thenne he wule,  
 90 God after uvele, weole after wowe.  
 Wel is him that hit ischapen is."  
*Thus seyth Alvred.*

9

- "Strong hit is to reowe ayeyn the see that floweth,  
 So hit is to swynke ayeyn unylimpe.  
 95 The mon the on his youhthe swo swinketh  
 And worldes weole her iwynth,  
 That he may on elde idelnesse holde,  
     And ek myd his worldes weole  
     God iqueme er he quele,

6

*Thus says Alfred:*

- 65 “He who in his youth eagerly learns  
Wit and wisdom, and reads what’s written,  
In old age he may be an excellent teacher;  
And he who in youth refuses to eagerly learn  
Wit and wisdom, and read what’s written,  
70 In old age he shall sorely regret it.  
When old age comes,  
And ill health,  
Then is his opinion  
Seen to be perverse;  
75 It is both deluded and also feeble.”  
*Thus says Alfred.*

7

- fol. 190r “Without wisdom, wealth is worthless,  
81 For even if a man possessed seventy acres,  
And had sown them all with red gold,  
And that gold grew as grass does on earth,  
He’d never, for all his wealth, advance any further  
Unless he, from the beginning, gains friends for himself,  
For what is gold but stone  
Unless it’s owned by a wise man?”  
85 *Thus says Alfred.*

8

- 90 “A young man should never be overly distressed,  
Even if his situation isn’t to his liking,  
And he doesn’t control all he’d like to,  
For God may give him, when he will,  
Good after bad, happiness after grief.  
Well is he who for that is destined.”  
*Thus says Alfred.*

9

- 95 “It’s as difficult to row against the flowing sea,  
As to strive against misfortune.  
The man who in his youth strives so  
And worldly wealth wins here,  
So that in old age he may gain leisure,  
And also with his worldly wealth  
Pleases God before he dies,

100            Youthe and al that he haveth idrowe  
                   Is thenne wel bitowe.”  
*Thus queth Alvred.*

10

105            “Mony mon weneth   that he wene ne tharf,  
                   Longes lyves,   ac him lyeth the wrench;  
                   For thanne his lyves   alre best luvede,  
                   Thenne he schal leten   lyf his owe.  
                   For nys no wrt vexynde   a wude ne a velde  
                   That ever muwe thas feye   furth upholde.  
                   Not no mon thene tyme   hwanne he schal heonne turne.  
 110            Ne no mon thene ende   hwenne he schal heonne wende.  
                   Dryhten hit one wot,   dowethes Louerd,  
                   Hwanne ure lif   leten schule.”  
*Thus queth Alvred.*

11

115            “Yf thu seolver and gold yefst   and weldest in this world,  
                   Never upen eorthe   to wlonk thu nywrthe.  
                   Ayhte nys non ildre istreon   ac hit is Godes lone;  
                   Hwanne hit is his wille,   tharof we schulle wende,  
                   And ure owe lyf   myd alle forleten.  
                   Thanne schulle ure ifon   to ure vouh gripen,  
 120            Welden ure maythenes,   and leten us byhinde.”  
*Thus queth Alvred.*

12

fol. 190v        “Ne ilef thu nouht to fele   uppe the see that floweth.  
                   If thu hafst madmes,   monye and inowe,  
                   Gold and seolver,   hit schal gnyde to nouht;  
 126            To duste hit schal dryven;   Dryhten schal libben evere.  
                   Mony mon, for his gold,   haveth Godes urre,  
                   And for his seolver,   hymseolve  
                   Foryemeth, foryeteth,   and forleseth.  
                   Betere him bycome   iboren that he nere.”  
 130            *Thus queth Alvred.*

13

                  “Lusteth ye, me leode,  
                   Ower is the neode,  
                   And ich eu will lere wit and wisdom,   that alle thing overgoth.  
                   Syker he may sitte   the hyne haveth to ivere;

100                    Then youth and all he's earned  
                          Are well applied."

*Thus says Alfred.*

10

105                    "Many a man expects    what he may not expect,  
                          Long length of life,    but he'll be deceived;  
                          For when his life    is most cherished,  
                          Then shall he lose    his own life.  
                          For there's no herb growing    in wood or in field  
                          That can ever sustain    what's fated to die.  
                          None knows the time    when he'll turn from here.  
110                    None knows the destination    when he'll go hence.  
                          Only God knows,    Lord of hosts,  
                          When our life    will end."

*Thus says Alfred.*

11

115                    "If silver and gold you give    and wield in this world,  
                          Don't ever on earth    become overly proud.  
                          Property's not gained from parents    but a loan from God;  
                          When it's his will,    we'll turn away from it,  
                          And our own life    entirely lose.  
                          Then our enemies will    seize our treasures,  
120                    Control our valuables,    and leave us behind."

*Thus says Alfred.*

12

fol. 190v            "Don't trust too much    in the sea that flows.  
                          If you have treasures,    abundant and plentiful,  
                          Gold and silver,    it'll crumble to nothing;  
126                    To dust it'll be reduced;    the Lord will live forever.  
                          Many a man, for his gold,    receives God's wrath,  
                          And for his silver,    himself  
                          Neglects, forgets,    and loses.  
                          It'd be better for him    had he never been born."

130                    *Thus says Alfred.*

13

                          "Listen, my people,  
                          You are in need,  
                          And I'll teach you wit and wisdom,    beyond all things.  
                          Securely sits he    who has it for company;

135 For theyh his eyhte him ago,  
 His wit ne agoth hym nevermo,  
 For ne may he forvare  
 The hyne haveth to vere  
 The wile his owe lyf ileste mote.”

140 *Thus queth Alvred.*

14

“If thu havest seorewe,  
 Ne seye thu hit nouht than arewe.  
 Seye hit thine sadelbowe, and ryd the singinde forth.  
 Thenne wile wene, thet thine wise ne con, that the thine wise wel lyke.  
 145 Serewe if thu havest and the erewe hit wot,

Byfore he the meneth,  
 Byhynde he the teleth.  
 Thu hit myht segge swyhc mon  
 That the ful wel on —

150 Wythute echere ore,  
 He on the muchele more.  
 Byhud hit on thire heorte  
 That the eft ne smeorte;  
 Ne let thu hyne wite  
 155 Al that thin heorte bywite.”

*Thus queth Alvred.*

15

“Ne schaltu nevere thi wif by hire wlyte cheose,  
 For never none thinge that heo to the bryngeth;  
 Ac leorne hire custe — heo cutheth hi wel sone.  
 160 For mony mon, for ayhte, uvele iauhteth,  
 And ofte mon, of fayre, frakele icheoseth.

Wo is him that uvel wif  
 Bryngeth to his cotlyf.  
 So him is alyve,  
 165 That uvele ywyveth  
 For he schal uppen eorthe  
 Dreori iwurthe.

Mony mon singeth  
 That wif hom bryngeth;  
 170 Wiste he hwat he brouhte,  
 Wepen he myhte.”

*Thus queth Alvred.*

## 24. THE PROVERBS OF ALFRED

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135                   For though his property leave him,  
                      His wit may never go from him,  
                      For he cannot perish  
                      Who has it for company  
As long as his own life    may last.”

140                   *Thus says Alfred.*

### 14

                      “If you have sorrow,  
                      Never tell it to a scoundrel.  
Tell it to your saddlebow,   and ride forth singing.  
Then he’ll think, ignorant of your state,   that you’re happy.  
145                   If you have sorrow   and the scoundel knows it,

                      To your face he’ll comfort you,  
                      Behind your back he’ll mock you.  
                      You may have told it to such a man  
                      As wishes you very well —

150                   Without any mercy,  
                      He’d wish you even more.  
                      Hide it in your heart  
                      So that you’re not hurt again;  
                      Never let him know  
155                   What your heart guards.”

*Thus says Alfred.*

### 15

                      “You must never choose   your wife for her beauty,  
                      No matter what   she brings to you;  
                      Learn instead her character —   she’ll reveal it right away.  
160                   For many a man, for wealth,   makes a bad bargain,  
                      And often a man, for beauty,   chooses what’s worthless.

                      Woeful is he who brings  
                      A bad wife to his dwelling.  
                      While he’s alive,  
165                   The one badly wived  
                      Shall everywhere  
                      Become miserable.

                      Many a man sings  
                      Who brings home a wife;  
170                   If he knew what he brought,  
                      He’d surely weep.”

*Thus says Alfred.*

16

175 “Ne wurth thu never so wod ne so wyn-drunke  
 That evere segge thine wife alle thine wille,  
 For if thu iseye the bivore thine ivo alle,  
 And thu hi myd worde iwreththed hevedest,  
 Ne scholde heo hit lete for thing lyvyinde,  
 That heo ne scholde the forth upbreyde of thine baleusythes.  
 Wymmon is word-woth and haveth tunge to swift;  
 180 Theyh heo wel wolde, ne may heo hi nowiht welde.”  
*Thus queth Alfred.*

17

fol. 191r “Idelschipe and overprute that lereth yong wif uvele thewes,  
 And ofte that wolde  
 Do that heo ne scholde.  
 185 Thene untheu lihte  
 Leten heo myhte  
 If heo ofte aswote,  
 Forswunke were,  
 Theyh hit is uvel to buwe  
 190 That beo nule treowe,  
 For ofte museth the kat after hire moder.  
 The mon that let wymmon his mayster iwurthe  
 Ne schal he never beon ihurd  
 His wordes louerd;  
 195 Ac, heo hine schal steorne totrayen and toteone.  
 And selde wurth he blythe and gled  
 The mon that is his wives qued.  
 Mony appel is bryht withute and bitter withinne;  
 So is mony wymmon on hyre fader bure  
 200 Schene under schete, and theyh heo is schendful;  
 So is mony gedelyng godlyche on horse,  
 And is theyh lutel wurth —  
 Wlonk bi the glede  
 And uvel at thare neode.”  
 205 *Thus queth Alvred.*

16

175 “Don’t ever be so crazy or so drunk on wine  
That you ever tell your wife all your secrets,  
For even if you saw before you all your enemies,  
And with your words have enraged them,  
She’d not neglect, for any living creature,  
To upbraid you openly for your mistakes.  
180 Woman is word-mad and has a very quick tongue;  
Even if she wanted to, she can’t control it at all.”  
*Thus says Alfred.*

17

fol. 191r “Indolence and excessive pride teach a young wife bad habits.  
And make her often want  
185 To do what she shouldn’t.  
She might readily  
Avoid bad habits  
If she had to sweat often,  
Worn out by work,  
Though it’s hard to bend  
190 What won’t be straight,  
For often a cat learns to mouse from her mother.  
The man who allows a woman to be his master  
Will never be listened to  
As lord of his words;  
195 Instead, she’ll severely torment and harass him.  
Seldom is a man happy and glad  
Who is his wife’s enemy.  
Many an apple’s shiny without and bitter within;  
So is many a woman in her father’s house  
200 Beautiful under sheet, and yet she’s shameless;  
So is many a soldier handsome on a horse,  
And yet worth little —  
Brave by the hearth  
And useless when needed.”  
205 *Thus says Alfred.*

18

“Nevre thu bi thine lyve  
 The word of thine wyve  
 To swithe thu ne arede  
 If heo beo iwreththed  
 210 Myd worde other myd dede.  
 Wymmon wepeth for mod  
 Oftere than for eny god,  
 And ofte lude and stille  
 For to vordrye hire wille;  
 215 Heo wepeth otherhwile  
 For to do the gyle.  
 Salomon hit haveth ised:  
 ‘That wymmon can wel uvelne red.’  
 The hire red foleweth,  
 220 Heo bryngeth hine to seorewe,  
 For hit seyth in the loth  
 As ‘cuenes forteoth.’  
 Hit is ifurn iseyd  
 That ‘cold red is quene red.’  
 225 Hu he is unlede  
 That foleweth hire rede.  
 Ich hit ne segge nouht, forthan,  
 That god thing ys god wymmon,  
 The mon the hi may icheose and icovere over othre.”  
 230 *Thus queth Alvred.*

19

“Mony mon weneth that he weny ne tharf:  
 Freond that he habbe thar me him vayre bihat,  
 Seyth him vayre bivore, and frakele bihynde;  
 So me may thane lothe lengust lede.  
 235 Ne ilef thu never thane mon  
 That is of feole speche,  
 Ne alle the thinge  
 That thu iherest singe.  
 Mony mon haveth swikelne muth,  
 240 Milde and monne forcuth;  
 Nele he the cuthe hwenne he the wule bikache.”  
*Thus queth Alvred.*

18

“Don’t ever in your life  
Heed too hastily  
The advice of your wife  
If she’s been angered  
210 By word or by deed.  
A woman weeps for wrath  
More often than for good,  
And under all circumstances  
To advance her own will;  
215 She weeps at other times  
In order to deceive you.  
Solomon has said it:  
‘Woman is prone to give bad advice.’  
Whoever follows her advice,  
220 She’ll bring him to sorrow,  
For it’s said everywhere  
That ‘women deceive.’  
It’s long been said  
That ‘cold counsel is woman’s counsel.’  
225 How miserable is he  
Who follows her counsel.  
I don’t deny at all, however,  
That a good woman is a good thing,  
For one who may choose and win her above others.”  
230 *Thus says Alfred.*

19

“Many a man thinks what he oughtn’t think:  
That he has a friend when someone makes fair promises,  
Says fair things to his face, but evil behind his back;  
Thus may someone loath the one he’s accompanied longest.  
235 Don’t believe any man  
Who’s of varying speech,  
Nor all of the things  
You hear being sung.  
Many a man has a deceptive mouth,  
240 A gentle yet wicked man;  
He’ll not let you know when he plans to trick you.”  
*Thus says Alfred.*

20

245  
fol. 191v

“Thurh sawe, mon is wis,  
And, thurh hiselthe, mon is gleu.  
Thurh lesinge, mon is loth,  
And thurh luthre, wrenches and unwurth;  
And thurh hokede honde that he bereth,  
Himseolve he forvareth.  
From lesynge thu the wune,  
250 And alle unthewes thu the bischune,  
So myht thu on theode  
Leof beon in alle leode.  
And luve thyne nexte — he is at the neode god.  
At chepyng and at chyreche,  
255 Freond thu the iwurche  
Wyth pouere and with riche,  
With alle monne ilyche.  
Thanne myht thu sikerliche sely sytte,  
And ek faren over londe hwider so beoth thi wille.”  
260 *Thus queth Alvred.*

21

265

“Alle world-ayhte  
Schulle bicumen to nouhte,  
And uyches cunnes madmes to mixe schulen imulten;  
And ure owe lif lutel hwile ileste,  
For theyh o mon wolde al the worlde  
And al the wunne the tharinne wunyeth,  
Ne myhte he, tharmyde, his lif none hwile holde,  
Ac al he schal forleten on a litel stunde;  
And schal ure blisse to balewe us iwurthe  
270 Bute if we wurcheth wyllen Cristes.  
Nu bithenche we, thanne, us sulve,  
Ure lif to leden so Crist us gynneth lere;  
Thanne mawe we wenen that he wule us wrthie.  
For so seyde Salomon the wise:  
275 “The mon that her wel deth  
He cumeth thar he lyen foth  
On his lyves ende,  
He hit schal avynde.”  
*Thus queth Alvred.*

20

245 fol. 191v “By proverb, man is wise,  
And, by piety, man is good.  
By lying, man is loathsome,  
And by evil, worthless and false;  
And by having hooked hands,  
He ruins himself.  
250 Lose the habit of lying,  
And shun all your vices,  
So that everywhere you may  
Be beloved by all people.  
And love your neighbor — he’s helpful in time of need.  
At market and at church,  
255 Acquire friends for yourself  
Among poor and rich,  
With all men equally.  
You will certainly then be happily situated,  
And also travel over land wherever you want.”  
260 *Thus says Alfred.*

21

“All worldly wealth  
Will come to nothing,  
And each kind of treasure will dwindle to filth;  
And our own life lasts a little while,  
265 For even if a man wanted the whole world  
And all the joys dwelling therein,  
His life he may not, therewith, keep for a while,  
But he must lose all in a brief moment;  
And so will our bliss lead us to torment  
270 Unless we perform Christ’s will.  
Now let’s resolve, then, on our own,  
To lead our life as Christ taught us;  
Then may we hope that he will reward us.  
For so said Solomon the wise:  
275 “The man who does well here  
Comes where he’ll be received  
At his life’s end,  
As he shall find out.”  
*Thus says Alfred.*

22

280           “Ne gabbe thu ne schotte  
               Ne chid thu wyth none sotte,  
               Ne myd manyes cunnes tales  
               Ne chid thu with nenne dwales.  
               Ne never thu ne bigynne  
 285           To telle thine tythinges  
               At nones fremannes borde,  
               Ne have thu to vale worde.  
               Mid fewe worde wis mon  
               Fele biluken wel con,  
 290           And sottes bolt is sone iscohte.  
               Forthi ich holde hine for dote  
               That sayth al his wille  
               Thanne he scholde beon stille,  
               For ofte tunge breketh bon  
 295           Theyh heo seolf nabbe non.”

*Thus queth Alvred.*

23

              “Wis child is  
               Fader blisse.  
               If hit so bitydeth   that thu bern ibidest,  
 300           The hwile hit is lutel,   ler him mon thewes;  
 fol. 192r       Thanne hit is wexynde,   hit schal wende tharto:  
               The betere hit schal iwurthe  
               Ever buven eorthe.  
               Ac if thu him lest welde   wexende on worlde,  
 305           Lude and stille  
               His owene wille.  
               Hwanne cumeth ealde,  
               Ne myht thu hyne awelde.  
               Thanne deth hit sone  
 310           That the bith unyquemere;  
               Oferhoweth thin ibod,  
               And maketh the ofte sory-mod.  
               Betere the were  
               Iboren that he nere,  
 315           For betere is child unbore   thane unbuhsum.  
               The mon the spareth yeorde   and yonge childe,  
               And let hit arixlye,   that he hit areche ne may,  
               That him schal, on ealde,   sore reowe.” Amen.

*Expliciunt dicta regis Alvredi.*

## 22

280           “Don’t scoff or yell  
          Or quarrel with a fool,  
          Or with all sorts of claims  
          Argue with dimwits.  
          You shouldn’t ever begin  
285           To disclose your news  
          At any franklin’s table,  
          Nor have too many words.  
          With few words the wise man  
          Can express a great deal,  
290           And a fool’s arrow is soon shot.  
          So I hold him a dolt  
          Who tells all his private thoughts  
          When he ought to be quiet,  
          For often does a tongue break a bone  
295           Though itself has none.”

*Thus says Alfred.*

## 23

          “Wise child is  
          Father’s bliss.  
          If it should happen   that you have a child,  
300           While it is small,   teach him good habits;  
fol. 192r       Then as it grows,   it shall carry on that way:  
          The better it shall become  
          Of any seen on earth.  
          But if you fail to control him   as he grows in the world,  
305           In all circumstances  
          He’ll do as he pleases.  
          When old age advances,  
          You’ll be unable to manage him.  
          Then soon it will do  
310           What displeases you;  
          He disdains your command,  
          And often causes you grief.  
          It’d have been better for you  
          Had he not been born,  
315           For better is an unborn child   than a disobedient one.  
          The man who spares the rod   and the young child,  
          And allows it to have its own way,   and he cannot control it,  
          That one will, in old age,   sorely regret it.” Amen.

*Here end the sayings of King Alfred.*



## 25. AN ORISON TO OUR LORD

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fol. 192r

*Tractatus quidam*

Louerd Crist, ich the grete;  
Thu art so mylde and swete.  
From heovene, Louerd, thu hider come,  
And of the swete mayde thu fleys nome;  
5 And hw hit ferde, mon may esche:  
Thi goddede wes ihud in fleysse;  
Of the mayde thu were ibore  
God and mon, so wel icore;  
Tho thu hire to come, heo mayde wes,  
10 And mayde heo wes after, wemmeles.

Jhesu, ich the grete, as ich er seyde.  
Thu were ibore, Louerd, of the swete mayde;  
Thu undervenge al ure wowe  
Withute sunne, that riht wule knowe.  
15 As other childre, thu eodest and speke;  
Hunger and thurst thu tholedest eke.  
Buhsum and poure thu were, iwis;  
Forbysne thu us yeve, and nouht amys.

20

Jhesu, ich the grete, Cryst Louerd min,  
That for us tholedest so swithe muchel pyn.

fol. 192v

Wunderliche, thurh wacche and fast  
Thi swete lychome thu teonedest  
God to donne and uvel to byleve;  
Ful gode vorbysne thu us yeve.

25

No more luvne ne may mon cheosen  
Thane deth to tholyen for other to alesen.

30

Jhesu, ich the grete, that were thar harde ibunde —  
With scurges thu tholedest mony blodi wunde;  
Bivore the hethene men thu stode,  
Naked and bylaved myd blode;  
Buffetes thu tholedest inowe;  
Bispat thu were, and al myd wowe;  
Mid on red mantel thu were byweved;



## 25. AN ORISON TO OUR LORD

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fol. 192r

*Another treatise*

Lord Christ, I greet you;  
You are so mild and sweet.  
From heaven, Lord, you've come here,  
And of the blessed maid you took flesh;  
5 And how it went, men may witness:  
Your godhead was concealed in flesh;  
Of the maid you were born  
God and man, so well chosen;  
When you entered her, she was a maid,  
10 And a maid she was after, unstained.

Jesus, I greet you, as I said before.  
You were born, Lord, of the blessed maid;  
You took on all our woe  
Without sin, as is truly affirmed.  
15 Like other children, you walked and spoke;  
Hunger and thirst you also suffered.  
Humble and poor you were, indeed;  
An example you gave to us, nothing amiss.

Jesus, I greet you, Christ my Lord,  
20 Who for us suffered such intense pain.  
Incredibly, by staying awake and fasting  
You mortified your precious body  
fol. 192v To perform good and forsake evil;  
A fine example you gave to us.  
25 No greater love may one choose  
Than to suffer death to redeem another.

Jesus, I greet you, who were tightly bound —  
With scourges you suffered many bloody wounds;  
Before heathen men you stood,  
30 Naked and washed with streams of blood;  
You suffered buffets to an extreme;  
You were spat upon, surrounded in misery;  
In a red mantle you were clothed;

- 35 Crune of thornes thu hevedest on heued.  
 Ne myhte the mixes tho wurse the don  
 Bute, among theoves, on rode anhon.  
 Al thu tholdest for ure sake —  
 Al the seorewe that heo the myhte make!
- 40 Jhesu Crist, that so luvedest mon,  
 Ich the grete al so ich best con,  
 That tholedest that thi swete lich  
 Of hethene todreved wes sullych:  
 Ithurled weren myd nayles threo  
 Honden and fet, faste to the treo;  
 45 That cold iren thu tholedest in thi syde,  
 Of the spere kene to thin heorte glyde.  
 As thu tholedest theos fyf wunde,  
 Of seorewe and sunne wite us myd isunde.
- 50 Jhesu, ich the grete, and that is wel ryht,  
 And tharto to don bothe mayn and myht  
 For the muchel tholeburnesse  
 That thu schawedest monkunne tho thu tholedest deth,  
 After alle the pyne, that the runnen a blode,  
 Tholedest, Louerd Crist, that me the dude on rode.  
 fol. 193r Hwoso hit ileveth myd gode wille,  
 56 Ne may nouht the Feond his saule aspille.
- 60 Jhesu, ich the grete so wyslych  
 As thu deth tholedest myldelich.  
 Ich the bidde, Louerd, thurh the ilke rode  
 Thar thu myd blodie wunde stode,  
 On thine werkes, so my lif leade,  
 And so do by thine rede,  
 That my saule habbe lysse,  
 That myn ende come to eche blysse. Amen.

25. AN ORISON TO OUR LORD

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35           A crown of thorns you had on head.  
The filthy scum couldn't treat you any worse  
Than hang you, among thieves, on a cross.  
You suffered everything for our sake —  
Every sorrow they could inflict on you!

40           Jesus Christ, who so loved mankind,  
You I greet as best I can,  
Who suffered such that your precious body  
Was tormented horrifically by heathens:  
Pierced through with three nails  
Were hands and feet, fastened to the tree;  
45           That cold iron stabbed you in your side,  
From the sharp spear entering your heart.  
Just as you suffered these five wounds,  
Keep us bodily whole against sorrow and sin.

50           Jesus, I greet you, as is very fitting,  
And to that end exert both strength and might  
Because of the profound submissiveness  
That you showed mankind when suffering death,  
After all the pain, streaking you with blood,  
That you suffered, Lord Christ, when they crucified you.  
fol. 193r   Whoever sincerely believes it,  
56           The Fiend may not destroy his soul.

60           Jesus, I greet you as certainly  
As you suffered death mildly.  
I pray to you, Lord, by the very cross  
That you endured with bloody wounds,  
By your works, so lead my life,  
And do so by your counsel,  
That my soul may have comfort,  
That my end may achieve every bliss. Amen.



## 26. A HOMILY ON SOOTH LOVE

---

fol. 193r

*Tractatus quidam*

Theo sothe lue among us beo wythuten euch endyng;  
And Crist us lete wel itheo and yve us his blessyng,  
And yeve us that we moten fleo ever sunegyng,  
And thene Feond and al his gleo and al his twyeling.

5

Ute we wurthi thene Louerd God that hider us brouhte.  
He wes with us swithe edmod thar he us wrouhte,  
And eft he wes ihonge on rode for helpe thene vorwrouhte;  
Mid his fleysse and myd his blod he us alle bouhte.

10

Iblessed be such Etherling us mylce that he wolde.  
He is ure beste King; we ouhte beon hym holde.  
And we beoth alle his ofsprung — iknowe we hit scholde —  
For he scop us and alle thing of thar eorthe molde.

15

Crist us haveth of eorthe iwrouht; to eorthe he wule us sende.  
Mid his dethe we weren ibouht from the Feondes bende.  
He hit haveth al bithouht: the frumthe to thon ende,  
How we beoth hider ibrouht and hwider we schulle wende.

20

If we beoth ryhtwise and luyeth ure Dryhte,  
And doth his servyse myd al ure myhte,  
Ne tharf us never agryse bi daye ne bi nyhte;  
We schulle in paradys schynen swithe bryhte!

fol. 193v

This world is neyh than ende; the deth neyeth blyve.  
Heonne we schullen wende, ne may non her bileve.  
The Dom is us neyh hende; yef we us leteth schryve,  
Crist us wile sende to thon eche lyve.

25

Ute we holde that ilche bod that Crist us wile theche.  
He yef us lith and deth an foth; he is ure leache.  
Ure euch beo with other edmod on werke and of speche,  
Elles ure Louerd God on us wulle done wreche.



## 26. A HOMILY ON SOOTH LOVE

---

fol. 193r

*Another treatise*

True love is among us without any limit;  
And may Christ let us thrive well and give us his blessing,  
And grant us that we may escape from ever sinning,  
And from the Fiend and all his games and all his deceiving.

5

We ought to worship the Lord God who brought us hither.  
He was very humble among us even though he created us,  
And later he was crucified on the cross to assist the damned;  
With his flesh and his blood he redeemed us all.

10

Blessed be such a royal Prince who can grant us mercy.  
He's our best King; we ought to be faithful to him.  
And we're all his offspring — we must acknowledge it —  
For he created us and all things of this world.

15

Christ has created us from earth; to earth he will send us.  
With his death we were redeemed from the Fiend's captivity.  
He has planned all of it: the world's beginning to the end,  
How we are brought hither and whither we will go.

20

If we are virtuous and love our Lord,  
And do his service with all our might,  
We need never be frightened day or night;  
We shall in paradise shine very brightly!

fol. 193v

This world's near the end; death approaches quickly.  
We will go hence, and no one can remain here.  
The Doom's nigh at hand for us; if we neglect confession,  
Christ will consign us to that eternal life.

25

We ought to abide by the very rule that Christ has taught us.  
He gives us life and death and sustenance; he's our physician.  
Let us always be submissive in work and in speech,  
Or else our Lord God will take vengeance on us.

- 30 Mid gode beode myd gode thonk, we schule to Criste grede,  
 And bidde mylce of ure wrong, of ure gydihede,  
 Of ure sunnen that beoth wel strong, of ure fule dede,  
 Hwenne cumeth he us among and wile us myd him lede.
- 35 Ure Louerd Crist us wule teo to heovene, myd iwise,  
 If we wulleth uvel fleo, ne thurue we that mysse.  
 Wel is him that schal ther beo; he may ther habbe lysse;  
 He may ther ever Crist iseo and joye inouh and blysse.
- 40 Ther wurth day buten nyhte; ne tharf thar no mon syche.  
 Hwer-forth grith wythuten fiht — wel god is heoveneriche!  
 Ther wurth soth withuten unriht, and ever hit wurth ilyche.  
 Ther wurth evenyng carle and cnyht, poure men and riche.
- 45 The sothe luve is heom among, and mylce and ryhtwisnesse,  
 Rihte bileve and clene thonk, and sibbe and edmodnesse.  
 Ne wurth ther unryht ne wrong, ne wreththe ne idelnesse.  
 Ther wurth joye and mury song withute swikelnesse.
- 50 If we wulleth thider in to thare riche wunyng,  
 Idelschipe and luther iwyn, and wraththe and hatyng,  
 Prude and onde and feondes gyn and uychen sunegyng,  
 We mote forsake er ure fyn, and do therof mendinge.
- fol. 194r We schulde among us habben ay sothe luve and sibbe.  
 We schulde, abute Cristes lay, beon yeornfulle and clybbe.  
 We schulde luvye alleway, for we beoth alle isybbe,  
 And us ibidde nyht and day hwihles that we libbe.
- 55 The sothe luve is god and mylde; nys heo nowiht sturne.  
 Nis heo nouther prut ne wilde, nele heo non ayhte yrne.  
 That folk worth eft wrothe ispild the nule to hire turne.  
 Jhesu, Seynte Marie Child, heom wule his riche werne.
- 60 The sothe luve is al rihtwis; ne kepeth heo non onde.  
 Mid than folke that rihtwis is, he wile ay atstonde.  
 Ure Louerd Crist, that almyhti is, alese us of his bonde  
 And lede us into heovene blyss and sette us on his ryht honde. Amen.

## 26. A HOMILY ON SOOTH LOVE

---

30           With good prayer and thanks, we ought to cry out to Christ,  
And ask for mercy for our errors, for our madness,  
For our very great sins, for our foul deeds,  
When he comes among us and hopes to lead us with him.

          Our Lord Christ wants to draw us to heaven, truly,  
If we determine to flee from evil, we don't need to miss that.  
35           Well is he who'll there abide; he may there have comfort;  
He may there always see Christ and much joy and bliss.

          There is day without night; no one there needs to sigh,  
Where there's peace without strife — so good is heaven's realm!  
There is truth without injustice, and always fairness.  
40           There are commoner and knight equal, men poor and rich.

          True love is among them and mercy and righteousness,  
Right belief and clean thoughts, and harmony and humility.  
There isn't any injustice or wrong, or wrath or folly.  
There is joy and merry songs without any treachery.

45           If we want there to enter into that rich dwelling,  
Then vanity and foul strife, and anger and hatred,  
Pride and malice and devils' tricks and every kind of sin,  
We must forsake before we die, and do penance for it.

          We should always have among us true love and harmony.  
50           Toward Christ's law, we should be desirous and eager.  
We should love in every way, for we're all closely related,  
fol. 194r       And pray night and day while we're alive.

          True love is good and gentle; it's not at all severe.  
It's neither proud nor wild, nor does it desire anything.  
55           Those folks who won't turn to it will be harshly brought to ruin.  
Jesus, Holy Mary's Child, will deny them his kingdom.

          True love is all righteousness; it contains no malice.  
Among folks who are righteous, it will always abide.  
May our Lord Christ, who's almighty, free us from his bondage  
60           And lead us into heaven's bliss and set us at his right hand. Amen.



## 27. THE SHIRES AND HUNDREDS OF ENGLAND

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[fol. 194r] *Her bigymneth the syren and the hundredes of Englonde.*

- 1 Englelond is eyhte hundred myle long, from Penwyth steorte (that is fyftene mylen byyonde Mihhales-steowe on Cornwale) fort that cume to Katenes. The breade of Englelonde is threo hundred myle brod, from Dewyes-steowe to Doveran. On Englelonde syndon two and thrytti schire, summe more and summe lasse, and threottene byscopryche and two erchebiscopryche, that is, alles, vyftene biscopryche. On is the erchebiscophryche of Kanterbury; othe the leod-biscopryche on Rouecestre; the thridde on Lundene; the feorththe on Northwyth; the fyfte on Cicestre; the sexte on Wyncestre; the seovethe on Saresbury (this bispryche wes hwylen two bispriche: theo other stol wes at Remmesbury and the other at Shireburne, ac Eadward King bitauhte theos two Heremon Biscop, and he myd thes kinges leave adylegade tha, twa noman, and makede enne at Saresburi); the eyhteothe on Excestre (this wes ek two bispriche, other on Cornwale and the stol wes at Seynte Germane, and the other stol at Bridyport, ac Leofrych Biscop hit makede to one myd Eadwardes Kynges leave and sette hit to Excestre); the nyethe on Bathun (ac thes stol wes at Welle, [fol. 194v] and Bathe wes abbodryche, and on Willames daye the yonger kynges wes that abboddie bynumen and imaked ther bisscop stol thurh Johan); the teonthe on Wirecestre; the eoll-este on Hereforde; the tweolfte on Lychesfeld; the threotteothe on Lyncholne (ac this wes hwile threo bisscopryche; forthi herto hereth .viii. store schire and on half schire); .xiii. on Dunholme; on Everwich (this wes .v. bispriche: on the erchebisscopryche, other on other half thes wateres, .iiij. on Rypun, .iiij. on Hwytobi, .v. at Beverley). Her beoth .xv. bispryche.
- 2 Swo we biforan quethen, .xxxij. schiren syndan on Englonde, and Northhumbre is withutan, and Lothen, and Westmaralond, and Cumberlond, and Cornwale. On Cornwale, syndan .vii. lutle schire, and Scotlaund, and Brutlaund, and Wyht. Thes .xxxij. schire syndon todelede on threo lawan. On is West Sexene lawe; other Denelawe; the thrydde Mercena lawe. To West Sexene lawe bilympeth .ix. schiren: .i. Kent, .ii. Suthsexe, .iii. Sutheray, .iiii. Bearrucschire, .v. Wiltoneschire (on Wiltoneschire syndon .xlviij. hundred hida), .vi. Suthhamptounschire, .vii. Sumersethschire, .viii. Dorsetschire, .ix. Devenaschre. To Denelawe bilympeth .xv. schire: Everwichschire, Snotingham, Deorebyschire, Leycestreschire, Lyncolneschire, Hertfordschire, Buringhamschire, Suthfolk, Northfolc, Bedefordschre (.xii. hundred hida), Eastsexe, Grauntebruggeschire (.xxv. hundred hida), Huntynduneschire (.vii. hundred hida and half hundred), Norhamtoneschire (.xxxij. hundred hida), Middelsex. To Mercene lawe bilympeth .vii. schiren: Gloucestreschire (.xxxiiij. hundred hida), Wyriceschire (.xij. hundred hida), Herefordschire (.xij. hundred hida), Warewikschire (.xij. hundred hida), Oxenefordschire (.xxiiij. [fol. 195r] hundred hida), Slobschire (.xxiiij. hundred hida), Chestreschire (.xij. hundred hida), Staffordschire (.v. hundred hida). This is under al xxvi. thusend hida and on half hundred.



## 27. THE SHIRES AND HUNDREDS OF ENGLAND

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[fol. 194r] *Here begins the shires and the hundreds of England.*

- 1 England is eight hundred miles long, starting from Penwith (fifteen miles beyond Michaelstow in Cornwall) until ending in Caithness. The breadth of England is three hundred miles broad, from Deastow to Dover. In England there are two and thirty shires, some larger and some smaller, and thirteen bishoprics and two archbishoprics, that is, in total, fifteen bishoprics. One is the archbishopric of Canterbury; another is the diocesan in Rochester; the third in London; the fourth in Norwich; the fifth in Chichester; the sixth in Winchester; the seventh in Salisbury (this bishopric was once two bishoprics: one stool was at Ramsbury and the other at Sherborne, but King Edward handed over these two to Bishop Heremon, and he with the king's leave did away with them, took those two, and made one at Salisbury); the eighth in Exeter (this was also two bishoprics, one in Cornwall and the stool was at St. Germans, and the other stool at Bridport, but Bishop Leofric converted it to one with King Edward's leave and established it in Exeter); the ninth in Bath (but this stool was in Wells, [fol. 194v] and Bath was an abbacy, and during King William the Younger's reign, that abbacy was taken and made there a bishop's stool by John); the tenth in Worcester; the eleventh in Hereford; the twelfth in Lichfield; the thirteenth in Lincoln (but this was once three bishoprics; to it belong eight large shires and a half shire); the fourteenth in Durham; the fifteenth in York (this was five bishoprics: one the archbishopric, another across the river, 3. in Ripon, 4. in Whitby, 5. in Beverley). Here are fifteen bishoprics.
- 2 As we said before, there are thirty-two shires in England and beyond it are Northumberland, Lothian, Westmorland, Cumberland, and Cornwall. In Cornwall, there are seven little shires, and Scotland, Britain, and Isle of Wight. These thirty-two shires are divided into three laws. One is West Saxon law; another is Danelaw; the third is Mercian law. To West Saxon law belong nine shires: 1. Kent, 2. Sussex, 3. Surrey, 4. Berkshire, 5. Wiltshire (in Wiltshire there are forty-eight hundred hides), 6. Southamptonshire, 7. Somerset, 8. Dorset, 9. Devon. To Danelaw belong fifteen shires: Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bedfordshire (twelve hundred hides), Essex, Cambridgeshire (twenty-five hundred hides), Huntingdonshire (eight and a half hundred hides), Northamptonshire (thirty-two hundred hides), Middlesex. To Mercian law belong eight shires: Gloucestershire (thirty-four hundred hides), Worcestershire (twelve hundred hides), Herefordshire (twelve hundred hides), Warwickshire (twelve hundred hides), Oxfordshire (twenty-four [fol. 195r] hundred hides), Shropshire (twenty-four hundred hides), Cheshire (twelve hundred hides), Staffordshire (five hundred hides). This is overall twenty-six thousand and a half hundred hides.



## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

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fol. 198rb *Ici comencent les unze peynes de enfern les queus Seynt Pool vist.*

*Plest vus oyer une demaunde  
Ke li Deable fist estraunge  
De un cheytif peccheur.  
Ke hors fu mys de grant tristur,  
5 De mort en vie resuscite  
Par la volunte de De.*

“Unsely gost, hwat dostu here?  
Thu were in helle myne vere.  
Hwo haveth helle dure unloke,  
10 That thu ert of pyne ibroke?”

*Dunke respund le mort a lu  
En le secle u il fu,  
Cunte en ordre, e cunte e dist  
15 Les .xi. peynes ke seynt Pol vist,  
Des autres ke il an senty.  
Un sul mot ne menty.*

“Wiltu ihere me, Sathan,  
Hw ich am of helle igan?  
Wrms habbeth my fleys ifreten,  
20 And mine freond me habbeth foryeten.

fol. 198va Ich mon wes, as thu wel wost,  
And nu ich a wrecche gost.  
In helle ich habbe yare ibeo,  
That mon may on myn hewe iseo!  
25 Of me, mon may forbysne taken  
That wile his sunnes forsaken —  
To wrothere hele he wes ibore,  
That for sunnes is forlore,  
For the mon that her wrcheth swo  
30 That his saule to helle go,  
In mo pyne he schal beo  
Than foweles under heovene fleo!



## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

---

fol. 198rb      *Here begin the eleven pains of hell that Saint Paul saw.*

*I ask that you please listen  
To how the Devil had a dispute  
With a miserable sinner.  
He was released from great sorrow,  
5      Raised from death into life  
By the will of God.*

*“Miserable spirit, what are you doing here?  
You were my companion in hell.  
Who’s unlocked the door of hell,  
10      Releasing you from pain?”*

*Then responds the dead to him  
In the world where he was,  
Recounts in order, describes and tells  
The eleven pains that Saint Paul saw,  
15      And others that he’d experienced.  
Not a single word lies.*

*“Will you listen to me, Satan,  
About how I’ve been freed from hell?  
Worms have gnawed my flesh,  
And my friends have forgotten me.  
20      I was a man, as you well know,  
And now I’m a miserable spirit.  
I’ve been in hell a long time,  
As anyone can see by my hue!  
25      In me, one may learn a lesson  
So that he may give up his sins —  
To destruction he will be borne,  
Lost because of sins,  
Because whoever behaves here  
30      Such that his soul goes to hell,  
He’ll be in pains more numerous  
Than than the birds flying under heaven!*

1

Erest, ther beoth bernynde treon  
 No mon ne may herre iseon,  
 35 Ther the saulen beoth anhon  
 That her habbeth sunnes idon  
 And nolden never to chireche gon.  
 Forthi, hi tholieth ther such won.  
 Thickure hi hongeth her over al  
 40 Than don been in wynter stal.

2

Seththen, ther is on ouen ihat.  
 Seove deovlen thar stondeth at,  
 And the saulen underfoth,  
 And heom into the fure doth.  
 45 Things ther beoth al abuten  
 That mon auhte muchel duten:  
 Snou and is, and lyvred blod;  
 Snaken and neddren stingeth for wod  
 Of that fur heo doth heom ther  
 50 And eft also hi weren er.  
 Hwiche saule the ther cumeth to  
 Naveth heo never reste ne ro.  
 Heo wolde deye ac heo ne may —  
 fol. 198vb Ac ther heom tyd beon alne way.  
 55 Swich pyne heo tholie schal  
 That wes of his fleysse to gal  
 And nolde leten his fleysse wil,  
 Ac folewede al that wes unskil;  
 And ther heo tholyeth swich wondrawn,  
 60 That her arereden unryhte lawen;  
 Thider cumeth the saulen ilome  
 That her demde false domes.  
 Mo saulen tholieth ther swich wo  
 Thene fysses swimme other fueles go!  
 65 Heo gredeth lude and wepeth sore,  
 Ac bote ne tyd heom never more.

3

A hwel of stele is further mo,  
 And berneth lihte and turneth o;  
 A thusend spoken beoth theron,  
 70 And pykes over al idon.

## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

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### 1

First, there are burning trees  
Like none that one may see here,  
35 Whereon are hung the souls  
Who here have committed sins  
And refused to ever go to church.  
For that, they suffer there such woes.  
There they hang in greater thickness  
40 Than do bees in their winter's hive.

### 2

Next, there is a hot furnace.  
Seven devils stand at it,  
With souls underfoot,  
Tossing them into the fire.  
45 There are things all around  
That men fear greatly:  
Snow and ice, and clotted blood;  
Snakes and adders fiercely sting  
Whoever's thrown in that fire  
50 And also those already there.  
Whichever soul they attack there  
Has never any rest or relief.  
They want to die but can't —  
fol. 198vb What they get there is something else.  
55 Such pain will they suffer  
Who were of their flesh too lascivious  
And wouldn't control their flesh's desire,  
But followed all that was wrong;  
There they suffer such miseries,  
60 Who here enacted unjust laws;  
Thither come often the souls  
Who here judged false judgments.  
More souls suffer there such woe  
Than fish swim or birds fly!  
65 They cry out loudly and weep hard,  
But remedy helps them nevermore.

### 3

A wheel of steel is further along,  
And burns bright and turns perpetually;  
A thousand spokes are on it,  
70 And spikes set all over it.

Ther schule the saulen beo todrawe  
 That her arereden unryhte lawe.  
 Mo saulen tholieth ther sucche wowe  
 Thane be flothre in the snowe.

4

- 75 Further, ther is a water wallinde hot,  
 That is deop and long and brod,  
 Blakkure than the swarte pich,  
 And stynketh so forholde lych  
 Of uych a wrm that atter bereth
- 80 Other hit stingeth other hit tereth.  
 Ifulled is that fule pool  
 That ever is hot and never cool.  
 Bisydes stondesth an feondes trume,  
 And wayteth hwenne the saules cume.
- 85 Heo hire awarieth al athrep  
 fol. 199ra Al so wulves doth the scep.  
 Hwenne the feondes heom forleteth,  
 Snakes and neddren heom imeteth  
 And dreyeth heom into a wel
- 90 Ther heo tholyeth al unsel.  
 Hwenne heo habbeth so idon,  
 Eft hit beoth heom al fornon.  
 Ne may he segge 'waylawei'  
 That so schule pynes nyht and day.
- 95 Summe me may ther iseon  
 That stondesth up to heore kneon,  
 And summe to heore mydtheyh,  
 And summe to heore uvere breyh,  
 And summe riht to heore theth,
- 100 As he her his sunnes deth.  
 Bakbiteres weren theo  
 That stondesth up to heore kneo;  
 That wes heore other copynere  
 Stondesth up to heore swere;
- 105 And heo that her wedlac breketh,  
 To heore muthe the flod taketh;  
 He that is glad of othres harme  
 Stondesth up into than arme;  
 That spek in chirche that nes no god,
- 110 To his muthe taketh the flod;  
 That wreyeth his sibbe other him fled,  
 Aboven his eyen the flod geth;

## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

---

Thereon will the souls be torn apart  
Who here enacted unjust laws.  
More souls suffer there such woe  
Than are snowflakes in the snow.

4

75 Further on, there's a river boiling hot,  
Deep and long and broad,  
Blacker than swarthy pitch,  
And stinking like an overripe corpse  
80 With poisonous worms that  
Sting it or tear at it.  
Befouled is that foul pool  
That's always hot and never cool.  
Beside it stands a devil's troop,  
Awaiting when the souls come.  
85 They strangle them in flocks  
fol. 199ra Just as wolves do sheep.  
When the fiends let go of them,  
Snakes and adders come upon them  
And draw them into a well  
90 Where they suffer terribly.  
After this has been done to them,  
It happens to them again and again.  
He cannot utter 'waylaway'  
Who suffers such pains night and day.  
95 There are some seen there  
Who stand up to their knees,  
And some to their thighs,  
And some to their upper brows,  
And some right to their teeth,  
100 Just as he committed his sins here.  
Backbiters were they  
Who stand up to their knees;  
Those who were whores or paramours  
Stand up to their necks;  
105 And those who broke wedlock,  
To their mouths receive the river;  
He who's glad of others' harm  
Stands up to his arms;  
He who speaks idly in church,  
110 To his mouth receives the river;  
He who accuses or abandons his brother,  
The river goes above his eyes;

115 That doth his wil that nys noht ryht,  
Of him, ne may me iseo nowiht!  
Hwo is wis bi me, beo war  
That his saule ne cume thar,  
For theyh the middenerd ago,  
fol. 199rb Heore pyne ilesteth o.

5

120 Vurthur, is a ful deop fen  
Ful of wowares and of wymmen.  
The stude is thustrore thene the nyht,  
For ther ne cumeth never lyht,  
And stinketh fulre thane the hund  
For brunston walleth at the grund.  
125 Ten thusend feondes and wel mo  
Thar freteth heore tunge a two  
And dreyeth ut heore brayn  
Vor heo weren of gavele vayn;  
Such is heore pyne ther,  
130 Vor heo weren gavelers her.  
Thenne beoth the wymmen further idon  
That nowiht nabbeth heom upon —  
Heom me drepeth myd the piche  
As we brede with the spiche.  
135 Neddren heore breosten suketh,  
And snakes heore eyen luketh;  
Hellehundes gnaweth heore feet,  
And four feondes heom stondeth at,  
For heo heore maydenhod lure  
140 Er heo come to chireche dure,  
And furduden heore istreon  
That hit ne moste ifulled beon.  
Heo hit wurpen hundes other swin.  
Forthi, hi tholieth thar such pyn.

6

145 Vurther, ther beoth wimmen and wapmen bo  
That feondes dreyeth al a two;  
Hwenne hi beoth so todrawen,  
Gripes freteth heore mawen.  
Half heo doth in o fur,  
fol. 199va And half into a froren mur;  
151 And heore ineward, uych del —  
Ne beo the tharm ne so smel —

## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

---

He who willfully does what's not right,  
Of him, one sees nothing at all!  
115 Whoever seeks wisdom from me, beware  
That his soul never come there,  
For even if the world passes away,  
fol. 199rb Their pain lasts forever.

### 5

Further on, is a very deep swamp  
120 Full of wooers and women.  
The place is darker than night,  
For light never comes there,  
And stinks fouler than a mongrel  
Because brimstone wells from the ground.  
125 Ten thousand fiends and even more  
There chew their tongues in two  
And draw out their brains  
For they were desirous of tribute;  
Such is their pain there,  
130 For they were usurers here.  
The women are placed further on  
Having nothing at all on them —  
They baste them with pitch  
As we roast meat with grease.  
135 Adders suck their breasts,  
And snakes close up their eyes;  
Hellhounds gnaw their feet,  
And four fiends stand near them,  
Because they lost their virginity  
140 Before they came to the church door,  
And destroyed their offspring  
So that it couldn't be baptized.  
They cast it out to hounds or swine.  
For that, they suffer there such pain.

### 6

145 Further on, there are women and men  
Being split in two by fiends;  
As they are drawn in such a manner,  
Vultures devour their stomachs.  
They throw half into a fire,  
fol. 199va And half into a frozen marsh;  
151 And their innards, every bit —  
No matter how small is their gut —

Eft heo werpeth, al in al,  
 And wurcheth to that ilke gal.  
 155 Uuele, heo beoth ipyned ynouh,  
 That her duden with heom woh,  
 Other reveden wrecches heore lond,  
 And brohten heom to muchel scond,  
 He ne funde fader ne freond hom by.  
 160 Forthi, me drof hom of londe awy;  
 Of heom hi token unriht mol!  
 Forthi, hi drayeth myd such sol.

7

Vurther, ther is o wateres flod  
 That is ymeynd al with blod;  
 165 A thusen saulen ther beoth bi  
 Sore ofthurst and ful hungri.  
 In fure hi berneth al away,  
 And so doth that water, nyht and day.  
 Ne moten heo biden never o sope,  
 170 Nabben heo never so mucche hope.  
 Such pine hi habbeth imet,  
 That breken the hesten that weren iset  
 In Holy Chirche over al.  
 Forthi, hi pleyeth myd such bal.

8

Vurther, ther beoth olde men  
 That among neddren habbeth heore den;  
 Heom heo tostyngeth uychon,  
 And freteth heore fleys to the bon,  
 And neddren suketh heore brayn  
 fol. 199vb And creopeth ut and in ayeyn.  
 181 Summe beoth furbrend and summe ifrore,  
 And alle the bones beoth todrore.  
 Hwenne hi beoth ifrete uychon,  
 Eft hi beoth al in on,  
 185 Noht for to wenden heom from,  
 Ac for eft tholie that wrecchedom.  
 Heo woneth and groneth day and nyht,  
 Ac hit ne helpeth heom nowiht,  
 For heo nolden beon ischriven  
 190 The hwile that hi mosten lyven.  
 Four deofle heom stondeth bi,  
 That pyneth heom ful reuly.

## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

---

They cast out likewise, all in all,  
And similarly treat the gall bladder.  
155 Vilely, they're made to suffer plenty,  
Whoever here caused woe with them,  
Or stole from poor wretches their land,  
And brought them to great disgrace,  
Those who were fatherless and friendless.  
160 For that, they drove them off their land;  
From them they took an unjust tribute!  
For that, they are gutted so filthily.

7

Further on, there's a watery stream  
That's all mixed with blood;  
165 Therein are a thousand souls  
Desperately thirsty and very hungry.  
All of them always in fire burn,  
And so does that water, night and day.  
They may never expect a sip,  
170 Nor do they ever have any hope.  
Such pain are they in,  
Who broke the commandments set  
In Holy Church over everyone.  
For that, they play with so much sorrow.

8

175 Further on, there are old men  
Who dwell among adders;  
They sting every one of them,  
And gnaw their flesh to the bone,  
And adders suck their brains  
fol. 199vb And crawl out and in again.  
181 Some are burning, some freezing,  
And all the bones have fallen apart.  
When they've been all consumed,  
Again they join all into one,  
185 Not in order to leave them,  
But to suffer again that wretchedness.  
They lament and groan day and night,  
But it doesn't help them at all,  
For they wouldn't be shriven  
190 When they were alive.  
Four devils stand near them,  
Torturing them grievously.

Unsely men, hwi neren hi war  
 The hwile that hi lyveden her?  
 195 Hwi nolden heo don for him no god  
 That heom lesede wyth his blod,  
 And yef us hus and lond and wif,  
 And wit and wisdom and joye and lyf,  
 And al that wes in worlde god?  
 200 And non of heom hit ne understod;  
 Heo nolden noht thenche theron,  
 Ne povre wrecches no god don.  
 Heo wenden hit scholde lesten o.  
 Forthi heo beoth in suche wo!  
 205 Preostes heste ne Godes lay  
 Ne heolden hi noht bi heore day,  
 Ac trichurs and lyeres, and les  
 That weren her — wo is ham thes!  
 Ne wenden heo nevermore beon ded,  
 fol. 200ra For that wes thes feondes red,  
 211 Ac ever as heo lyveden lengur,  
 So here pynen were strengur.  
 Heo beoth iput in thilke trume  
 That ne levede nouht in Godes Sone,  
 215 Ne that Ihesuc wes iboren  
 Of that mayde that wes icoren  
 For to nymen that holy streon.  
 Wel wes him that hit moste iseon.

9

In helle is a deop gayhol;  
 220 Tharunder is a ful hot pol.  
 Ten thusend deoflen and wel mo  
 Ther doth the wrecche saulen wo,  
 That nymeth eaules and heom totereth.  
 Nis ther non that heom atdareth.  
 225 Ho stondeth, thustrur thane the nyht,  
 Theo that demde Jesu Crist;  
 Nis non other pine so strong  
 As the stunch that heom is among.  
 An heyh tofore than hevene King,  
 230 Of heom ne speketh me nothing;  
 Ne dar no seynt heom bidde fore  
 Forthi heo beoth ever furlore.

## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

---

Wretched men, why weren't they wary  
While they lived here?  
195 Why wouldn't they do good for him  
Who delivered them with his blood,  
And gave us house and land and wife,  
And wit and wisdom and joy and life,  
And all that was good in the world?  
200 Yet none of them understood it;  
They wouldn't consider that,  
Or do good for poor wretches.  
They thought it'd last forever.  
For that, they're in such woe!  
205 Neither priests' words nor God's law  
Restrained them in their day,  
But these traitors and liars, who  
Were false here — woe to them!  
They never thought about being dead,  
fol. 200ra For so did these fiends advise them,  
211 But the longer they lived here,  
The stronger were their pains.  
They're put in that same troop  
That didn't believe in God's Son,  
215 Nor that Jesus was born  
Of that maid who was chosen  
To bear that holy offspring.  
Fortunate was he who understood that.

9

In hell there's a deep dungeon;  
220 Under it is a very hot pool.  
Ten thousand devils and even more  
Torture there the wretched souls,  
Taking awls and tearing them to pieces.  
No one there escapes their notice.  
225 There stand, darker than night,  
Those who judged Jesus Christ;  
There's no other pain so strong  
As the stench that's among them.  
On high before heaven's King,  
230 They never speak of them;  
No saint dares intercede for them  
Because they're forever lost.

10

Vurther, ther his onother put  
 That ne cumeth never undut;  
 235 Seove duren ther beoth on  
 The saulen for to underfon.  
 Lyhtliche me may cume therinne,  
 Ac up never for none gynne;  
 To so deop hit is wel neyh  
 fol. 200rb As heovene is, from the eorthe, heyh.  
 241 Therinne goth soulen thikkure inouh  
 Than leves fallen of the bouh.  
 The put is hot at helle grunde.  
 Tharinne, is mony on hungri hund —  
 245 Mo hundes therinne beoth  
 Thane foweles under heovene fleoth —  
 And the lyun that wes so strong,  
 That al the worlde underfong  
 Er that he was ibrouht adun  
 250 With Cristes holy passyun.

11

Therunder, is of iren a wal  
 That is of saulen ifuld al,  
 On heom is mony yrene beond,  
 That is hatture thene the brond.  
 255 Therinne beoth the saulen idon  
 That weren biheaveded other anhon,  
 Other that so hedden isped  
 That leyen hedden in theovene bed,  
 Other weren mansed bi nome  
 260 Forthi heo habbeth Godes grome.”  
  
 Ich wile segge eu a soth:  
 Hwoso hit halt, god hit him doth.  
 Hit is iwriten on the Bok,  
 For witnesse therof ich tok.  
 265 Theyh on hundred heveden iseten  
 Seoththe Kaym wes biyeten,  
 And nyht and day heveden iwaked,  
 And teth and tunge of stel imaked,  
 And tolden of helle pyne o,  
 fol. 200va Yet ther beoth a thusend mo!  
 271 Hwose is wis beo ywar  
 That his saule ne cume thar!

10

Further on, there's another pit  
That never becomes unshut;  
235 Seven doors are on it  
To receive the souls.  
Easily may they come therein,  
But never go back up, by any trick;  
It's well nigh as deep  
fol. 200rb As, from the earth, heaven is high.  
241 Therein go souls much more thickly  
Than leaves fall off the branch.  
The pit is hot at hell's floor.  
In it, there are many hungry hounds —  
245 There are in it more hounds  
Than are birds flying under heaven —  
And the lion that was so strong,  
That appropriated all the world  
Before he was conquered  
250 By Christ's holy passion.

11

Down below, there's an iron-walled enclosure  
Entirely full of souls,  
With many iron bands on them,  
Hotter than a branding-iron.  
255 In there are consigned the souls  
Who were beheaded or hung,  
Or who'd gone about  
Lying in a bed of thieves,  
Or were excommunicated by name  
260 For they received God's anger.”  
  
I'll tell you the truth:  
Whoever obeys, it does him good.  
It's written in the Bible,  
Of which I give witness.  
265 Even if a hundred men had sat  
Since the birth of Cain,  
And stayed awake night and day,  
With teeth and tongues of steel,  
And spoke always of hell's pains,  
fol. 200va There'd still be a thousand more!  
271 Whoever's wise should beware  
That his soul not come there!

275 Vor theyh hi greden evermo  
Ne helph heom wurth o slo.  
Ac bidde we Crist that is us buve,  
For his swete moder luve,  
Leve us suche werkes wurche  
And so anuren Holy Chireche  
280 Hwarthurh we beon iborewe,  
And ibrouht ut of kare and seorewe.

*Ki ces .xi. peynes escryvera;  
Bon aventure ly avendra.*

285 Hwoso wrot thes pynen ellevene,  
His soule mote cumme te hevene  
And pleye ther myd engles bryhte,  
Ther heo beoth in hevene lyhte;  
And nabbe he never Godes grome,  
For Hug' is his rihte nome,  
And he is curteys and hendy.  
290 Thi, god him lete wel endy.  
Amen.

*Expliciunt .xj. pene inferni quas vidit beatus Paulus.*

## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

---

Even if they were to cry out forever  
It wouldn't help them even a bit.  
275 So let's pray to Christ above us,  
For love of his blessed mother,  
To allow us to perform such works  
And thus honor Holy Church  
So that we may be saved,  
280 And brought out of care and sorrow.

*Here are written the eleven pains;  
Have good fortune by it.*

He who wrote these eleven pains,  
May his soul come to heaven  
285 And play there with bright angels,  
Where they're in heaven's light;  
And may he never have God's anger,  
For Hugh is his true name,  
And he is courteous and kind.  
290 For that, may his ending be good.  
Amen.

*Here end the eleven pains of hell that Saint Paul saw.*





## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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### 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

Appearing at the head of Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 (II), *The Passion of Jesus Christ* opens the book in commemoration of the Passion, given as a moral lesson with brief asides. This long poem paraphrases and blends the gospel narrative shared in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The poet's intent is to preach a proper understanding of Jesus's life. The "lutele tale" (line 1) he will tell, he says, is not of Charlemagne and his twelve peers, but rather of Christ's suffering, and implicitly, too, the events touching the lives of the apostles. He begins by calling the *Passion* a stirring adventure of more significance than a popular tale could ever hold. The narrative of Christ's suffering is offered as more properly edifying, kingly, and victorious than are tales of a worldly emperor.

After a short prologue, the poet sketches Christ's main life events — birth, baptism, temptation by Satan, and ministry — paraphrasing brief bits of gospel. The narrative then proceeds according to Matthew 26–27, Mark 14–15, Luke 22–23, and John 13, 18–19. The key events, economically recounted, are the Last Supper, Judas's betrayal of Jesus, Jesus seized by the Jews, Peter's acts and denials, Jesus's trial before Pilate, and the Crucifixion. The Resurrection is paraphrased in a last section under its own rubric. Borrowing mainly from John 20, but also from Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and Acts 2, the poet depicts Mary Magdalene at the tomb, Christ's appearance before her, Christ's coming among the apostles, and Christ's Ascension to heaven. The *Passion* concludes with a prayer for the writer and those "bothe yonge and olde" of his "ordre" (lines 699–700). The prayer in combination with the moralizing glosses implies that the author was a friar, a canon, or a monk.

Directed at an audience "in English" (as the incipit stresses) and projecting a popular narrative style, the *Passion's* religious directives reinforce the absolute importance of confession — an annual imperative decreed for all Christians in England after the reforms enacted by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) — a standard theme for an evangelizing preacher and working confessor. Some strategic repetitions emphasize that Judas, in betraying Jesus, acted like Satan when he tempted Christ, and that Satan, in wanting folks to sin, acts like the envious Jews who conspired to kill Jesus. Fear of death is normal — indeed, Jesus felt it — but with God's Passion and confession as shields, one need fear neither death nor the pains of hell. A countervailing message of God's love is shown to exist in the Passion narrative, which makes the doctrinal theme of this long scriptural paraphrase congruent with the softened strains of Friar Thomas of Hales in *Love Rune* or the poet of *A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 19, 26).

*Passion* is written in a Southwestern dialect in agreement with the provenance of Jesus 29. The Gospels and Acts are probably the direct source for *Passion*, but other well-disseminated analogues may have been known by the poet, in particular, *The Gospel of Nicodemus* and Herman de Valenciennes's *La Passioun Nostre Seignour* (ca. 1188–1195). The former presents, as biblical apocrypha, the trial before Pilate and the Crucifixion in legalistic detail; the latter paraphrases the Gospels in Anglo-Norman *laissez*, while dramatically heightening, contrasting, and psychologizing the tortured emotions of Judas and Peter. Both works survive in thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman copies in another trilingual West Midland miscellany: MS

Harley 2253 (*CHMS*, 1:208–359). The varied contents of Jesus 29 include two more biblical paraphrases: *The Woman of Samaria* (art. 5) and the Anglo-Norman *Tobias* (Reinsch, ed., “La vie de Tobie”). Another Jesus 29 text has an incipit that states its English language: *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr in English* (art. 17).

Enlarged, decorated capitals and rubrics demarcate the *Passion*’s three sections: Prologue (lines 1–20), Christ’s Passion (lines 21–552), Christ’s Resurrection (lines 553–706). Smaller yet somewhat enlarged colored initials indicate stanza-like groupings of couplets. Most are four, six, or eight lines in length, and many are longer. This edition groups lines according to the positioning of the colored initials.

[Fols. 144r–155r. *NIMEV* 1441. *DIMEV* 2431. Muir, *MWME*, 2:393–94, 544 [33]. **Quire:** 1. **Meter:** 706 septenary lines (seven stresses per line) with caesuras, in rhymed couplets, with some quatrains and sestetts, *aa(aa)(aa)*. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. Decorated, much enlarged initials appear after rubrics at major transition points (lines 1, 21, 553). **Edition:** Morris, pp. 37–57. **Seventeenth-century transcription, lines 1–85:** Oxford, BodL, MS Ashmole 1449, pp. 163–66, by Welsh antiquary Edward Llyud, Assistant Keeper (1683–1689) and Keeper (1691–1709) of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Hill-History, p. 203n1; and Hill-Part2, p. 276).]

- 3        *Nis hit nouht of Karlemeyne ne of the duzeper.* The poet establishes the work’s opposition to secular French *chansons de geste* (songs of adventure). The topos is common in Anglo-French devotional literature (*VLT*, pp. 238–41). For the author — and perhaps the scribe too, because the compilation begins here — the chief adventure for humankind is Jesus’s Passion. Compare the opening of Chardri’s Anglo-Norman *Life of the Seven Sleepers* (also in Jesus 29): “Gentlemen, I do not want to waste my efforts on the fables of Ovid, and I am certainly not going to say anything about Tristram nor Galeron; or waste any attention upon Renart or Hersent. I would rather talk about God and his power” (Chardri, *The Works*, trans. Cartlidge, p. 42). Compare also the English poem *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), which celebrates Saint Thomas in epic style; *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12), which suggests a chivalric defense of Holy Church; and *Love Rune* (art. 19), which extols spiritual love in courtly terms.
- 5        *Al volk wes todreved, so schep beoth in the wolde.* Compare Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. The line is repeated in its biblical context later; see lines 133–34.
- 17       *Heo habbe scolde, and so we muwe, ne therfth ther non adrede.* “He had, and thus we have, no need to be afraid.” On Jesus as an exemplum on the fear of death, compare lines 153–54 (note).
- 25–26   *After that he was . . . that hatte Seynt Johan.* On Jesus’s baptism by John the Baptist, compare Matthew 3:13, Mark 1:9, and John 1:29–31.
- 27–40   *The Holy Gost hyne ledde . . . hym to servy.* On Jesus’s temptation by Satan, compare Matthew 4:1–11, Mark 1:12–13, and Luke 4:1–13. See also the note to lines 681–85, below.
- 35       *yssyng.* “avarice.” See *MED*, *yitsinge* (ger.), sense c.
- 38       *To hwan artu ycume?* This question posed by Jesus to Satan is later posed by Jesus to Judas: “To hwan ertu ycume?” (line 193). The repetition serves to directly liken Judas to Satan. On the phrase *to hwan*, “why, to what purpose,” see *MED*, *whan* (pron.), sense 2b.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 47–48      *Seththe to luyve . . . treowe and holde.* Compare the message on God's love and commandments as found in *A Homily on Sooth Love* (art. 26), lines 1, 53–58.
- 49            *for-hwon.* "why." See *MED*, *for-whan* (pronominal adv. and conj.), sense 1, and compare line 242.
- 59            *smythes sune.* "carpenter's son." See *MED*, *smith* (n.), sense 1b, where this line is cited.
- 62            *His hwile he vorleost that doth for the quede.* "He loses his labor who serves the wicked." This saying is offered as a common proverb. See Whiting W219.
- 65–71      *Tho he com . . . "mote he beo."* On Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, compare Matthew 21:8–11, Mark 11:7–11, Luke 19:36–38, and John 12:12–15.
- 66            *none robe of fowe ne of gray.* "no robe of variegated or gray fur." This phrase for a fur garment, derived from OF *vair et gris* and common in Middle English verse, appears elsewhere in Jesus 29: *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 357; *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 14; and *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 14. Dickins-Wilson explain that the first kind of fur comes "from the grey back and white belly of a sort of squirrel, the second from the grey back alone" (p. 197n116). See *MED*, *fou* (adj. as n.), sense 2, and *grei* (n.(2)), sense a.
- 73–80      *Tho he com . . . hit habbeth ymaked.* On Jesus and the moneychangers in the temple, compare Matthew 21:12–13, Mark 11:15–17, Luke 19:45–46, and John 2:14–16.
- 85            *neyhlechet.* "approached, drew near." See *MED*, *neighlechen* (v.), sense a, and compare *The Woman of Samaria* (art. 5), line 6.
- 89–299     *At the Schere Thursday . . . and bigon to wepe.* The paraphrased account of the Last Supper, Judas's betrayal, the seizure of Jesus, and Peter's denials are based on Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 13, and John 18:1–27.
- 108          *And the Veond him on bicom myd therylke snode.* This scene of Judas taking the bread from Jesus is treated with high drama in Herman de Valenciennes's biblical paraphrase. See *CHMS*, 1:260–63 (lines 1028–45).
- 111          *"Thu hit seyst," queth ure Louerd, "and dest al thine mihte."* Jesus is ordering Judas to carry out his destined part in Jesus's own execution.
- 119          *iredede.* "ready, in order, taken care of." See *MED*, *iredede* (adj.), from OE *geræde*, with this occurrence being the only example cited.
- 133–34     *'Beo the seopheorde . . . alle beon todreved.'* Compare Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. The poet cites this line in the Prologue (line 5).

- 153–54 *Wel ouhte we . . . we beoth here!* “Well ought we be afraid if we are wise, / And conquer our sins while we are here!” The poet offers a moralizing couplet, using Jesus’s momentary fear of death as an exemplum. Compare lines 17–18.
- 167 *He wes on of the thre.* Peter, James, and John, the three apostles who accompanied Jesus to Gethsemane, are named at line 151. See Matthew 26:37 and Mark 14:33.
- 188 *veollen to the grunde.* “fell to the ground.” The Jews appear to fall back slightly, making way for the interaction between Jesus and Judas. At line 195, the Jews spring up from the ground.
- 193 *To hwan ertu ycume?* This is the same question Jesus asked of Satan earlier. The repetition seems deliberate. See note to line 38, above.
- 198 *Malkes.* Malchus, whose ear was struck by Peter’s sword, was a servant of the Jewish high priest. See John 18:10, and compare Matthew 26:51–52, Mark 14:47, and Luke 22:50.
- 223 *cendal.* Sendal is a costly fabric, probably of silk or linen. See *MED*, *cendal* (n.), sense 1.
- 242 *vor-hwon.* See note to line 49, above.
- 244–46 *the temple al tobreke . . . a new a areare.* This reference to Christ’s breaking and rebuilding of Solomon’s temple in three days derives from the gospels; see Matthew 26:61, Mark 14:58, and John 2:19–20. On Solomon’s original temple (3 Kings 6–8), compare *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 57 (note), where its mention may allude to Henry III’s building of Westminster Abbey (1245–1269). Elsewhere in *Jesus 29*, King Solomon is known for his judicious sayings; see *Death’s Wither-Clench* (art. 7), lines 21–24, and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 217–18, 274.
- 269 *therof thu nym gome.* “pay attention to it.” See *MED*, *gome* (n.(4)), sense 1b, which cites this line.
- 272–74 *Blyndfellede and spatten . . . Constu hit arede?* This moment of Christ’s torture was often pictured by medieval writers and artists as a cruel game of blindman’s bluff. Compare enactments in medieval drama, for example, “The Buffeting,” in *The Towneley Plays*, lines 497–99 (ed. Epp, pp. 257, 477n498).
- 277–98 *Peter stod bi the fur . . . He wes sori-mod.* The scene of Peter’s denials of Christ is treated with intense theatrical drama in Herman de Valenciennes’s biblical paraphrase. See *CHMS*, 1:276–81 (lines 1346–1407).
- 300–531 *Theyh he hedde . . . upe thene ston.* The paraphrased account of Jesus on trial before Pilate and the Crucifixion are based on Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18:28–40, and John 19. Compare also *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, in *CHMS*, 1:314–33.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 364 *And heo wel atholdeth, and leggeth ine hord.* “And heed them well, and store them up.” See *MED*, *at-holden* (v.), sense 3, “(sth.) fix in mind, heed; to grasp, comprehend.” On the phrase *leggeth ine hord*, see *MED*, *hord* (n.(1)), sense 1b(a), “store or keep (words, etc.) for reference.”
- 372 *al skere.* “free, unhindered.” See *MED*, *sker(e)* (adj.), sense 1c, where this line is cited. The word also means “innocent, blameless” (sense 1a), a meaning also appropriate here.
- 379 *knyhtes.* The Roman soldiers are consistently called “knights,” which may reflect some attempt at creating a romance ambience. Muir comments that the poet, in noting that “this is not a tale of Charlemagne and his knights,” inserts some “qualities of a romance, as, for example, in the dramatic emphasis on action, the emotional telling of the betrayal and suffering, the participating Roman ‘knights,’ and the direct dialogue” (*MWME*, 2:393–94). In the French sermon of Thomas of Hales (author of *Love Rune* (art. 19)), Jesus is mocked by “les cheualers paens” (pagan knights) (Legge, ed., “The Anglo-Norman Sermon,” p. 216).
- 419 *letest.* “release, let go, spare (someone’s life).” See *MED*, *leten* (v.), sense 9a(a–b).
- 424 *sixte tide.* “sixth hour.” The time of day follows John 19:14. See also Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33, and Luke 23:44. Another reference to time, at lines 477–78, is likewise biblical, but one at line 657 is not. There may be distant allusions to the canonical hours (matins, lauds, prime, tierce, sext, none, vespers, compline), which, in prayers and devotions found in books of hours, were frequently keyed to the events of the Passion. In a pious French text of this type found in MS Harley 2253, *Seven Hours of the Passion of Jesus Christ* (*CHMS*, 3:298–305, 363–64), the moment when Pilate relinquished Jesus to his Jewish accusers corresponds to tierce. Compare also *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 26 (note).
- 426 *an hying.* “at once, in haste, soon.” See *MED*, *hiinge* (ger.), sense 1a, which cites this line, and compare note to line 467, below.
- 434 *bouhte us myd his blode.* Medieval Christian doctrine held that God’s sacrifice of his incarnate son Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross, was an act of love that redeemed humankind from its sinful fallen state. Thereafter, human souls could repent, seek God’s grace, and hope to enter heaven. The bloody sacrifice is seen as a “buying” of human souls out of an otherwise certain fate in hell.
- 467 *al on hying.* “very quickly.” Compare note to line 426, above.
- 477–78 *mydday . . . thet hit wes non.* On darkness falling at the “ninth hour,” see Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33, and Luke 23:44. Compare note to line 424, above.
- 478 *midden-herde.* “earth, world,” literally “middle-earth,” the term for the whole world of people, as perceived to exist between heaven and hell. See *MED*, *middel-erd* (n.).
- 513 *hwelfde.* “rolled,” a meaning attested only here. See *MED*, *whelven* (v.), sense 1b, “to move (a stone) by rolling it over and over,” and compare Mark 15:46.

- 536 *Ne*. “Immediately, now.” See *MED*, *nou* (adv.), sense 2, where the erroneous spelling *ne* is listed. The word cannot be the negative conjunction for there is no other negative word in the sentence. An interrupted syntax emphasizes the ironic, divine purpose in conjoined actions of creation and destruction: God created all things, and in this moment destroys hell’s door. The Jews, meanwhile, plot irrationally to overcome one who is all-powerful.
- 547–52 *Bidde we alle . . . of lykamyche bende*. This section ends with a prayer that reminds the audience to confess and thereby repel the Devil. Throughout the poems of Jesus 29, the sacrament of confession (*scrift*) is stressed as a crucial precondition for the soul’s salvation, in accord with dictates of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) requiring, at minimum, annual confession of all Christians. This decree caused a great expansion in pastoral care to the laity. On the vital importance of confession for salvation, a preacherly imperative throughout the lyrics of Jesus 29, compare *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), line 189; and see the headnotes to *Poema Morale* and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 3, 26).
- 547 *Bidde we*. In the Jesus sequence of poems, many closing stanzas open with this phrase, which signals a final prayer. Because the first letter *B* is always a red capital, these worshipful endings are quite noticeable to a reader of the manuscript. Compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 389; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 349; *The Annunciation* (art. 10), line 4; *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 41; and *Fire and Ice* (art. 21), line 2.
- 553–642 *Seoththe Crist from dethe aros . . . thereafter ful sone*. The paraphrased account of Mary Magdalene at Jesus’s tomb and the Resurrection is based largely on John 20; see also Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24.
- 576 *leyhtunward*. “gardener,” a meaning attested only here. See *MED*, *leigh-toun* (n.), sense 1b, and compare John 20:15.
- 586 *heore*. “what’s his.” The translation “his own” follows Morris, who reads *heore* as the genitive of *he*.  
  
*ever ilyche*. “unceasingly, constantly, invariably.” For this phrase, see *MED*, *iliche* (adv.), sense 3, and *ever* (adv.), sense 9.
- 607 *Hondleth*. “Observe, consider.” See *MED*, *hondlen* (v.), sense 3c. The primary sense of *hondlen* is “touch, feel, grasp,” so it is possible that Jesus is inviting the disciples to touch him in this scene, which perhaps alludes to when Jesus allowed Thomas to touch his side-wound (John 20:27).
- 611 *Yet heo hit ny levede, the more ne the lesse*. “But they believed it not, neither more nor less (that is, not at all).” For this construction, *the more ne the lesse*, see *MED*, *ne* (conj.(1)), sense 2b(d), where this line is cited.
- 629–32 *“Theo that ye . . . wyteth ye myd iwisse.”* Jesus declares the doctrine of salvation: those who are released from their sins will go to heaven; those bound to their worldly sins will remain fet-

tered in hell. The lines are based on John 20:21–23: “He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”

645–46 *twei veyre men . . . myd hwite clothes*. The two fair men in white are angels, as described in the Bible: “And she saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid” (John 20:12). See also Luke 24:23.

657–72 *At thon heye undarne . . . then heoveliche kyng*. These lines paraphrase Acts 2:1–8. For the phrase *heye undarne*, see *MED*, *undern* (n.), “the third hour of the day, 9 a.m.; mid-morning,” with *heigh undern* defined as the hour between 9 and 10 a.m. No time of day is specified in the Bible. On the marking of time in *The Passion of Jesus Christ*, see note to line 424, above.

657 *Witsuneday*. Whitsunday, based on the original Pentecost (depicted here, when the apostles received the Holy Ghost). In the church calendar it is celebrated the seventh Sunday after Easter.

668 *Everuych ther understod his icunde speche*. This detail from the pentecostal story seems relevant to the overall preaching in English verse found in Jesus 29. Note too the mention in the *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr in English* (art. 17) that this native saint is of special help to the English because he readily understands English prayers (lines 7–8).

681–85 *Thervore the Veond . . . myd his ycorene*. The language applied here to Satan closely reflects that used for the Jews in the Passion narrative. The Jews had envy and always sought ways to bring Jesus to death; compare lines 57, 81–88, 392. The *Passion* poet frames the narrative of Christ’s Passion with mentions of the existential reality of Satan’s malice in the world: at the beginning, in Satan’s temptation of Christ (lines 27–40), and here in this prayer.

686 *Nerun*. Nero Claudius Caesar, Roman emperor (37–68), notorious for his tyranny, cruelty, extravagance, and persecution of Christians.

*Dacyen*. Probably Trajan Decius, Roman emperor (249–51), who reigned too late to have killed the apostles, but was a scourge to Christians. The miraculous sleep in Chardri’s *Life of the Seven Sleepers* (one of Jesus 29’s Anglo-French texts) begins in the time of Decius (Chardri, *The Works*, trans. Cartlidge, p. 42). In Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*, the martyrdom of Saint Lawrence is ascribed to Decius Caesar (trans. Ryan, 2:67). Lawrence is commemorated elsewhere in Jesus 29: *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), lines 44–47.

690 *That is heore mede vor heore preching*. Friars modeled themselves on the apostolic mission of preaching, and this line seems to affirm the fraternal estate.

697–702 *And he that . . . ut of lyve thisse*. The poet asks God’s blessing for himself and his “ordre” (line 700). The lines strongly suggest that the author was a friar or canon, and that composition occurred “within some sort of religious order” (Cartlidge-Composition, p. 258). Compare

prayers for the writer or scribe that close *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 389–90; and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 283–91.

## 2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

*The Owl and the Nightingale* is a humorous bird-debate carried out expansively to a length of 1794 lines in octosyllabic couplets. The meter matches that of another English item in Jesus 29: the tonally dissimilar *Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28). The octosyllabic couplet, a common meter in Anglo-French, is also the manner adopted for three long works by Chardri in both Jesus 29 and Cotton Caligula A.ix. These two manuscripts are the only sites where copies of *Owl* and of Chardri are found. Physical correspondences confirm that each scribe copied *Owl* from the same lost exemplar (“X”; see Introduction, pp. 5–7). In Jesus 29, *Owl* opens a new quire that follows the first one holding *The Passion of Jesus Christ in English* (art. 1). After *Owl* comes the long set of English works edited in this volume, which extends continuously to *The Shires and Hundreds of England* (art. 27). In the Cotton manuscript, *Owl* sits at the head of a briefer sequence of eight English poems: after *Owl*, arts. 7–9, 13–16 in this volume.

*Owl*’s date of composition remains uncertain. Before Neil Cartlidge’s careful reassessment of the facts in 1996 (“The Date”), the composition, as distinct from the copying, was usually set between 1189 and 1216 on the basis of lines that appear to refer to a deceased king: “That underyat the Kyng Henri. / (Jhesu his soule do merci!)” (King Henry learned about that. (Jesus have mercy on his soul!)) (lines 1091–92). The passage was thought to refer to England’s Henry II, who died in 1189. Cartlidge shows how a later date — the second half of the thirteenth century — is quite possible; the name might then refer to Henry III (d. 1272). In another Jesus poem, a showy compliment to Henry III appears at the midway point (*Love Rune* (art. 19), lines 41, 51). Combined with the mention in *Owl*, the royal references suggest a historical-political milieu for the Jesus 29 poems of around 1250–1280, and a post-1272 date for both manuscripts.

The authorship of *Owl* is also subject to speculation, and several of the most provocative clues are detailed in the Introduction to this volume (pp. 16–19). The clerk named by the birds, Nicholas of Guildford (lines 191, 1778), might be the poet or merely someone known by the poet. The poet (in the birds’ words) praises Nicholas for his eminent good sense and sues for Nicholas’s career preferment, but injudiciously mocks the authorities who might grant it. The tone might be taken to be sufficiently humorous, and the circle of first listeners sufficiently intimate, that the mockery is to be taken as a joke. The most likely candidate for authorship thus remains the otherwise unknown Nicholas (Cartlidge, “Nicholas of Guildford”). There is, however, an alternate line of argument that proposes that the author was a woman (Barratt, “Flying in the Face of Tradition”). Unfortunately, the question cannot be settled one way or another, and *Owl* remains an anonymous work.

The poem records a debate overheard by the narrator between a serious-minded owl and a light-hearted nightingale as to the benefits each confers on humankind. In the manner of Latin and French *conflictus* that oppose two sorts of existence, each represented by an abstract essence, one side is paradigmatically harsh, restrictive, regulated, while the other is free-spirited, permissive, generous. A good specimen of the type is the Anglo-French *Debate between Winter and Summer* found in Harley 2253 and probably authored by Nicholas Bozon (*CHMS*, 2:34–47). Within Jesus 29, the debate form can be found in two Anglo-French poems: William the Clerk of Normandy’s *Four Daughters of God* (between Justice, Mercy, Peace, and Truth) and Chardri’s *Little Debate* (between youth and old). In early Middle English poetry, secular debates like *Owl* are extremely rare, but one does encounter the debate format with a religious, didactic slant in Christ’s debate with Satan in *The Harrowing of Hell* and in a range of popular debates between a soul and its body (as partly appears in *Death* (art. 14)). The only secular debate in Middle English that is contemporary with

*Owl* is the much briefer, yet seemingly related *The Thrush and the Nightingale* found in MS Digby 86 (ca. 1280) and the Auchinleck manuscript (ca. 1330–1340) (Conlee, ed., *Middle English Debate Poetry*, pp. 237–48). Other non-religious examples from before 1350 survive chiefly among the lyrics of Harley 2253: in English, the male/female dialogues on love in *The Meeting in the Wood* and *The Clerk and the Girl* (CHMS, 2:148–51, 276–77), and in Anglo-French, more pertinently, the long free-wheeling debate about female sexuality known as *Gilote and Johane* (2:156–73). The latter is cousin to another lively French debate on female life-choices that survives in Digby 86: *L'Estrif de deus dames* (*The Debate between Two Ladies*). The content of debates that focus on the desires and behaviors of women reflects closely the concerns of a long exchange in *Owl* about women and marriage (lines 1340–1602). It stems from what was evidently an avid taste for debating the female nature — a subject laid out for entertainment across many works in Digby 86 and Harley 2253 (see especially Corrie, “Misogyny in MS Digby 86”; Cartlidge, “Gender Trouble?”; Dove, “Evading Textual Intimacy”; and Nolan, “Anthologizing Ribaldry”). Additional specimens of the broad pan-European taste for debate poetry have been usefully collected and translated by Michel-André Bossy in *Medieval Debate Poetry: Vernacular Works*.

As the most brilliant of long poems in the early Middle English corpus, *The Owl and the Nightingale* is often judged to be a singular literary event — that is to say, an inexplicable phenomenon — in its never-before-seen combination of remarkable features: avian characters of opposed instincts and habits who are colorfully loquacious and dramatic; a high-spirited match of rhetorical wits at times ingenious, at times specious; a linguistic showcase of English idiomatic invention; and an encyclopedic display of learning on an array of subjects: musical skills and styles (both human and avian), sophisticated rhetoric, legal pleading and wrangling, prophecy and foreknowledge, confession and mortal sins, natural science, human psychology (love, jealousy, vengeance, and so on), house design, potty training, and much more. Bestiary lore, beast fables, and even one of Marie de France’s Breton *lais* are among its many allusions and potential sources. Both birds are female, both nocturnal, and both English in their habitats. With native fervency, both favor the ancient Anglo-Saxon King Alfred as the best font of wisdom. Each credits him often as the sayer of proverbs that they think will clinch their arguments, even though the actual proverbs they spout are seldom found in the extant *Proverbs of Alfred* tradition.

*Owl* is thus a virtuoso poem, highly accomplished in its lightly satiric style and broadly humorous tones. It exudes the very spirit of oppositional play, and the debate itself never achieves a definitive resolution. In the end, the birds decide that their arguments are to be submitted to Nicholas of Guildford’s astute judgment. Once the clerk has heard the full set of arguments (for the owl has committed it to memory and will recite it verbatim), Nicholas will know who to judge as winner of the dispute. The long poem’s inconclusiveness has attracted an army of critics seeking to pin down its ultimate meaning and ideological bias: should we side with the owl or with the nightingale? Such studies, while valuable for explaining particular points raised by the birds, often prove too narrow to embrace the spirit of the entire poem. Alexandra Barratt notes that the critical “interest in the multifarious subjects raised in the poem (and then so carelessly abandoned) is much more serious than that of the birds themselves” (“Avian Self-Fashioning,” p. 17). A good, bibliographic sorting-out of critical topics is proffered by Neil Cartlidge in a 2016 *Oxford Bibliographies* article. The dominant topics include: the birds’ personalities; rhetoric and dialectic; law and legal matters (on which, in Jesus 29, compare the legal domains presented in *Shires* (art. 27)); orality and performance; play, games, irresolution, and self-referentiality; love, sexuality, and marriage; and studies of animal versus human perspectives (“*The Owl and the Nightingale*”).

Beyond these approaches, one might look, as well, at the rich interpretive possibilities lent by the pairing of *Owl* with *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24) in Jesus 29. One might say that *Owl* adopts the essentially

secular outlook of *Proverbs*, which springs from the human desire for a good, orderly life, and then extravagantly embellishes it with beast fable and debate. Each work concerns the aspirations of lived existence and the deployment of one's instinct for survival (the motive of beast fables) amid other responsibilities. Questions arise: What are the best practices among competing possibilities? What are the right strategies? In the beast-fable parlance of the nightingale, is it better to have one best trick (like the cat) or many tricks (like the fox) (lines 793–836)? The poem confirms how every creature opposes any means unnatural to it and will rationalize to defend its own inherent proclivities. The poem is unresolved because such proclivities are both individualized and species-based, hence irresolvable against another's. Humans too are idiosyncratic and varying: they can be bad or good, male or female, married or unmarried, faithful or unfaithful. Yet all pursue similar needs and goals: try to determine precepts by which to survive, seek happiness, maybe gain bliss. The arguments in *Owl* thus adhere (much like *Proverbs*, but in a different medium) to a sense of time lived instinctively inside a body. They concern habits, habitats, and workable strategies for thriving: infants having physical needs met (eating, defecation, protection from predation); youths becoming bred and educated; adults finding love, sexuality, marriage, male/female strife; and, eventually, bodies dying and turning into corpses (the owl notably makes claims of her usefulness after death). Spiritual life is scarcely perceived of. *Owl* does not paint a picture of heaven and hell, as do many other poems in Jesus 29. The birds view those places as somewhere else, beyond view, yet birdsong may give humans a foretaste of heaven. Each bird sees her own song as allied, naturally, with virtue.

*A note about this edition:* This edition of *The Owl and the Nightingale* differs in two crucial ways from others that already exist. First, it is based on the version appearing in Jesus 29, not the one in Cotton Caligula A.ix that has become standard as the base-text for most editions and all previous translations. Until now, the Jesus *Owl* has not been edited on its own: presentations of it in the editions by Wells (1907), Hall (1920), Atkins (1922), and Grattan-Sykes (1935) set it beside the Cotton *Owl* on juxtaposed facing pages. Scholars have ascertained that the scribes shared the same exemplar X, in which some letter-forms were too unfamiliar, or written too similarly and interchangeably (for example, *p*, *p*, *z*, *p*, and *y*), for the scribes to be always successful in replicating them. The more conservative Cotton scribe generally attempted to write what he saw (even if it introduced error), while the Jesus scribe was prone to adapt and alter what he could not construe (on the scribes, see Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*, p. xviii; Stanley, p. 6; and Scahill, "Abbreviations"). As is especially clear when their work is assessed in tandem, both scribes strove to give reliable witness to the poem set before them, as they understood it. This edition offers the Jesus scribe's *Owl* while acknowledging that the Cotton version often preserves better readings that resolve problems in Jesus and must be adopted. At the same time, as editors of Cotton have conceded, there are many instances where a Jesus reading is able to solve a crux in Cotton. In weighing the variations between copies, I have not sought to restore X, but instead to make an edition of the text copied (and admittedly sometimes altered) by the Jesus scribe, conservatively corrected by reference to Cotton (just as editions of Cotton are traditionally corrected by reference to Jesus).

Second, it must be noted that this edition of *Owl* is the first to display the poem situated contextually in its manuscript setting, where there are clues regarding the tastes of an authentic medieval readership. In Jesus 29, *Owl* is part of a long sequence of English lyrics, mainly religious in tenor, as recorded in this edition. In Cotton, its second witness, *Owl* is the first and by far longest item in a set of eight English poems — an abbreviated rendition of the sequence found in Jesus 29. Working out a hypothetical reconstruction of X, Cartlidge finds it likely that *Owl* traveled there with numerous English lyrics congruent with what we find in Jesus and Cotton, and, in addition, with the three Chardri works ("Imagining X," pp. 42–43). It is worth noting in this regard that the Jesus scribe heads *Poema Morale* with a Latin incipit "*Tractatus quidam*

*in anglico*” (Another treatise in English) that emphasizes its sequencing after *Owl*. For Ivana Djordjevic, the reading matter that surrounds *Owl* confirms that its ideological thrust is “manifestly . . . didactic,” with both books “most probably produced in monastic scriptoria” (“*The Owl and the Nightingale*,” p. 373). Treharne agrees that the two manuscripts situate *Owl* in a religious/didactic context, and she further observes that in Cotton it travels with Layamon’s *Brut*, a lengthy chronicle in English on the history of the Britons (see Lazamon, *Brut*, ed. and trans. Barron and Weinberg). She takes this as sign that we might foreground “the historical aspects of the poem — the reference to a King Henry [line 1091] and the contemporary resonances throughout” (p. 370). In the verse sequence of Jesus 29, contemporary references occur most forcefully in *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* and *Love Rune* (arts. 12, 19).

It is possible, moreover, to detect other facets of *Owl*’s ebullient nature refracted in its two manuscript contexts. Cartlidge, *Owl*’s premier modern critic and editor (of the Cotton text), characterizes it as “the earliest extant long comic poem in the English language” (“*The Owl and the Nightingale*”). A skilled though less ambitious comic poem, *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), is preserved in both manuscripts; in Cotton, it concludes the English sequence headed by *Owl*, causing the pair to frame the English religious verse as entertaining bookends. Another feature of *Owl*’s character, the secular strains of love lyric as reflected in the nightingale’s song, is delicately evoked and refocused toward love of Jesus in *Love Rune* (art. 19), one of Jesus 29’s major poems. Another chief text in Jesus 29 is an extremely apt companion to *Owl* (rarely noted by critics): *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24). The *contrafacta* song-pair *Death’s Wither-Clench* and *An Orison to Our Lady* (arts. 7, 8) immediately follows *Owl* in Cotton, and their primal opposition (death’s gloom versus heaven’s comfort) offers an epilogue that may comment on the birds’ emblematic opposites as well as their musical competitiveness. The dialogue-debate form exists, too, in Chardri’s *Le Petit Plet* (in both manuscripts). Beyond these provocative correspondences, there are many individual instances of verbal resonance among *Owl* and other Jesus poems, as detailed in specific Explanatory Notes.

The Explanatory Notes provided here are much indebted to three editions in particular: those of Atkins (1922), Stanley (1960), and Cartlidge (2001). These scholars supply superb editions with philological and critical notes, each constituting a virtual variorum on the state of scholarship at the time of the edition’s making. I have also relied on modern translations of the Cotton *Owl* produced by Cartlidge-*Owl* (2001) and Millett (2003), supplemented by etymological and philological data in the *MED*.

For a facing-page facsimile of both manuscripts of *Owl*, see Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale Reproduced in Facsimile*. Grattan-Sykes provide facing-page diplomatic readings of both manuscripts. MS Cotton Caligula A.ix is viewable by digital facsimile at [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX).

[Fols. 156ra–168vb. NIMEV 1384. DIMEV 2307. Utey, *MWME*, 3:716–20, 874–82 [45]. **Quires:** 2–3. **Meter:** 1794 lines rhyming in octosyllabic couplets. **Layout:** Short lines written in double columns. Colored capitals (some enlarged) mark divisions of content (indicated in this edition by double spacing). **One other MS:** London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fols. 233r–246r. **Editions of the Jesus Owl (on pages facing the Cotton Owl):** Wells, pp. 4–147; Hall, 1:148–75, 2:553–79 (extracts); Atkins, pp. 2–151; Grattan-Sykes, pp. 1–56. **Select other editions of the Cotton Owl:** Wright; Dickins-Wilson, pp. 49–57, 182–87 (extract); Stanley; Bennett and Smithers, eds., *Early Middle English Verse and Prose*, pp. 1–27, 262–75 (extract); Sisam and Sisam, eds., *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, pp. 6–10 (extract); Dunn-Byrnes, pp. 54–98; Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 2–43; Treharne, pp. 468–505. **Critical editions:** Gadow, ed., *Das mittlenglische Streitgedicht Eule und Nachtigall*, pp. 99–165; Morris-*Specimens*, pp. 171–93, 343–49 (extracts). **Translations of the Jesus Owl:** None. **Translations of the Cotton Owl:** Atkins, pp. 152–81; Sisam and Sisam, eds., *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, pp. 6–10 (extract); Stone, trans., *The Owl*

and the Nightingale, pp. 155–244; Gardner, trans., *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, pp. 185–231; Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 2–43; Millett.

incipit *Incipit altercatio inter filomenam et bubonem*. In contrast to the poem’s traditional title, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, the title given in the scribe’s rubric is *Debate between the Nightingale and the Owl*. The well-known title is from line 4: “An ule and one nyhtegale.” In Cotton, there is no rubric. In the lost Tichfield Abbey, MS Q.III, the title is identical to the Latin incipit of Jesus 29. The late thirteenth century witnessed the rise of a genre of devotional passion meditations termed “nightingales” directed toward wealthy patrons, and, if in the vernacular, toward women like Queen Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III and widow after 1372. The title might therefore be a clue as to genre: a nightingale poem “draws diverse materials into a single harmony” (*VLT*, p. 204). The tradition is best represented in the Anglo-French *Rossignos* (1268–1275) by John of Howden (Queen Eleanor’s clerk and religious advisor) and two Anglo-Latin poems, both titled *Philomena*, by John of Howden and John Pecham. Wogan-Browne traces the tradition from *Rossignos* to John Lydgate’s *Nightingale*, and suggests that the early Middle English *Thrush and the Nightingale* (contemporary with *Owl*) springs from it (“The Tongues of the Nightingale”). See also Reed, *Middle English Debate Poetry*, pp. 245–46. The meditative nightingale genre deserves closer attention in regard to the cultural origin of *Owl* and its placement in Jesus 29 after *Passion* (art. 1). See the discussion in the Introduction to this volume (pp. 16–17).

1 *in one sumere dale*. “in a valley in summer.” The poem opens with an eavesdropping narrator who is out enjoying a natural setting specified by landscape and season, as in numerous vernacular lyrics (*chansons d’aventure*). On the grammatical and translational challenge of the phrase *sumere dale*, see Stanley, p. 105n1; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 106n1. Because trees are said to be in bloom, Millett translates *sumere* as “springtime.”

4 *An ule and one nyhtegale*. “an owl and a nightingale.” Cartlidge comments, “The poetic conjunction of owls with nightingales is not unnatural, since both birds are traditionally identified as nocturnal singers” (Cartlidge-Owl, p. 96), and he provides excerpts from several texts that precede and might have influenced *Owl*, including St. Ambrose’s *Hexaameron*, a sermon by Maximus of Turin, and Theodulf of Orléans’s *Carmen 27* (Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 96–98). The English bird-name *nightingale* is first recorded in *Owl*; it also appears as a surname around 1275; see *MED*, *nightin-gale* (n.).

14 *beche*. “beech trees.” Alternatively, the word could mean a “forest clearing”; Cotton reads *breche*. See *MED*, *beche* (n.), sense 1a, compared to *bach* (n.(1)), sense 1a. The variants are discussed by Stanley, p. 105n13f; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 107n14.

17 *vaste*. “thick, impenetrable.” Cotton reads *waste*, “deserted.”

20 *a veole cunne wyse*. “in many ways” or “a range of tunes.” See note to line 54, below.

26 *song hire tyde*. “sang her hours.” This reference initiates an ongoing poetic association of the owl and her music with the Church. The sonoric image of a bird singing hours evokes the “set of

- observances (combining psalms, prayers, and hymns) recited at regular intervals throughout the day, the ‘canonical hours’ of Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline. Secular clerics and members of religious orders followed the complex observances of the full Divine Office; the pious laity in this period might also observe the Hours as a private devotion” (Millett, n26). See also Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 47n26, and compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 424 (note). On the musical competition between the birds, see especially Allen, “The Voices”; Holsinger, “Vernacular Legality,” pp. 171–82; and Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, pp. 3–6. John Pecham’s thirteenth-century *Philomena*, a meditation on Christ’s Passion, is structured as the nightingale’s songs set at different canonical hours (Bestul, *Texts of the Passion*, p. 102).
- 35 *wle lete*. “awful face.” For *wle*, read *vule*, “evil, vile, ugly”; the orthography of *w* for *vu* is common in both the Jesus and Cotton texts of *Owl*. On *lete*, “face,” compare *MED*, *ilete* (n.), senses 1a “outward manner or bearing,” and 1b “expression.” This Old Norse-derived word appears only in *Owl*; compare lines 403, 1446, 1715.
- 37 *falt my tunge*. “my speech fails.” See *MED*, *folden* (v.(2)), sense 2b, which cites this line. Compare *Signs of Death* (art. 22), line 4.
- 38 *Hwenne thu art to me ithrunge*. “When you press close to me.” A nightingale’s refusal to sing when perched too close to a hawk appears in the fable of The Hawk and the Nightingale, told in Anglo-Norman by Marie de France (*Fables*, ed. and trans. Spiegel, pp. 178–79), and in Latin by Romulus. See excerpts in Stanley, p. 164; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 98–99.
- 44 *That wel neyh hire fnast atset*. “She could barely breathe,” literally “That barely could she pass her breath.” The verb is attested only in *Owl*; see *MED*, *atsheten* (v.), “of breath, life: pass out or away, be gone from (sb.),” and compare line 1623.
- 48 *wrytelinge*. “warbling, twittering”; *MED*, *writelinge* (ger.). The word appears in *Owl* two times, and nowhere else. See also line 914.
- 54 *wise*. “tune, melody.” As Stanley notes, “Both meanings, ‘manner’ and ‘tune,’ fit the context, but the latter is perhaps to be preferred” (p. 106n54). See *MED*, *wis(e)* (n.(2)), “way, manner,” and *wis(e)* (n.(3)), “melody, song”; compare lines 20, 519, 1663, and 1703.
- 57 *blete*. “exposure.” This noun is attested only in *Owl*. See *MED*, *blet* (adj. and n.), sense 1b, “bareness, lack of cover.” Compare line 616.
- 65–68 *Vorthi thu art loth . . . narewe the byledeth*. The medieval *Bestiary* notes the tendency of other birds to mob the screech-owl, allegorizing this action as wholesome hostility against a sinner: “If other birds see it, they set up a great clamour, and it is vexed by their fierce onslaughts. So when a sinner is recognised in full daylight he becomes an object of mockery for the righteous” (trans. Barber, p. 149). In the cathedrals of Gloucester and Norwich, one may still find carved medieval misericords that depict an owl swarmed by numerous smaller birds. See, for exam-

- ple, the Gloucester Cathedral owl misericord, online at <https://misericords.co.uk/images/Gloucester/Gloucester%209.3.jpg>.
- 69 *forthe*. “that’s why, for that reason, therefore.” The word is the same as *Vorthi* in line 65, and grammatically parallel to it.
- 76 *wode*. “a blue dye of vegetable origin.” See *MED*, *wod(e)* (n.(1)), sense 1a.
- 86 *That sit at mulne under cogge*. Stanley, p. 107n86, notes how a frog dwells under a millwheel cog in Marie de France’s fable of The Mouse and the Frog (*Fables*, ed. and trans. Spiegel, pp. 34–41), but the resemblance is slight: the frog in the fable merely visits a mouse there, and then entices the mouse to visit a swamp.
- 91 *Thu art lodlich and unclene*. The medieval *Bestiary* notes that the screech-owl fouls its own nest, comparing it to sinners: “It is known as a loathsome bird because its roost is filthy from its droppings, just as the sinner brings all who dwell with him into disrepute through the example of his dishonourable behaviour” (trans. Barber, *Bestiary*, p. 149).
- 99–100 *‘Dehaet habbe that ilke best / That fuleth his owe nest.’* “Shame on that creature / Who soils its own nest.” This is a common proverb (Whiting B306) that appears in many different languages in many medieval literary texts, including a Latin translation of Nicholas Bozon’s fable of The Hawk and the Owl (ca. 1350–1400). See commentary in Atkins, pp. 10–11n99–100; Stanley, pp. 107n99f, 160, 162, 164; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 50n99–100.
- 101–26 *That other yer . . . crowe hit todrowe*. The funny story of an ugly, ill-mannered owl chick in a falcon’s nest appears in the popular fable of The Hawk and the Owl, retold in collections by Romulus, Nicholas Bozon, and Marie de France (*Fables*, trans. Speigel, pp. 212–13). It appears, too, in Odo of Cheriton’s fable of The Buzzard and the Hawk’s Nest, where a buzzard is the hideous one (Odo of Cheriton, *The Fables*, trans. and ed. Jacobs, p. 75). Summaries of the different versions are printed by Stanley, pp. 159, 164; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, pp. 99–101.
- 121 *myd the vyrste*. “first of all, right away.” See *MED*, *first* (ord. num. (as adj. & n.)), sense 5a(c). The Cotton reading is more emphatic and more colorful: *mid þe alre wrste*, “with the worst muck of all” (Stanley, p. 107n121f).
- 127–38 *Therby men seggeth . . . he is icume*. This exemplum of the apple rolling away from its tree of origin appears in versions of the fable of The Hawk and the Owl told by Marie de France and Nicholas Bozon. See *Cartlidge-Owl*, pp. 99–101. On the proverb of lines 135–38 (Whiting A169), see further commentary in Atkins, pp. 14–15n135–8; Stanley, pp. 107n135, 138, 160, 162; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 51n135–8.
- 131 *freomonne*. “free gentry, worthy men.” Compare line 1507; and see *Weal* (art. 6), line 3 (note).

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- 150–52 “*Hwy neltu fleon . . . of fayrur bleo?*” The ploy of flattery to lure an opponent into a vulnerable position is a common device in beast fables. Compare the fox’s flattery of Chauntecleer in Chaucer’s *Nun’s Priest’s Tale* (CT VII[B<sup>2</sup>]3289–94).
- 176 ‘*Wel fyht that wel flyhth.*’ “He fights well who flees well.” This widespread proverb (Whiting F141) appears in the Harley 2253 *Hending* (CHMS, 3:224–25 (lines 85–86)). See discussions in Atkins, p. 18n176; Stanley, pp. 108n176, 160, 162; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, 51–52n176.
- 180 *myd some*. “with civil concord.” Compare *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12), line 15.
- 187 *seme*. “settle a dispute, reconcile.” See *MED*, *semen* (v.(1)), sense 1a.
- 191 *Mayster Nichol of Guldevorde*. “Master Nicholas of Guildford.” The poet names here an acquaintance (or possibly himself), for whom the entire poem is a “plea for preferment” (see Hume, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, pp. 119–26; quote appears on p. 119). The title *mayster* indicates that he is university educated. At lines 1751–78 we are told that he is a suitable candidate for episcopal preferment, and lives at Portesham in Dorset. See Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 101–02, who lists eight potential historical candidates proposed by scholars, and the discussion in the Introduction to this volume (pp. 16–19).
- 204 *other wyhte gent and smale*. “other creatures delicate and small,” that is, women. For later applications of the collocation *gent and smal* to women, see *MED*, *gent* (adj.), sense 1b.
- 211 *fast-rede*. “having a fixed purpose, steadfast.” See *MED*, *fast-rede* (adj.). The *MED* lists this occurrence as the only one in Middle English; it appears in both manuscripts.
- 225 *Hit thincheth bothe wise and snepe*. “It seems to both wisemen and fools (i.e., to everyone).” Attested only here, the adjective *snepe*, “foolish,” is applied as a collective noun (dative and plural). See *MED*, *snepe* (adj.), and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 192 (glossary, s.v. *snepe*).
- 227 *Thu flyhst a nyht and noht a day*. “You fly by night, and not by day.” The medieval *Bestiary* offers an allegorical form of the nightingale’s argument: both the night-owl and the screech-owl signify those who seek the darkness of sin and shun the light of justice (trans. Barber, *Bestiary*, pp. 147–49). On the owl’s nighttime habits being traditionally attached to wickedness, see Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 99, for excerpts from Ambrose, Boethius, Rabanus Maurus, Walter Map, and Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls* (lines 599–602).
- 229–30 *For uygh thing . . . and hateth lyht*. A common proverb; see Whiting E184, and compare lines 245–50.
- 235 *Alvred King*. “King Alfred,” that is, Alfred the Great, born 849, ruler of Wessex from 871 to 886, Anglo-Saxon king from 886 to 899, renowned for wisdom, learning, and enlightened governance. Both birds often cite him as a dignified font of proverbial lore. Thus, by name-dropping his austere name, they each intend to lend weight to their individual arguments. Although King Alfred was in fact an impressive Anglo-Saxon prose writer, the birds’ ascriptions are

based in popular lore. A late-twelfth- or early-thirteenth-century collection of Middle English proverbs known as *The Proverbs of Alfred* appears in Jesus 29 (see art. 24). The proverbs cited in *Owl* almost never overlap with those clustered in *Proverbs* (see, however, notes to lines 291–92, 1039–42, below).

- 236 ‘*He schuneth that hine ful wot.*’ Literally, “He stays away [shuns] who knows himself to be foul” (Whiting S290). Stanley likens the saying to “a nursery situation” of the child with guilty knowledge of his soiled pants (p. 109n236). See also commentary in Stanley, pp. 160, 162; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 113n236. Alan Lupack suggests a plausible alternative translation: “He shuns that one who knows him to be foul (or unclean)” (personal communication).
- 240 *sene*. “eyesight, vision, the faculty of sight.” *Owl* records the last two occurrences of the word, which was common in Old English. See *MED*, *sene* (n.(4)), and compare line 368. In Cotton, the word has been glossed *eyen*, “eyes,” in a later hand (Stanley, p. 109n240).
- 245–50 ‘*Riht so hit . . . bryhte lat away.*’ For variants of this widespread proverb, an expansion of lines 229–30, see Whiting E184.
- 248 *aprenche*. “to prank, trick.” This is the reading of both manuscripts, but the scribes may have mistaken a wynn (*p*) for a *p*. The word occurs nowhere else in Middle English. See *MED*, *?aprenchen* (v.); Atkins, p. 25n248; Stanley, p. 110n248; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, pp. 113–14n248.
- 252 *nabbeth hi none imunde*. “they care nothing at all.” See *MED*, *iminde* (n.), sense 2a, and compare line 1516.
- 256 *galegale*. “chatterbox.” The word is a comic coinage by the poet, who defines it in the next line. It puns *nightegale* with *galen* (v.), “to cry out, complain, squawk”; see *MED*, *gale-gale* (n.). Stanley suggests that “to recapture the force of *galegale* in translation it may perhaps be permissible to make up a word like *gabble-gale*” (p. 111n256). It is interesting that the phrase *gleo and gal* appears in *Love Rune* (art. 19), “mirth and song” (see note to line 63); and *gal* appears in *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28) as a rare adjective, “lascivious” (see note to line 56).
- 272 *wunne*. The MS reads *ynne* (= ?*wune*, with an error of *y* for wynn, *n* for *u*); Cotton reads *wune*. See *MED*, *win* (n.(2)), sense 1a, “joy, happiness, pleasure, delight.” The emended spelling, accepted for rhyme, is discussed by Atkins, p. 27n272.
- 286 *sit-worde*. “dirty words, obscenities,” literally, “shit-words” (plural in context). Cotton reads *schit-worde*.
- 291–92 ‘*me ne chide with the gidie / Ne with than ofne me ne yonie.*’ “one shouldn’t quarrel with fools / Nor yawn with an oven.” Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24): “Ne gabbe thu ne schotte / Ne chid thu wyth none sotte, / Ny myd manyes cunnes tales / Ne chid thu with nenne dwales” (Don’t scoff or yell / Or quarrel with a fool, / Or with all sorts of claims / Argue with dimwits) (lines 280–83). The proverb (Whiting O59) warns that one wastes effort quarreling with an unintelligible fool. An open oven is imagined as a yawning face, possibly alluding to

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- a hell-mouth as well. For a similar figure, see *Death* (art. 14), line 117 (note). Remarking that the “point is that nobody can compete with an oven for bigness of mouth,” Cartlidge provides more citations (*Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 55n292). See also Stanley, p. 162.
- 295–97 ‘*Loke that thu . . . forth thu go!*’ On this proverb (Whiting C165), see commentary in Atkins, pp. 28–29n295–97; Stanley, p. 160; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 55n291, 295–97.
- 301–02 ‘*That with the fule haveth imene, / Ne cumeth he never from him clene.*’ “He who mingles with someone filthy / Never walks away from him clean.” On this proverb (Whiting F558), see commentary in Stanley, pp. 160, 162; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 55n301–02.
- 309 *Yet*. “What’s more, yet, still.” Both birds employ this conjunction as a formal marker by which to punctuate their long speeches, as they build from point to point. The word often marks a transition from one rebuttal into the next one.
- 323 *Ich singe an efne a ryhte time*. “In evening I sing at a proper time.” The word *rihte* implies another reference to the canonical hours (see note to line 26, above): vespers in the evening, compline at bedtime, matins at midnight. The owl names “canonical hours of the night rather than those of the day,” taking credit for singing “only to call the religious to their hours,” and “not all night like the Nightingale” (Stanley, p. 113n323–28).
- 337 *adunest*. “fill with noise,” a verb attested only here. See *MED*, *adunen* (v.), “fill (the ears) with din.”
- 341–44 *Evrych murethe may . . . hit is to long*. Proverbial (Whiting M582). Compare Whiting P408, as in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*: “But fle we now prolixitee best is” (2.1564).
- 351–52 ‘*Evrich thing may lesen godhede / Mid unmethe and overdede.*’ “Everything can lose its goodness / By lack of measure and excess.” On this proverb (Whiting E168), see commentary in Atkins, p. 33n351–2; Stanley, pp. 114n351f, 160, 162; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, pp. 56–57n351–52.
- 353–62 *Mid este thu . . . and ever is iliche*. Here and elsewhere, the owl strays into homiletic Christian messaging; compare lines 879–86. At lines 716–20, the nightingale offers similar language.
- 353 *overquatie*. “glutted, satiated, over-full.” This line in *Owl* is the only appearance of this Middle English verb; see *MED*, *overquaten* (v.).
- 368 *sene*. “sense of sight.” See note to line 240, above.
- 373–80 *The hare luteth . . . pathes to the grove*. On the hare’s agility and acuity, compare the late-thirteenth-century comic poem *The Names of the Hare*, which is copied next to *Dame Sirith* in MS Digby 86. See Ross, “The Middle English Poem on the Names of a Hare”; and Stanley, p. 115n373–82.

- 378 *blenches*. “tricks.” See *MED*, *blench* (n.), sense 1a, “changing course (to throw the hunter off scent)” (which cites this line), and sense 1b, “ruse, strategem, trick”; and compare *Death’s Wither-Clench* (art. 7), line 4 (note).
- 385 *auhte*. “worthy in warfare, stout-hearted, brave.” For this word, derived from OE *āht*, found also at lines 389, 1479, and 1481, see *MED*, *ought* (adj.), sense 1b.
- 402–08 *Vor heo is wis . . . of bore wurche bareh!* These lines have the feel of a proverb, but are not listed as such by Whiting or Stanley. Cartlidge compares the sentiment to James 4:7 on withstanding the devil (*Cartlidge-Owl*, pp. 57–58n402–06). The proverbial sentiment of putting on a brave face before one’s enemy is similarly found in lines 1712–16, where it is the owl who takes the advice.
- 403 *ilete*. “face.” See note to line 35, above.
- 415 *yomere*. “sorrowfully, mournfully.” The only instance of this Old English-derived word in Middle English; see *MED*, *yomere* (adv.).
- 427–28 *Ne rouhte he . . . and bi here*. The image pictured in these difficult and obscure lines has been taken, variously, to reference wool being carded, men fighting in battle, snowflakes falling, or mixed herds being sorted by animal or owner. The last of these options is selected here, with *flockes* understood as the plural of *MED*, *flok* (n.(1)), “herds,” not *flok* (n.(2)), “tufts of wool” (as chosen by the *MED* editors). See the explanation given by *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 118n427–28; and compare Atkins, p. 40n427–28; Stanley, p. 116n427f; and Millett, n427–28.
- 433–38 *Ac ich mid me . . . and ek in mede*. Here the nightingale adopts the classic position of Summer (that is, spring) in the *Debate between Winter and Summer*, a version of which survives as a long Anglo-Norman debate poem, possibly by Nicholas Bozon, in Harley 2253 (*CHMS*, 2:34–47). For a summary of a Latin version, see Stanley, pp. 167–68. The nightingale comes close to arguing, audaciously, that it is *she* who brings about the advent of spring. See discussion in *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 59n433–38.
- 439–49 *The lilie myd hire . . . myd myne songe*. By this imagery, the nightingale’s song is identified with lyric verse and its clichéd association of the rose and the lily (*Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 59n439–49). See also Stanley, p. 116n437–49.
- 483 *cundut*. “a kind of dance song or motet.” For this French-derived word, see *MED*, *condut* (n.). It is recorded only three times in Middle English: in *Owl*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*. See the comments of Stanley, p. 117n483; *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 60n483; and Holsinger, “Vernacular Legality,” pp. 180–82.
- 501–22 *Sone so thu . . . anon to schome!* Stanley offers an intriguing note about the nightingale’s loss of voice after engaging in sex: “The (factually mistaken) belief that the nightingale loses its voice after copulation is ascribed (wrongly) to Pliny by the German philosopher Albertus Magnus (1193?–1280)” (p. 117n507f).

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- 504 *cokeringe*. “coughing, make a choking sound.” Cotton reads *chokeringe*; see *MED*, *chokeringe* (ger.), where the line in Cotton is the only one cited. Compare *MED*, *cokeringe* (ger.), sense 1a, where this line is cited with two others, but the definition “fawning” does not suit the context. See discussion by Atkins, pp. 45–46n504.
- 512 *cherles wode res*. “churl’s mad frenzy.” See *MED*, *res* (n.), sense 3a, and compare *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 5.
- 514 *boldhede*. “ardor, passion, male virility.” Despite the *MED*’s straightforward definition of *boldhede* (n.), “boldness, courage, audacity,” the word here has a bawdy sense, for it is the male erection that has fallen. A similar innuendo surrounds the word *bold* in *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 60 (note).
- 515 *istunge under gore*. “stung under a skirt.” The *under gore* sexual trope, often found in secular lyrics, is at play here, as it is in *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 84 (note). Such phrases are frequent in the secular love lyrics of Harley 2253 (Fein, “A Saint ‘Geynest under Gore’”).
- 519 *wise*. “tunes, melodies.” See note to line 54, above.
- 527–28 *At than harde, . . . hwo lyth bihynde*. “In tough times, it shall be discovered / Who goes forward, who lags behind.” On this proverb (Whiting H107), see commentary in Stanley, pp. 117n529f, 160, 163.
- 530 *wike*. “helpful act, dutiful service.” See *MED*, *wik(e)* (n.(3)), sense 1d, and compare lines 603 and 805.
- 540 *For lutly*. “So as to reduce.” The verb is an attested spelling of *MED*, *litelen* (v.), sense 1a, “to diminish, lessen, reduce.”
- 557 *note*. “use, usefulness”; see *MED*, *note* (n.(2)), sense 1b, with a double entendre on *note* (n.(3)), “a musical note, tune, harmony.”
- 562 *And nys thi ryel nowiht long*. “And your coat’s not long at all.” Among the owl’s insults is a specific mention of the nightingale’s short coat. While this taunt might be taken as a jibe on the difference between religious and secular garb (long versus short), Cartlidge-Owl plausibly sees it as simply another example of species difference: “a jibe at the Nightingale for her unspectacular plumage” (p. 62n562). Giving *ryel* a metaphorical sense, Atkins, p. 161, translates the line “and thy defence is nothing great” — a definition not supplied in *MED*, *rail* (n.), “a garment, clothing, mantle, coat.” This line supplies the last recorded use of this OE word.
- 571–74 *’Nis no mon . . . naht ne can.*’ On this proverb, see commentary in Stanley, pp. 118n571–74, 160, 163; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 62n571–76.

- 592 *run-huse*. “privy.” The word occurs only in *Owl*, where it appears twice. The reading of *rū hus* (in both manuscripts) as *run-hus*, not *rum-hus*, is based on the analysis of Laing, “*The Owl and the Nightingale*” pp. 474–75; see line 652, and compare note to lines 651–52, below.
- 603 *gode wike*. “useful service.” See note to line 530, above.
- 604 *wike*. “dwelling, home.” See *MED*, *wike* (n.(1)), sense 1a.
- 616 *blete*. “bare.” This adjective is attested only in *Owl*. See *MED*, *blet* (adj. and n.), sense 1a, “bare (boughs).” Compare line 57.
- 634 *in heore duhthe*. “when they’re older,” literally “in their maturity.” The noun *douthe* typically signifies “a body of retainers” or, more generally, “power, wealth.” A meaning regarding human development is attested only here. See *MED*, *douthe* (n.), sense 2b, “the full powers of manhood, maturity.”
- 636 *mysketh*. “defecates,” a verb formed from Middle English *mix* (n.), “filth, dung.” Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), line 263; and *An Orison to Our Lord* (art. 25), line 35 (note). Laing, “*The Owl and the Nightingale*,” pp. 455–62, argues for the superiority of this reading in Jesus 29 compared to Cotton’s *mysdep*.
- 637 *of olde iwurne*. “of great antiquity.” See *MED*, *ifern* (adv.), sense 1a.
- 638 *neode maketh old wif eorne*. “Need makes the old woman trot.” On this widespread proverb (Whiting N54), see commentary in Atkins, pp. 56–57n638; Stanley, pp. 118n638, 160, 163; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 63n638.
- 651–52 *among othre iyende, / A run-hus at heore bures ende*. “among other conveniences, / A privy at the far end of their bedchambers.” Laing, “*The Owl and the Nightingale*,” pp. 473–75, offers a cogent explanation of Cotton’s *ipende* and Jesus’s *iwende* as joint misreadings of *izende*, “facilities, conveniences,” in the exemplar. She also corrects the traditional editorial reading of *rū hus* as *rum-hus* to *run-hus*, “a private or secret room.” On this arrangement in aristocratic houses, see Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 55–57. On *rum-hus*, see note to line 592, above.
- 655 *chaterestre*. “chattering girl, chatterbox.” This colorful substantive formed from the verb *chateren* is attested only here. See *MED*, *chaterestre* (n.).
- 658 *Hong up thin ax!* “Give up!” On this colloquial expression (Whiting A251), see *MED*, *hongen* (v.), sense 1a(b), and commentary in Atkins, p. 57n658; Stanley, pp. 118n658, 161, 163; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 64n658.
- 672 *bihemme*. “embellish, embroider, put on airs or frills,” the only instance of the word in Middle English. See *MED*, *bihemmen* (v.).

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- 674 *niseo*. “not discover.” This negative form of the verb is not listed separately in the *MED*, but see *MED*, *isen* (v.(1)), sense 3a(a).
- 679 *upe thon*. Atkins notes that this phrase derives from OE *uppan þam*, “as against that” (p. 58n679). Stanley translates it “even so” (p. 119n679f).
- 683 *yephede*. “acuity, cunning, astuteness.” See *MED*, *yephede* (n.), related to *yep(e)* (adj.), sense 1a–b, “mentally agile, cunning, wily.” The word occurs only here in *Owl*.
- 687–88 ‘*Hwenne the bale is alre hekst, / Thenne is the bote alre-nest.*’ “When disaster’s the highest, / Then remedy’s the nearest.” On this widespread proverb (Whiting B22), which is repeated at lines 699–700, see commentary in Atkins, p. 59n687–88; Stanley, pp. 119n687f. and 699f., 161, 163; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 65n687–88, 699–700. It also appears in the Harley 2253 version of *Hending* (*CHMS*, 3:228–29 (lines 195–96)).
- 694 *red-purs*. “bag of wisdom, one’s store of good ideas”; *MED*, *purs(e)* (n.), sense 1a. On the expression, see Stanley, p. 119n694; Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 67n809–36; and Millett, n694. The figure appears in Marie de France’s fable *The Fox and the Cat* (*Fables*, ed. and trans. Spiegel, pp. 248–51; summarized by Stanley, p. 164). Compare lines 809–36 (note).
- 699–700 ‘*Hwenne the bale . . . the bote alre-nexst.*’ See note to lines 687–88, above.
- 707–836 “*Ule, thu axest me . . . than thine twelve.*” Stanley illuminates a scholastic background for the nightingale’s speech: “It seems possible that the Nightingale is echoing, and applying to herself, an important aspect of a problem that was in the foreground of scholastic discussion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the connexion of the virtues. It was held that one virtue sincerely exercised could, since all the other virtues were interconnected, embrace all other virtues. The devoted exercise of one virtue could, therefore, surpass the weak or indifferent exercise of all the virtues” (p. 120n707–836). See also Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 65n712–14.
- 709 *in sumeretyde*. “in summertime.” Most editors accept that *sumetyde*, found in both Jesus and Cotton, is an error for *sumeretyde* caused by omission of the *-er* abbreviation. The emendation is adopted by Stanley, Cartlidge-*Owl*, and Millett (editors of the Cotton version).
- 716–20 *Wostu to hwan . . . of gode can*. The nightingale’s argument takes a homiletic turn here. See note to lines 353–62, above.
- 729 *Clerekes, munekes, and canunes*. The reference is to cathedral clergy, monks, and regular canons, as distinguished from parish priests (see line 733). Canons are priests living in a religious community according to a rule, usually the Rule of St. Augustine. All of these religious professions followed a more elaborate devotional routine than parish priests. Left off of this list are friars.
- 730 *wike-tunes*. This compound appears only in *Owl*. See *MED*, *wik(e)* (n.(1)), sense 1d, “?a religious community.”

- 732 *And singeth of thon hevene lyhte.* As Stanley notes, “In the hymns sung during the midnight service (Matins and Lauds) reference to the coming of light is often made” (p. 121n732).
- 733 *preostes upe londe.* “priests in the land.” The reference is to parish priests, that is, the secular clergy as distinguished from the regular clergy listed in line 729.
- 745–46 *Ich graunti that thu go to dome / Tovore the sulve Pope of Rome.* “I’d let you go for judgment / Before the Pope of Rome himself.” While Jesus reads *thu* in line 745, Cotton reads *þe*, which editors generally emend to *we* (assuming a scribal confusion between *wynn* and *thorn*). In Jesus, the nightingale would allow the owl to seek judgment from the pope; in Cotton, the birds would make the appeal together. Under canon law (the international legal system of the Church), the ultimate court of appeal was the papal court. See Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, pp. 128–29.
- 748 *bles.* “blast.” Added by a later hand, this reading is a crux. Cotton reads *þes*, which Cartlidge accepts as a demonstrative pronoun, so that the line means “You shall hear something else about this” (Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 19, 122n748). See also Atkins, p. 64n748; and Stanley, p. 121n747f.
- 762 *‘Ne may no strengthe ayeyn red.’* “Strength cannot beat wisdom.” On this widespread proverb (Whiting S833), see commentary in Atkins, pp. 65–66n762; Stanley, pp. 122n762, 161, 163; and Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 66–67n762,769–72.
- 769–72 *Uvel strengthe is . . . naveth non evening.* Compare Whiting W418, “Wit is better than force or strength”; and L381, “Better is lith (*cunning*) than lither (*evil*) strength.” Compare this saying to line 762, and see commentary in Stanley, pp. 122n769–72, 161, 163; and Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 66–67n762,769–72.
- 795–804 *If twey men . . . is so genge?* On this analogy between disputation and the sport of wrestling, see lines 1285–86 (note); and Stanley, p. 123n795–804.
- 805 *fele wike.* “many services.” See note to line 530, above.
- 809–36 *Ofte, hwan hundes . . . than thine twelve.* This passage about a fox’s many tricks versus a cat’s single one derives from a popular fable of The Fox and the Cat, which is told by Marie de France (*Fables*, ed. and trans. Spiegel, pp. 248–51; summarized by Stanley, p. 164). Compare line 694 (note).
- 816 *he can hongy bi the bowe.* “he can hang from a branch.” Given the cat’s critical ability to climb trees (line 833), the poet seems to have blundered in listing this among the fox’s tricks: “It is robbing the fable of its point to include the Cat’s one, but supremely effective, shift, the life-saving ability to climb trees, among the many tricks in the Fox’s bag; it is a blunder in the art of narrative” (Stanley, p. 124n816).
- 824 *vorth the abak.* “forward or back.” In this construction, *the* means “or”; compare line 1360.

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- 833 *Bute he can clymbe swithe wel.* “He simply knows how to climb well.” On the cat’s one life-saving trick, see note to line 816, above.
- 868 *foliot.* “snare,” a word occurring only in *Owl*. See *MED*, *foliot* (n.), “a means of ensnaring or beguiling, a lure or decoy.” Atkins, p. 202n868, proposed a pun on the name of Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London (1163–1187), opponent of Thomas Becket (archbishop of Canterbury, 1162–1170), but the theory has been mostly rejected. For some assessments, see Hume, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, pp. 7, 68–81; Stanley, p. 125n868; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 70n868.
- 877–78 *If riht goth . . . than thi song.* “If right goes ahead and wrong behind, / My weeping is better than your song.” Compare *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 20 (note).
- 879–86 *Theyh summe men . . . biddeth Cristes ore.* As elsewhere, the owl’s speech takes a homiletic turn. See note to lines 353–62, above.
- 882 *That beoth her wo is hom thes.* Literally, “They that are here, woe is them thereof.” Compare *Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 207–08: “Ac trichurs and lyeres, and les / That weren her — wo is ham thes!” (But these traitors and liars, who / Were false here — woe to them!). See Stanley, p. 125n882; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 124n882 (“the phrasing here is strikingly coincidental”).
- 904 *bilegge.* “to interpret (what is said); to have (a certain) meaning; explain (something).” See *MED*, *bileggen* (v.), sense 4.
- 905–10 *Hwi nultu singe . . . men of Galeweye?* It was common knowledge in medieval England (and a confirmed fact) that nightingales are rarely found elsewhere. Gerald of Wales observed that there were none in Ireland. Cartlidge quotes Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum*, on the matter: “When she is occupying herself with the allurements of love, this bird abhors those places made unpleasant by the great cold, and if by any chance she visits them at that time, she does not perform her [musical] labour with its sweet modulations” (Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 70n905–10; see also Stanley, p. 125n905–10). On Neckam (1157–1217), abbot of Cirenchester Abbey (1213–1217), see Neckam, *De naturis rerum*, ed. Wright.
- 910 *Galeweye.* Galloway, a region of southwest Scotland.
- 914 *writelinge.* “warbling.” See note to line 48, above.
- 926 *That thi dwele-song heo ne forlere.* *dwele* means “delusive, misleading” (Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 173; glossary, s.v. *dweole* (adj.)) or “heretical, perverse” (Stanley, p. 179; glossary, s.v. *dweole* (adj.)). See *MED*, *dwele* (n.), sense 2b, where *dwele song* is defined as “beguiling song.” *Forleren*, an Old English verb, is very rare in Middle English and this line in *Owl* marks its final instance. It means “to teach (someone) falsely, to mislead, to seduce” (*MED*, *forleren* (v.)).
- 935–38 *For the ule . . . to heore ned.* The nightingale’s response to the owl’s charge of her singing near human privies has been delayed, as part of the poem’s comedy of legal attack and well-considered

ered counterattack. Stanley comments: "It is strange that the Nightingale should only now be thinking of the Owl's words at lines 592–96. She has had her chance to answer this charge in her last speech, 707–836" (p. 126n936–38).

- 941 *The wraththe binymeth monnes red.* "Wrath deprives a man of his wits." On this proverb (Whiting W703; compare W701, W702), see commentary in Stanley, pp. 126n941, 161, 163; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 71n941, 945–48.
- 943–44 *"Selde endeth . . . wel the wrothe."* "The hateful seldom end well, / And the wrathful seldom plead well." On this proverb (Whiting L417), see commentary in Atkins, p. 80n943; Stanley, pp. 126n943f., 161, 163; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 71n943–44. Other instances of the proverb have *erendeth*, "intercedes," instead of *endeth*, and Stanley, Cartlidge-Owl, and Millett (n943) accept this emendation of the Cotton text (positing an omission of the *-er* abbreviation).
- 948 *breth.* "passion." For this meaning, see *MED*, *breth* (n.(1)), sense 2a(b), "fervent spirit, ardor, passion," where this line and line 1454 are the only instances cited. Translating *breth* as "vapour," Cartlidge-Owl, p. 71n945–50, discusses medieval medical theories that may inform lines 945–50. See also *MED*, *breth* (n.(2)), "wrath, anger, vengeful spirit," which might infect the meaning here.
- 961–64 *Wenestu that wise . . . in neste thine?* The proverb (Whiting S891) is also recorded in *Handlyng Synne*; see Stanley, pp. 127n961–64, 161, 163; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 72n963–64.
- 965 *one hole brede.* "a board's hole," that is, a privy. The Nightingale argues that her natural haunt is near the bedroom of lovers, and it is not her fault if the privy happens to be nearby.
- 999–1014 *That lond nys . . . ut of helle.* Commentators sometimes relate this notable description of a wild foreign landscape and its primitive inhabitants to the Anglo-Saxon narrative of Othere's journey to Norway, recorded in King Alfred's *Orosius*; later travel narratives known in England have also been cited. Critics have also disputed whether the place intended is Norway, Scotland, or Ireland. See the summaries in Stanley, p. 128n999–1014; and Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 73–74n999–1014.
- 1016 (*So hwile dude sum from Rome*). "As someone from Rome once did." This seemingly topical reference to a specific papal missionary has not been convincingly identified. The candidates who have been proposed are enumerated by Stanley, p. 129n1016; and by Cartlidge-Owl, p. 74n1015–18.
- 1021–22 *He myhte bet . . . scheld and spere.* "He'd do better to teach a bear / How to hold shield and spear." This fanciful image recalls the colorful drawings of animals impersonating human actions, drolleries found in the margins of ornate manuscripts. It also evokes the world of beast fable, as do two birds of different species in impassioned debate. For some interesting analogues, see Atkins, p. 87n1021–22, who cites Neckam's *De naturis rerum*; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 74n1021–22. See also the entertaining array of animals armed for warfare, as depicted in the manuscript marginalia, in Jackson, "Medieval killer rabbits," and Biggs, Knight v. Snail."

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- 1030 *ise*. “iron,” a form of the word attested in Old English; see *MED*, *iren* (n.), where this line is cited under sense 3a. Both manuscripts read *ire*, “iron.” For the rhyme, Atkins emends *ire* in both manuscripts to *ise*, a change followed here. Both Stanley and Cartlidge retain the reading *ire*. See the discussion by Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 126n1030.
- 1035 *leve tydinge*. “welcome tidings, good news”; see *MED*, *lef* (adj. & adv.), sense 2c. In Cotton, the reading is *loue tipinge*, “love tidings.”
- 1039–42 ‘*Mon schal eryen . . . ne springth ne bled*.’ On this widespread proverb on sowing and reaping (Whiting S542), biblical in origin, see commentary in Stanley, pp. 130n1039f., 161, 163; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 74n1037–42. Compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 23; and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 52–53.
- 1049–62 *Enes thu sunge . . . hors were todrawe!* A version of this story of the nightingale and the jealous husband appears in Marie de France’s lai *Laüstic* (*The Lais*, trans. Hanning and Ferrante, pp. 155–59; summarized by Stanley, pp. 165–66). The detail of the nightingale torn apart by wild horses appears in the chapter on the nightingale in Neckam’s *De naturis rerum* (Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 103).
- 1052 *bothe lowe and buve*. “both low and high.” See *MED*, *boven* (adv.), sense 1a, and compare note to line 1346, below.
- 1066 *sprenge*. “bird snare.” This rare word, “sprinkling,” is recorded only here as a physical object. See *MED*, *sprenge* (n.), sense 1b.
- 1072 “*Wel viht that wel spekth*.” “He fights well who speaks well.” Repeated at line 1074, this proverb (Whiting F142) is recorded only in *Owl*. See Stanley, pp. 131n1072, 161, 163.
- 1081 *He hire bilek in one bure*. “He locked her in a chamber.” The motif of a woman (wife or daughter) imprisoned by a jealous, possessive man (husband, suitor, or father), in a bower (that is, a bedchamber or tower) recurs in romance and fabliau. The situation exists in Marie de France’s lai *Yonec* (*The Lais*, trans. Hanning and Ferrante, pp. 137–52), where the wife receives consolation and love from a hawk that can change into a man. See Atkins, p. 91n1081ff.; and Stanley, p. 131n1081–86.
- 1091 *Kyng Henri*. The name has been traditionally taken to refer to King Henry II (d. 1189); line 1092 indicates that the king is now dead (Stanley, pp. 131–32n1091f.). According to Millett, *Owl* “is likely to date from before 1216, the accession of Henry III. Henry II, as a patron of courtly literature (including the *Lais* of Marie de France), could be seen as an appropriate supporter for the nightingale” (n1091). Cartlidge argues plausibly, however, for a much later date, not very distant from the making of the Cotton and Jesus manuscripts, with the reference being to Henry III (d. 1272) or to a fictitious king (Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 75–76); for the argument in full detail, see Cartlidge, “The Date.” Compare the complimentary references to Henry III that appear in *Love Rune* (art. 19), lines 41 (note), 51 (note). Compare also the

proposed dates based on lines 1730 (note) and 1767 (note), and the discussion on dating in the Introduction to this volume (pp. 11n47, 18).

- 1093 *forbonne*. “banished,” a verb attested only here. See *MED*, *forbannen* (v.).
- 1110 *agrulle*. “annoy.” A rare word; see *MED*, *agrillen* (v.), sense 1a.
- 1111 *ermyng*. “wretch.” See *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 317 (note).
- 1119 *the totorveth and toheneth*. “violently pelt and injure you.” The *to-* prefixes accentuate the acts’ forceful aggression. Both verbs are rare. For *totorveth*, see *MED*, *totorven* (v.), “to pelt (sb.), especially with turf or stones,” attested only thrice in Middle English (two times in *Owl*; see also line 1166). The verb *toheneth* is attested only here; see *MED*, *tohenen* (v.), “to injure (sb.), greatly, afflict grievously.”
- 1124 *codde*. “paunch, belly.” See *MED*, *cod* (n.(1)), sense 3b, which cites this line.
- 1148 *Hit is ever of mannes unhwate*. “It dwells incessantly on human calamity.” On the ancient and medieval tradition of the owl as a harbinger of death and disaster, see Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 77n1145–50, who lists a plethora of sources, from Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, trans. Mandelbaum, 5.548–49), to Pliny, John of Salisbury, Bartholomeus Anglicus, Albertus Magnus, and Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls* (“The oule ek, that of deth the bode bryngeth,” line 343). Citing Ovid, the medieval *Bestiary* follows the tradition: “It is a bird associated with death, . . . among the augurs it was said to foreshadow evil” (trans. Barber, *Bestiary*, p. 148). On *unhwate*, see *MED*, *unwhate* (n.), a word appearing only twice and only in *Owl*: here (in Jesus and Cotton) and at line 1267 (in Cotton only).
- 1156 *theves rune*. Literally, “the secrets of thieves.” For this interpretation of the word *rune*, which differs from Stanley’s “hue and cry” (p. 136n1215), see Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 128n1156; and *MED*, *roun(e)* (n.(2)), sense 1a.
- 1166 *totorveth*. See note to line 1119, above.
- 1174 *al that wereth lynnene cloth*. “all who wear linen cloth.” This line has provoked controversy over who the wearers of linen might be. Context suggests that Millett is right: “the reference may be to the linen surplices of the clergy” (n1174). Others have understood the line to refer more broadly to “All socially respectable people, lay or clerical, but not the poor, nor the peasantry (nor, for that matter, monks),” that is, those who “wore linen (i.e., underclothing)” (Stanley, p. 134n1174). See Cartlidge’s lengthy discussion (Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 78n1174).
- 1177–78 *Ertu ihoded . . . thu cursest unihoded?* As Stanley notes, “The right to pronounce a curse in the divine name is a part of the priestly office; and outside the priesthood no man has authority to do so” (p. 134n1177–79).

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- 1180 *Ich not if thu were preost.* The Cotton reading for Jesus 29's *preost* is *zauere prest*, a phrase that has puzzled editors. Laing, "The Owl and the Nightingale," pp. 471–73, corrects the adjective to *wavre*; the phrase means "vagabond priest," a type held in contempt by medieval society. The Jesus scribe omitted the exemplar's adjective, which had yogh for wynn, probably because he could not construe its meaning.
- 1182 *mansynge.* "excommunicating, cursing." See *MED*, *mansing(e)* (ger.), sense 1(a), "the act of excommunicating," which only priests were empowered to do.
- 1186 *Drah to the!* "Pull harder!, Try again!" The precise meaning of this saying (Whiting C62) is disputed by critics (see Cartlidge's summary in *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 78n1186). Context suggests that the owl mocks the nightingale for the losing argument just rebutted, taunting her that she will have to find something better in order to win.
- 1206 *smithes sale uuele clenche.* Literally, "smiths will badly clinch with rivets." Stanley explains why smiths are listed: "*Smipes* here means 'armourers', who are subjects of Mars, and who, if they bungle their riveting, will bring about calamity" (p. 135n1206). Cartlidge thinks the reference embraces "blacksmiths, armourers or shipwrights" (*Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 79n1206).
- 1213 *toknyng.* "prophecy." See *MED*, *tokning(e)* (ger.), sense 2a: "an omen, a portent; a prediction, prophecy." On the owl's overall claim that her powers come from "devout and wholesome study," see *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 79n1208–14.
- 1215 *rem.* "hue and cry." See *MED* *rem*, (n.(1)), sense 1a. A hue and cry is a call raised for the pursuit of a felon; whoever hears it must arm himself and join in pursuit.
- 1225–26 *'If thu isyst her heo beo icume / His strengthe is him wel neyh binume.'* "If you see beforehand that it's coming, / Its strength is virtually robbed from it." The proverb is similar in meaning to "Forewarned is forearmed": if a calamity is perceived in advance, it can be prepared for and somewhat alleviated. Compare Whiting W392: "He is wise that is (will be) ware." See discussion by Stanley, pp. 136n1225f, 161, 163; and *Cartlidge-Owl*, p. 79n1225–32.
- 1235–60 *Thauh ic iseo . . . harem the ner.* The argument on divination presented here by the owl can be compared to serious studies and formulations by medieval theologians, philosophers, and scholars who pondered the problem of the relationship between human free will and divine foreknowledge. See especially *Cartlidge-Owl*, pp. 79–81n1233–42, who cites relevant passages from Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, and adds, as well, Neckam's *De naturis rerum*, Albertus Magnus's writings, and Chaucer's Nun's Priest's Tale (*CT* VII[B<sup>2</sup>]3234–50). On the poem's parody of this weighty topic, see also Stanley, p. 137n1241f; and A. C. Cawley, "Astrology in 'The Owl and the Nightingale.'"
- 1258 *awene.* "vex, trouble, distress (someone)." See *MED*, *ahwenen* (v.). The only two occurrences of this Old English-derived verb in Middle English appear in *Owl*; compare line 1564.

- 1264 *huyng*. “hooting.” See *MED*, *huing* (ger.), derived from *heuen* (v.(3)). This occurrence is the only attested instance of the gerund.
- 1267 *unhap*. “misfortune.” The reading in Cotton is *unwhate*, “misfortune.” See note to line 1148, above.
- 1271–72 ‘*everich mon the bet him beo / Ever the bet he him biseo*.’ “the better off each man is, / The more ought he plan ahead.” For this proverb, see Whiting B275.
- 1273–84 *Ne triste no . . . turneth to grome*. As Stanley states, “A number of proverbs are here joined together into one gnomic utterance” (p. 138n1271–80); see also Atkins, p. 108n1273–74; Stanley, pp. 161, 163; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 81.
- 1285–86 *Go so hit go, at eche fenge / Thu vallest mid thin owe swenge!* “However it goes with every bout, / You fall down by your own swing!” An analogy between disputation and wrestling or boxing, as in lines 795–804. On *fenge* as “bout,” see *MED*, *feng* (n.), sense 1b, “a coming to grips (in an argument), a bout,” where *Owl* is the only example of this rare word employed this way.
- 1297 *heo hire understod*. “she gathered her thoughts, pondered.” On this reflexive use of the verb, see *MED*, *understonden* (v.), sense 7a.
- 1298–1314 “*Ule, artu wod? . . . natheles thu were*. On the nightingale’s arguments about witchcraft (divination by necromancy) and excommunication by priest’s edict, Stanley offers this summary: “She had authority for cursing the Owl (1169–74), for the priestly authority . . . had been exercised long ago in condemnation of witchcraft; yet even if that had not been so, cursing has become so universal that the Nightingale is not alone in doing so” (p. 139n1305–16). See also Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 81–82n1298–1308.
- 1325–28 *On ape may . . . top ne more*. The figurative use of apes and monkeys in literature and art, as comically unreasoning imitators of humans, is widespread in medieval culture. For many pertinent analogies, see Stanley, p. 140n1325–28; Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 82–83n1325–28; and Lerer, “The Owl, the Nightingale, and the Apes.” For the phrase *top ne more*, see *MED*, *top* (n.(1)), sense 1a, “neither top nor root, nothing at all.”
- 1342 *copinere*. “lover.” See *MED*, *copenere* (n.); and compare *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), line 103.
- 1346 *Thane that schal hire beo bove*. “The man who will be her lord,” literally “The one who shall be above her.” See *MED*, *bove* (adv.), sense 1a, “above, aloft, on high,” and compare note to line 1052, above.
- 1357 *luyve derne*. “secret love.” See *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), line 34 (note).
- 1360 *wel the wrothe*. “good or ill.” In this construction, *the* means “or”; compare line 824.

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- 1378–81 *Beo hwich heo . . . unwele and forbroyde!* The nightingale's distinction is between mutual love (which is always proper) and forcible seduction and rape (which is always wrong). The verb *atbroyde*, a key to the meaning, is difficult to translate precisely. See *MED*, *atbroiden* (ppl.), sense 1b, "diverted," where this line is the only instance. See also the discussions of Stanley, p. 142n1380; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 132n1380–81.
- 1392 *more*. Literally, "root." On the figurative sense of this line (*That stumpeþ at the fleysse more*), see *MED*, *mor(e)* (n.(1)), sense 1c: "to fall into sin because of the stumbling-block of physical appetite."
- 1395–1408 *Ne beoþ noht . . . fleys the gost?* This passage is often cited as a variation of the many enumerations of the Seven Deadly Sins found in medieval literature. In Jesus 29 specifically, compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 79–85 (note); and the more general depictions in *A Little Sooth Sermon* and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 16, 26). Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 86n1395–1410, and Stanley, pp. 143–44n1395–1416, provide many analogues, drawn from Hugh of St. Victor, Alain de Lille, *Ancrene Wisse*, *Holy Maidenhood*, *Handlyng Synne*, and the later *Piers Plowman*. It is typical of *Owl* that the passage sets up the sins themselves as vying in a contest for "worse" between sins of the flesh and sins of the spirit.
- 1400 *wlonkhede*. "pomposity." The only recorded instance of this word, found only in Jesus. See *MED*, *wlonkhede* (n.), "?wantonness," but the meaning would seem to be associated with *wlonk* (adj.), sense 2, "pompous, proud." The reading in Cotton is another nonce word: *wrouehede*, "peevisness, perverseness, irritability." See discussions in Stanley, pp. 144–45n1400; and Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 133–34n1400.
- 1428 *chirche-bende*. "church-bond, the sacrament of marriage." See *MED*, *chirche* (n.), sense 9.
- 1446 *tohte ilete*. "drawn (taut) expression." On *ilete*, see note to line 35, above.
- 1449–58 *Ic theche heom . . . adun myd alle*. On the theme of fleeting love, which is here matched lyrically to a nightingale's ephemeral song, compare *Love Rune* (art. 19), lines 21–28. As Cartlidge notes, life's transitory joys are also evoked in *Poema Morale* (art. 3) and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), but, he adds, "as far as I know, the beautiful metaphor in l. 1454 is unparalleled in medieval literature" (Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 88n1449–54).
- 1454 *breth*. See note to line 948, above.
- 1458 *myd alle*. "altogether, completely." On the phrase, see *MED*, *mid* (prep.(1)), sense 11a; and compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), line 118.
- 1461 *breth*. "breath, sexual passion." See note to line 948, above.
- 1468 *utschute*. "excess." See *MED*, *outshot* (n.), which normally means "a projection or extension of a building." This instance in *Owl* is cited as bearing sense 1c, "sexual misbehavior or excess," and it is the only line with that meaning.

- 1483 *Hure*. “least of all.” See Stanley, p. 148n1483.
- 1485–86 *And that he forlose that ther hongeth / That him eft tharto noht ne longeth*. “Lest he lose what hangs there, / Causing him to never again desire that way.” According to Stanley, thirteenth-century English law permitted an injured husband to castrate his wife’s lover, but murdering the adulterous couple was not allowed (p. 148n1485f.).
- 1490 *spanne*. “seduce.” The verb is attested only here; see *MED*, *spannen* (v.(2)), “to seduce (someone’s wife).”
- 1507 *freomon*. “worthy man.” See note to line 131, above.
- 1516 *beoth of thine imunde*. “are of concern or interest to you.” See *MED*, *iminde* (n.), sense 2a, and compare line 252.
- 1521–38 *For hit ityd . . . just in the theth*. On this depiction of a woman’s lot when married to a sexual cheater and violent abuser, one may compare, in the English tradition, the early-thirteenth-century *Holy Maidenhood* (Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, pp. 236–37). From the patristic period on, strong depictions of the “woes of marriage” were included in works recommending female or male celibacy. On the theme of marriage in *Owl*, from different perspectives, see especially Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, pp. 174–99; Coleman, “The *Owl and the Nightingale* and Papal Theories of Marriage”; Cartlidge-*Owl*, pp. 90–91, 103–05; and Stanley, pp. 149–50n1521–1602, 166–67.
- 1522 *unisome*. “at odds, in disagreement.” This word of Old English origin appears only twice in Middle English, the earlier one dated 1150. See *MED*, *unisome* (adj.).
- 1527 *riche*. “proper.” The spelling is a variant of the reading in Cotton: *rizte*.
- 1564 *ahweneth*. “vex, upset.” See note to line 1258, above.
- 1574 *sputing*. “disputing.” See *MED*, *sputing* (ger.), the only instance of this form in Middle English.
- 1582 *iduwe*. “useful, profitable.” The only instance of this Old English-derived word in Middle English. See *MED*, *idoue* (adj.).
- 1583–92 *The louerd into . . . thinkth a mile*. The owl ventures into lyric elegy with this evocation of the faithful wife’s lonely grief upon the departure of her husband. Stanley, pp. 151–52n1586, and Cartlidge-*Owl*, p. 91n1575–92, cite comparable scenes in *Holy Maidenhood*, *Ancrene Wisse*, and the later Franklin’s Tale by Chaucer (*CT* V[F]817–21).
- 1586 *houth-sythe*. “departure.” The only instance of this Old English-derived word in Middle English. See *MED*, *houth-sithe* (n.), “?An anxious or distressing journey, ?a long journey, ?departure.”
- 1604 *alemed*. “paralyzed, lame.” The only instance of this word in Middle English. See *MED*, *alamed* (ppl.).

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- 1613 *ascheule*. “scare away (birds).” The only instance of this word in Middle English; it is associated with the word *sheuel*, “scarecrow.” See *MED*, *asheu(e)len* (v.).
- 1618 *unmethē*. “difficult, ungentle.” The owl is saying that her rebuttal puts the nightingale in a hard spot, that is, at a disadvantage in the dispute. The construction is impersonal and means “it is difficult/disagreeable for you.” Cotton has *inmeathe* (= *unneathe*), “difficult,” yielding a similar meaning. See the discussions of this crux by Atkins, p. 136n1618; Stanley, p. 152n1618; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 137–38n1618.
- 1623 *Ah thah my lif me beo atschote*. “But yet when my life’s passed out of me.” The verb is attested only in Owl, where it appears twice. See note to line 44, above.
- 1632 *stal ne stode*. “nor afford any help.” Compare *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 100: *hit wolde him stonde muchel stel* (“it would afford him much help”). Stanley suggests that there is a pun on *stal*, “decoy bird”: “But you never helped mankind as a decoy bird, alive or dead” (p. 153n1631f.). See *MED*, *stal(le)* (n.), sense 5, and *stal(e)* (n.(4)), “decoy.”
- 1639–51 *Nule ic with . . . gest an honde*. On the nightingale’s legal ploy, arguing that an error in argument has caused the owl to forfeit, see the discussion of English law provided by Cartlidge-Owl, p. 92n1638–52. Cartlidge finds the nightingale’s claim to be specious.
- 1658–60 *Tharvore, anon to . . . grete and smale*. This early instance of a “parliament” of birds is of great literary interest, particularly in comparison to Chaucer’s much-later *Parliament of Fowls*. In a lengthy note, Atkins, pp. 140–41n1658ff., cites, of works earlier than Owl, Marie de France’s fable of The Eagle, the Hawk, and the Doves (*Fables*, ed. and trans. Spiegel, pp. 172–73) and Alain de Lille’s *De Planctus Naturae*. See too Marie’s fable of The Eagle, the Hawk, and the Crane (*Fables*, ed. and trans. Spiegel, pp. 214–17). Jill Mann comments that “It is equally likely . . . that the poet knew the *Speculum stultorum*, for the parliament of birds reported by the ass Burnellus provides the only previous model for avian debate, and also anticipates the English poem in its comic blurring of avian behaviour and human morality” (*From Aesop to Reynard*, p. 149). See, too, discussions provided by Stanley, pp. 153–54n1658–60; Cartlidge-Owl, p. 92n1658–60; and Honegger, *From Phoenix to Chauntecleer*, pp. 103–30.
- 1663 *wise*. “melodies.” See note to line 54, above.
- 1666 *taveleth*. “plays at dice.” On this reference to gambling, see the lengthy discussions by Stanley, p. 154n1666; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 92n1665–66.
- 1679–82 *The seolve cok . . . under welkne bi nyhte*. Although the cock is not a bird of prey, its nature is bellicose. These lines represent an early reference “to the fighting qualities of the cock, and, by extension, to cock-fighting” (Stanley, p. 154n1679). Medieval writers also classified cocks as nocturnal singers like owls; on this notion, see Cartlidge-Owl, p. 93n1680–82, who cites Ambrose and Pliny.
- 1683 *up eu on utest grede*. “raise a hue and cry against you.” See note to line 1215, above.

- 1689 *voreward*. “agreement” with quasi-legal, contractual overtones. See *MED*, *fore-ward* (n.), sense 1, “an agreement, contract, treaty, bargain,” and compare the end of the General Prologue in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, where the Host certifies the pilgrims’ agreement to tell tales along the way by declaring: “Ye woot youre foreward, and I it yow recorder” (CT I[A]829).
- 1703 *wise*. “song.” See note to line 54, above.
- 1710–16 *Heo wolde natheles . . . for arehthe swete*. The advice to put on a brave face to deflect a powerful enemy was acted upon earlier by the nightingale (lines 402–08, 1067–74). On *ilete*, “brave face,” see note to line 35, above.
- 1711 *The nihtegale*. Both manuscripts have a large capital thorn at the beginning of this line, but the syntax does not indicate a break or transition. The error had to have been present in the exemplar (Stanley, pp. 5, 155n1711). The proper break occurs at line 1717.
- 1717 *The wrenne*. The transition is inserted editorially. See note to line 1711, above.
- 1724–25 *Vor theih heo nere abred ibred a wolde / Heo wes itowen among mankunne*. “For though she’d not been bred in the woods, / She’d been educated among humans.” The reference is apparently to a lost fable about a wren (Stanley, p. 155n1724–26).
- 1728 *Tofore the kinge thah heo scholde*. “Even if she were in the king’s presence.” The wren is associated with royal rank because the Latin word for “wren” is *regulus*, “little king.” Neckam explains the Latin name by means of a story: the birds agree that whoever can fly the highest will be their king; the wren succeeds by first hiding in the eagle’s wing and then, when the eagle has flown very high, it perches on the eagle’s head (Neckam, *De naturis rerum*, ed. Wright, p. xxv; see also Stanley, p. 167, and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 93n1723–28).
- 1730 *pays*. “peace,” that is, the king’s peace. Many commentators take this word as a clue as to Owl’s date of composition. It may indicate “the peace declared by the justiciar Hubert Walter in 1195, . . . which was imposed by an oath taken by everyone over fifteen years of age, and so must have had a wide impact” (Mann, *From Aesop to Reynard*, p. 149n1). See Mann’s presentation of the historical scholarship; and also Stanley, p. 156n1730f., and Cartlidge-Owl, pp. 93–94n1730–34. Compare the proposed dates based on lines 1091 (note) and 1767 (note).
- 1733 *Hunke*. “You two.” See *MED*, *ink* (pron. (dual)); and Stanley, pp. 156–57n1733f.
- 1750 *in hore lynde*. “in a linden tree.” The prepositional form of *a* (indefinite article) is spelled *ore* in both manuscripts at lines 17, 1750, and 1754, except for this instance in Jesus 29; see Cartlidge-Owl, p. 166 (glossary, s.v. *a*). It is possible, however, that the Jesus scribe preserves here an adjective of color: “in a gray-white linden.” See *MED*, *hor* (adj.), senses 1a–c.
- 1754 *Bi thare see in ore utlete*. “Near the sea on an inlet,” an accurate description of the topography of Portesham.

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- 1767 *rente on vale stude*. “revenues from many places.” Atkins comments, “There is abundant evidence as to the contemporary practice of inducting into livings persons of influence whom either ignorance or youth disqualified for such charges. Bishop Grosseteste in the first half of the 13th century tried to put an end to these abuses” (p. 150n1775ff.). Yet the practice of granting multiple livings was so common as to be rather ordinary, and it is difficult to gauge whether it is regarded here as an abuse or as a proper way to reward Nicholas. See discussions by Stanley, p. 158n1773–76; and by Cartlidge-Owl, p. 94n1759–68, who argues that if Nicholas was trained in law (line 1756), the poem can best be dated in the period from the 1230s to the 1320s. Compare the proposed dates based on lines 1091 (note) and 1730 (note).
- 1775–76 *With heore kunne, heo beoth mildre / And yeveth rente lutle childre!* “To their own families, they’re more gentle / And give revenues to little children!” A complaint about rampant nepotism in the giving of preferments. Cartlidge notes that the problem persisted in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, so the complaint cannot help to date *Owl* (Cartlidge-Owl, p. 95n1775–76). Bennett and Smithers cite an egregious example: “[I]n the fourteenth century one Philip Beauchamp had a canonry before he was six and fourteen preferments by the time he was as many years old” (*Early Middle English Verse and Prose*, p. 275n733).
- 1777–78 *So heore wit hi demeth adwole / That ever abit Mayster Nichole*. “Thus do their own wits judge them to be wrong / In how Master Nicholas continues to wait.” In upbraiding Nicholas’s superiors, the poet seems unlikely to win them over. As Cartlidge comments, “The request that Nicholas should be better paid is hardly likely to have succeeded, unless his patrons were able to appreciate the poem’s impudence as an aspect of its wit” (Cartlidge-Owl, p. 95n1777–80). On the difficulty in translating line 1777, see *MED*, *adwole* (adv. (or phr.)), “falsely, erroneously,” a word appearing nowhere else; Stanley, p. 158n1777f.; and Cartlidge-Owl, p. 141n1777.
- 1785–86 *al ende of orde, / Telle ic con word after worde*. “from beginning to end, / I can repeat it word for word.” Cartlidge notes that Nicholas “is clearly expected to receive the debate as a text rather than as a trial taking place in front of him. In this respect, the evidence made available to him for judging between the two birds is no different (at least in form) from that provided to the readers or hearers of the poem” (Cartlidge-Owl, p. 95n1781–88). This observation is not quite true, however, for the owl’s recitation of the speeches would necessarily omit the narrator’s voice, which sometimes depicts the disputants’ emotional reactions and mental ruminations. Nonetheless, the idea that the poem just read is the verbatim transcript to be recited before Nicholas renders *Owl* akin to *Love Rune*, which becomes the actual writ (a “rune” or song) to be drawn out and read (or sung) repeatedly by the “maid of Christ”; see *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 102 (note).
- 1787 *misrempe*. “go astray.” This verb is attested only here and, in Cotton only, at line 1353 (where the Jesus manuscript reads *misnyme*, “goes astray”). See *MED*, *misrempen* (v.), “to go wrong, make a mistake.”
- 1788 *me crempe*. “make me stop.” The verb is attested only here. See *MED*, *crempen* (v.), “to turn (sth.) back, restrain.”

### 3. POEMA MORALE

*Poema Morale* begins in the voice of an old man who regrets his sinful, “worthless” life, but the voice is soon succeeded by that of a preacher and moralist, who offers remonstrances and counsel to every Christian who dwells in the fallen state of mankind. It is a long poem filled with warnings that sometimes seem repetitive and rambling. A thoughtful structure does exist, however, becoming clear when the Jesus scribe’s indicators are closely attended to. Punctuation occurs in nearly every line, suggesting a preacher’s cadence of oral delivery, in long lines with caesuras, rhyming in couplets and grouped like paragraphs. Composed before 1200, *Poema Morale* exemplifies the metrical style that becomes something of a standard for many of the thirteenth-century poets represented in Jesus 29. It and several of the later poems are composed and copied in long lines that balance phrases and pauses. As Pearsall notes, the verses are meant to be “read aloud with emphatic delivery” (*Old and Middle English Poetry*, p. 96).

The spiritually urgent, compellingly logical argument of *Poema Morale* is structured as follows:

- Regrets in old age (the pivotal last moment for redemption by repentance and confession)
- The need to be *mindful* of one’s own state (repeating the verb *me bithenchen*, lines 6, 8, 34)
- The difficult psychology of acknowledging one’s own sin while beset with a constant drive to sin, and bearing this painful knowledge under God’s all-knowing eye
- Doomsday described (when self-knowledge will become one’s own damnation)
- Hell and its pains described
- Another reminder to be *mindful* (repeating, again, the verb *me bithenchen*, lines 322, 330)
- Heaven and its joys described
- A climax that imagines the beholding of God in heaven

Adam’s Fall is a prevailing theme because Adam brought the triple curse of aging, disease, and death to mankind. The old man at death’s door (the brink) must repent and confess, but he is struck with despair at the enormity of his transgressions. *Poema Morale*’s poetics of mindfulness offers the crucial remedy for how to face this dilemma before time is up. The vision offered by the speaker is pessimistic and pain-filled, fraught with the predicament of carrying on in life while bearing an awareness of personal sin and the dire consequences, yet he offers hope and a recourse: one may trade worldly wealth for good deeds, prayers, and alms, which will build the soul’s treasure in heaven — accruing a deposit of good, so to speak, in the next world. A quantifying mentality pervades the poet’s outlook on personal salvation; he likes to emphasize how one’s rewards in heaven shall be numbered according to one’s merits.

The title *Poema Morale* was given to the work by Frederick Furnivall in 1862. Despite occasional efforts to anglicize it (e.g., *A Moral Ode*), the title holds firm as the consensus choice, comparable to how *Cursor Mundi* remains the standard title for another Middle English text. Contrarily, Betty Hill argued against Furnivall’s title and assigned it the name *Conduct of Life*, a title she felt was better suited for a homiletic sermon (“The Twelfth-Century *Conduct of Life*,” pp. 126–28). While others have added to Hill’s discussion of genre, they all have upheld the older title. Treharne concurs that *Poema Morale* is more a “versified homily than poetry” (p. 337), while Louis, who agrees it is a “versified sermon,” notes its poetic, aesthetic qualities. The liveliness of *Poema Morale*, he observes, “lies not so much in its commonplace content as in the vigor and originality of the manner in which it is expressed. The first person point of view gives the poem a sincerity and immediacy of attitude, while the vividness of its imagery gives its message a forceful impact” (*MWME*, 9:3008).

The popularity of the poem is attested by its survival in seven manuscript copies. The editorial history is complex. One critical edition written in German exists (Lewin, ed., *Das mittelenglische Poema Morale*, (1881)), but it was made before discovery of the McClean manuscript (Paues, “A Newly Discovered Manuscript”; and Hill, “A Manuscript from Nuneaton”). Numerous editions from single manuscripts have been created over time. The present edition, based on Jesus 29, does not provide comparative readings among the manuscripts. For such analysis, see especially Hill, “The Twelfth-Century *Conduct of Life*”; and Morris-*Specimens*, pp. 350–56; and for a listing of editions, see *DIMEV* 2113. The Cambridge manuscript, TCC, MS B.14.52, may be viewed digitally at <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.14.52>. In it and other copies of *Poema Morale*, the markers of “stanza” structure and oral delivery found in Jesus 29 (capitals and punctuation) do not appear; see Fein, “Designing English,” p. 55.

[Fols. 169r–174v. *NIMEV* 1272. *DIMEV* 2113. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3007–08, 3378 [204]. **Quire:** 3. **Meter:** 390 lines rhyming in couplets, seven stresses per line (“Septenarius, or fourteener, in imitation of the Latin trochaic tetrameter catalectic” (Louis, *MWME*, 9:3007)). **Layout:** Long lines, most with internal punctuation. Colored capitals are treated in this edition as indicators of stanza-like groupings (usually of 6 or 8 lines). **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 58–71; Morris-*Specimens*, pp. 194–220, 350–56. **Six other MSS:** Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 4, fols. 97r–110v; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, fols. 115r–120r; Cambridge, TCC, MS B.14.52, fols. 2r–9v; London, BL, MS Egerton 613, fols. 7r–12v; London, BL, MS Egerton 613, fols. 64r–70v; London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 487, fols. 59v–65r. **Translations:** Furnivall, ed., *Early English Poems*, pp. x–xii (from Egerton); Thomas, ed. and trans., “*Poema Morale*” (from TCC).]

- 1–19 *Ich am eldre . . . ne for myste.* The poem begins as if narrated by an old man filled with regret — a dramatic-monologue-as-prologue soon to be replaced by the voice of a moralizing preacher.
- 5 *Unned.* “Useless, idle, vain, worthless.” See *MED*, *unnait(e)* (adj.).
- 7 *chilce.* “childishness.” See *MED*, *chilce* (n.), where this line is listed as the only occurrence of the word.
- 14 *The.* “The one, he who, whoever.” This use of the indefinite article as a general, indefinite pronoun is very common in the Jesus 29 *Poema Morale*. It usually begins a full statement of moral injunction.
- 16 *selhthe.* “discretion.” See *MED*, *selth(e)* (n.), sense e.
- 20 *Erewe we beoth to donne god, uvel, al to thriste.* “We’re slow to do good, but evil, all too rash.” See *MED*, *argh* (adj.), sense 1d, “slow, sluggish, lazy,” and *thrist(e)* (adj.), sense 1a, “courageous, bold; audacious, rash.”
- 23 *Hwenne alle men repen schule that heo ear seowe.* “When all men have to reap what they earlier sowed.” Compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 1039–42; *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 52–53, 59–60; and Whiting S542.

- 30–33     *Ne beo the leovere . . . he beoþh alyve.* The moralist advises love of self over love of others, to keep one's focus on salvation. Note the contradiction with line 304 on Jesus's command to love one another.
- 37         *Mony monnes sore iswynk ofte habbeth unholde.* "Many a man's hard exertions often earn hostility." See *MED*, *unhold(e)* (adj.), sense 1b as noun: "unfriendly or hostile people"; and *Morris-Specimens*, p. 350n37: "a man often receives no return for his hard work."
- 38         *don a virst.* "postpone, delay." See *MED*, *first* (n.(1)), sense 2a.
- 46         *yelde.* "payments." *MED*, *yeld* (n.), senses 1 and 3. In *Poema Morale*, ideas of reward or loss in the afterlife are frequently quantified in ways that reflect terms of material commerce.
- 48         *ofte and ilome.* An idiom; see *MED*, *ilome* (adv.), sense 1b. Punctuation shows that *wel* modifies the idiom: "very much over and over again." Compare line 323; and *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12), line 14.
- 62         *te the leste.* Literally "he who [does] the least." Here, *te* means "he who," in parallel with the word *The* that opens this line.
- 65         *lean.* "reward, payment." See *MED*, *lon(e)* (n.(1)), sense 1c.
- 72         *lok.* "gift, present." See *MED*, *lok* (n.(3)), sense 2a.
- 73         *And lutel he let on muchel wowe ther the heorte is ille.* "But he cares little about misery where the intent is foul." On the phrase *litel leten on*, "care little about (something)," see *MED*, *litel* (n.), sense 1a(a), and *leten* (v.), sense 15d, where this line is cited.
- 76–78     *Nis him forhole . . . alle quyke wyhte.* A frightening, awesome aspect of God's bright eyes is that they illuminate everything. The poet is much concerned with God's surveillance, which melds with the power of one's own conscience. Nothing can be hidden.
- 85         *wende hwer thu wende.* Compare *Song of the Annunciation* (art. 10), line 4.
- 105–06    *Way, hwi were . . . and evermore forlorene?* The poet poses here the key existential question for the medieval Christian who fervently believes in original sin. Why are humans born in the first place if only to be eternally damned?
- 114        *For so seyth that unhol is himseolve hwat him smeorteth.* "For whoever says he's unwell knows himself what pains him." *Morris-Specimens* comments: "This is evidently a proverb, like ours that every one knows best where the shoe pinches him" (p. 352n114).
- 143–44    *Never ich in helle . . . ther wende to vecche.* The poet has a tendency to utter unusual thoughts, here affirming he has never been to hell and would not go even if there he could fetch all the wealth in the world. Compare the inexpressibility topos in lines 271–88 (note); and in *The*

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- Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 38; *Death* (art. 14), lines 29–30; and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 265–70.
- 165      *lowen*. “lie, falsify, speak untruthfully.” See *MED*, *lien* (v.(2)).
- 166      *wrien*. “cover, conceal, hide.” See *MED*, *wrien* (v.(1)), sense 2e.
- 195      *Ure forme-faderes gult*. This phrase refers to Adam’s original sin, which led to the fall of humankind. Compare *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), lines 9–16.
- 197      *ache and*. Morris-*Specimens* argues that this phrase is a mistake for *and ache*, “every,” based on what other manuscripts read (p. 353n197). The Jesus version makes good sense, however; see *MED*, *ache* (n.(1)), “pain, aching, suffering.”
- 207      *ore bare sunne*. “merely one sin.” For the translation, see Morris-*Specimens*, p. 353n207 (“for one single sin”); and Morris, p. 279 (glossary, s.v. *On* (adj.)).
- 212      *Nis his mylce nowiht lasse ah al by one wyhte*. “His mercy is never any bit less for only one creature.” Compare the translation given by Morris-*Specimens*: “‘His mercy is not less, but all according to one weight’ (measure or standard), i.e., his mercy is as weighty as his power” (p. 353n212).
- 213–14      *More he one . . . he hit bigunne*. The poet makes a quantifying point about God’s all-powerfulness that conveys a real degree of surprise and wonder: God’s mercy is so great he could redeem the Devil!
- 220      *And on heore boke hit iwryten is, that me may hit reden*. The author claims to rely on books and wise men for his knowledge of hell. Earlier, he notes that he has never seen hell himself (lines 143–44).
- 223–88      *Understondeth nu to me . . . habbe non ende*. The description of hell in *Poema Morale* may be compared to those found in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 43–60, and in *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28).
- 228–30      *Ho vareth from . . . heo habbeth mysse*. One of the pains of hell is to suffer sudden shifts of extreme heat and extreme cold. This form of infernal punishment is also recounted in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 49, and suggested in *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 47, 149–50.
- 240      *Nu were her, nu were ther — heo nuste hwat heo wolden*. The indecisiveness of these sinners in life is reflected in their hot/cold punishment, which is extreme at either end. Their sin resembles that of the indecisive in Dante’s *Inferno*, Canto 3 (ed. and trans. Musa, 1:22–31).
- 241–70      *Ther is psych . . . lif to lede*. The poet paints an indelible portrait of the many kinds of sinners in hell. The poetry is fresh and lively, almost seeming to relish the sight of such misery. The passage gives the audience a chilling treat. Comparisons of here and there are important (“here”

is the touchstone for understanding “there”). For another work that vividly imagines hell, compare *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28).

- 244 *Ne may hit quenche no saltwater, ne Avene strem ne Sture.* “No saltwater may quench it, nor the river Avon or Stour.” This line has been used to help locate the author and place of composition. See Morris-*Specimens*: “This mention of the rivers Avon and Stour is interesting as affording a possible indication of the locality of the poem. There are several rivers of these names, but only in two cases are they found in conjunction. A Stour runs into an Avon near Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire; whilst another Avon and Stour join at Christchurch, Hampshire. The poem being in a Southern dialect, the latter is more probable; there was a monastery at Christchurch, at an early period, which was converted into a priory of St. Austin’s Canons in 1150. This locality would suit very well” (p. 354n244).
- 258 *Ne his poure kunesmen at him ne myhte nouht spede.* Based on comparison to other versions, Morris-*Specimens* believes that this line is an addition by the Jesus scribe (p. 354n258).
- 271–88 *Ther beoth neddren . . . habbe non ende.* Here are the visual special effects of hell in full: snakes and frogs, demons and chains, smoke and so on. All of this is designed to accentuate the unimaginable pain, and the inexpressibility of it, which is here being expressed and vividly imagined. On the inexpressibility topos, intended to heighten the horror, compare lines 143–44; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 38; *Death* (art. 14), lines 29–30; and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 265–70.
- 280 *bi sihtes.* “with their eyes open, wittingly” (Morris-*Specimens*, p. 355n280). The definition does not appear in the *MED*. Compare *MED*, *bi* (prep.), sense 9a(a), “by appearance.”
- 291 *heorure.* “companions.” This word, apparently from the verb *heren*, would literally mean “hearers, listeners”; see *MED*, *herer(e)* (n.). But it could be from the verb *herien*, “worshippers, supporters, followers”; see *MED*, *herier(e)* (n.). The word aligns the bad Christians in hell with the heathens consigned there.
- 293 *anythe.* “next to, nearby.” See *MED*, *anigh* (adv.).
- 304 *Ure even Cristen as usseolf, for so us lerede Dryhte.* This Christian sentiment to love one another contradicts the poet’s earlier command to set one’s salvation before love of others (lines 30–33). On Jesus’s command “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mark 12:31), see also *A Homily on Sooth Love* (art. 26), line 25.
- 306 *bi thisse twam worde.* “to these two words,” that is, love God and love fellow Christians.
- 317 *earmynges.* “poor creatures, wretches.” See *MED*, *erming* (n.), sense 1. Derived from OE *ierming*, the word also appears in *Lazamon’s Brut*, line 8329 (ed. and trans. Barron and Weinberg, p. 428), and *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 1111.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 323 *wel ofte and wel ilome*. The idiom *ofte and ilome* intensified: “constantly and repeatedly, again and again.” Compare line 48.
- 329 *Mest alle men, he yeveth drynke of one Deofles schenche*. “To most every man, it offers a drink from the Devil’s draught.” Compare the imagery of drinking Death’s draught in *Death’s With-er-Clench* (art. 7), line 10.
- 342 *shedeth*. “shield, protect, keep.” See *MED*, *sheden* (v.), sense 2b.
- 343 *cleo*. “cliff.” On the appearance of this spelling elsewhere in *Jesus 29*, where *cleo* appears to mean “scythe,” see the note to *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 36.
- 351 *wone*. “want.” See *MED*, *wane* (n.(1)), sense 1a.
- 353–54 *Summe habbeth lasse . . . heo swunken sore*. Even though the joy of heaven is abundant and satisfying for all, it is distributed at different, quantifiable levels, according to the souls’ places there. This peculiar idea may be meant to match notions of *contrapasso* experienced in hell for different sins by different categories of sinners, as described in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 91–174 (see note), and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28).
- 356 *blisse, eche reste*. See *MED*, *eche* (adj.), sense 1a, “eternal.” The Egerton and TCC versions have the word *and* between *bliss* and *eche*: *blisse and eche reste*.
- 357 *Ther nys nouthen fou ne grey*. “variegated or gray fur.” The phrase *fou and grey*, common in thirteenth-century Middle English verse, appears elsewhere in *Jesus 29* as a marker of wealth: *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 66; *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 14; and *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 14. Dickins-Wilson explain that the first kind of fur comes “from the grey back and white belly of a sort of squirrel, the second from the grey back alone” (p. 197n116). See *MED*, *fou* (adj.), sense 2, and *grei* (n.(2)), sense 1a.
- 358 *acquerne*. “squirrel.” This word is not in the *MED*, but see Morris-*Specimens*, who compares the word to Old High German *eic-horne* (p. 368; glossary, s.v. *Acquerne*). Later, Morris defines *acquerne* as “dog-leather well dressed,” from OF *ocaigne* (p. 233; glossary, s.v. *Acquerne*). Depicting nobles who wore rich furs in life is a common setpiece of Middle English *ubi sunt* laments and moral denunciations of worldly wealth. Here the motif is altered into a reminder that heaven holds no worldly riches. Compare *Death* (art. 14), lines 49–56; *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), lines 69–72; and *Love Rune* (art. 19), lines 33–36. On the *ubi sunt* tradition, see Woolf, pp. 95–96.
- sablyne*. “the fur of a sable.” The word is rare, and *Poema Morale* is the first known instance. See *MED*, *sabelin(e)* (n.).
- 361–78 *Nis ther no murehthe . . . alle wordliche thinges*. The sight of God provides a climax to *Poema Morale*’s visual imagery and sensory representations of sin and bliss.

- 375–76     *On him, heo schullen . . . heo her nusten.* Compare the description of Christ as all-sufficient in *Love Rune* (art. 19), lines 45–48.
- 376         *And on lyves bec iseon al that heo her nusten.* “And see in life’s book all that here they didn’t know.” For *bec*, the MS reads *bee*, which both Morris (p. 71, line 376) and Morris-*Specimens* (p. 356n376) emend to *bec* (“book”), found in other versions of *Poema Morale*. On the phrase *lyves bec*, “future happy lives in heaven,” see *MED*, *lif* (n.), sense 4a.
- 389–90     *Bidde we nu, leove . . . beo ther atholde.* The final couplet appears only in the Jesus 29 version of *Poema Morale*. It is a prayer for the author (or perhaps scribe), solicited from the audience. The effort of composing (or copying) the poem is offered as a good deed to be deposited in heaven in the writer’s favor. The personal prayer caps the penultimate prayer (lines 385–89) made on behalf of the audience. Compare the final prayers in *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), lines 697–702; and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 283–91.
- 389         *Bidde we.* In the Jesus sequence of poems, many closing stanzas open with this phrase, which signal a final prayer. Because the first letter *B* is always a red capital, these standard endings are quite noticeable to a reader of the manuscript. Compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 547; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 349; *The Annunciation* (art. 10), line 4; *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 41; and *Fire and Ice* (art. 21), line 2.

#### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

*The Saws of Saint Bede* survives in two versions in two manuscripts. It has no title in Jesus 29, but its scribal rubric in the second copy is *Pe Sawe of Seint Bede Prest*. That name is found in the important trilingual miscellany Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86 (Worcestershire, ca. 1280), fol. 127va, a volume that also preserves copies of *Doomsday*, *Death*, and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (arts. 13, 14, 28). A *saw* is a “saying,” and the medieval title marks this poem as belonging to the vernacular genre of proverb collections attributed to a famous sage, such as *Hending* (*CHMS*, 3:220–37, 334–37) and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24). The Venerable Bede (672–735) was a revered English saint, religious scholar, and monkish author of *An Ecclesiastical History of England*, whose authority is cited elsewhere in Jesus 29 (*Ten Abuses* (art. 15), line 13).

Previously edited just once each, the two versions’ existence under different titles has muddied awareness and recognition of a vigorous poem of moral warning, enlivened by clever estates satire and a scene of God’s examination of souls on Judgment Day. Early editors named the Jesus copy *Sinners Beware!* (Morris in 1872), and the Digby one *The Sayings of St. Bede* (Frederick J. Furnivall in 1901). The later Digby copy is somewhat longer (373 lines compared to 354), lacks four stanzas found in Jesus 29, and possesses seven new ones. The fifty-five stanzas that agree are largely in the same order. Hence, the two copies are near-identical versions of the same poem. Although *NIMEV* and *DIMEV* list *Sinners Beware!* and *Saws* separately, Cameron Louis names them as one work, *The Saws of Saint Bede* (*MWME*, 9:3041). I give this context in order to explain my decision to name the Jesus 29 poem according to its traditional, and medieval, Digby title. Although the Venerable Bede is never named in *Saws*, his reputation for sagacity does crop up in Jesus 29: see *Ten Abuses* (art. 15), line 13. Like the oft-mentioned King Alfred, Bede represents proverbial wisdom and moral rectitude welling from a reservoir of ancient, native authority.

The poem opens with a long prayer that invokes the Trinity (Holy Ghost, Christ, and Creator) to protect us from the Devil (lines 1–24). Then the speaker urges that “makie we us clene and skere [*pure*]”

before we die so that we may dwell with angels (lines 25–30). Although no tongue may express hell, it is nonetheless described in brief strokes (lines 25–72), comparable to the fuller description found in *Poema Morale* (art. 3). To avoid hell, we must repent, forsake sin, and confess. The Seven Sins are then loosely enumerated (line 73–90) before the speaker turns to the uncertain fates faced by all. He now enumerates different estates, inserting apt details that match living occupations to each practitioner’s eventual doom (lines 91–180). The estates include rich and poor, monks and priests, knights and lawyers, merchants and bondsmen, fine ladies and nuns. Unfortunately, the poet says, we may not know when we will die (lines 181–92). He contrasts the equally dire fates of the doomed soul and body: one travels to pain; the other rots all alone. We come in weeping and naked, and so do we leave (lines 193–216). We must therefore subdue sin with prayer and alms, but, sadly, some fail to confess out of shame. Later, however, it will be worse: each sinner will go to the pains of hell and then be judged, so confess now (lines 216–58). When Doomsday comes, God will speak directly to each side, calling out the Seven Works of Mercy (lines 259–324). The damned souls will curse their bodies, and the “clene,” saved souls (who passed God’s test of mercy) will feel no compassion for the punished ones (lines 331–42). In the end, the poet affirms that virtuous souls will dwell with angels (lines 343–54).

The Jesus 29 scribe copied the tail-rhyme stanzas of *The Saws of Saint Bede* in an unusually graphic way, spreading each stanza across two columns, *a*-rhymes on the left, *b*-rhymes on the right. Red tie-lines connect each *aab* grouping, and a colored initial letter marks off each 6-line stanza. Daniel Wakelin points to the layout of *Saws* as an example of how early Middle English scribes experimented with ways to present new verse forms on the page, probably with a strong sense that rhymes and meters were designed for being recited aloud and heard (*Designing English*, pp. 138–39). According to Pearsall, the tail-rhyme form of *Saws* was derived from Latin models (*Old and Middle English Poetry*, p. 97). No other poem in Jesus 29 is composed in tail-rhyme verse, and no other poem has such a strikingly inventive layout on the page. The text of *Saws* is presented in this edition with deep indentations for the *b*-rhyme lines, which encourages the kind of reading with measured pauses that the scribe’s dramatic graphic layout requires.

The version of *Saws* in MS Digby 86 may be viewed digitally at [https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_4426](https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4426).

[Fols. 175r–178v. NIMEV 3607, 1229. DIMEV 5698, 2042. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3041–42, 3399 [373]. **Quire:** 3. **Meter:** 354 lines in fifty-nine 6-line stanzas, rhyming  $aa_3b_{2-3}aa_3b_{2-3}$ . **Layout:** Two columns, with *a*-lines in the left column, *b*-lines in the right column. The *b*-lines are connected to the *a*-line couplets by red tie-lines. Each stanza is headed with a colored initial, alternating in red or blue. Most lines have end punctuation. **Edition from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 72–83. **One other MS:** Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86, fols. 127v–130r (Furnivall, ed., *The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS., Part II*, pp. 765–76).]

38            *Ne may no tunge telle.* On the inexpressibility topos, intended to heighten joy or horror, compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 143–44, 271–88; *Death* (art. 14), lines 29–30; and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 265–70.

43–60        *In helle beoth . . . enes cumeth there.* The description of hell’s afflictions in *Saws* is brief yet detailed: pain, darkness, extreme hot and cold, hunger and thirst. It may be compared to fuller descriptions in *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 223–45, 271–88, and in *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28).

- 49 *Her is chele and hete.* One of the pains of hell is to suffer sudden shifts of extreme heat and extreme cold; see note to line 245. This form of infernal punishment is also recounted in *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 228–30, and suggested in *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 47, 149–50, below.
- 58 *yeyncherryng.* “returning.” See *MED*, *yencharinge* (ger.), “an averting of some consequence, an escape,” where this line is the only example cited.
- 71 *ethgete.* “easily receive.” See *MED*, *eth-yete* (adj.), from OE *ēap-gēte*. The word was rare in Middle English; the *MED* provides only three instances, with the other two dated 1100 and 1225.
- 77 *Wytherwynne.* “Adversary, the Devil.” See *MED*, *wither-win(e)* (n.), sense 1c, a term for Satan (derived from OE *wiþer-winna*). Compare line 226.
- 79–85 *Prude and modynesse . . . beoth sunnen seovene.* The Seven Deadly Sins are rattled off in a very casual fashion: Pride/Arrogance (“prude and modynesse”), Sloth/Despair (“arhhede and soryness”), Envy/Malice (“nythe and ek onde”), Ire (“wraththe”), Lechery (“hordom”), and Avarice (“yvernesse”). Missing is Gluttony, which has been replaced by Deceit (“swikelnesse”). Compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 1395–1408 (note).
- 80 *arhhede.* I translate this noun as “sloth” because the context is a listing of traditional sins. The word is attested only in this poem; see *MED*, *arghhede* (n.), “cowardice.”
- 91–174 *Nu weneth monye . . . schule heom warantye.* This listing of the different estates heading off to hell approaches comedy in how each group is satirized and provided a deft hint of *contrapasso*. The rich thought they would have the high status of angels; the poor thought they were immune through poverty; the monks planned to keep their treasures; the priest accepting money to sing Mass should have given alms; and so on. The estates satire in *Saws* is the most extended and vibrant of the Jesus 29 lyrics. For other examples, see *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12), lines 27–32; *Ten Abuses* (art. 15), lines 2–11; and *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), lines 17–24.
- 116 *gersumme.* “treasure.” See *MED*, *gersum(e)* (n.), sense 1b (a word of Old Norse and Old English origin).
- 120 *Puke.* “the Devil, Evil Spirit.” See *MED*, *pouk(e)* (n.), sense 1a (from OE *puca*).
- 133 *playdurs.* “pleaders, orators, lawyers.” See *MED*, *pledour* (n.), sense 1a.
- 134 *That werieth red and grene.* The colors appear to be specific to the orators’ (? lawyers’) profession. On the wearing of red and green, compare *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), line 69.
- 145–50 *Of alle men alonde . . . he cume myhte.* The modest husbandman (farmer or plowman) may gain salvation by means of his humble labor, so long as he tithes. This idealization of the honest, devout laborer reflects a medieval Christian attitude informing the later *Harley Song of the*

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- Husbandman* (CHMS, 2:128–31) and William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. The poet, however, adds a stern warning about the necessity of tithing; without that, the husbandman's soul is endangered.
- 146 *bonde*. "husbandman, plowman, farmer." The word indicates someone under another's domination, and so, among the estates, it has a range of possible specific meanings, all connoting submission and obedience. See *MED*, *bond(e)* (n.(1)), sense 1a, "a customary tenant," such as farmers, plowmen, serfs, servants, or vassals; and Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, pp. 273–77. Compare *thral* in *Ten Abuses* (art. 15), line 10 (a work also ascribed to Bede).
- 153 *theothinge*. "tithing." Contributing one-tenth of one's goods to the Church (i.e., tithing) was considered the obligation of every good Christian. A humble, hard-working, impoverished husbandman (i.e., farmer) would seem to represent a virtuous estate, but should he fail to tithe, the poet warns, he will go to hell. On the practice of tithing, see *MED*, *tithen* (v.(2)).
- 158 *drywories*. "illicit affairs." See *MED*, *druerie* (n.), sense 1b, "love-making, flirtation" (from OF *druerie*). The spelling is unusual but similar to that of the Digby 86 version: *driweries*.
- 190–92 *For nes non . . . his ende-day were*. Not knowing the time of one's death is frequently lamented in the Jesus 29 lyrics. Compare *Death's Wither-Clench* (art. 7), lines 1–2; *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (art. 23), line 4; and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 103–12.
- 200 *On here*. "In a haircloth," that is, as a gesture of humility and Christian penance. For burial in a coarse cloth, see *MED*, *here* (n.(2)), sense 3a, and compare *Signs of Death* (art. 22), line 10.
- 211–16 *Sothliche, nakede and . . . Vorleten and bileven*. For a variation of this oft-repeated truism — naked do we enter the world and naked do we depart — compare *Death* (art. 14), lines 13–20.
- 226 *Wytherwine*. "Adversary, the Devil." See note to line 77, above.
- 245 *Ever schrinke and swelle*. "Forever to cramp and swell," perhaps as a result of being subjected to extreme cold and heat. See note to line 49, above.
- 271–318 "*Loke,*" *seyde God . . . "beoth ful lothe."* The description of the Last Judgment in *Saws* is enlivened by a direct dialogue between God and the judged, when Christ questions them about the Seven Works of Mercy (Matthew 25:31–46). This conception of the Last Day is standard, although it does not appear in other representations in Jesus 29. Compare the brief addresses from God to the souls appearing in *Doomsday* (art. 13), lines 33–40. Compare, too, the later poetry of John Audelay: God carries out this Doomsday inquisition in *True Living*, lines 162–79, and addresses the living in *God's Address to Sinful Men*, lines 164–71 (Audelay, *Poems and Carols*, ed. Fein, pp. 29, 131).
- 331–36 *The saule seyth . . . schal ever smerte!* The poet inserts here a miniature recrimination of the soul against the body, at the moment of their final judgment. While the event is familiar from

body-soul debates, the *Saws* poet adds this bit of direct speech to enliven the lesson, just as the poem is to conclude.

- 337–42     *The gode, the . . . tharto nyme gome*. The poet adds a stern coda to the fate of the damned. On Doomsday the righteous souls will bear no compassion for them. The doctrine seems to be that all saved souls will be in accord with the judgment of God, but this detail of virtuous human mercilessness seems harsh to the extreme.
- 349         *Bidde we*. In the Jesus sequence of poems, many closing stanzas open with this phrase, which signals a final prayer. Because the first letter *B* is always a red colored capital, these standard endings are quite noticeable to a reader of the manuscript. Compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 547; *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 389; *The Annunciation* (art. 10), line 4; *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 41; and *Fire and Ice* (art. 21), line 2.

## 5. THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

*The Woman of Samaria* is a biblical paraphrase of John 4:4–30 with virtually no homiletic content. As a gospel-based retelling, it may be compared with *The Passion of Jesus Christ in English* (art. 1), but there are strong differences. While *Passion* recounts a universally understood sequence of events, well known not only from the gospels but also from the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and its sacred narrative forms the foundation of redemptive theology, *The Woman of Samaria* selects a passage of the Bible rarely highlighted on its own.

The reason for its inclusion is not apparent. Perhaps it was composed as a reading for a church service or for a specifically female audience. What it adds to the lyric collection in Jesus 29 is a surprising interest in a biblical woman who interacted with Jesus. The *Passion* concludes with Mary Magdalene's moving encounter with the resurrected Lord (lines 554–94). In like manner, this paraphrase highlights the Samaritan's woman's earnest discourse with Jesus. The manner of telling conveys Jesus's humility, mercy, and quiet authority, expressed with disarming simplicity and homely intimacy.

The main theological import of the paraphrase is the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah, the woman's immediate and total faith in this truth, and the lesson Jesus gives her about prayer and salvation (lines 51–54). Jesus's gentle admonition about the woman's number of husbands (lines 33–36) is merely paraphrased without comment, and there is none of the misogyny given to the passage by Jerome and defended against by the Wife of Bath (see *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 864–65). Jesus, born of Mary (line 3), unpretentiously speaks alone with a sexualized, foreign woman, and the apostles are astounded (lines 61–62). Yet the key import seems to be that what he said to her he had already said to them (they did not marvel at the content; line 63), and that here the redemptive, merciful Word spreads outward beyond a Jewish, male community.

[Fols. 178v–179v. NIMEV 3704. DIMEV 5874. Muir, *MWME*, 2:397–98, 546 [44]. **Quire:** 3. **Meter:** 77 septenary lines, rhyming mostly in couplets, *aa*, with some triplets and quatrains, *aaa(a)*. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. Colored capitals are treated in this edition as indicators of stanza-like groupings (of 4, 6, 7, or 8 lines). **Editions:** Morris, pp. 84–86; Zupitza, pp. 120–22. **Other MSS:** None.]

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 6            *neyleyhte*. “approached, drew near.” See *MED*, *neighlechen* (v.), sense 1a, and compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 85.
- 33–36        “*Well thu seyst . . . than thin owe.*” Compare the Wife of Bath’s Prologue (*CT* III[D]14–19), where she famously queries this response from Jesus about the Samaritan woman’s number of husbands.
- 39            *iredynesse*. “explanation.” *MED*, *irednesse* (n.), where an uncertain definition, “?A decision, an answer,” is given. Derived from OE *gerædnes*, the noun is attested only here.
- 57            *ryhtleche*. “rectify, make correct.” *MED*, *right-lechen* (v.), sense 1a.
- 69            *sayde*. The rhyme fails here, and the original word was perhaps *bihete*, “promised.” This line is the only unrhymed one in the poem. Lines 67–73 constitute the only stanza-group having an odd number of lines (seven), so perhaps half of an original couplet is missing.

## 6. WEAL

This short poem offers a gnomic proverb on Fortune’s capriciousness with artful soundplay and alliteration. Its sentiment is pessimistic and cynical. “Weole” (Wealth or Fortune) always neglects the poor, and, because they lack it, they may never hope to commune with those who are rich. One group of society (the “freomen,” line 3) is born possessed of things that guarantee their happiness. The personified name “Weole” conveys a light pun on Fortune’s wheel. The lyric belongs with numerous other songs in Middle English that contrast woe and weal as the variable conditions of life over which one has little to no control.

The editions of Brown and of Luria and Hoffman print this poem as eight short lines, but there is no internal rhyme in its long lines. Morris prints it (as here) according to the long-line layout of the manuscript. *Weal* is one of several aphoristic, mnemonic poems in *Jesus* 29. See, in particular, *Ten Abuses*, *Signs of Death*, and *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (arts. 15, 22, 23), along with *Will and Wit* (art. 9), contributed by the Cotton MS.

[Fol. 179v. *NIMEV* 3873. *DIMEV* 6182. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3027, 3391–92 [304]. **Quire**: 3. **Meter**: 4 septenary lines, rhyming *aaaa*<sub>7</sub>. **Layout**: Four long lines, with caesuras punctuated. **Editions**: Morris, p. 86; Brown, pp. 65, 196; Luria and Hoffman, eds., *Middle English Lyrics*, p. 10 (with regularized spelling). **Other MSS**: None. **Translation**: Adamson, trans., *A Treasury of Middle English Verse*, p. 13.]

- 3            *freomen*. “free gentry, gentlemen,” the opposite of *bonde*, as named in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 146 (note). See also *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 131 (note) and 1507. The term is discussed in Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, pp. 273–77.
- 4            *for to mele*. “to mingle with.” See *MED*, *medlen* (v.), sense 1a, which gives better sense than *melen*, “speak with” (sense 2a(g)).

## 7. DEATH’S WITHER-CLENCH

Following a complex 10-line stanzaic rhyme scheme, this five-stanza lyric on death appears beside music in one of its five manuscripts, so it evidently circulated as a song. Given its “rather grisly character” (Reese,

*Music in the Middle Ages*, p. 242), the mood it conveys is one of misery: each stanza's seventh line opens with the woeful exclamation "Wailaway!" Many lines call directly to "Mon," chiding him for how oblivious he is to death. The listener or congregant singer is reminded to be prepared for death's unlooked-for, inauspicious, sudden appearance. Death in personified form enters stealthily in four stanzas, offering its potion, striking a violent blow, lurking in one's shoe, and tossing one down from a height. In the final stanza, it is the World that deceives a man and keeps him unprepared for death. As in many other Jesus 29 lyrics, Solomon is named as a wise authority, here on the subject of death (line 21).

In Jesus 29 and Cotton Caligula A.ix, *Death's Wither-Clench* precedes *An Orison to Our Lady* (art. 8). Dobson and Harrison have noted, interestingly, that both poems can be sung to the same music, which they provide from the Maidstone MS (*Medieval English Songs*, pp. 131, 243). It seems very likely, therefore, that the medieval audience of Jesus and Cotton would have recognized these lyrics as paired songs. The two poems may in fact be *contrafacta*, that is, one a transformation of the subject matter and style of the other. The direction for this activity was usually secular to religious, which would suggest, in this case, that *Death's Wither-Clench* is the somewhat older poem (and that it was viewed as more generally admonitive than religious). This possibility makes it all the more fascinating that *An Orison to Our Lady* retains intimations of death in its tones of Marian worship.

*Death's Wither-Clench* appears often in anthologies of Middle English verse, sometimes under the title *Long Life* and sometimes under the first line *Man may longe lives weene*. Titles have varied because the word *wither-clench*, "counter-grip" (line 12) appears in only two versions of the poem (Maidstone and Laud), while Jesus and Cotton bear the word *wither-blech*, "counter-trick." But an unfixed title creates the false impression that the two poems are different, while in fact they are the same one: a lyric mourning Death's cold grip and strategic tricks, sung to a tune that survives. By naming the Jesus/Cotton song *Death's Wither-Clench*, I seek here to standardize the title by selecting the one of most color and familiarity. In the bibliographical summary given below, I provide only a select listing of editions based on manuscripts other than Jesus 29. For a fuller overview, see *DIMEV* 3370. Three of the four other versions of *Death's Wither-Clench* may be viewed by digital facsimile. For MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, see [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX); for MS Laud Misc. 471, see [https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_7274](https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_7274); and for MS Arundel 57 (stanza 1 only), see [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Arundel\\_MS\\_57](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Arundel_MS_57).

[Fols. 179v–180v. *NIMEV* 2070. *DIMEV* 3370. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3022, 3389 [280]. **Quires:** 3–4. **Meter:** 50 lines in five 10-line stanzas, rhyming *ababbaabbb*<sub>4</sub> (usually). **Layout:** Short lines in a single column, each with end punctuation. The scribe sometimes writes two verse lines on one manuscript line. **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 157–59; Hall, 1:29, 2:308–12. **Four other MSS:** London BL, MS Arundel 57, fol. 51v (Michel, *Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwyth*, ed. Morris, pp. 129–30; stanza 1 only); London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fol. 246r (Morris, pp. 156–58); Maidstone, Kent, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, fol. 93v (Brown, pp. 15–16, 170–71); Oxford, BodL, MS Laud Misc. 471, fol. 65r (Brown, pp. 17–18, 170–71). **Critical edition with music:** Dobson and Harrison, eds., *Medieval English Songs*, pp. 122–30, 242, 298. **Translation:** Dobson and Harrison, eds., *Medieval English Songs*, p. 324.]

1–2 *Mon may longe . . . lyeth the wrench.* Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24): "Mony mon weneth that he wene ne tharf, / Longes lyves, ac him lyeth the wrench" (lines 103–04). Not knowing the time of one's death is frequently lamented in the Jesus 29 lyrics. Compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 190–92; and *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (art. 23), line 4. See also Woolf, pp. 86–87.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 4            *maketh his blench*. “changes his course; plays his trick.” See *MED*, *blench* (n.), sense 1b, which cites this line, and compare the note for *wyther-blench* at line 12, below. Compare also *The Owl and the Nightingale*, line 378 (note).
- 10           *aquench*. “quench.” This verb concludes the colorful tavern imagery of drinking Death’s potion while sitting on a beer-bench. “Mon” will be made by Death to fall off his bench, as if drunk, but before that happens, he should be prepared by “quenching” his sinfulness. Compare the imagery of drinking Death’s draught in *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 329. On imagining the ways Death enters the body, see also *Death and Signs of Death* (arts. 14, 22), and Woolf, pp. 81–83.
- 12           *wyther-blench*. “counterblow, hostile trick.” The *MED* lists neither this prefixed word nor its colorful variant *wither-clench*. Line 12 is quoted erroneously under *wither* (adj.), sense 1a, “hostile” (both variants given). The prefix denotes “in opposition to, against.” *Blench* means “trick” (*blench* (n.), sense 1b), as in line 4; Morris defines the prefixed form as “assault, attack” (p. 305). *Wither-clench* (Laud and Maidstone manuscripts) is likewise elusive in the *MED*, where *clench* (n.(1)) means simply a “clinch nail” or a “clinch hammer.” Brown defines *wither-clench* as “counter-clinch, hostile grasp” (p. 303), and Dobson and Harrison define it as “hostile grip” (*Medieval English Songs*, p. 324). Given how familiar *wither-clench* has become via the lyric’s popular title, it is odd that the *MED* lexicographers failed to include it and its variant as two distinct entries.
- 16           *thar-toyeynes*. “against it.” See *MED*, *ther-toyenes* (adv.), sense 1b.
- 18           *leches drench*. “potions,” literally “doctors’ drink, medicinal potion.” See *MED*, *leche* (n.(3)), sense 1b, where this line is cited.
- 21–30       *Do bi Salomones rede . . . stilliche to fordo*. This stanza conveys an injunction to “do well” by means of repeating the verb *do* and its related forms *mysdo* and *fordo*.
- 21–26       *Salomones rede . . . myht the adrede*. Famed for his wisdom, King Solomon is the putative author of the biblical book Proverbs. The reference may be to Proverbs 23:17–18: “Let not thy heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long: Because thou shalt have hope in the latter end, and thy expectation shall not be taken away.” Solomon is also cited for his wisdom in *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 217–18 (on women’s cold counsel) and 275–78 (on one’s destination in the afterlife). The latter set of lines probably refers to the same passage; see Hall, 2:307n288. Elsewhere in Jesus 29, Solomon is named for his building of the temple; see *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 245, and *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 57.

## 8. AN ORISON TO OUR LADY

Like the preceding *Death’s Wither-Clench* (art. 7), this Marian prayer has five 10-line stanzas rhyming on two sounds, but the rhyme scheme is different. Because the speaker mentions song twice (lines 2, 8), it may also have been sung, but no musical score has survived. Dobson and Harrison propose that it was sung to the same tune as *Death’s Wither-Clench*, which they provide (*Medieval English Songs*, pp. 131, 243). In

syntax, the stanzas of *An Orison to Our Lady* turn at the sixth line, with phrases echoed in stanzas 1–2 (“Heo brouhte”) and in stanzas 3–4 (“Tharfore ich thenche”).

Despite heaping praise upon Mary, the speaker’s mind dwells persistently on the threat of death and eternal punishment. He prays in optimistic hope of Mary’s ability to provide remedy from hell’s pains because of her blessed childbearing. Contrasted to Eve’s darkness, she is bright light, good health, and joyous happiness. Foolishly deluded by the World’s attractions, the speaker pledges to forsake sin and let Mary guide him. The song ends in repentant near-desperation, asking Mary, surprisingly, to take vengeance on him (“Awrec thu nu on me, Levedi”) before Death seizes him (lines 43–45). Mary is thus addressed as a direct agent in the petitioner’s salvation: the poem ends by crying out to her, not God, for retribution followed by mercy.

Praise and worship of Mary appear frequently in the verse of Jesus 29. Other Marian lyrics include *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary* (art. 11) and the two fragmentary Annunciation lyrics (arts. 10, 20). In addition, other works express Marian veneration as an assumed component of their religious focus; see, in particular, *When Holy Church Is Under Foot, Doomsday*, and *Love Rune* (arts. 12, 13, 19). A more general interest in Jesus’s interactions with women surfaces in *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1) (the meeting with Mary Magdalene) and *The Woman of Samaria* (art. 5).

The Jesus 29 copy of this poem lacks the final nineteen lines because the leaf that originally followed folio 180 has been lost. Missing lines 22, 32–50 are here supplied from the near-identical text that survives in MS Cotton Caligula A.ix. The lyric has appeared often in anthologies of Middle English verse. The summary given below offers a select listing of the editions based on Cotton Caligula A.ix or on Cambridge, TCC, MS B.14.39; for a fuller overview of the publication history, see *DIMEV* 4270. Two of the other versions may be viewed by digital manuscript facsimile. For the Cambridge manuscript, see <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.14.39–40>; and for MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, see [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX).

[Fol. 180v. *NIMEV* 2687. *DIMEV* 4270. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 50 lines (31 surviving) in five 10-line stanzas, rhyming *ababaababa*<sub>4</sub>. **Layout:** Short lines in a single column, each with end punctuation. The scribe sometimes writes two verse lines on one manuscript line. **Edition from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 159–63. **Three other MSS:** Cambridge, TCC, MS B.14.39, fols. 81v–82r (Brown, pp. 56–57, 192–93; Stevick, ed., *One Hundred Middle English Lyrics*, pp. 18–20); London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fol. 246v (Morris, pp. 158–62; Brown, pp. 57–59, 192–93; Saupe, pp. 130–32, 250–52); London, BL, MS Royal 2.F.viii, fol. 1v (Brown, pp. 59–60, 192–93). **Critical edition with music:** Dobson and Harrison, eds., *Medieval English Songs*, pp. 130–36, 243, 298–99. **Translation:** Dobson and Harrison, eds., *Medieval English Songs*, p. 324.]

- 7 *childthinge*. “childbearing.” See *MED*, *childinge* (ger.), sense 1a, which cites this line from TCC, MS B.14.39, where the spelling is *childinke*. Jesus 29 and Cotton Caligula A.ix agree in the unusual spelling with *th* (a thorn in Jesus, an eth in Cotton), which must reflect how the *d* was pronounced.
- 20 *So wel thu myht*. Compare *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary* (art. 11): “for wel thu miht” (line 28).
- 23 *we*. This word (omitted in Jesus 29) is adopted from Cotton Caligula A.ix for better sense. In Middle English, *forgon* is a transitive verb requiring an object. Compare *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary* (art. 11): “hwenne we schulle this lif forgon” (line 24).

- 28 *nys wurth a slo*. “not worth a sloe (the fruit of a blackthorn tree),” that is, worthless. See Whiting S389. This idiomatic reading is adopted from Cotton Caligula A.ix. Poorer in sense, Jesus 29 reads *bis lyues blysse nys wurþ al so*. Compare *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28): “Ne helph heom wurth o slo” (line 274).

## 9. WILL AND WIT

This splendid short lyric offers tongue-twisting, mind-bending, pithy aphorisms on how Wit personified must struggle to contain and control Will – that is, the rational mind’s (or soul’s) constant effort to rein in the physical body’s wayward desires. The lyric ends humorously with Wisdom losing his cap over Will’s willful ignorance.

*Will and Wit* survives only in MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, but it was very likely present in Jesus 29 as well because the two manuscripts’ lyric sequences overlap wherever they both survive. Viewed within the context of the Jesus 29 poems, *Will and Wit* is one of several brief, aphoristic, mnemonic poems set alongside *Weal, Ten Abuses, Signs of Death*, and *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (arts. 6, 15, 22, 23). It is here printed in long lines with internal rhymes — the layout used by the Jesus 29 scribe for longer poems in the same meter: *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary, Love Rune, Fire and Ice*, and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 11, 19, 21, 26). The poem in Cotton is laid out in eight short lines; it may be viewed digitally at [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX).

[NIMEV 4016. DIMEV 6410. **Manuscript:** London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fol. 246vb. **Meter:** 4 lines in long lines with caesuras and internal rhymes, *aaaa*<sub>7</sub> (compare arts. 11, 19, 21, 26); the Cotton scribe copies it in a right-hand column as 8 lines, rhyming *abababab*<sub>3-4</sub>. **Layout:** In Cotton, the poem is written in short lines with end punctuation (except for line 8, which lacks punctuation). On the long-line layout adopted here (as used by the Jesus scribe for this meter), see Fein, “Designing English,” pp. 50–51. **Editions:** Wright, p. 67; Morris, p. 192; Brown, pp. 65, 195–96; Dickins, p. 9; Luria and Hoffman, eds., *Middle English Lyrics*, p. 152 (with regularized spelling). **Other MSS:** None.]

- 1 *Hwenne-so*. “Whenever.” On this repeated adverbial phrase, see *MED*, *so* (adv.), sense 27d, and *whanne-so* (conj.).
- 3 *sieth*. “comes upon, proceeds to.” See *MED*, *sien* (v.(1)), sense 1b. The primary sense of this verb, derived from OE *ge)sigan*, is “descend, fall down, decline.”
- 4 *to wene wrieth*. “turns to speculation.” Both *wene* and *wrieth* are open to numerous meanings. I follow the *MED*’s specific definitions for this passage. See *MED*, s.vv. *wene* (n.), sense 1a; and *wrien* (v.(2)), sense 5a.

*ofo of Wisdom*. “close-fitting cap,” as worn by a clerk or lawyer, from OE *hufe*. See *MED*, *houve* (n.), sense 1a, where this early spelling (ending in *o* rather than *e*) is listed as an error. “Wisdom” is here wholly synonymous with “Wit.” Elsewhere in Jesus 29, the phrase *wit and wisdom* is treated as a singular noun. See *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), line 133 (note).

## 10. THE ANNUNCIATION

*The Annunciation* survives in damaged form as a fragmentary lyric of seven closing lines. Another fragment on the same subject (Luke 1:28–38), but in a wholly different meter, appears later in Jesus 29: *Song of the Annunciation* (art. 20) immediately follows *Love Rune* (art. 19), to which it is thematically connected. The separate fragments share a rhyme-sound: *sende/wende/hende* (*Song*, lines 1–3); *wende/sendē/hende/ende* (*The Annunciation*, lines 4–7).

The seven lines of *The Annunciation* have been printed by previous editors as the end of *Song of the Annunciation*, but there is no codicological or metrical possibility that they are parts of the same poem. In 1954, Celia Sisam offered a strained codicological argument (“The Broken Leaf,” pp. 337–40). The idea that the two fragments belong to the same work was accepted by Betty Hill in 1975 (Hill-Addenda, p. 101), but not mentioned in her later work (Hill-Part2). Unlike the quasi-tail-rhyme stanzas of *Song*, *The Annunciation* is composed in long-line monorhyming quatrains, a meter identical to that of three other poems in Jesus 29: *Weal, Doomsday*, and *Death* (arts. 6, 13, 14).

[Fol. 181r. NIMEV 877 (combined with art. 20). DIMEV 1467 (combined with art. 20). **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 7 surviving septenary lines in 4-line stanzas, rhyming *aaaa*. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. **Editions (combined with art. 20):** Morris, p. 100; Saupe, pp. 44–45, 172–73. **Other MSS:** None.]

- 2            *Godes wenche*. “God’s handmaid.” Compare Luke 1:38: “And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.” Although there are some positive usages of the term *wenche*, it is not a word commonly applied to Mary; see *MED*, *wench(e)* (n.).
- 4            *Bidde we*. In the Jesus sequence of poems, many closing stanzas open with this phrase, which signal a final prayer. Because the first letter *B* is always a red colored capital, these standard endings are quite noticeable to a reader of the manuscript. Compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 547; *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 389; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 349; *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 41; and *Fire and Ice* (art. 21), line 2.

*wende hwer we wende*. “going where we go.” Even in an Annunciation lyric, we encounter the eschatological thread so prominent in the Jesus 29 lyrics: the worrying uncertainty of one’s destination after death and at Doomsday. Compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 85; *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (art. 23), lines 5–6; *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 109–110; and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (art. 26), lines 16, 22. On the tradition, see Woolf, pp. 86–87.

## 11. THE FIVE JOYS OF OUR LADY SAINT MARY

Although this poem is unique to Jesus 29, *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary* addresses a subject very commonly found in early trilingual English miscellanies like this one. The topic of Mary’s Five Joys arises, for example, in two Harley lyrics — *An Autumn Song* and *The Five Joys of the Virgin* — and two Harley items in French — *The Joys of Our Lady* and *Prayer on the Five Joys of Our Lady*; see *CHMS*, 2:222–25, 2:272–75, 2:280–85, 3:274–75.

The Jesus 29 *Five Joys* enumerates in stanzas 1–5 the same traditional Five Joys found in the French Harley poems: Annunciation, Nativity, Resurrection, Ascension, and Assumption. Other formulations

exist, as when the English Harley *Five Joys* names Epiphany instead of Assumption. In more than a dozen extant Middle English lyrics on the subject, Mary's joys are usually five in number, although patterns of seven, eight, twelve, or fifteen joys also occur. In Jesus 29, the speaker asks, in stanza 6, for Mary's intercession with a directness similar to *An Orison to Our Lady* (art. 8). In stanza 7, the petition then leads to Jesus, who is thereby approached in a gradual manner, via Mary. The worshipful care in proceeding from Mary to Jesus exemplifies a formal prayer method also found in the religious lyrics of Harley 2253 (*CHMS*, 2:435). On other Jesus 29 poems with Marian content, see the headnote to *An Orison to Our Lady* (art. 8).

*The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary* is one of four poems in Jesus 29 composed in septenary long lines with internal rhymes, grouped in stanzas of four lines. The most important of these is *Love Rune* (art. 19); the others are *Fire and Ice* and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 21, 26). *Will and Wit* (art. 9), found only in the Cotton MS, has this meter as well. Previous editors have printed these poems in 8-line stanzas, *abababab*<sub>3-4</sub>. On the editorial presentation adopted here, in accordance with the scribe's practice, see the headnote to *Love Rune*; and Fein, "Designing English," pp. 50–51, 57–58.

[Fol. 181r–v. *NIMEV* 1833. *DIMEV* 3019. Compare Fein, *MWME*, 11:4200, 4354–55 [27]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 28 septenary lines with internal rhymes, in seven 4-line stanzas rhyming *aaaa*<sub>7</sub> (or *(ab)(ab)(ab)(ab)*<sub>7</sub>). **Layout:** Long lines with caesuras, and medial and end punctuation. Colored capitals mark the beginning of each 4-line stanza. **Editions:** Morris, pp. 87–88; Patterson, pp. 151–53; Brown, pp. 65–67, 196; Saupe, pp. 144–46, 260. **Other MSS:** None.]

- 2            *Tho thu wistest myd iwisse that Jhesu wolde beo thi Sune.* The First Joy: Annunciation.
- 5–6        *Moder, blithe were . . . ibore withute wo.* The Second Joy: Nativity.
- 9            *blithe.* The rhyme indicates that the original word might have been *blive*, "willing," but the adjectival form of the adverb *blive* is not attested before 1450. See *MED*, *blive* (adj.), and compare *blive* (adv.), sense 1b, "willingly."
- 10         *Tho Crist thureh his myhte aros from dethe to lyve.* The Third Joy: Resurrection.
- 13–14     *From the Munt . . . myd eye swete.* The Fourth Joy: Ascension of Christ.
- 17–19     *The King that . . . he the grette.* The Fifth Joy: Assumption of Mary in heaven.
- 24         *hwenne we schulle this lif forgon.* Compare *An Orison to Our Lady* (art. 8): "And al this lyf we schulleth forgo" (line 23).
- 28         *for wel thu miht.* Compare *An Orison to Our Lady* (art. 8): "So wel thu miht" (line 20).

## 12. WHEN HOLY CHURCH IS UNDER FOOT

When *Holy Church Is Under Foot* is an evil-times complaint that vents a thirteenth-century writer's distress over systemic greed and corruption among ecclesiastical and secular officials who degrade the Church's sanctity. While overt political content is rare among the Jesus 29 lyrics, the poet's outlook is similar to the religious, patriotic sentiments on Thomas of Canterbury expressed in the *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr in English* and *On Serving Christ* (arts. 17, 18).

The poet claims that simony (ecclesiastical greed and bribery) is rampant among the clergy, and in making this charge he indicts the papacy and the secular estates too. He claims that rapaciousness by powerful interests has forced the Church to fail its sacred mission, ordained by Christ himself. The poet extols six courageous defenders — three ancient popes, three recent English churchmen — who countered this corruption and reverently upheld the Church's honor. The three popes are the apostle Peter (enjoined by Christ to be the "stone" (Latin *petrus*) upon which the Church is to be founded) and then Clement of Rome and Gregory the Great. Next, the poet names three Canterbury archbishops — Thomas Becket, Stephen Langton, and Edmund Rich, each one an English champion who gave all he could — but now sadly, despite their efforts, Holy Church is overcome.

Celebration of the three bishops as defenders of the Church's long-held liberties follows a popular political trend in thirteenth-century England to "canonize" religious men seen to have stood righteously against royal overreach. As Eamon Duffy has noted, the thirteenth century "saw a revival in interest in the cult of the saint-bishop, stimulated perhaps by the reputation of Becket" ("Religious Belief," p. 303). Josiah Cox Russell has dissected the cultural, specifically English, phenomenon of anti-royal leaders attracting postmortem honors as popular saints, with miracles reported in their names, cults rapidly developing, and even some official canonizations ("Canonization of Opposition"). Thomas, Stephen, and Edmund each attracted this kind of adulation. The phenomenon speaks to a social climate in which political saints could operate to neutralize royal power in the popular imagination, a notion promoted particularly by clerical writers who sought to maintain the Church's privileges and glorify its reputed defenders. The trend is well reflected in the oeuvre of Matthew Paris (1200–1259), who honored each archbishop named in *Holy Church*, composing Latin hagiographies of Stephen Langton and Edmund Rich, and French verse lives of Thomas Becket and Edmund Rich (*VLT*, pp. 120–27).

Using gendered pronouns, the *Holy Church* poet deploys the ideology and metaphors of courtly romance and warfare to suggest that the feminine Church requires the defense of strong, honorable male champions — a chivalric corps — to keep her from subjugation and ruin. Men of the present day abuse their power by showing her malice and stealing wealth rather than protecting her. The formal complaint begins and ends by appealing to Christ, for love of his mother, to save her (lines 9–10, 34–36). Gendered language is thereby strategically managed, connecting Mary and Church as the nearest female relations of God (mother and daughter).

Inexplicably, this poem has been rarely featured among the political poems of medieval England. It belongs to the longstanding tradition of venality satire, a type of complaint poem found often in Anglo-Latin and Anglo-French verse, but appearing more rarely in Middle English. Prominent English specimens include *The Simonie*, *Piers Plowman* (the figure of Lady Meed), and *London Lickpenny*. On the tradition, see especially Yunck, *The Lineage of Lady Meed*; and Dean, ed., *Medieval English Political Writings*, pp. 179–242. As a venality poem written in defense of the Church during the reign of King Henry III, *Holy Church* has an important analogue in the Anglo-French *Song of the Church*, a lyric of grievance against how the female-gendered English Church is subject to oppressive fees and taxes: "chescun la defule" (each one tramples her under foot) (line 18; Aspin, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, pp. 43, 46).

*Holy Church* must date after the canonization of Edmund Rich in 1246. Its probable date is ca. 1258–1261, a period that witnessed a series of ecclesiastical councils seeking guarantees of liberties in response to burdensome royal fees that were being exacted from the clergy — tallages sanctioned by Pope Alexander IV to fund Henry III's debts and Sicilian ambitions (see Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, pp. 223–27; Hoskin, "The Church and the King," pp. 197–208; and Fein, "When Holy Church Is Under Foot," p. 17). The two surviving copies of *Song of the Church* illustrate, however, how tricky can be the dating of a medieval political

poem: the earlier copy is likely dated ca. 1255, referring to conditions under Henry III; the later one seems to refer to conditions under Edward I, ca. 1276 or 1291. The general problem was a long-roiling political issue between English churchmen on one side, the king prodded by the pope on the other. For discussions of *Song of the Church*, see Scase, *Literature and Complaint*, pp. 19–22; and Somerset, “Complaining about the King,” pp. 84–97.

Morris prints this poem without stanza divisions, but *laisses* are indicated by the meter and by capitals in the manuscript. The thirty-six long lines are divided into seven groups by the insertion of colored initials. All groups are monorhyming except for the longest one, lines 25–32, which rhymes *aaaabbcc*<sub>7</sub>. The meter is similar to *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), but lacks the alliteration found in that poem.

[Fols. 181v–182r. NIMEV 4085. DIMEV 6528. Robbins, *MWME*, 5:1442–43, 1672 [96]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 36 septenary lines, mainly in monorhyming 4- or 6-line *laisses*, *aaaa(aa)*<sub>7</sub>. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. A colored capital marks the opening of each *laisse*. **Editions:** Morris, p. 89; Kaiser, p. 321. **Other MSS:** None. **Translations:** ten Brink, *History of English Literature*, trans. Kennedy, 1:316–17; Adamson, trans., *A Treasury of Middle English Verse*, pp. 17–18. **Anglo-French Analogue:** *Song of the Church* (Wright, ed., *Political Songs of England*, pp. 42–44); Aspin, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, pp. 36–48; Somerset, “Complaining about the King,” pp. 94–97).]

- 2–3        *Tho queth ure Louerd . . . sette the upon.* For Christ’s words to the apostle Peter, see Matthew 16:18: “That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
- 6        *wurthsype.* This word, repeated at line 24, bears a double meaning, one straightforwardly about the Church as the center of worship, and the other about Holy Church figured as a woman whose chastity is threatened or abused. See *MED worship(e)* (n.), sense 1e, “a woman’s honor, perceived virtue, her reputation for chastity, modesty, etc.”; and the ecclesiastical meanings gathered under sense 2, for example, “(b) the veneration offered to that which is regarded as holy or sacred, devout reverence directed toward a deity, a person, an institution, object, etc.”
- 7        *symonye.* The wordplay is upon the Peter’s alternate name Simon; see John 1:42.
- 13        *Clement.* Saint Clement, Bishop of Rome (88–99), presumed to be the first or second successor to Peter, is regarded as the first Apostolic Father of the Church.
- Gregorie.* Saint Gregory the Great, Pope (590–604), instigated a large-scale mission from Rome to England to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. The author recounts a direct line of ecclesiastical authority from Christ to Peter, from Peter to Clement and Gregory, and then from Gregory to England via Saint Augustine of Canterbury. The Church’s divine authority is shown to have descended directly from Christ through the popes to the see of Canterbury.
- 14        *ofte and ilome.* “again and again.” For the idiom, see *MED, oft(e)* (adv.), sense 1d and *ilome* (adv.), sense 1b, and compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 48, 323.
- 15        *myd some.* “in accord.” Compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 180.

- 18–19     *Nu me kasteth . . . heo to grunde*. As the poem advances to these central lines, the solid “Ston” undergirding the Church suffers a figural pulverization — the Rock is now a multitude of simoniacal coins — and a sinister inversion — the Church herself is now *being stoned* (the biblical punishment for immoral women). The Old Norse verb *casten* combined with the preposition *to* denotes an action of throwing projectiles at and against “hire” (Holy Church). See *MED casten* (v.), sense 1a, “to throw (sth.) to a distance, fling, hurl,” and *to* (prep.), sense 24a, “against (sb. or sth., God), in opposition to.” Compare *tocasten* (v.), sense 1a, “to destroy (sth.),” a rare verb for which the only citation occurs in the Auchinleck manuscript. The verb of violent attack paints an image of both stoning and toppling. Operating as missiles, the silver and gold bruise and maim the vulnerable feminine body of Holy Church. Compare the affective imagining of Jesus’s maimed body at the center of *An Orision to Our Lord* (art. 25), lines 30–34.
- 20     *Nis nu non that wile, for hire, tholie deth ne wunde*. The argument expressed here is that no one — churchman or otherwise — is willing nowadays to suffer the pain of persecution or martyrdom in defense of Holy Church. Among the poems of Jesus 29, this argument is expressed most strongly in *On Serving Christ* (art. 18).
- 21     *Seynt Thomas*. Saint Thomas of Canterbury (ca. 1120–1170), archbishop of Canterbury from 1162 until his murder in 1170. He was rapidly canonized and popularly venerated as a defender of the Church against the Crown. He is celebrated elsewhere in Jesus 29 in *The Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr* and *On Serving Christ* (arts. 17, 18).
- 22     *The Archebisscop Stephne*. Stephen Langton (1150–1228) was archbishop of Canterbury (1207–1228). A dispute between King John of England and Pope Innocent III over his election helped to lead to the Magna Carta in 1215. Historian C. H. Lawrence explains how “This episode inaugurated the most famous conflict between Church and monarchy in the history of medieval England. In the face of John’s stubborn refusal to yield, a papal interdict was laid upon the country and published in all the churches on 23 March 1208. It was not to be lifted until the summer of 1214. During these five years, no services were held in the churches, the bells were silent, and the laity were denied the sacraments saving only the baptism of infants and the confession and absolution of the dying” (Paris, *The Life of St Edmund*, trans. and ed. Lawrence, pp. 24–25). Stephen Langton remained politically active during Henry III’s early reign, sometimes speaking for the barons, sometimes allying with the king. In the 1220s he won concessions from Pope Honorius III that favored the English Church and exalted the see of Canterbury.
- 23     *Seynt Admund*. Saint Edmund Rich (ca. 1174–1240), also known as Edmund of Abingdon, was archbishop of Canterbury (1233–1240) in the early part of Henry III’s reign. Canonized a saint in 1246, he was known as a fervent defender of the Church. His devotional treatise, *Speculum ecclesiae* (*Mirror of Holy Church*), was translated into French and Middle English, and gained a popular following. For a discussion of his influence and a bibliography, see *VLT*, pp. 212–22. See, too, Matthew Paris’s *Life of St. Edmund* (trans. Lawrence, pp. 118–67).
- 24     *wurschipe*. See note to line 6, above.

- 25 *uwele under honde*. “under wicked governance.” The phrase *under honde* metaphorically complements the theme that the Church is “under foot.” Compare line 33.
- 27–32 *Bispes and clerekes . . . so swythe stronge*. For other instances of estates satire in the Jesus 29 lyrics, compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 91–174; *Ten Abuses* (art. 15), lines 2–11; and *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), lines 17–24. The trope frequently surfaces in venality complaint poems. On this aspect of *Holy Church* compared to *The Simonie*, see Fein, “*When Holy Church Is Under Foot*,” pp. 17–20. On *The Simonie* (preserved in the Auchinleck manuscript), see Wright, ed., *Political Songs of England*, pp. 323–45; Embree and Urquhart, eds., *The Simonie*; and Dean, ed., *Medieval English Political Writings*, pp. 193–212.
- 32 *Heo let heom alle iwurthe that beoth so swythe stronge*. “He lets powerful men do as they please.” See *MED*, *iworthen* (v.), sense 4a, “to let (sb.) do as he chooses.” The mastermind of simony, the pope himself, solicits money from powerful estates (bishops, clerks, knights, bondsmen, kings, and earls), and then looks the other way as they rapaciously abuse Holy Church. The verb *iworthen* extends the embodied feminine metaphor: the pope lets them do as they please, or, in ten Brink’s suggestive translation, “all do their will” (*History of English Literature*, trans. Kennedy, 1:317).
- 33 *under vote*. “under subjection, vanquished, overcome” (literally “under foot”). See *MED*, *fot* (n.), sense 14y, and *under-fot* (adv.), sense 1b.

### 13. DOOMSDAY

*Doomsday* survives in four manuscripts, and in every one it prefaces *Death*, a longer poem in the same meter. In fact, the two moral exhortations seem barely differentiated from one another because there is never an incipit for the second poem and their layouts always match. One may infer, therefore, that a single poet produced both poems, as Brown asserts (p. 187). The manuscripts certainly present them as if this is the case.

In content, *Doomsday* evokes terror over the impending signs of doom, during which sinners will feel utterly helpless. The signs, which will begin on a Sunday evening, are an all-consuming fire, trumpets sounded by angels, and Christ’s appearance as judge. Mary will be there, but it will be too late to call out for mercy. And, unfortunately for living sinners, the Devil works to keep mankind blind and forestall their timely prayers. At the Judgment, Christ will speak kindly to the righteous, harshly to the sinful, and then consign each side to its respective reward or damnation; compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 265–324. The poem ends with an exhortation to pray to Mary that she intercede on the petitioners’ behalf.

There is little substantial variation between the Jesus and Cotton texts of *Doomsday*: both have eleven stanzas in the same sequence. Eleven strophes also appear in the Cambridge manuscript, TCC, MS B.14.39, but stanzas 6 and 7 appear in reverse order. In the TCC version, the sight of Christ as Judge occupies the central seventh stanza; in Cotton/Jesus, the central moment is the sight of merciful Mary. The TCC reversal of stanzas 6 and 7 is also found in MS Digby 86, but because Digby has two unique stanzas appearing before the last one, this longest version also places Mary in the central stanza.

The extra stanzas in Digby simply reiterate the lesson that every living person sprung from Adam must repent, and they warn the reader to pray for mercy before “*þe latemeste dai*.” The insertion verbally connects to the first line of *Death* in Digby: “*Þenç of þe latemeste dai, hou we shulen fare*” (Stengel, ed., *Codicem*

*manu scriptum* Digby 86, p. 98, stanzas 39–41). In Digby, the sequence of *Doomsday-Death* is appended, with minimal sign of transition, to *The Debate between the Body and the Soul*, composed in a very similar meter. The conjoining of *Debate*, *Doomsday*, and *Death* appears to be the Digby scribe's own creative operation (Brown, pp. 187–88; Fein, "The Middle English Poetry of MS Digby 86").

All surviving copies of *Doomsday* present it in long lines. The Digby scribe joins stanzas with red tie-lines in the right margin. The TCC scribe denotes stanzas with left-margin paragraphs and horizontal lines in the right margin. The Cotton scribe copies each stanza without line breaks (like prose), but with punctuation that matches the long-line copying found typically in Jesus 29. A capital marks the beginning of each stanza in both Cotton and Jesus. Morris prints the poem in 8-line stanzas despite the absence of internal rhymes. All three of the other versions of *Doomsday* may be viewed by digital facsimile. For TCC, MS B.14.39, see <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.14.39-40>; for MS Digby 86, see [https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_4426](https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4426); for MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, see [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX).

[Fol. 182r–v. NIMEV 3967 (see also 3517). DIMEV 6339. Utley, *MWME*, 3:693–94, 850 [18(g)]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 44 septenary lines in eleven 4-line stanzas, rhyming *aaaa*.,. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. A colored capital marks the beginning of each 4-line stanza. **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 163–69; Reichl, pp. 408–14. **Three other MSS:** Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86, fols. 197v–198r (Stengel, ed., *Codicem manu scriptum Digby 86*, pp. 96–98; Reichl, pp. 408–14); Cambridge, TCC, MS B.14.39, fol. 43r–v (Brown, pp. 42–44, 187–88; Reichl, pp. 408–14); London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fol. 246v (Wright, pp. 67–70; Morris, pp. 162–68; Brown, pp. 44–46, 187–88; Reichl, pp. 408–14).]

- 5–12      *That fur schal . . . God were iqueme.* For an analogous account of the Signs of Doom, see the Harley *Debate between the Body and the Soul*, lines 53–86 (*CHMS*, 2:82–83), which represents the same version appearing in Digby 86 (to which the Digby *Doomsday* is appended) and in TCC, MS B.14.39. For the Digby *Debate*, see Stengel, ed., *Codicem manu scriptum Digby 86*, pp. 93–96. Louis presents an overview of the Signs of Doom topos in Middle English verse (*MWME*, 9:3047–48).
- 5            *Sone-nyhte.* The night before Sunday, that is, Saturday night. This colloquial compound is not listed in the *MED*, but compare *fri-night* (n.), sense 1a; *Sater-night* (n.), *Tiues-night* (n.), and *Wednes-night* (n.).
- 14          *Monye of thisse riche that werede fouh and grey.* This line introduces the idea of how vain and useless are rich clothes, a theme receiving emphasis in *Death* (art. 14), the companion-piece of *Doomsday*. The phrase *fouh and grey*, derived from OF *vair et gris* ("variegated and gray fur") and common in thirteenth-century Middle English verse, appears elsewhere in Jesus 29: *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 66; *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 357; and *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 14. Dickins-Wilson explain that the first kind of fur comes "from the grey back and white belly of a sort of squirrel, the second from the grey back alone" (p. 197n116). See *MED*, *fou* (adj.), sense 2, and *grei* (n.(2)), sense 1a.
- 21          *ofkende.* "gave birth, bore." This verb is attested only in *Doomsday*. See *MED*, *ofkennen* (v.(2)).

- 24 *Qued*. “the Devil, the Evil One.” See *MED*, *qued(e)* (n.(1)), sense 2c. Compare *Death* (art. 14), lines 113, 123, where the usage is identical.
- 33–40 *Wyth the rihtwise . . . thisse worlde bere*. God speaks to each side, the righteous and the sinful, in turn. Compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 271–318, where God questions the souls on Doomsday about the Seven Works of Mercy.
- 39 *skere*. “deprived (of possessions), bereft.” See *MED*, *sker(e)* (adj.), sense 1e.
- 40 *oure*. “your.” See the glossary, s.v. *Ower* (adj.), in Morris, p. 280.
- 41 *Bidde we*. In the Jesus sequence of poems, many closing stanzas open with this phrase, which signals a final prayer. Because the first letter *B* is always a red capital, these standard endings are quite noticeable to a reader of the manuscript. Compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 547; *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 389; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 349; *The Annunciation* (art. 10), line 4; and *Fire and Ice* (art. 21), line 2.

#### 14. DEATH

The opening of *Death* is indicated not by an incipit, but by an exhortation to “listen” — a common trope for opening — which comes immediately after *Doomsday*’s closing invocation to pray. As explained in the headnote for art. 13, *Doomsday* and this poem are presented in all manuscripts as a joined pair. Both have the same meter, are related in content and monitory style, and were surely composed by the same writer. In Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86, the scribe appends *The Debate between the Body and the Soul* to both *Doomsday* and *Death*, with which both poems have overlapping content.

Calling it by its alternate title, *The Latemest Day*, Pearsall characterizes *Death* as a poem of “grim strength and imaginative limitation” (*Old and Middle English Poetry*, p. 96). At a length of thirty-three stanzas, it is three times longer than *Doomsday*. It continues the same subject by addressing the need of the living to avoid distractions from the Devil and the World, and to contemplate the reality of death and the soul’s final fate. Addressing the reader who sits comfortably in rich clothes, the moralist reminds him how he had nothing when born and will have nothing when he departs. When Death enters us (line 27), we will become a mere corpse, a “cley-clot” (clay-clod; line 37). Our friends will take our possessions, and our lonely soul will lament. Then the soul will utter recriminations against the foolish body, with arguments that align with the body/soul debate tradition. Details of the grave — of worms gruesomely supplanting one’s former comfort in clothes — become part of the reformative rhetorical strategy, which is soon succeeded by a graphic description of hell-fire and the Fiend, who sports hideous horns on his knees (line 114). The poem concludes with an exhortation to avoid lechery (“hordom”; line 125), have masses sung, and perform charitable acts, and then closes with a conventional prayer to achieve heaven.

*Death* possesses an intriguing structural likeness to *Doomsday*, which can be taken as another mark of shared authorship. Both show signs of an author wanting to push the subjects’ grim limits toward escape routes. While *Doomsday* situates the sight of Mary in the central stanza, and then closes in prayer to her as intercessor, *Death* sets the singing of masses and the giving of alms in the central stanza (lines 65–66), and then closes with those same ideas about how to achieve pardon. Both poems gain a kind of rhetorical elegance and power of persuasion by strategically setting such hopeful signs amid the desperate horror of the signs of doom and death.

As with *Doomsday*, the Cotton version of *Death* agrees with the Jesus version in the number and order of stanzas. And, again as with *Doomsday*, Morris prints *Death* in 8-line stanzas despite the absence of internal rhymes. The Cambridge, TCC, MS B.14.39, and Digby 86 versions of *Death* are shorter poems, mainly because they both omit the first four stanzas and begin at line 17, which in Digby reads: “þenç of þe late-meste dai, hou we shulen fare” (Stengel, ed., *Codicem manu scriptum Digby 86*, p. 98, stanza 41). The Digby version thus has twenty-nine stanzas, which agree with Cotton/Jesus stanzas 5–33. The version in TCC is quite different, though, because the stanzas are substantially rearranged and three unique stanzas have been added. Using the Cotton/Jesus stanza-sequence of *Death* as the base-text, the twenty-nine stanzas in the TCC version are ordered as follows: 5, 6, 11, 7, 9, 10, 19, 20, 22, 21, 13, 23, 14, (new), 17, 15, 16, 18, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, (new), (new), 32, 33. The nine stanzas missing from the TCC version are 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, 24, 25, 26. All four versions end with the same stanza of prayer for protection from the Devil.

The three other versions of *Death* may be viewed by digital facsimile. For TCC, MS B.14.39, see <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.14.39-40>; for MS Digby 86, see [https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_4426](https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4426); and for MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, see [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX).

[Fols. 182v–184v. NIMEV 3517. DIMEV 5640. Utley, *MWME*, 3:694, 850 [18(h)]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 132 septenary lines in thirty-three 4-line stanzas, rhyming *aaaa*. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. A colored capital marks the beginning of each 4-line stanza. The poem begins without a break after *Doomsday*. **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 169–85; Reichl, pp. 415–36. **Three other MSS:** Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86, fols. 198r–200r (Stengel, ed., *Codicem manu scriptum Digby 86*, pp. 98–101; Reichl, pp. 415–36); Cambridge, TCC, MS B.14.39, fols. 43v–45v (Brown, pp. 46–49, 188–91; Reichl, pp. 415–36); London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fol. 247r (Wright, pp. 70–80; Morris, pp. 168–84; Brown, pp. 50–54, 188–91; Reichl, pp. 415–36).]

- 5            *Ye that sytteth ischrud myd skarlet and myd palle*. “Palle” means either a fine cloth or a cloak made of such cloth; see *MED*, *pal* (n.), senses 1 and 2. Fine clothes of rich hues vivify the trope of deriding the vanity of fancy clothes. Compare *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 14; and *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), line 69.
- 13–20       *Hwenne that chyld . . . sunnen yeven onsware*. For a variation of this oft-repeated truism — naked do we enter the world and naked do we depart — compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 211–16.
- 17            *Thenche we on the laste day, that we schulle heonne fare*. This is the opening line of the shorter versions found in MS Digby 86 and TCC, MS B.14.39. Because of the short-version opening, Brown gives this poem the title *The Latemest Day* (p. 46).
- 25–28       *Thenne the latemeste . . . iturnd to nouht*. On imagining the ways Death enters the body, compare *Death’s Wither-Clench* and *Signs of Death* (arts. 7, 22). On the tradition, see Woolf, pp. 81–83.
- 29–30       *Ne myhte no tunge . . . he hedde iswore*. The impossibility of describing hell comes up often in Jesus 29 poems that do just that. See also lines 123–24, and compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3),

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- lines 143–44, 271–88; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 38; and *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), lines 265–70.
- 49–56 *Hwer beoth alle . . . myd the Wonde*. On the *ubi sunt* topos evoked here, compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 358 (note); *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), lines 69–72; and *Love Rune* (art. 19), lines 33–36. On the tradition, see Woolf, pp. 95–96.
- 52 *Nolden heo non herestonkes nu the imete*. “They’d not willingly want to meet now with you.” See *MED*, *thank* (n.), sense 5a: *herestonkes*, “willingly,” perhaps with a wordplay on *stonkes*, “stink, stench” — they would not want to be met with the stench of a rotting corpse.
- 78 *virste*. “ceiling,” an Old English word. See *MED*, *first* (n.(2)), sense 1a.
- 85–87 *Nu schal forrottyen . . . thu mide sunge*. Compare *Signs of Death* (art. 22), lines 1–4.
- 86 *mawe*. “stomach.” See *MED*, *maue* (n.), sense 1a, which cites this line from the Cotton manuscript.
- 91 *Beo thu in the putte wrmes ifere*. Compare *Signs of Death* (art. 22), line 11.
- 107 *rake*. “jaws.” See *MED*, *rake* (n.(2)), sense 1a, which cites this line from the TCC manuscript.
- 113 *Qued*. “The Devil, the Evil One.” See *MED*, *qued(e)* (n.(1)), sense 2c. Compare line 123, and *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 24, where the usage is identical.
- 117 *He yoneth myd his muthe*. “He gapes with his mouth.” The Devil’s yawning mouth denotes the entrance to fiery hell, as is often depicted in medieval art and drama. Compare the proverb about a yawning oven provided in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 291–92: “me ne chide with the gidie / Ne with than ofne me ne yonie” (one shouldn’t quarrel with fools / Nor yawn with an oven) (see note).
- 123–24 *Ne may no tunge . . . mihte beo ded!* This statement holds an absurd sort of irony when uttered by an already-dead soul, who cannot die “for kare.” The poet had explained earlier, at lines 29–32, that until Christ released souls from hell, there was never any way to know about the pains of hell. On the inexpressibility topos, see note to lines 29–30, above. On *Qued*, see the note to line 113, above.
- 131 *wouh*. “wrong.” See *MED*, *wo* (n.), sense 4a.

## 15. TEN ABUSES

This mnemonic saying in rhythmic prose expresses cynicism about human nature and the condition of society. The kingdom rots from above, starting with a monarch’s unsound governance. From the corrupt head, immorality infects the estates (judge, priest, bishop, noble, servant), the ages (old man, young man, child), and the genders (man, woman). The vision is anarchic — a lawless land — and it is summed up in a saying attributed to the Venerable Bede, author of *An Ecclesiastical History of England*: “Wo there theode”

(Woe be the nation, line 14). A political view emerges, as in *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12), expressed as the general complaint of a moral pessimist. As such, *Ten Abuses* fits with the more purely admittive lyrics in Jesus 29, preaching that the corrupt world leads one off the path to salvation.

The taciturn wit of *Ten Abuses* suggests its life as an oft-repeated saying. All told, Jesus 29 provides a tidy collection of such poems. The others are *Weal*, *Signs of Death*, and *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (arts. 6, 22, 23), along with *Will and Wit* (art. 9) contributed by the Cotton MS. As a saw attributed to Bede, moreover, *Ten Abuses* adds to the storehouse of native proverbs touted by Jesus 29, most of them attributed to King Alfred in *The Owl and the Nightingale* and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (arts. 2, 24), and also to a tradition that Bede authored the views on sin, hell, and Doomday recorded in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4).

The theme of *Ten Abuses* survives in a host of related lyrics. On the tradition, see especially Louis, *MWME*, 9:3045 [393–402], and Robbins, ed., *Historical Poems*, pp. 144, 328. The other copy of the poem surviving in MS Cotton Caligula A.ix is viewable at [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX).

[Fol. 184v. NIMEV 4051. DIMEV 6475. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3015, 3384 [243]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 14 lines (2–3 stresses), irregular rhyme or blank verse. **Layout:** Written as prose with ends of lines punctuated. **Edition from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, p. 185. **One other MS:** London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fol. 248v (Wright, p. 80; Morris, p. 184).]

- 2–11      *King that is wilful . . . Athelyng brytheling*. For other instances of estates satire in the Jesus 29 lyrics, compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 91–174; *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12), lines 27–32; and *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), lines 17–24.
- 9          *Child unthewed*. “Child untaught.” Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 298–318, on the problem of allowing a child to be improperly schooled. See *MED*, *unthewed* (ppl.), sense 1a, “Unversed in proper behavior, unmannerly, badly reared.”
- 10        *Thral*. “Servant, slave, bondsman.” See *MED*, *thral* (n.(1)), sense 1a; Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, pp. 273–77; and compare *bonde* in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 146 (note).
- 11–12    *Athelyng brytheling*, / *Lond withuten lawe*. Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 44–63, on the estates of noble and knight.
- 13        *Bede*. The Venerable Bede (672–735) is not named elsewhere in the lyrics of Jesus 29, but *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4) is attributed to him in the sole medieval manuscript that provides a title for that work. As Anglo-Saxon monk, saint, and author of the chief medieval history of Anglo-Saxon England, Bede’s authority in the lyrics of Jesus 29 is as substantial, although less mentioned, as that of King Alfred.

## 16. A LITTLE SOOTH SERMON

The author of this engaging lyric calls it a “little true sermon” (line 2), but for modern readers of early Middle English, it is more than that: a rare, wry comedy of the human condition, cleverly and artfully composed. The poet preaches of the need for all sinners to repent, while his vignette of an English village bustling with life radiates not so much despair as a sense of bemusement with the unending generational cycles of human weakness. The Watkins, Wilkins, and Malkins who inhabit the town pursue their desires in

ways a preacher must judge ungodly, yet their antics brim with the transgressive vitality one finds in fabliau. Brewers and bakers overcharge for weak goods, adolescents defy parents, and a foolish girl finds herself with child.

The poem is written in long-line couplets that Morris printed as four lines despite their lack of internal rhymes. The couplets fall semantically into pairs, and I present the poem, accordingly, in sets of four long lines, even though stanza divisions are not indicated by either scribe. A pithy sermon-within-a-sermon on the subject of Adam's Fall (lines 9–16) is written in four octosyllabic couplets. Thus, in departing from the surrounding meter of long septenary lines, it stands as a separate and distinct unit. It is, in essence, a precise eight-line lesson — the “little true sermon” — for which the rest of the poem is the exemplum displaying mankind's fallen condition. For recent commentary on *A Little Sooth Sermon*, see Hahn, “Early Middle English,” p. 81; and Fein-Children, pp. 224–26. The version in MS Cotton Caligula A.ix is viewable at [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Caligula\\_A\\_IX](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Caligula_A_IX).

[Fol. 185r–v. NIMEV 1091. DIMEV 1773. Heffernan, *MWME*, 11:4046–47, 4264–65 [12]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 54 lines in couplets. Most lines are septenary with strong caesuras; lines 9–16 are octosyllabic couplets without caesuras. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation, except for lines 9–16, which are short lines written with only end punctuation. The sole colored capital is the enlarged opening letter *H* on *Herkneþ*. **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 187–91; Kaiser, p. 284; Fein-Children, pp. 215–17, 224–26. **One other MS:** London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, fols. 248v–249r (Wright, pp. 80–84; Morris, p. 186–90). **Extract from MS Jesus 29:** Sisam and Sisam, eds., *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, pp. 11–12. **Translation:** Adamson, trans., *A Treasury of Middle English Verse*, pp. 4–7.]

- 1–4        *Herkneth alle gode . . . feol into helle*. The preacher's core theme of the Fall, which affects everyone, is metaphorically broached in the first stanza when the audience is told to sit “down” (line 1) to hear a tale about the consequences of Adam's downfall.
- 9–16       *He made him . . . so strong atfalle*. Written in a new meter, these eight lines boil the biblical lesson down to a sound-bite: Adam fell and had to stay in hell until Christ's Passion redeemed him; we are all fallen, but Christ's death can save us. The first and last rhymes reinforce the theme: *falle . . . atfalle*. Adam's Fall is often mentioned in the poetry of Jesus 29; compare, for example, *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 195. *A Little Sooth Sermon* gives the subject its most extended and lively treatment.
- 17–24     *Alle bakbytares . . . seolver heo tulleth*. The list of miscreants begins generically, seems all-male, and refers to actual sins: backbiters, robbers, thieves, murderers, lechers, whoremongers. The second part of the list remains male but moves into everyday professions: merchants, bakers, and brewers. Increasing specificity moves the list into the daily life of a village. The *Sooth Sermon* poet is strategically adapting the topos of estates satire. For other instances in Jesus 29, see *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 91–174; *When Holy Church Is Under Foot* (art. 12), lines 27–32; and *Ten Abuses* (art. 15), lines 2–11.
- 24        *tulleth*. “obtain through guile, wheedle.” See *MED*, *tillen* (v.(3)), sense 1c.
- 25        *Bothe heo maketh feble heore bred and heore ale*. “Both of them weaken their bread and their ale.” The central line of *A Little Sooth Sermon* depicts a false Eucharist being dispensed by the

- greedy brewers and bakers — more signs of the world's fallen, blind indifference to God's sacrifice.
- 27 *Gode men*. An exhortation to the audience as “good men” occurs thrice in the poem, at beginning, middle, and end (lines 1, 27, 49), demonstrating a rhetorically-controlled, preacherly style.
- 29 *preostes wives*. The surprising mention of priests and their wives has elicited comment. See Pearsall, who writes colorfully that the poem “develops its theme of penitence on a frankly popular level: among those who will go to hell are . . . priests’ wives (one imagines cheers)” (*Old and Middle English Poetry*, p. 97); and Heffernan, who soberly notes how “The wives of priests come in for especial condemnation and are damned to hell. This . . . rebuke . . . may speak to a genuine problem in the ranks of the rural clergy” (*MWME*, 11:4046). Compare *The Simonie*, line 52: “And late the parsoun have a wyf, and the prest another” (Wright, ed., *Political Songs of England*, p. 326).
- 31–41 *Ne theos prude . . . to than ale*. The parade of sinners gains increasing familiarity as girls are added and homespun nicknames bring them to life: Malkin, Jankin, Watkin, Wilkin, Robin, Giloth. They flirt, as young people do, both at market and in church.
- 33 *At chireche and at chepyng*. Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), line 254: “At chepyng and at chireche.”
- 34 *derne luve*. “secret love.” In this moral context, the term hints of the adolescents’ sexual transgressions. The term is also very commonly found in secular love lyrics, such as those of Harley 2253 — see *Annot and John*, line 36; *A Beauty White as Whale’s Bon*, line 5; and *The Way of Woman’s Love*, line 2 (*CHMS*, 2:122, 2:152, 3:242) — and in Chaucer’s *Miller’s Tale* (*CT I[A]3200*). See also *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 1357.
- 38 *Paternoster*. The unmarried young people attend church only to flirt and socialize, and the girl who leaves her *Paternoster* (prayer book) locked up at home represents their collective neglect of the holy service. The reference to “Our Father” taps into a theme of paternity — from Adam to God, from Giloth’s *syre* (line 45) to the father of her unborn child — that runs neatly through the lyric. See Fein-Children, p. 225. The image of a locked box opposes the girl’s dalliance, seen as a threat to her virginity. For female virginity figured as a locked “bower,” compare *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 74.
- 39–40 *Masses and matynes . . . in hire thouht*. The catalogue of sinners, having advanced to recognizable types with homespun names, next moves to the inner motives of weak-minded women. The young girl thinks of boys, not God’s worship.
- 47–48 *ne com hire . . . aryse an heyh*. The womb of the unwed girl is the only thing that rises in this fallen world. Her denial that any man has touched her ironically echoes Mary’s words at the Annunciation: “How shall this be done, because I know not man?” (Luke 1:34). See *Song of the Annunciation* (art. 20), line 11.

- 51 *Seynte Marie*. The final prayer for intercession from Mary interrupts the theme of inevitable, inter-generational fallenness that tumbles forth from “Adam ure vorme-fader” (line 4), that is, from father to father. The poem ends on a maternal note, with a prayer that God’s human mother, weeping tears, may intercede and help to advance all to the bliss of heaven.

## 17. ANTIPHON OF SAINT THOMAS THE MARTYR IN ENGLISH

Like *Caedmon’s Hymn*, the *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr in English* is (by legend) of divine origin. It is reported that an apparition of monks in white robes taught it to Reginald, a priest of Wretham, Norfolk, and ordered him to sing it in veneration of Saint Thomas even before the archbishop was officially canonized in 1173 (three years after his martyrdom). The story is included in the *Miracles of St. Thomas* recorded by William, a monk of Canterbury who witnessed Thomas’s murder, so the antiphon and its origin-legend are of solid pedigree and early in date, although the two manuscripts of *Antiphon* (Jesus 29 and Winchester College, MS 4, which holds the legend) are each from the thirteenth century (Robertson, ed., *Materials*, 1:150–51; Brown, pp. 196–98). In the Winchester MS, *Antiphon* resides in an all-Latin context. Using it as an example, Hahn notes how such English lyrics “seem to have functioned as performance texts, inserted into sermons as audio enhancements to the more serious and systematic discourse of a homily, sound bites that captivated an audience’s attention by speaking their own language” (“Early Middle English,” p. 78). It is therefore of great interest that the Jesus 29 copy of *Antiphon* presents it as having a function within an all-English sequence.

In Jesus 29, *Antiphon* serves a specific purpose: it is the choral introit to the next item, *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), that is, an office sung for Saint Thomas to preface a homily on the martyr’s heroism. *Antiphon*’s final word, *Euouae*, indicates choral chanting. In addition to its musical setting, *Antiphon*’s language matters too. The incipit written in red to the right of the poem specifically names its chosen language because Thomas is a saint native to the English tongue. The key idea is that Saint Thomas will offer special intercession for whoever prays in English: he is a “help in Engelaunde” (line 7). By this formulation, linguistic identity stands for national identity, and “nation” as a concept is conjoined with an evangelical drive to see to the salvation of the English populace. Consequently, the paired presence of *Antiphon* and *On Serving Christ* outwardly expresses the religious-nationalist zeal that is often implicit in the lyrics of Jesus 29. Similar flashes of Englishness can be spotted in some poems preceding *Antiphon*: *Ten Abuses* (which quotes Bede) and *A Little Sooth Sermon* (brimming with the rhythms of parochial village life) (arts. 15, 16). The work that comes after *On Serving Christ* — *Love Rune* (art. 19) — includes a tribute to King Henry III. King Alfred is the vernacular font of wisdom in *The Owl and the Nightingale* and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (arts. 2, 24), and the former poem also names an English King Henry at line 1091 (see note). A political dimension is thus at play in the poetry of Jesus 29, and this aspect of the verse deserves more attention.

[Fol. 185v. NIMEV 1233. DIMEV 2047. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3041, 3399 [371]. **Quire**: 4. **Meter**: 10 lines, rhyming *aabbccddeē*. **Layout**: Written continuously as prose on five ruled lines, with punctuation at the end of each line. **Editions from MS Jesus 29**: Morris, p. 90; Brown, pp. 67, 196–98. **One other MS**: Winchester, Winchester College, MS 4, fol. 185v (Robertson, ed., *Materials*, 1:151; Brown, pp. 67, 196–98).]

incipit *antiphona*. In Christian liturgical practice, *antiphon* is a musical term that denotes a short sentence sung or recited before or after a psalm or canticle. Its use here indicates that *Antiphon* serves as a musical preface to the next item, *On Serving Christ* (art. 18).

- 3            *the understonde*. “welcome you.” See *MED*, *understonden* (v.), sense 16c.
- 9            *froure*. “comfort.” Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 19, 37.
- 10           *Euouae*. Pronounced *yoo-oo-ee*, *euouae* is a musical term derived from the sequence of vowels in “*seculorum amen*,” the final words of the *Gloria patri* doxology, and it serves as a mnemonic (like *do re mi*) for the sequence of tones to be sung. The term is typically found in Latin psalters and other liturgical books. The term’s presence confirms that *Antiphon* was originally a choral chant. The word is crossed out in the manuscript, perhaps by a post-Reformation reader who wished to censor veneration of Saint Thomas.

## 18. ON SERVING CHRIST

*On Serving Christ* follows *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr*, which serves as its choral introit. This poem venerates Thomas Becket as equal to biblical and Roman martyrs, selecting Saints Peter, Lawrence, and John the Baptist as stellar exemplars of passive suffering in the face of persecution. They were each heroic because they followed God’s will actively and without resistance to martyrdom. An exceptional feature of *On Serving Christ* is how its metrical form is fashioned specifically to convey a heroic message. As Pearsall notes, it is composed “in an irregular long alliterative line, rhyming in *laissez* of varied length in imitation of the Anglo-Norman” (*Old and Middle English Poetry*, p. 96). Although seldom recognized as such, it is an alliterative poem in early Middle English. It may be noted that Layamon’s long-line alliterative *Brut* survives in MS Cotton Caligula A.ix (see Lazamon, *Brut*, ed. and trans. Barron and Weinberg). Evaluated by date and style, *On Serving Christ* serves as a bridge between Layamon and the late-thirteenth-/early-fourteenth-century Harley lyrics and *William of Palerne*, earliest of the fourteenth-century unrhymed long-line alliterative romances, dated between 1335 and 1361 (Bunt, ed., *William of Palerne*, p. 15).

A second metrical feature of *On Serving Christ* is of equal interest. Its lines are grouped by assonanced rhyme, creating monorhyming “stanzas” of irregular length, properly termed *laissez* because they are the English equivalent of the standard verse form of French *chansons de geste* like *The Song of Roland*, which survives in its best form in Anglo-Norman. Although, at seventy-eight lines, *On Serving Christ* is not a very long poem, its meter deploys two epic modes: the ancient English alliterative line revived by Layamon to write of Arthur, and the *laisse* used by Old French poets to write of Charlemagne.

Notably, *The Passion of Jesus Christ in English* (art. 1), which opens Jesus 29, starts off by declaring that it will speak of Jesus and his twelve disciples, not of Charlemagne and his twelve peers (lines 3–4). By creating an innovative, hybrid epic meter, the poet of *On Serving Christ* makes a similar claim by stylistic means. His heroes are four martyrs who defended Holy Church: two of the Bible, one of the early Church, and one of England. Opening with *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr in English*, a combination of epic meter, choral introit, and saintly procession heaps glory on the English saint. Joined with Saints Peter, Lawrence, and John the Baptist, Thomas is made all the greater by deployment of a powerful new verse form.

[Fols. 185v–187r. NIMEV 4162. DIMEV 6672. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3041, 3399 [371]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 78 alliterative long lines, with most marked with caesuras, in nine monorhyming stanzas of variable length (8, 10, 6, 8, 10, 8, 6, 8, 14). The form is a hybrid of English alliterative verse and the French *laisse*. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. A colored capital marks the beginning of each stanza. **Edition:** Morris, pp. 90–92. **Other MSS:** None.]

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 5           *rauht*. “stretched (on the cross).” See *MED*, *rechen* (v.(1)), sense 8c.
- 6           *duthe*. “people, retainers.” See *MED*, *douth(e)* (n.), a word derived from OE *dugub*. Compare line 15; and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), line 111: “dowethes Louerd” (Lord of hosts).
- 8           *faht*. “resisted.” The word, past participle of *fighten*, refers to Christ’s passivity on the cross. It is an appropriate descriptor of God in the context of human resistance to God’s will. Morris retains *faht* but notes (p. 251; glossary, s.v. *Faht*) that the word could be an error for *saht*, “reconciled, accorded,” which would make *us* the subject of the clause (compare line 1). There is no need to accept that reading as better, however. A syntax that describes God’s attributes in a long line’s second clause, set at a distance from the referent, is very common in the verse of Jesus 29.
- 10          *asyen*. “decline, collapse.” This rare verb denotes downward movement, as with the setting sun; see *MED*, *asien*, sense 1b, where this line is cited.
- 19          *Nis so wlonk under Crist ridynde on stede*. This line begins with a colored capital, marking lines 19–24 as separate from lines 9–18, but the rhyme continues as if all sixteen lines are one *laisse*.
- 25–28      *Ther is the sunfulle . . . and grysligh gle*. These lines describe the terror of Doomsday (the end of the world), when Christ will appear before every trembling soul, living and dead, and assign one of three paths to each: everlasting heaven; everlasting hell; or purgatory, where one dwells in pain with a glimmer of hope that eventually he or she will attain heaven. This three-way division of souls is the meaning of line 27, where the heirs of Adam will be *parted on thre*. Compare the idea of these fates as forms of “eternal life” in *The Homily on Sooth Love* (art. 26), line 24 (note).
- 38          *hethene-hode*. “heathen belief or practices.” This word is recorded only in this line and three times in the later Middle English religious work *Cursor Mundi*. See *MED*, *hethenhede* (n.), sense 1a.
- 39–40      *Seynte Peter . . . thet he stode*. The naming of Saint Peter, Jesus’s apostle and the founder of Holy Church, occurs at the center of *On Serving Christ*. As in *Love Rune* (art. 19), a cross is figured in the poem’s central line. As the first model of heroic martyrdom in *On Serving Christ*, Saint Peter stands for the Church’s ideal stance against secular powers. His martyrdom by upside-down crucifixion was a well-known feature of his legend. See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. Ryan, 1:345; and, for an Anglo-Norman version, see *CHMS*, 1:420–23. Elsewhere in Jesus 29, the narrative of Peter’s denial of Christ prior to the Crucifixion is dramatically recounted in *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), lines 137–300.
- 44–47      *Hw Seynte Laurence . . . horyen and schede*. Saint Lawrence, martyred December 31, 225, was an early deacon of Rome, in charge of the Church’s treasury. Before his execution, he distributed the Church’s wealth to the poor, and then presented the poor people themselves before the prefect as the embodiment of Church riches. His legend attests that he was martyred by a slow, painful roasting over hot coals. On how his passion was considered especially heroic, see

- Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. Ryan, 2:64–74. Jacobus ascribes Lawrence’s persecution to Decius Caesar (2:67), a Roman ruler also named in *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 686.
- 46        *dute his dede*. “undergo or perform his death.” The verb is *don*, “to do, perform,” not *douten*, “to be in doubt of, to fear.” See *MED*, *don* (v.(1)), senses 1a and 1d.
- 47        *schede*. “waste, destroy.” See *MED*, *sheden* (v.), sense 6e, where this line is cited.
- 48        *hirdsype*. This instance of the word is the only one recorded in Middle English. See *MED*, *hird-shipe* (n.): “?Life or service in a household.”
- 51–56     *Seynte Johan . . . byterluker ibouht*. Like those of the other martyred saints, the poet’s narrative of John the Baptist stresses the saint’s determination to follow God over man. John the Baptist’s strength of will seems to mirror God’s own purposeful creation of the world “myd his thought” (line 52). Herod’s beheading of John the Baptist is recounted in Matthew 14:3–11 and Mark 6:17–28. Perhaps the emphasis on “thoht” in the rhyme is meant to reflect John the Baptist’s martyrdom by beheading.
- 57–64     *Seynt Thomas . . . beon in holde*. The inclusion of Thomas of Canterbury brings the narrative of four martyrdoms to a climax by clear design, moving from biblical and early Church martyrs to the most famous of modern English martyrs (d. December 29, 1170). Again, the narrative emphasizes the saint’s Christlike nonresistance to persecution. The preceding *Antiphon of Saint Thomas the Martyr* (art. 17) seems therefore to be the preface for *On Serving Christ*. It asserts that Thomas is equal to all the apostles and of particular intercessory help to English people.
- 63        *the dute of the Dom*. “in awe of Doomsday.” The poet indulges in alliterative variation and wordplay, seen in how this phrase reshapes *tholede dom vor his duth* (“suffered judgment for his people,” line 6) said about Jesus, and *dute his dede* (“performed his death,” line 46) said about Saint Lawrence. On the meaning of *dute*, see *MED*, *doute* (n.), sense 3b, “awe, reverence, respect, fear (of God).”
- solde*. See *MED*, *sellen* (v.), sense 1d, “to give up (one’s life), deliver up.”
- 64        *beon in holde*. “to resist, to be restrained”; see *MED*, *hold* (n.(2)), sense 5. The scribe does not write the final word of this line, leaving a blank. Alliteration, rhyme, and sense point to the missing word being *holde* — not *wolde*, as Morris suggests (p. 92). The word accords with the poem’s general theme of how sinful men stupidly resist being faithful to God, although it would save them, and how specific martyrs model heroic conformity to God’s will.
- 69–72     *no grene ne no scarlet . . . body and the bon!* The evocation of a noble hunt alongside the mention of beautiful clothes hints of the classic *ubi sunt* topos (“where are they now?”), as found in *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 358 (note); *Death* (art. 14), lines 49–56; and *Love Rune* (art. 19), lines 33–36. On the *ubi sunt* tradition, see Woolf, pp. 95–96.

- 69 *no grene ne no scarlat non*. Bright colors refer to the rich clothing of wealthy laypeople, contrasted to drab colors worn by laborers or men in religious orders (line 70). Rhetorically, this line completes the argument about the futility of beautiful clothes (lines 18–24). Compare *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 14; and *Death* (art. 14), line 5. In *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 134, these colors appear to denote gowns worn by lawyers.
- 70 *of russet ne of rencyen*. “of gray wool or mottled brown.” The line draws a contrast to the bright colors worn by aristocrats in line 69 (see note, above). The reference is to either clothes worn by lower classes or robes worn by friars or monks. See *MED*, *russet* (n.), sense 1a, “gray or dull red, brown, suitable for working clothes,” and *MED*, *rencian* (n.), “a kind of cloth made in or associated with Reims.” In the mid-thirteenth century, the wealthy baron Simon de Montfort reportedly wore simple clothes of coarse russet as a private act of humility, doing so in emulation of friars; at the same time, friars warned against the wearing of rich scarlet (Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 88–92). It is of particular interest that the word *rencian* is recorded only twice in Middle English: here and in *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 53 (the work that directly follows). The verbal correspondence and physical juxtaposition may be clues that Thomas authored both poems. Compare also the note to lines 39–40, above.
- 71 *that ruskit the ron*. “that startle (game) in the thicket.” See *MED*, *rusken* (v.), sense 1a, “to start (game),” a rare word of Old Norse origin; and *ron* (n.3), sense 1b, “a thicket, bush, shrubbery.” The word *ron* is also mistakenly cited in the *MED* under *ro* (n.(1)), as a plural form of *roe*, “deer.”

## 19. THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE RUNE

*Love Rune* is the most important religious lyric in Jesus 29. In verbal precision, sacred numerology, refined spiritual longing, and shimmering aesthetic beauty, it is no less than a miniature precursor to *Pearl*, the masterpiece of fourteenth-century religious English poetry. *Love Rune* does not suffer at all in being compared to such a great work, for it too is a rarefied vernacular expression of desire for and emulation of the Divine Ideal. Among the Jesus lyrics, *Love Rune* has been called the “gem of the collection,” belonging to “a completely different class” of poetic art (Pearsall, *Old and Middle English Poetry*, p. 97). As in *Pearl*, a profound religious motive is adorned in courtly terms, with images of jewels to reflect the poet’s precious style. An artful “rune” enclosing a secret treasure, *Love Rune* replicates in crafted words the high art of a goldsmith-jeweler, as if it is consciously designed to become a beautiful and delicate luxury object for a wealthy patron, or a perfect artifact in reflection and worship of the Creator.

Aimed putatively at a sole female reader, *Love Rune* succeeds an important earlier strain of West Midland devotional texts: *Ancrene Wisse*, the *Katherine*-group, and associated works that extol virginity and bodily integrity, such as *Sawles Warde* and *Holy Maidenhood* (all conveniently gathered and translated by Savage and Watson in *Anchoritic Spirituality*). In surveying this powerful tradition and distinguishing the early Middle English corpus from later modes, Hahn notes how *Love Rune* “presents an exceptionally compacted and intense realization of this nexus of religion, writing, selfhood, popular song and gender” (“Early Middle English,” p. 79). The thirteenth-century author Thomas of Hales, identified in the incipit as a Franciscan friar, is known elsewhere as the author of a Latin prose life of Mary, the *Vita sancte Marie* (Horral, ed., *The Lyf of Oure Lady*), and an Anglo-Norman sermon (Legge, ed., “The Anglo-Norman Sermon”). His acquaintance with fellow Franciscan Adam Marsh is documented, ca. 1252–1256, and Marsh himself was

a close friend of Robert Grosseteste (b. 1175–d. 1253), head of the Franciscan school at Oxford. Other life-records show that Thomas served for a time (ca. 1246–1252) as spiritual advisor to Henry III's queen, Eleanor of Provence (Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 92–94). No further works by Thomas are known to have survived, but if Thomas composed more English poems, a likely site for them to be still preserved is the verse sequence of MS Jesus 29. Among the more probable candidates are *Song of the Annunciation* (art. 20) and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (art. 26). Beyond these, a rare word links *Love Rune* with *On Serving Christ* (art. 18; see note to line 70). For a brief survey of the scant facts of Thomas's life and writings, and more speculation on Thomas's English oeuvre, see the Introduction to this volume (pp. 13–16).

The 105 long lines of *Love Rune* are the result of careful numerical structuring — 100 lines in 25 stanzas, plus a 5-line epilogue. Or, perhaps, it is meant to be charted by its prominent diptych structure: 50 + 50 + 5. Organization based on the number five represents the sacred wounds suffered by Christ at the Crucifixion, and correspondingly the points on the Cross (four endpoints, one centerpoint). The central line of *Love Rune* proper (line 50) invokes the directional sign of the Cross, by which the poet summons the Deity to mystically sanctify his perfectly-shaped 100-line runic mystery-poem. Line 50 marks the beginning-point of rhetorical crossover, where the argument pivots from moral warning against taking a mortal lover, to fervent persuasion that the maiden assent to the amorous blandishments of the Divine Lover. To make the case for Christ the Lover-Knight, Thomas adopts a long-standing devotional convention — common among monastic writers — of describing the soul's union with Christ in unguardedly erotic language. Rather than be surprised at such language, within the context of Christian mysticism “we should be scandalized not so much by the presence of such erotic elements as by their absence” (McGinn, “The Language of Love in Christian and Jewish Mysticism,” p. 205).

*Love Rune's* manner of inscription in Jesus 29 seems to show off its design by halves, and could therefore be a vestige of its original layout (Fein, “Roll or Codex?”). The rune's middle lines 50–51 appear at the foot of a verso and top of a recto. Given *Love Rune's* precise structural symmetry, this instance of graphic symmetry could be more than coincidence, especially since it required the scribe to reduce his normal number of lines per page. A shift from false worldly pursuit to true spiritual love takes place where the book gutter — a tangible, visible dividing line — must be crossed. Moreover, just when the poet begins to introduce Christ as Lover at the foot of a verso, he offers a compliment to King Henry III's Christian humility at the top of the facing recto, just where such praise would catch the eye of a royal patron.

Thomas of Hales's service to Queen Eleanor as spiritual advisor adds support to an impression that *Love Rune* was originally composed to directly please King Henry (who reigned 1216–1272) and his queen. Its fictive pose, however, is that it is addressed to a “maid of Christ” (a nun or a novitiate) to counsel her in an affair of the heart. Nonetheless, mention of the ruling monarch means that *Love Rune* belongs with other poems in Jesus 29 that hint of political realities and viewpoints shared by the poets, collectors, and/or readers of this verse. That outlook ferociously defends Holy Church as God's presence on earth, sees England and its native saints (especially Thomas Becket) as proof of a national calling, and honors the English monarch yet worships Christ as the one true King. In *Love Rune*, Henry III's highest sovereign act is his meek bowing before God.

All seven previous editors of *Love Rune* — in chronological order, Morris (1872), Brown (1932), Dickins-Wilson (1951), Kaiser (1958), Dunn-Byrnes (1990), Fein-*MLSL* (1998), and Treharne (2010) — erroneously present the poem in stanzas of eight short lines because its long lines rhyme internally. But an analysis of the poet's numerology and the scribe's standard practice (writing this stanza type in four lines not eight) show how, in understanding the verse historically, we need to trust the scribal evidence in favor of a 100-line diptych structure. Moreover, in terms of the Jesus 29 setting, Thomas's septenary line,

*aaaa*<sub>7</sub>, with internal rhymes represents a style found elsewhere: *Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary, Fire and Ice, A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 11, 21, 26), and *Will and Wit* (art. 9; surviving only in Cotton) (see Fein, “Designing English,” pp. 57–58).

[Fols. 187r–188v. NIMEV 66. DIMEV 104. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 105 septenary lines with strong caesuras and internal rhymes, in twenty-five 4-line stanzas rhyming *aaaa*<sub>7</sub>, (or *(ab)(ab)(ab)(ab)*<sub>7</sub>), and a final stanza of five lines. **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation. A colored initial opens each 4-line stanza. The item begins with a Latin incipit in red written on two lines. **Editions:** Morris, pp. 93–99; Brown, pp. 68–74, 198–99; Dickins-Wilson, pp. 103–09, 216–20; Kaiser, pp. 219–21; Dunn-Byrnes, pp. 156–62; Fein-MLSL, pp. 11–56; Treharne, pp. 437–43. **Other MSS:** None. **Extract:** Sisam and Sisam, eds., *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, p. 13. **Translations:** Weston, trans., *The Chief Middle English Poets*, pp. 343–45; Stone, trans., *Medieval English Verse*, pp. 51–56.]

- 1 *mayde Cristes*. The phrase is synonymous with “*puella Deo dicata*” in the Latin incipit. What it indicates of the woman’s status is uncertain except that she is a virgin. If she was a real person, she may have been a nun — a Minoress or Poor Clare (Hill, “The ‘Luue-Ron,’” p. 321), a lay recluse (Millett, “Women in No Man’s Land,” pp. 97–98), or merely a pious laywoman under the friar’s instruction. Bloomfield remarks that the maid “may also be no one at all but a poetic construct” (“Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” p. 55). The gendered context of the poem — pious instruction from a religious man to a woman — has a long tradition, and such works often focus on virginity (Newman, *From Virile Woman*, pp. 19–45).

*luve ron*. “a private message between lovers, or a love poem with a private meaning.” *Ron* (“rune”) combines a range of senses: “song,” “message,” “secret,” and “riddle”; see *MED*, *roun(e)* (n.(2)), sense 1, *ron* (n.(1)), and *rounen* (v.), senses 1 and 2. Compare the phrase *luve runes* (translating Latin *amatoria carmina*) in Eienkel, ed., *The Life of Saint Katherine*, p. 7. Thomas’s plan to “wurche” a love rune suggests the intricacy of verbal composition in interlocked rhyme and sense, and it hints at a secret message to discover. A later alliterative poem, *Summer Sunday*, also names its own form as runic (Robbins, ed., *Historical Poems*, p. 100). For Bloomfield, *love ron* suggests a hidden “wisdom” within a framed structure, something to be unlocked like the treasure of virginity itself (“Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” pp. 59–60). Levy reads the poem as a veiled message in likeness to the Annunciation (“The Annunciation,” p. 125–27).

- 2 *For-hwan*. “From which.” See *MED*, *for-whan* (pronominal adv. and conj.), sense 2c, and compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ*, lines 49, 242.

*onother soth lefmon*. The word *onother* is startling after the poet has stated the maid’s dedication to Christ. One wonders if the phrase *mayde Cristes* has a generic, neutral meaning: “virgin made in the image of Christ.” That the virgin should so much as express a desire not directed to God reveals her virginal status to be endangered (Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny*, pp. 97–101).

- 3 *best wyte cuthe*. The phrase is ambiguous because *wyte* can bear two different meanings: *MED*, *witien* (v.(1)), “guard, keep, preserve,” or *witen* (v.(1)), “know, advise.” Either may be meant here: “best able to protect” or “best able to advise.” The word *wyte* could also be *wite* (n.(1)):

“best advisor known to a noblewoman.” In the courtly language of *Love Rune*, the word *cuthe* suggests a friendly “being known” with the potential for amorous intimacy. The phrase *wyte cuthe* thus opens several potential meanings: Thomas’s advising role, the possessive or protective role of a husband (or God), the need to guard something the woman has (virginity), and the potential of someone “knowing” her sexually. On the adjectival past participle *cuthe*, see *MED*, *couth* (adj. and n.), “acquainted or known”; *connen* (v.), senses 3–5, “to have ability; to know”; and *kithen* (v.), senses 1–2, “to make known.” Compare also lines 52 (*beo the cuth*, about Christ’s desire) and 100 (*cuthe hit*, about the poem).

*freo*. “noble,” with another latent meaning: “free, unattached.” Thomas invites the question of why a woman dedicated to Christ would seek *onother soth lefmon* (line 2).

5 *res*. “madness, frenzy, a fit of delirium.” See *MED*, *res* (n.), sense 3a, and compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 512.

7 *theines*. Means “men” generically, but the primary sense “servants, attendants” implies men subject to a higher authority — God or death. Compare *Death* (art. 14): “Hwer beoth thine theynes that the leove were?” (line 89).

12 *ofdryve*. “to drive (something) away, dispel” (*MED*, *ofdriven* (v.)); this rare word, not recorded in Old English, is documented only here and once in a fifteenth-century text.

14 *vouh ne gray*. “variegated or gray fur.” The phrase, derived from OF *vair et gris* and common in Middle English verse, appears several times elsewhere in Jesus 29: *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 66; *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 357; and *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 14. See also line 53. Dickins-Wilson explain that the first kind of fur comes “from the grey back and white belly of a sort of squirrel, the second from the grey back alone” (p. 197n116). See *MED*, *fou* (adj. as n.), sense 2, and *grei* (n.(2)), sense 1a.

15 *enne*. “a single one”; see *MED*, *on* (num.), sense 4f, “the space of one day, a single day,” and compare line 44.

20 *Ye*. This use of the second-person plural pronoun is unique in the poem and may be an error for *Thu*. If not, Thomas’s usually intimate tone of address to the maiden is here more generalized as he expounds on the transience of life.

*that wouh goth forth, abak that soth*. The phrasing is probably proverbial. Compare the owl’s argument in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 877–78: “If riht goth forth and abak wrong, / Betere is my wop than thi song” (If right goes ahead and wrong behind, / My weeping is better than your song).

21–24 *Theo luve that . . . lef on bouh*. For another evocation of fleeting love in the Jesus sequence of English poems, see *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 1449–58.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 22            *mereuh*. “unstable, variable.” See *MED*, *meruw(e)* (adj.), sense 1c. This occurrence is the only one cited as a description for love. More commonly the adjective describes people (“frail”).
- 26            *funde*. “depart, go away, leave.” See *MED*, *founden* (v.(1)), sense 2a.
- 27            *alunde*. “elsewhere, afar.” This adverbial word is attested only here. I translate it contextually in opposition to *her*, “here.” See *MED*, *alunde* (? ppl.), “? remote, estranged.”
- bed*. “offer to fight, challenge.” See *MED*, *bidden* (v.), sense 7d.
- 29–32        *Yf mon is riche . . . from him take*. The guarded treasure of this stanza is analogous to the soon-to-be-described treasures of heaven and the maid’s virginity. The wealth described here is, of course, the false kind threatened by theft or decay (Luke 12:34).
- 33–36        *Hwer is Paris and Heleyne . . . is of the cleo*. This stanza uses the *ubi sunt* formula (“Where are they now?”). Hector and Caesar are among the Nine Worthies of the past, used to show the futility of worldly dominance, but Thomas’s main emphasis is on pairs of famous lovers, Paris and Helen, Amadas and Idoine, Tristram and Isolde. Many commentators have praised Thomas’s elegaic tones; see especially Woolf, pp. 62, 95–96; Pearsall, *Old and Middle English Poetry*, p. 97; and Bloomfield, “Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” pp. 55–56. On the *ubi sunt* topos evoked here, compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 358 (note); *Death* (art. 14), lines 49–56; and *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), lines 69–72.
- 36            *so the schef is of the cleo*. “as the sheaf is cut by the scythe.” The meaning of the word *cleo* is uncertain. The definition provided is the choice of most commentators. Bloomfield connects the half-line to Apocalypse 14, the Son of Man with a sickle (“Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” pp. 56–57), which would tie the image to many other allusions to Apocalypse. The etymological problem is whether *cleo* derives from OE *clif*, *cleofu*, “hillside, cliff,” or from OE *clawu*, *clea*, “hook.” Brown accepts the former, cites the word’s appearance in *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 343, and implicitly translates: “as the sheaf from the hillside” (p. 249, s.v. *cleo*). If, as seems more likely, the word is derived from *clawu*, there is no other record of it as a farm implement: other usages signify a claw, a talon, a crosier, and an instrument of torture. See *MED*, *clawe* (n.1), sense 2b.
- 40            *fere*. “appearance.” Derived from OF *ofaire*, the word is rare in Middle English. *MED*, *fere* (n.5) cites only three occurrences, this one being the earliest, the others dating from the fifteenth century.
- 41            *Henry ure kyng*. Henry III, king of England, who reigned 1216–1272. See also line 51; and compare the reference to *Kyng Henri* in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 1091.
- 42            *Absalon*. David’s son, noted for his beauty. See 2 Kings 14:25; and Chaucer’s *Legend of Good Women*, Prol. F 249.

- 44 *Mayde, if thu wilnest after leofman, ich teche the enne treowe King.* The *sponsa Christi* theme begins here, with Christ described as the Divine Lover the maiden should seek. The logic behind the depiction is that Christ endured the Passion to prove his love for humankind, so certainly he desires each soul in a way best expressed through terms of passionate human love. Courtly terms applied to Christ are typical of the anchoritic texts that preceded *Love Rune*. Compare the presentation of Christ's appeal in *Ancrene Wisse*: "Let everyone now choose one of these two, earthly comfort or heavenly, whichever she wants to keep — because she must let go of the other . . . Stretch out your love to Jesus Christ, and you have won him. Reach for him with as much love as you sometimes have for some man. He is yours to do all that you want with" (Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 197). On the *sponsa Christi* motif, see Swanton, *English Literature before Chaucer*, p. 248; and Bugge, *Virginitas*, pp. 82, 87–96; and compare the lyric *In a Valley of This Restless Mind* (Fein-MLSL, pp. 68–71).
- 45 *childe*. "a youth of noble birth," a title common in romances and ballads. See *MED*, *child* (n.), sense 6a.
- 47 *of wisdom wilde*. "strong of wisdom." See *MED*, *welde* (adj.), "powerful, mighty," which cites this line.
- 50 *est and west, north and suth*. At the center of the *luve ron*, Thomas invokes the four cardinal directions (a sign of the Cross) to sanctify the rune so that it may bring the Holy Bridegroom to the maiden. The Cross signifies Jesus's Passion, which signifies God's love for mankind. This line activates the rune's holy efficacy for the reader. Compare *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), lines 39–40 (note). Referencing the four cardinal points before naming the king of "Engelonde" might also be meant to invoke a sense of the nation, its length and breadth, as geographically specified in *The Shires and Hundreds of England* (art. 27).
- 51 *Henri, King of Engelonde, of hym he halt and to hym buhth*. Henry III was a great patron of the Franciscan order in England, and so the head-of-a-recto positioning of this compliment might have been intended for royal eyes in a presentation copy (not Jesus 29). See also line 41; and compare the reference to "Kyng Henri" in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 1091.
- 52 *sonde*. "message." Following all editors, the MS reading *schonde*, "shame, disgrace," has been emended to *sonde*; see *MED*, *sond(e)* (n.). Thomas styles himself an emissary from God, a role analogous to that of Gabriel at the Annunciation. Note that *Song of the Annunciation* (art. 20) follows *Love Rune* in Jesus 29. On the allusion, see Levy, "The Annunciation."
- cuth*. On the resonance of the word *cuth*, see note to line 3, above; and also *MED*, *couth* (adj. and n.), sense 2c, "acquainted or familiar," where this line is cited.
- 53 *vouh ne gray*. See note to line 14, above.
- rencyen*. "a kind of cloth made in or associated with Rheims." See *MED*, *rencian* (n.). The word is recorded only twice: here and in *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), line 70. The verbal correspon-

dence and physical juxtaposition may be clues that Thomas authored both poems. See also the note to line 50, above.

- 57 *bolde*. “castle, mansion, tower, dwelling place, abode”. See *MED*, *bold* (n.). The figure of a castle carries some traditional meanings: Solomon’s temple, the heavenly city, Christ’s body, the human body. Thomas’s Franciscan contemporary Robert Grosseteste deployed the figure in his Anglo-Norman *Chateau d’Amour* (*VLT*, pp. 40–45) and Latin *Templum Dei*. The latter begins with a meditation on 1 Corinthians 3:17, “For the temple of God is holy, which you are” (see also 1 Corinthians 6:19). The castle of the body is the guiding metaphor for *Sawles Warde* and a frequent figure in *Ancrene Wisse*. On how another connotation of *bolde* will eventually complement the rune’s spiritual eroticism, see the note to line 60, below.

*that wrouhte the wise Salomon*. Solomon’s temple is described in 3 Kings 6–8. It symbolizes the heavenly mansion, yet also signifies that mankind’s best building is infinitely exceeded by God’s edifice in heaven. The biblical account explains how God entered the temple in the guise of a cloud (3 Kings 8:10–12). Hugh of St. Victor used the biblical passage to illustrate how God conceals the “treasure . . . hidden in the field of the human heart,” that is, God’s image in man (*Selected Spiritual Writings*, p. 102). In Thomas’s contemporary climate, a mention of Solomon’s temple might readily recall Henry III’s signature building project: Westminster Abbey. Renevey notes that “Thomas of Hales may have written his poem . . . while or after Westminster Abbey was built in a record time of twenty-four years (1245–69) . . . [R]eferences to Solomon’s temple . . . and other building imagery recall the construction of an English *templum dei* whose magnificence echoed that of Solomon’s temple” (“1215–1349: Texts,” p. 101). On Solomonic kingship as a model for Henry III, see also Paris, *The History of Saint Edward*, trans. Fenster and Wogan-Browne, pp. 14–15. For another reference to Solomon’s temple in the poems of Jesus 29, see *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 245. For other mentions of Solomon, see *Death’s Wither-Clench* (art. 7), lines 21–26 (note), and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 217–18, 274.

- 58 *Of jaspe, of saphir, of merede golde, / and of mony onother ston?* The imagery of gems will come to be associated with the maiden’s virginity (lines 81–84). On the jewels of Solomon’s temple, see 3 Kings 7:9–10. Compare, too, the gems of the new Jerusalem in Apocalypse 21:18–21 and in the dreamer’s vision at the end of *Pearl*, lines 985–1032 (Andrew and Waldron, eds., *Pearl*, pp. 101–03). Bloomfield cites a letter on virginity by Osbert of Clare, twelfth-century Prior of Westminster, that names the “twelve stones of virginity from the Apocalypse” (“Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” p. 57).

- 60 *bold*. In *Love Rune*, the word *bolde* expands from its basic meaning “castle” and its metaphorical meaning “the maiden’s body” to embrace a sense of phallic masculinity (“tower”): God’s *bolde* will stand forever, while mere men who are *bolde* wither like meadow grass (lines 7–8). When given to the maiden, God’s *bolde* is here both a figure for her intact body and his virile presence by which she may find spiritual ecstasy with her Divine Lover. The masculine sense of the word *boldhede* (an erect penis) is explicit in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 513–16: “Vor hwanne he haveth ido his dede, / Ifalle is al his boldhede; / Habbe he istunge

under gore, / Ne last his luvē no leng more” (For as soon as he’s done the deed, / All his passion collapses; / Once he’s stung under a skirt, / His love lasts no longer).

- 61 *mote*. “hill, eminence, mound” (from OF *mote*), not “moat, ditch,” a meaning not recorded before 1378. See *MED*, *mote* (n.(1)), sense 1a.
- 62 *Ne may no mynur hire underwrote*. “No miner may undermine it (*or her*),” or “no Minorite may falsify it through his meager writing.” This line conceals a personal reference to the poet. For the primary meaning of *mynur*, “one whose military function it is to undermine fortifications, tunnel into a town, etc.,” see *MED*, *minour* (n.), sense 1. The line is the earliest recorded instance of the usage, also found in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* (CT I[A]2465). When *bold* is understood not as “it” but as her body (*hire*), the action becomes sexually charged. The second meaning puns on *mynur* and *underwrot*; see *MED*, *Menour* (n. and adj.). By veiled language, the poet deflects the maid’s attentions away from himself and toward Christ. The innuendo is sexual: “No friar Minor may undermine the castle of God.” Shakespeare uses a similar pun in a comic exchange that quibbles on virginity in military figures; see *All’s Well That Ends Well* 1.1.118–22 (*The Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 506). In the verb *underwrot*, Thomas extends the pun, calling his writing inadequate to the purpose; God, however, will overlook it in his love for the maiden.
- 63 *gleo and gal*. “mirth and song.” For *gal*, see *MED*, *gal(e)* (n.(1)), sense 1a, “song, singing.” Compare *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28), line 56, where *gal* appears as a rare adjective, with the sense “lascivious”; and also *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 256 (note), where the Owl taunts the Nightingale by calling her a “galegale.”
- 71 *He is day withute nyhte!* See Apocalypse 21:25: “And the gates thereof shall not be shut by day: for there shall be no night there.”
- 72 *Nere he, mayde, ful seoly that myhte wunye myd such a knyhte?* On the figure of Christ as Lover-Knight, see Woolf, “The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight.”
- 73 *tresur*. The idea that God gives each person a treasure when he or she relinquishes worldly possessions appears often in the gospels; see Matthew 19:21, Mark 10:21, Luke 12:33–34, Luke 18:22. Such treasure is both the promise of heaven and God’s image in the soul. As Christ within, the treasure is also profound wisdom, as described by Paul: “their hearts may be comforted, being instructed in charity, and unto all riches of fulness of understanding, unto the knowledge of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ Jesus: In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:2–3). The concept of treasure as inner wisdom where Christ is present is key to the rune-poem (Bloomfield, “Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” p. 59). In medieval mysticism, virginity itself was a key to God’s wisdom (Bugge, *Virginitas*, pp. 120–22).
- 74 *And bit the luke thine bur, and wilneth that thu hit wyte wel*. “And bids you lock (*or watch over*) your bower, and desires that you guard (*or know*) it well.” The word *luke* triggers two verbal meanings. It means both “lock” (*MED*, *louken* (v.(1)), sense 1b) and “watch over, guard,

defend” (*MED*, *loken* (v.(2)), senses 8a, 8b, 12b(a)). “Lock, fasten,” pertains specifically to physical virginity, which the maid must keep hidden and intact. “Watch over” indicates that the maid must protect her *bur* (bower) but treats the treasure as something she may view and enjoy. These two meanings carry over into the also ambiguous verb *wyte*, which can mean both “guard” and “know” (see note to line 3, above). Compare, too, *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), line 38, where a girl’s locked box is ironically opposed to her flirting in church: “At hom is hire Paternoster, biloken in hire teye” (Her Paternoster is at home, locked in her box).

76 *Thu art swetture than eny flure hwile thu witest thene kastel.* The language comparing the maiden to a sweet flower is traditional in both love poetry (see, for example, *Annot and John*, lines 11–20 (*CHMS*, 2:120–23)) and also in devotional descriptions of virginity, as in *Holy Maidenhood*: “Maidenhood is the flower that once completely cut down never blooms again” (Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 228).

77–92 *Hit is ymston . . . in heovene bur!* The treasure in the castle of the body is now a gem named “maydenhod” (line 81). In order to grasp the meaning of the rune, one must read the pronouns *he* and *hine* in lines 78–92 in a double fashion: as the neuter pronoun “it” in reference to the gem virginity *and* as the masculine “he” and “him” in reference to Christ the Holy Gem, who actively desires, inhabits, and enjoys the virgin’s body. Virginity figured as a gem has a long tradition and figures in the twelfth-century anchoritic literature of England. Saint Margaret in the *Katherine*-group legend calls out to Christ in prayer: “Lord, listen to me! I have a precious jewel, and I have given it to you — I mean my maidenhood, the brightest blossom in the body that bears it and keeps it well . . . Lord, defend me, and protect it always for yourself” (*Saint Margaret*, in Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 289). In anchoritic literature, the gem of virginity is closely identified with Christ himself: “The eagle keeps in his nest a precious gem called ‘agate,’ . . . This precious stone is Jesus Christ, true as a stone, and full of every power over all gemstones. He is the agate that the poison of sin never came near. Keep him in your nest, that is, your heart” (*Ancrene Wisse*, in Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, pp. 98–99). Virginity becomes the mark of physical linkage to Christ in spiritual marriage because Christ’s image is unmarred in the virgin’s intact body. The author of *Holy Maidenhood* so instructs the reader: “do not break the seal [of virginity] that seals you both together (Canticles 4:12) . . . No wonder if what is so like God is lovely to him; for he is the loveliest thing and all unbroken, and always was and is more pure than anything, and loves purity more than anything. And what is a more beautiful thing and more praiseworthy among earthly things than the power of maidenhood, unbroken and pure, modelled on him?” (Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, pp. 228–29). See further Bugge’s discussion of how the anchoritic texts are influenced by “the Christian gnostic tradition, wherein virginity is the image of the divine essence” (*Virginitas*, p. 120); and Swanton, *English Literature before Chaucer*, pp. 247–48.

84 *witest under thine hemme.* The pun latent in the verb *witen* (see note to line 3, above) comes forth in a sexualized way — “know God under hem” — beside “guard virginity under hem.” Thomas brings mystic eroticism to a courtly love lyric. The phrase *under thine hemme* invokes a secular motif in which a male poet enjoys imagining what is under a woman’s clothes and expresses a desire to be there. The usual phrase is *under gore* (“skirt”) or *under bis* (“linen”).

A sexual intent is unambiguous in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 515, and such phrases are frequent in the secular love lyrics of Harley 2253 (Fein, “A Saint ‘Geynest under Gore’”).

- 85        *vertu*. “power.” The word refers to an occult efficacy or curative power thought to inhere in a substance. Precious stones and plants were thought to possess virtues, which were enumerated in lapidaries and herbals.
- 86        *lectorie*. This is the first recorded occurrence of the word in Middle English, and the only one spelled without the prefix *a-*. See *MED*, *alectorie* (n.) and *lectorie* (n.). The word, derived from Latin *alectoria*, denotes a small, clear stone said to be found in a cock’s gizzard.
- 91        *He is idon . . . of fyn amur*. Both Christ and the gem of virginity are described as set in gold, as Thomas completes the love rune in a manner analogous to a goldsmith setting a gem. *Fyn amur* is a “technical term as used by Provençal poets” (Bloomfield, “Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” p. 59n10). Christ the Lover-Knight, proffering a castle, a treasure, and a gem, loves in the refined, noble manner of courtly love.
- 92        *bur*. The term denoting the lady’s body now denotes heaven shining with Christ’s light; compare Apocalypse 21:23: “And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.” Compare too the description of heaven in *The Wooing of Our Lord*: “You [Christ] loosed your prisoners and delivered them out of the death-house, and yourself took them with you to your jewelled bower, the abode of eternal joy” (Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 250).
- 95–96    *Ne doth he . . . the betere let gon?* This rhetorical question, explaining the choice and making clear the proper answer, is expressed so delicately that it refers both to the maid’s proper choosing of Christ over Thomas and to Thomas’s noble choosing to write the *luve ron* rather than assenting to the maid’s desire.
- 97–98    *open and withute . . . thu hit untrende*. The verb *untrende* is attested only here; see *MED*, *untrenden* (v.), “to unroll (sth.), open up.” The poem is to be thought of as written upon an unsealed parchment roll. Hill argues that the original poem was in fact written on a roll, as were many other Franciscan lyrics (“The ‘Luue-Ron,’” pp. 322–25; see also Woolf, pp. 57–58), but the reference is likely figural rather than literal (Fein, “Roll or Codex?”). Stone interprets the absence of a seal (*withute sel*) as Thomas’s way of making the poem an open message rather than one perceived as a private love note (*Medieval English Verse*, p. 56). Levy finds here an allusion to scrolls in iconography associated with the Annunciation (“The Annunciation,” pp. 127–30). Allusions to Apocalypse may also be present: the opening of the scroll with seven seals (chap. 6) and the unsealed roll (chap. 10). Compare too the notion of virginity as the unbroken “seal” that keeps God’s image whole within the soul (*Holy Maidenhood*, in Savage and Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 228).
- 100       *Hwoso cuthe hit*. “Whoever knows it.” On the resonance of the word *cuthe*, see note to line 3, above.

- hit wolde him stonde muchel stel.* “it would afford him much help.” This idiom also appears in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 1632 (note).
- 101 *Hwenne thu sittest in longynge, drauh the forth this ilke wryt.* This line opens the five-line epilogue. Millett notes that the maid appears to be literate in English, though probably not in Latin or French, and that she is pictured “in solitary but not silent meditation” (“Women in No Man’s Land,” p. 97).
- 102 *Mid swete stephne thu hit singe, and do al so hit the byt.* The song the maid will sing is both the love rune from Thomas (called a *cantus* in the incipit) and the “new song” of the 144,000 virgin brides of Christ in Apocalypse 14:3–4. *Item cantus* appears in the right-hand margin beside the opening line of the next piece, *Song of the Annunciation* (art. 20), directly below the *Amen* that concludes *Love Rune*. Thomas’s reference to the poem as a piece of writing to be used in the future by the maiden is comparable to the end of *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), where the birds’ debate (that is, the poem just read) is to be recited later before the one who will judge it; see *Owl*, lines 1785–86 (note).
- 103 *he.* This richly ambiguous pronoun refers to the message, the rune itself, or the messenger (either Thomas its conveyor or God the Wooer). The line alludes to the Annunciation; see note to line 52, above.
- 104 *brudthinge.* “bridal chamber.” According to *MED*, *brud-þing* (n.), “wedding feast,” this is the only occurrence of this Old English word in Middle English.
- 105 *And yeve him god endynge that haveth iwryten this ilke wryt.* This line is metrically part of the epilogue stanza extended to five lines. Lines 101–04 complete an image: the maid, sitting in longing, arrives as a bride before God who sits enthroned. The final line, Bloomfield writes, is “the last reminder of death in the poem — the writer’s own” (“Thomas of Hales’ ‘A Love Rune,’” p. 55). On how these lines bring the process of composition into the poem, see Scahill, “The Friar,” p. 3.

## 20. SONG OF THE ANNUNCIATION

*Song of the Annunciation*, a paraphrase of Luke 1:28–38, survives in damaged form as a fragment of twelve opening lines. It must be deliberate that an Annunciation hymn follows *Love Rune* in Jesus 29 because *Love Rune* adopts the premise of an annunciatory message delivered to a “maid of Christ,” borne by a go-between (like Gabriel) who serves God’s amatory business. Thus, after the maiden of *Love Rune* is bid to sing the runic message (line 102), the holiest of angelic pronouncements appears under the scribe’s rubric “*Item cantus*” (A song). Perhaps in its original presentation *Song* was appended to *Love Rune*, and, if so, then Thomas of Hales could be its author. The surviving lines suggest a poem of great delicacy. Elsewhere, Thomas’s treatment of the theme is extant in his Latin *Vita sancte Marie* (Horrall, ed., *The Lyf of Oure Lady*, pp. 47–51).

*Song of the Annunciation* has been erroneously printed by previous editors in combination with *The Annunciation* (art. 10), another fragment, but the makeup of Jesus 29 precludes the possibility that the items belong to the same poem. In addition, their meters are decidedly different. Irregular rhymes in the

surviving fragment make the precise meter of *Song* difficult to pin down, but it seems to be similar to that of the Harley 2253 political poem *The Flemish Insurrection* (CHMS, 2:214–21), which commemorates an event of 1307.

[Fol. 188v. NIMEV 877 (combined with art. 10). DIMEV 1467 (combined with art. 10). **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 12 surviving lines, apparently in 8-line stanzas, rhyming irregularly  $aaa_{5-7}b_3ccc_{5-7}b_3$ . **Layout:** Long lines with medial and end punctuation, and short lines with end punctuation, sometimes written continuously. The incipit is written to the right of the first line. **Editions (combined with art. 10):** Morris, p. 100; Saupe, pp. 44, 172–73. **Other MSS:** None.]

- 11 *Monnes imone on me ne may no mon fynde.* Compare Luke 1:34: “How shall this be done, because I know not man?” This line is parodied in *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), lines 47–48 (see note).

## 21. FIRE AND ICE

*Fire and Ice*, written at the top of a recto, presents the last five lines of a longer religious poem that does not survive. Preserved here is only a final prayer to the “heye Kyng” who governs Doomsday, requesting that the audience may escape that “tything” (tiding, outcome; line 4). The presence of internal rhymes, and the absence of an initial letter *B* in line 2, which would have been intended for colored ink (heading a quatrain), indicates a meter identical to that of *Will and Wit*, *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary*, *Love Rune*, and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 9, 11, 19, 26). For a close critical analysis of this lyric (erroneously taken as a complete poem in the manuscript), see Reiss, “Religious Commonplaces,” pp. 97–102.

[Fol. 189r. NIMEV \*2284.5. DIMEV 3676. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 5 surviving septenary lines with internal rhymes, apparently in 4-line stanzas, rhyming  $aaaa_7$ , (or  $(ab)(ab)(ab)(ab)_7$ ). **Layout:** Long lines with caesuras and medial and end punctuation. Begins imperfectly. **Editions:** Morris, pp. 100–01; Oliver, p. 3; Stevick, ed., *One Hundred Middle English Lyrics*, p. 33 (with regularized spelling). **Other MSS:** None. **Translation:** Segar, trans., *A Mediaeval Anthology*, p. 37.]

- 1 *Naveth my saule bute fur and ys, and the lichome eorthe and treo.* The powerful imagery of this line — the ethereal soul is fire and ice, the organic body is earth and tree — indicates that the lost poem must have contained vivid metaphors, as captured in Segar’s translation: “My soul has nought but fire and ice, / And my body earth and wood” (*A Mediaeval Anthology*, p. 37). Reiss offers the following comment: “the body can most likely anticipate only the wood of the coffin and the earth in which it will lie, while the soul similarly will have for its end or resting place the fire and ice that in the medieval view characterized hell” (“Religious Commonplaces,” p. 98). Such a reading complements the visions of hell found in *Poema Morale* (art. 3) and *Eleven Pains of Hell* (art. 28).
- 2–5 *the laste Dom . . . ne byth undon.* The immediate topic — Doomsday — is simply part of a closing prayer. It offers little indication of the content of the lost poem.
- 2 *Bidde we.* In the Jesus sequence of poems, many closing stanzas open with this phrase, which signals a final prayer. Because the first letter *B* is always a red capital (as would be expected here were the *B* not missing), these standard endings are quite noticeable to a reader of the

manuscript. Compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 547; *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 389; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 349; *The Annunciation* (art. 10), line 4; and *Doomsday* (art. 13), line 41.

- 4 *tything*. “news of one’s fate.” Compare the note on the meaning of *tydinges* in *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (art. 23), line 1.

## 22. SIGNS OF DEATH

Addressing the reader in second person, the *Signs of Death* poet enumerates the signs and expects them to be felt viscerally by the listener. The chilling process begins with one’s changing hue and ends with loss of breath. The narrator then takes the listener past the point of death to envisioning and feeling the sensations of being laid out and shrouded, and then being buried in a pit amid worms. The final line consigns the dead one to oblivion. The affective method of the poem may be compared to *An Orison to Our Lord* (art. 25).

This poem belongs with several aphoristic, mnemonic poems in Jesus 29, particularly *Ten Abuses* (art. 15) and its companion in the manuscript *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (art. 23), along with *Will and Wit* (art. 9), contributed by the Cotton MS. The Signs of Death is a familiar trope of Middle English lyrics, commonly found in death lyrics and debates of the body and the soul. For other imaginings of how Death enters the body, see *Death’s Wither-Clench* and *Death* (arts. 7, 14). On the Signs of Death tradition, see Brown, pp. 130, 220–22; Woolf, pp. 81–83; and Louis, *MWME*, 9:3042–44 [374–86].

[Fol. 189r. *NIMEV* 4047 (see also 3998, 4033). *DIMEV* 6462 (see also 6383, 6437, 6439, 6447, 6459, 6460). Louis, *MWME*, 9:3042, 3400 [377]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 12 lines, rhyming in couplets, *aa*<sub>3-4</sub>. The last line is hypermetric. **Layout:** The ends of lines are punctuated. Several lines are continuously written as prose. **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, p. 101; Brown, pp. 220–21. **One other MS:** Oxford, BodL, MS Bodley 416, fol. 109r (Brown, p. 221).]

- 1–4 *Hwenne thin heou bloketh . . . thi tunge voldeth*. Compare *Death* (art. 14), lines 85–87.
- 4 *thi tunge voldeth*. “your speech fails.” See *MED*, *folden* (v.(2)), sense 2b, which cites this line. Compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 37.
- 10 *bipreoneth*. This verb is attested only here; see *MED*, *bipreonen* (v.), “to sew (sb.) up.”  
*on here*. “in a haircloth,” that is, as a gesture of humility and Christian penance. For burial in a coarse cloth, see *MED*, *here* (n.(2)), sense 3a, and compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 200.
- 11 *And doth the ine wurmes iver*. Compare *Death* (art. 14), line 91.
- 12 *Theonne bith hit sone of the al so thu never nere*. The final hypermetric line resembles the ending of several Harley lyrics, in particular *A Winter Song*, lines 17–18 (*CHMS*, 2:230–31).

23. THREE SORROWFUL TIDINGS

This brief poem is written in Jesus 29 without any break from the preceding item, *Signs of Death* (art. 22). It is a sorrowful meditation on the soul's precarious fate. The three woeful events are the certainty that one must enter the afterlife by dying; the uncertainty of knowing when; and the very dire uncertainty as to where one will go, to heaven or to hell. According to Louis, "This obviously popular tag relies on its easily memorable form and its effectively climactic structure. It is based on the popular Latin aphorism, 'Sunt tria vere, quae faciunt me semper dolere'" (There are three truths that always make me sorrowful) (*MWME*, 9:3045; translation mine). Brown prints the Jesus 29 and Maidstone poems under the title *Three Sorrowful Tidings*, and two related poems under the title *Three Sorrowful Things* (pp. 18–19). See also Brown, pp. 172–73; Silverstein, p. 20; and Woolf, pp. 86–87.

*Three Sorrowful Tidings* belongs with several other aphoristic, mnemonic poems in Jesus 29, particularly *Ten Abuses* (art. 15) and its manuscript companion *Signs of Death* (art. 22), along with *Will and Wit* (art. 9), contributed by the Cotton MS. It is also closely associated with the next item in Jesus 29, *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), with which it also appears in the Maidstone manuscript. The three sorrowful tidings are named in *The Proverbs of Alfred*, lines 103–12.

[Fol. 189r. *NIMEV* 695 (see also 1615, 3711, 3712, 3713, 3969). *DIMEV* 1157. Louis, *MWME*, 9:3045, 3401 [394]. **Quire:** 4. **Meter:** 6 lines, rhyming in couplets, *aa*<sub>4</sub>. **Layout:** Art. 23 begins without any break from art. 22. Each line is punctuated at the end. The second couplet (lines 3–4) is copied on a single line. **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, p. 101; Brown, pp. 19, 171–72; Silverstein, p. 20. **Three other MSS:** Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS I.2.6, fol. 162va (Brown, p. 172); Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 258, fol. 134v (Heffernan, "Unpublished Middle English Verses," p. 33); Maidstone, Kent, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, fol. 243v (Brown, pp. 18, 171). **Translation:** Adamson, trans., *A Treasury of Middle English Verse*, p. 12. **Seventeenth-century transcription:** Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 120, pp. 601–17, by Welsh antiquary Edward Lluyd, Assistant Keeper (1683–1689) and Keeper (1691–1709) of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Hill-History, p. 203n1; and Hill-Part2, p. 276).]

- 1 *tydinges*. "musings, thoughts (that come to me), truths." The full range of meanings in this context is not quite covered by the definitions given in the *MED*: *tiding(e)* (n.), senses 1 ("report"), 2 ("news"), and 4 ("events, occurrences"). The word echoes *Fire and Ice* (art. 21), line 4, where it means "news of one's fate."
- 4 *that ich noth hwenne*. Not knowing the time of one's death is frequently lamented in the Jesus 29 lyrics. Compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 190–92; *Death's Wither-Clench* (art. 7), lines 1–2; and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 103–12.
- 6 *That ich not hwider ich scal fare*. Compare *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), lines 103–12; and also the Harley lyric *A Winter's Song*, lines 17–18: "For Y not whider Y shal, / Ne hou longe her duelle" (*CHMS*, 2:230).

24. THE PROVERBS OF ALFRED

The Jesus 29 version of *The Proverbs of Alfred* consists of twenty-three sections written as punctuated prose paragraphs by the scribe. After a two-section introduction, each section declares a nugget of proverbial

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truth — pious adage, good manners, social mores, or marital advice — ascribed to the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon king, a king to whom Henry III traced his ancestry (see Paris, *The History of Saint Edward*, trans. Fenster and Wogan-Browne, p. 12). What follows is a summary of the content by section:

1. Alfred was wise in law and in words, powerful, and loved God's work.
2. Alfred spoke wise words to the people.
3. God is the supreme King.
4. A king must be intelligent and learned.
5. Nobles must judge justly; knights must keep order, defend land, keep peace.
6. Education is beneficial; ignorance is not.
7. Wealth is worthless without wisdom and friends.
8. One's situation can change for the better; God gives us our destiny.
9. Strive in youth to gain wealth for old age and for God.
10. Many expect long life, but only God knows when a death will occur.
11. Property is temporary and from God. Avoid pride over it.
12. Do not trust in wealth and gain God's anger; it would be better not to have been born.
13. Wit and wisdom are better than wealth.
14. Keep sorrow to yourself; do not give an advantage to your enemy.
15. Marry a good wife; choose character over beauty.
16. Do not share private thoughts with your wife; she'll disparage you before your enemies.
17. Choose and train a wife well. She should work hard; the husband should be her master.
18. Woman gives cold counsel. Do not listen to your wife, yet a good woman is a good thing.
19. Beware of false friends.
20. Shun bad habits. Instead, be beloved, acquire friends; thereby be fortunate and able to travel.
21. Everything is transitory, so follow Christ's will, as Solomon counseled.
22. Do not blab everything before anyone; be discreet.
23. Teach your child good habits. He'll be a comfort or a scourge in your old age.

The third to fifth sections of the Jesus 29 *Proverbs* establish the outlook on social order that one finds concisely stated in *Ten Abuses* (art. 15), and the final section treats the eighth abuse: "child unthewed." According to this medieval model, good social order is hierarchical: God is supreme, king is next, and nobles and knights perform essential duties. The cultivation of wisdom and wit (treated as one noun) is also extremely important: education, literacy, and the application of one's intelligence form the grounds of good governance (section 4) and, likewise, a good life (sections 6–7). Subsequent sections bring the advice to an individual level, offering wise moral guidance designed to bring about a fortunate life.

Compared to other English texts in Jesus 29, aside from *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), there is relatively little concern shown for the perils of the afterlife. The advice given in *Proverbs* is largely for the here and now. The last section is about one's progeny being well taught, well behaved, and a comfort in one's old age: "Wis child is / Fader blisse" (lines 296–97). "Blisse" does not here refer to heaven as it does in almost every other Jesus poem, but to pride in one's family descendents. This aspect of *Proverbs* makes it more like the collection of English adages in *Hending*, found in MS Harley 2253, than like the hell-fire moralizing of *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), found in both Jesus 29 and Digby 86. *Proverbs* is also a very apt manuscript companion for *The Owl and the Nightingale*, where avian disputants copiously quote the "sayings" of "King Alfred," although most of the proverbs they spout are not to be found in the *Proverbs* tradition.

Because its vocabulary is almost exclusively of direct Old English derivation, and because ancient letter-forms appear in some manuscripts, the date of *Proverbs* has been of great interest. The most recent assessment sets its composition in the twelfth century, but proposals have ranged from pre-Conquest to the mid-thirteenth century (South, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, p. 24). Ascription of the sayings to Alfred is by popular tradition not fact. As Hall notes, it “rests on no firmer ground than an affectionate remembrance of the great king as a sage and teacher of his people” (2:294).

The unusual meter of *Proverbs* strongly evokes an older Anglo-Saxon style: “The system is that of Layamon and the *Bestiary*; . . . a mixture of the national alliterative verse loosely constructed and rhyming couplets. The latter are bound together by perfect, imperfect, even inflectional rhymes, and assonances” (Hall, 2:292). Scholars have determined that the Jesus 29 copy of *Proverbs* is the youngest and most scribally-tampered copy to survive (Arngart, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred. II.*, p. 135; South, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, p. 23). The Jesus scribe sometimes tends to expand by adding new lines. Hall comments that a “poem of such loose structure readily lends itself to selection on the part of the copyist; and the scribe of MS. J was evidently a critic” (2:295; see also 2:293). But given the distance in time of all manuscripts from the original, no copy is flawless. Hall groups the “dilapidations wrought by the copyists” under six categories: 1) rejection of archaic and uncommon words; 2) modernization of older forms and constructions; 3) rearrangement of words, often into a prose order, spoiling rhyme and rhythm; 4) transposition of lines and parts of lines; 5) a free use of padding; and 6) distortion of rhymes by the substitution of alien dialectic forms (2:293–94). Reading *Proverbs* from any of its manuscripts requires, therefore, allowances as to meter, vocabulary, and rhythm.

Most of the editorial and critical apparatus surrounding *The Proverbs of Alfred* dates from the nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries and is little designed to welcome modern readers to the work. The text survives in two other manuscripts plus a third one now lost because of the fire in 1731 that destroyed a portion of the Cotton collection. Records of the MS Cotton Galba A.xix copy exist only in pre-1731 transcriptions of differing quality and completeness. On the early transcriptions and the manuscripts, see Hall, 2:285–87; Arngart, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred. II.*, pp. 11–37; South, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, pp. 3–11; and Arngart’s earlier study, *The Proverbs of Alfred. I.* (1942). *Proverbs* varies in every copy; sections differ in number and in order. The present edition, based on Jesus 29, does not provide comparative readings among the different manuscripts, only those among the different editions of the Jesus text. Many editions providing texts from the other manuscripts exist, and nearly every edition cited here prints two or more versions. For a good listing of editions, see DIMEV 714. The Cambridge manuscript, TCC, MS B.14.39, may be viewed digitally at <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.14.39-40>.

Two matters of presentation in this edition require special notice. The first one regards meter and layout. In copying each section as punctuated prose, the Jesus scribe did not present *Proverbs* in a verse layout, only a loosely rhythmic one. While most editors (for example, Morris and Treharne) have set out the Jesus 29 *Proverbs* in uniformly short lines determined by scribal punctuation, I follow a method similar to that of Hall and sanctioned by the scribe’s copying of many long lines elsewhere: lines that alliterate are set as long lines with caesuras; lines that rhyme are set as short lines without caesuras. The second matter regards the placement of the tag “Thus queth Alvred.” By editorial convention, the tag heads each section, but, in fact, the Jesus scribe usually sets it at the *end* of a section. This manner — intoning “So says Alfred” at section-ends — mirrors the style of *Hending*, where every stanza closes in a proverb followed by “Quoth Hending” (*CHMS*, 3:220–37). The Jesus scribe’s section divisions are therefore preserved here.

For recent critical commentary on *The Proverbs of Alfred*, see Cannon, “Proverbs and the Wisdom of Literature”; and Yeager, *From Lawmen to Plowmen*, pp. 99–120.

[Fols. 189r–192r. NIMEV 433. DIMEV 714. Louis, *MWME*, 9:2974–75, 3358–60 [42]. **Quires:** 4–5. **Meter:** 318 lines, irregular rhyme, irregular alliteration, in sections of varying length. The style is that of late Old English, with some lines not alliterating, some rhyming. **Layout:** Twenty-three sections, each written as punctuated prose, headed with large colored initials. **Editions from MS Jesus 29:** Wright-Halliwell, 1:170–88; Morris, pp. 102–38; Skeat; Borgström, pp. 26–41; Hall, 1:18–28, 2:285–308; Arngart, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred. II.*, pp. 71–150; Treharne, pp. 443–55. **Three other MSS:** London, BL, MS Cotton Galba A.xix (lost by fire); Cambridge, TCC, MS B.14.39, fols. 85r–87v; Maidstone, Kent, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, fol. 93r. **Extracts from MS Jesus 29:** Morris-*Specimens*, pp. 146–52, 332–33; Sisam and Sisam, eds., *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, pp. 10–11 (section 7 only). **Translations (based on TCC):** Kemble, ed. and trans., *The Dialogue of Salomon and Saturnus*, pp. 225–48; Segar, trans., *A Mediæval Anthology*, pp. 127–32. **Seventeenth-century transcription:** Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 120, pp. 601–17, by Welsh antiquary Edward Llyud, Assistant Keeper (1683–1689) and Keeper (1691–1709) of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Hill-History, p. 203n1; and Hill-Part2, p. 276).]

- 1 *Sevorde*. The place-name probably refers to Shefford, Berkshire, rather than Seaford, a south coastal town in East Sussex. See South, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, pp. 25–42, who argues persuasively for Shefford’s associations with King Alfred’s life, and she uses its mention to date *Proverbs* in the twelfth rather than the thirteenth century. But see, too, Yeager, who reevaluates the legal ties of Shifford, Oxfordshire (*From Lawmen to Plowmen*, p. 116n59).
- 4 *Eorl Alvrich*. An unidentifiable name. South comments that “Alfrich was too common a name in Alfred’s time to admit of certain identification now, but its gratuitous insertion suggests that it had some real connection with early stories of the king” (*The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, p. 41n67).
- 8 *Englene londe*. The phrase literally means “land of the English people.” See *MED*, *Engle* (n. (pl.)), sense 1; *Englene* is a genitive form.
- 14 *clerek*. “clerk, scholar,” that is, literate in Latin.
- 35–36 *That him ne schal beo wone nouht of his wille, / The hine her on worlde wrthie thencheth*. “That he shall lack nothing of what he desires / Who here in this world intends to honor him (i.e., God).” A literal translation of the convoluted syntax is provided by Hall: “that there shall not be wanting anything he desires to him who is purposed to honour Him here in this world” (2:296n35, 36).
- 38–42 *Ne may non ryhtwis king . . . laweliche holde*. Compare these lines from *The Sayings of the Four Philosophers* (a poem found in the Auchinleck manuscript): “Ne may no king wel ben in londe, / Under God Almihte, / But he cunne himself rede, / Hou he shal in londe lede / Everi man wid rihte” (No king can prosper in the land, / Under God Almighty, / Unless he can advise himself, / How he should lead in the land / Every person fairly) (Wright, ed., *Political Songs of England*, p. 254; translation mine).
- 38 *under Criste seolven*. Literally “under Christ himself,” but also with the general sense “anywhere.” See *MED*, *under* (prep.), sense 8a(e).

- 41 *lokie himseolf one*. “find out (something) by reading it himself.” See *MED*, *loken* (v.(2)), sense 5a, where this line is cited.
- 44–63 *The eorl and the ethelyng . . . hit wel fare*. This proverb presents the societal roles of two estates: the nobility and the military (earls and knights). On the idea that each estate must fulfill its proper duties to sustain the social order, compare *Ten Abuses* (art. 15), especially lines 11–12, attributed to Bede. At line 55, both Morris and Hall divide this proverb into two sections (Morris, line 87; Hall, line 55).
- 52–53 *Hwych so the mon soweth, / Al swuch he schal mowe*. See 2 Corinthians 9:6: “Now this I say: He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings.” And Galatians 6:8: “For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting.” See also lines 59–60, and compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), lines 1039–42; *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 23; and Whiting S542.
- 54 *And everuyches monnes dom to his owere dure churreth*. “And every man’s judgment returns to his own door.” For this proverb, see Whiting D342.
- 59–60 *His sedes . . . to mowen*. The moral on reaping what one sows is illustrated literally with a peasant’s labor. See note to lines 52–53, above.
- 63 *knyhtes lawe*. “knight’s duty.” See *MED*, *laue* (n.), sense 1d, “a special code of duties or rules applicable to a particular group or activity.”
- 65–67 *The mon . . . wenliche lortheu*. Compare the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 22–23: “Wyt ant wysdom / Is god warysoun” (Wit and wisdom / Is good treasure), with the broad sense of *warysoun* being “reward, protection, security” (*CHMS*, 3:220–21). On *lortheu*, “teacher, master,” see *MED*, *lor-theu* (n.), sense 1a, a compound of *lore* (teachings) and *theu* (manners).
- 74 *wrothe*. See *MED*, *wroth* (adj.), sense 3c, “perverse, evil,” where this line is cited.
- 77–84 *Wythute wysdome . . . haveth wis mon?* The need for wisdom to accompany wealth is not expressed in this manner in other Jesus 29 lyrics, but compare the adages on these topics in *Weal and Will and Wit* (arts. 6, 9).
- 78 *huntseventi*. “seventy,” from Old English; see *MED*, *hundseventi* (card. num.).
- 83–84 *For hwat is gold . . . haveth wis mon?* “For what is gold but stone / Unless it’s owned by a wise man?” For this proverb, see Whiting G316.
- 86 *howyen*. “distressed.” See *MED*, *houen* (v.(1)), sense 1c, where this line is cited.
- 93–101 *Strong hit . . . thenne wel bitowe*. Compare these lines from *The Sayings of the Four Philosophers* (a poem found in the Auchinleck manuscript): “Whoso roweth azein the flod, / Off sorwe he shal drinke; / Also hit fareth bi the unsele, / A man shal have litel hele / Ther agein to swinke”

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- (Whoever rows against the current, / He shall drink of sorrow; / So it goes for the unfortunate, / A man shall have little strength / To strive against it) (Wright, ed., *Political Songs of England*, pp. 254–55; translation mine).
- 100 *al that he haveth idrowe*. “all he’s earned or accomplished.” See *MED*, *drauen* (v.), sense 2d(a), “to get (something).”
- 101 *bitowe*. “well applied, employed.” See *MED*, *biten* (v.(2)), sense 2a, where this line is cited.
- 103–12 *Mony mon weneth . . . leten schule*. On the sentiments in this proverb — the expectation of a long life and the actual uncertainty — compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 190–92; *Death’s Wither-Clench* (art. 7), lines 1–2; and *Three Sorrowful Tidings* (art. 23), line 4. On the tradition, see Woolf, pp. 86–87; and Louis, *MWME*, 9:3045.
- 107–08 *For nys no . . . furth upholde*. For this proverb, see Whiting W687. On *vexynde*, “growing,” see *MED*, *waxen* (v.(1)), sense 1a. On *feye*, see *MED*, *fei(e)* (adj.), sense 1a, “fated to die,” of Old English derivation.
- 111 *dowethes Louerd*. “Lord of hosts.” See *MED*, *douth(e)* (n.), sense 1e, and compare *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), line 6, where *duthe*, derived from Old English, means “people, retainers.”
- 114–20 *Yf thu seolver . . . leten us byhinde*. Compare the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 321–22: “Frendles / Ys the dede” (Friendless / Is the dead) (*CHMS*, 3:234–35).
- 116 *Ayhte nys non ildre istreon ac hit is Godes lone*. “Property’s not gained from parents but a loan from God.” For this proverb, see Whiting A240.
- 118 *myd alle*. “entirely, completely.” On the phrase, see *MED*, *mid* (prep.(1)), sense 11a; and compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 1458.
- 120 *maythenes*. “valuables, treasures.” See *MED*, *madmes* (n. pl.), the spelling found at line 123 and here in the TCC version.
- 131–39 *Lusteth ye . . . ileste mote*. On the value of wisdom (*wit*), see also *Will and Wit* (art. 9).
- 133 *wit and wisdom, that alle thing overgoth*. The author treats the pair *wit and wisdom* as a singular noun, as in the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 22–23: “Wyt ant wysdom / Is god warysoun” (*CHMS*, 3:220–21).
- 141–43 *If thu havest seorewe . . . ryd the singinde forth*. For this proverb, see Whiting S512.
- 142 *arewe*. “scoundrel, base fellow, ignoble person.” See *MED*, *argh* (adj.) used as a noun, sense 1c, of Old English origin.

- 148–49 *Thu hit myht . . . ful wel on.* These lines sarcastically convey the bearing of the man who lies to your face: “You might tell it to *such* a man / As wishes you *very well*.” The next two lines give the scoundrel’s true feelings. See Hall, 2:301n159.
- 150 *Withute ehere ore.* “Without any mercy.” See *MED*, *ech* (pron.), used as an adjective, sense 1c, where this line is cited.
- 152–55 *Byhud hit . . . thin heorte bywite.* Compare the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 103–04 (Whiting F366): “Tel thou never thy fo / That thy fot aketh” (Never tell your foe / That your foot aches) (*CHMS*, 3:224–25). The advice never to speak of one’s inner sorrow is reminiscent of the Old English poem *The Wanderer*.
- 165–67 *That uvele ywyveth . . . Dreori iwurthe.* See Whiting M191. Compare the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 312–13: “Moni mon for londe / Wyveth to shonde” (Many a man for land / Marries to his disgrace) (*CHMS*, 3:234–35).
- 168–71 *Mony mon singeth . . . Wepen he myhte.* See Whiting M194. Compare the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 148–53: “Moni mon syngeth / When he hom bringeth / Is yonge wyf. / Wyste wot he brohte / Wepen he mohte / Er syth his lyf” (Many man sings / When he home brings / His young wife. / If he knew what he brought, / Weep he must / For the rest of his life) (*CHMS*, 3:226–27).
- 173–80 *Ne wurth thu . . . hi nowiht welde.* The sense of this proverb builds from the sentiments of section 14, about keeping one’s thoughts to oneself, and section 15, about choosing a wife. It tells a man never to reveal his secrets to his wife because she will chastise him for his mistakes with poor timing, in front of angry foes. For the word *wille*, the sense “intentions, opinions, thoughts” shades into “private thoughts, secrets” (see Hall, 2:302n185). For the word *baleu-sythes*, the sense “misfortune; destruction, death” (an Old English compound; see *MED*, *bale-sip* (n.), sense 1a) shades into “private sorrows, regrets, mistakes.” For *word-woth*, “word-mad,” another Old English compound, see *MED*, *word* (n.), sense 2c(b), “unrestrained or wild in speech,” where this line is the only Middle English instance cited.
- 182 *overprute.* “excessive pride.” See *MED*, *overprut* (n.), where this is the only instance cited of the Old English word (*oferprut*) directly into Middle English. Compare *override* (n.) and *overproud* (adj.).
- 191 *For ofte museth the kat after hire moder.* “For often a cat learns to mouse from her mother.” For this proverb, see Whiting C89.
- 195 *totrayen and toteone.* “torment and harrass.” These alliterating verbs are both quite rare, with the former not found elsewhere. See *MED*, *totraien* (v.) and *toten* (v.(3)).
- 198 *Mony appel is bryht withute and bitter withinne.* “Many an apple’s shiny without and bitter within.” For this proverb, see Whiting A155.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- 200 *Schene under schete*. “Beautiful under sheet,” an alliterative euphemism for “sexually attractive.” See *MED*, *shete* (n.(2)), sense 1c, where this line (but not the idiom) is cited.
- 201–02 *So is mony gedelyng godlyche on horse, / And is theyh lutel wurth*. “So is many a soldier handsome on a horse, / And yet worth little.” For this proverb, see Whiting G3.
- 211 *mod*. “anger, wrath.” See *MED*, *mod* (n.), sense 7a, where this line is cited.
- 213 *lude and stille*. “under all circumstances, at any time,” literally “loud and quiet, openly and secretly.” See *MED*, *stille* (adv.), sense 4b.
- 214 *vordrye*. “advance, promote.” See *MED*, *furtheren* (v.), sense 2c, citing this line.
- 217–20 *Salomon hit haveth ised . . . hine to seorewe*. Of this saying, Hall notes: “Not said by Solomon, but by Syrus: ‘Malo in consilio feminae vincunt viros’” (With bad advice women conquer men) (2:304n231; translation mine). Publilius Syrus (85–43 BCE) was a Latin writer known for his *sententiae* (wise sayings). Famed for his wisdom, King Solomon is the putative author of the biblical book Proverbs; other ascriptions to Solomon occur at line 274, below (see note), and in *Death’s Wither-Clench* (art. 7), lines 21–26. Elsewhere in Jesus 29, Solomon is named for his building of the temple; see *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 245, and *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 57.
- 221 *in the loth*. “in the land, among the people, everywhere.” See *MED*, *led(e)* (n.(2)), sense 2a. An alternate definition is “song,” as given by Morris (line 333), Hall (line 234), and Treharne (line 334). See *MED*, *leth* (n.(3)), sense 1a, and *leden* (n.), sense 2b, noting the other noun’s influence. The Jesus 29 spelling *loth* seems an error for *leoth*. Compare *lede* in Maidstone, *led* in Cotton Galba (South, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, p. 121), and *MED*, *forten* (v.), sense 1b, which suggests the better spelling.
- 222 *As ‘cuenes forteoth.*’ “That ‘women deceive.’” The line is one of several added to this section by the Jesus scribe. For *cuenes*, he writes *scumes*, an apparent error. Hall suggests it should be *cwen us* (3:304–5n235), and Treharne emends to *cuenes* (p. 452, line 335), as adopted here. For the verb, see *MED*, *forten* (v.), sense 1b, “deceive, lead astray,” where this line is cited.
- 224 *cold red is quene red*. “cold counsel is woman’s counsel.” Proverbial (see Whiting W505). Compare Chaucer’s Nun’s Priest’s Tale — “Wommennes conseils been ful ofte colde” (*CT* VII[B<sup>2</sup>]3256) — and also Melibee (*CT* VII[B<sup>2</sup>]1096) and the *Legend of Good Women*, line 762. See *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 940n3256.
- 229 *icovere*. “win” See *MED*, *icoveren* (v.), where this line is the only instance cited.
- 240 *forcuth*. “wicked, base, infamous.” See *MED*, *forcouth* (adj.), sense 1a, which cites this line.
- 241 *bikache*. “trick, deceive, elude.” See *MED*, *bicacchen* (v.), sense 1b, where this line is cited.
- 244 *hiselthe*. “piety.” See *MED*, *iselthe* (n.), sense 1c, where this line is cited.

- 247 *hokede honde*. “hooked hands,” that is, grasping, greedy hands, likened to a clawed vulture or demon. Hall notes that, in criminal slang, a “hook” is a pickpocket (2:306n259).
- 254 *At chepyng and at chyreche*. Compare *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16), line 33: “At chireche and at chepyng, hwanne heo togadere come.”
- 263 *mixe*. “filth, dung.” On this strong word, see *An Orison to Our Lord* (art. 25), line 35 (note); and *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 636 (note).
- 274 *For so seyde Salomon the wise*. The reference may be to Proverbs 23:17–18: “Let not thy heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long: Because thou shalt have hope in the latter end, and thy expectation shall not be taken away.” See Hall, 2:307n288. Solomon is also cited for his wisdom in lines 217–18 (on women’s cold counsel), and in *Death’s With-er-Clench* (art. 7), lines 21–26. Elsewhere in Jesus 29, Solomon is named for his building of the temple; see *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), line 245, and *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 57.
- 280 *Ne gabbe thu ne schotte*. “Don’t scoff or yell.” See *MED*, *gabben* (v.), sense 2a, and *shouten* (v.), sense 1a. The spelling *schotte* is difficult. It does not appear in the other manuscripts (South, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, p. 121n446–47). Morris (line 411) suggests that it is an error for *scholde*, but the *MED* suggests *shouten* instead (see *shotten* (v.), sense 1b). Compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 291: “me ne chide with the gidie” (one shouldn’t quarrel with fools); and Whiting O59.
- 289 *biluken*. “express.” See *MED*, *bilouken* (v.), sense 3, where this line is cited.
- 290 *And sottes bolt is sone iscohte*. A common proverb (see Whiting F408). Compare the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 94–95: “Sottes bolt / Is sone shote” (A fool’s bolt / Is soon shot) (*CHMS*, 3:224–25).
- 294–95 *For ofte tunge . . . nabbe non*. For this widespread proverb, first recorded here, see Whiting T384; and compare the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 159–60: “Tonge breketh bon / Ant nad hireselve non” (Tongue breaks bone / Though itself has none) (*CHMS*, 3:228–29).
- 297–98 *Wis child is / Fader blisse*. “Wise child is / Father’s bliss.” For this proverb, see Whiting C228.
- 300 *ler him mon thewes*. “teach him good habits.” For *mon thewes*, “customs of men, proper human behavior,” see *MED*, *man* (n.), sense 12a. One of the *Ten Abuses* (art. 15) cited by Bede is “Child unthewed” (Child untaught; line 9).
- 303 *Ever buven eorthe*. “Of any seen on earth.” The line is an abbreviated idiom: “as ever yet seen above earth.” See *MED*, *above(n)* (prep.), sense 1c(b).
- 304 *wexende*. The emendation of *werende* to *wexende* is required for sense. Hall suggests *wuniende*, “dwelling” (2:308n316). This line is part of an amplifying insertion by the Jesus scribe (South, ed., *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied*, p. 112n231).

- 315        *For betere is child unbore thane unbuhsun.* “For better is an unborn child than a disobedient one.” For this proverb, see Whiting C200.
- 316–18    *The mon the spareth yeorde . . . sore reowe.* Compare Whiting Y1; and the Harley 2253 *Hending*, lines 40–41: “Luef child / Lore byhoveth” (Precious child / Needs instruction); and lines 49–50: “Whose yong lerneth, / Olt he ne leseth” (What one learns in youth, / He does not lose in old age) (*CHMS*, 3:222–23).
- 317        *And let hit arixlye.* “And allows it to have its own way.” The verb is attested only here; see *MED*, *arixlien* (v.), “to dominate, have one’s way.”

## 25. AN ORISON TO OUR LORD

*An Orison to Our Lord* is a powerful meditational prayer-poem deeply set in traditions of affective piety felt for the incarnate, humanized Jesus. It asks a reader to identify corporeally with Jesus from his conception and birth — when “his goddede wes ihud in fleys” (line 6) — to his sweet vulnerability as a humble, submissive child. The nature of such an appeal breeds instinctive, protective affection for what is small and innocent. Then begins a sensate, increasingly brutal depiction of the Passion, which climaxes at the poem’s center, where horrific images of torture give way to a surreal subtext of sovereignty because the Crucifixion marks the moment of incarnate God’s transcendent victory. Ultimately, the speaker affirms that his faith has been deepened by this intense meditation upon Jesus as an example of supreme forbearance and patience, which he must try to match by firm belief (lines 57–58).

Composed in thirty-two couplets of irregular length, the poem has seven stanzas as indicated by colored capitals at the beginning of each. Anaphoric greetings to God unite the stanzas. Their usual form is “Jhesu, ich the grete,” causing the orison to become a salutation that hails Jesus in each stanza. *Orison*’s devotionalism resides empathetically in the petitioner’s sensate body. He is to imagine God in the flesh with his own flesh, meditating upon Jesus being born, raised, and then tortured. The prayer requests both bodily wellness and protection from God: “Of seorewe and sunne wite us myd isunde” (Keep us bodily whole against sorrow and sin; line 48). For further commentary on the fine craftsmanship of *An Orison to Our Lord*, see Fein-Children, pp. 222–23.

[Fols. 192r–193r. *NIMEV* 1948. *DIMEV* 3190. **Quire:** 5. **Meter:** 64 lines, rhyming in couplets, *aa*<sub>4,7</sub>, in stanzas of irregular length. **Layout:** Lines of irregular length, with medial and end punctuation (some looking like septenaries). A few times, two lines are copied continuously. Colored initials divide the lines into stanzas of irregular length: 8, 10, or 12 lines long. Because long lines are few, the caesureas are not indicated by spacing in this edition. **Editions:** Morris, pp. 139–41; Fein-Children, pp. 213–15, 222–23. **Other MSS:** None. **Seventeenth-century transcription:** Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 120, pp. 601–17, by Welsh antiquary Edward Lluyd, Assistant Keeper (1683–1689) and Keeper (1691–1709) of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Hill-History, p. 203n1; and Hill-Part2, p. 276).]

- 4            *mayde.* This word refers to Mary’s physical condition as a virgin.
- 17        *Buhsun and poure thu were, iwis.* Jesus is depicted as a vulnerable child, eliciting a reader’s empathy and affective piety. On Jesus’s humility, compare *A Homily on Sooth Love* (art. 26), note to line 6. A stress upon Mary and Christ’s common humanity is a mark of Franciscan

piety, one notably present in Thomas of Hales's Latin life of Mary (Horrall, ed., *The Lyf of Oure Lady*, p. 11); see also D'Angelo, "English Franciscan Poetry," p. 224.

- 18 *Forbysne*. "example." See *MED*, *fore-bisne* (n.), sense 1a, "an example of conduct to be imitated, a model or pattern," derived from OE *forebysen*. The *Orison* poet stresses how Jesus is to be an example for one's own Christian conduct, particularly forbearance when faced with adversity. The word is repeated at line 24.
- 24 *vorbysne*. See note to line 18, above.
- 32–33 *Bispat thu were, and al myd wowe; / Mid on red mantel thu were byweved*. "You were spat upon, surrounded in misery; / In a red mantle you were clothed." The center of the poem pivots from extreme degradation and humiliation (Jesus spat upon) to an extreme revisualizing of the sacred moment: Jesus's blood perceived spiritually as a royal mantle. The *crune of thornes* in line 34 also participates in the figuration of God's central sovereignty.
- 35 *mixes*. "vile persons, scum." The primary meaning of the word is "filth," even "dung, excrement," so its use is meant to be powerful, even shocking, like the expletive "shit." See *MED*, *mix* (n.), senses 1a and 1b (where this line is cited). See also *The Proverbs of Alfred* (art. 24), line 263; and *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 636 (note).
- 42 *sullych*. "horrifically." See *MED*, *seli* (adv.), sense 1b, "severely, vigorously, quickly," where this line is cited, but the adverb also means "wondrously" and could be used as an intensifier, "to an extreme."
- 45 *cold iren*. The meditation calls for one to sense a cold, inanimate metal point piercing God's perfect living flesh, that is, to feel it as if it were happening to one's own flesh.
- 51 *tholeburnesse*. A scribal error here loses the rhyme but not the sense. The MS reads "poleburne, and parto don bothe mayn and myht." In error, the scribe recopied the last portion of line 50 (in this edition, it is omitted). Moreover, "poleburne" should read "tholeburnesse"; on this error, see *MED*, *thole-burdnesse* (n.), "patience, submissiveness."
- 57–58 *Jhesu, ich the grete so wysslych / As thu deth tholedest myldelich*. "Jesus, I greet you as certainly as you suffered death mildly." These lines sum up the speaker's felt-in-the-flesh logic: Because I have attempted to understand and affectively feel the level of suffering that you, Jesus, endured for me, which you did with a beyond-human, wondrous amount of mild, patient forbearance, then my own faith is now girded and sustained to the same degree. The meditational exercise of *Orison*, grounded in the speaker's own bodily sensations, is designed to actively strengthen belief in and devotion to God.

## 26. A HOMILY ON SOOTH LOVE

This work is a verse homily on the necessity of repentance and confession before death and Doomsday arrive — the terror-inducing theme found in much poetry in Jesus 29. The lesson comes tempered and

sweetened, however, with another theological tiding: God's abundant love. The opening line affirms the message: "Theo sothe love among us beo wythuten each endynge" (True love is among us without any limit). If we are virtuous, worshipful, and serviceable, the preacher says, then we need not be frightened — we will shine brightly in paradise! The poet preaches submissive meekness, using Christ as the example, in a way that echoes the preceding poem, *An Orison to Our Lord* (art. 25). It might well be that the prayer-poem stands as introit to this homily.

The homily's first half rehearses the usual gloomy lessons of inevitable death and final judgment. The middle stanza (lines 29–32) models the confession demanded of listeners: they need to cry for mercy and acknowledge their foul sins. The second half stresses God's love: he desires souls to be drawn to heaven; he wants them to discover joy and bliss and see Christ's face (line 33–36). There then follows a description of the "riche wunynge" (rich dwelling; line 45) of paradise, and how it is *we* who must have and show true love so that we can obtain this reward. The poem closes with Pauline definitions of love (from 1 Corinthians), and a prayer that God show his love by freeing the prayerful from bondage and taking them to heaven.

*A Homily on Sooth Love* is composed in the same meter (long lines with internal rhymes) as *Will and Wit* (from Cotton), *The Five Joys of Our Lady Saint Mary*, Thomas of Hales's *Love Rune*, and *Fire and Ice* (arts. 9, 11, 19, 21). It is conceivably another English poem written by Thomas, but one cannot determine authorship with any degree of certainty. The balanced style and love-centered content are compatible with *Love Rune*, yet *Homily* is undeniably a slighter work. As with the other lyrics in this meter, Morris sets *Homily* in 8-line stanzas despite the fact that the scribe lays it out in long lines. He names it *The Duty of Christians*, but the title provided here reflects the comforting message offered in the first line: "sothe luvē." In *Love Rune*, the layout is a critical element of its numerological structure, which the scribe maintains. The layout in long lines is therefore preserved for *A Homily on Sooth Love* as well.

[Fols. 193r–194r. NIMEV 3474. DIMEV 5479. **Quire**: 5. **Meter**: 60 septenary lines with internal rhymes, *aaaa*<sub>7</sub> (or *(ab)(ab)(ab)(ab)*<sub>7</sub>), in fifteen 4-line stanzas. **Layout**: Long lines with strong caesuras and medial and end punctuation. A colored initial opens each 4-line stanza. The item begins with a Latin incipit in red, written on two lines. **Edition**: Morris, pp. 141–44. **Other MSS**: None. **Translation**: Adamson, trans., *A Treasury of Middle English Verse*, pp. 8–11. **Seventeenth-century transcription**: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 120, pp. 601–17, by Welsh antiquary Edward Llyud, Assistant Keeper (1683–1689) and Keeper (1691–1709) of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Hill-History, p. 203n1; and Hill-Part2, p. 276).]

- 1 *euch*. "any." See *MED*, *ech* (pron.), sense 1c.
- 4 *twyelingē*. "deceiving, duplicity." See *MED*, *twielinge* (n.), where this line provides the only record of the word.
- 6 *swithe edmod*. "very humble." On Jesus depicted as a humble man, compare *An Orison to Our Lord* (art. 25), line 17 ("Buhsum and poure thu were, iwis"); and see *MED*, *ed-mod* (adj.), sense 1a, "humble, free from pride; meek, submissive"; and *edmodlich* (adj.), "humble, submissive to God's will." The word and its forms appear in the Jesus lyrics only in this poem (see lines 27, 42). The idea that Jesus accepts the Passion passively, without resistance, is also argued in *On Serving Christ* (art. 18).

- 24        *eche lyve*. “eternal life,” denoting the final fate of each soul assigned by Christ on Doomsday, that is, heaven, hell, or purgatory. Compare *On Serving Christ* (art. 18), lines 25–28 (note), which states that there are three options for the afterlife. In any of them, the soul will eternally endure its final fate, good or bad.
- 25        *that ilche bod*. “that very rule,” that is, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mark 12:31). Compare *Poema Morale* (art. 3), line 304.
- 27        *edmod*. “submissive.” See note to line 6, above.
- 42        *edmodnesse*. “humility.” See note to line 6, above.
- 53–58     *The sothe luve . . . ay atsonde*. The definitions of love given here borrow from a well-known biblical passage: “Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; Is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed” (1 Corinthians 13:4–8).
- 60        *his ryht honde*. On Doomsday, those who are to be saved, that is, sent to heaven, are traditionally visualized as gathered on the right side of Christ, while those who are doomed to hell are gathered beside him on the left.

## 27. THE SHIRES AND HUNDREDS OF ENGLAND

This item is the only English prose text in Jesus 29. Dated 1086–1133, *The Shires and Hundreds of England* appears to be the oldest item in Jesus 29 (Hill-History, pp. 206–07; Hill-Part2, p. 274n45). Like the short Latin prose bit that follows it in the manuscript, *Assisa panis Anglie* (a legal statute on the pricing of bread), *Shires* seems included for general reference. First, it enumerates the thirty-two shires and fifteen bishoprics of England, providing a history of how several bishoprics were founded. Then it enumerates the shires beyond the fourteenth-century borders of “England”: Northumberland, Lothian, Westmorland, Cumberland, and Cornwall.

Next the author names the three jurisdictional laws — West Saxon law, Danelaw, and Mercian law — and itemizes the shires that fall under each. For some counties (and *all* the Mercian ones, which would be regional for the scribe), quantities of hides are specified. A hide is a variable measurement of land. Originally, the term denoted the amount required to support a family and its dependents (*MED*, *hide* (n.(2), sense 1)). A hundred hides constitute a “hundred,” that is, an administrative division of a county that maintained its own court system (*MED*, *hundred* (n.), sense 1), which would also reflect regional structures for taxation. *The Shires and Hundreds of England* thus profiles England as a nation with borders and with episcopal, legal, and economic jurisdictions. As the last item in the sequence of English poetry, it grounds the verse of Jesus 29 in an idea of Englishness that is both linguistic and geographical.

Little commentary on *Shires* exists, but see Cannon, *The Grounds of English Literature*, pp. 53, 68–70, who compares it to maps and to *Brut* (found in Cotton); and Cartlidge-Composition, p. 259, who notes how it is “at odds with the literary character” of Jesus 29. It is worth noticing, however, that *Shires*’s practical,

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taxonomic interest in legal domains shares a topical interest (the law in general) with the quasi-legal wranglings in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2).

[Fols. 194r–195r. Zacher, *MWME*, 7:2238, 2451 [1]. **Quire:** 5. **Meter:** Prose. **Layout:** Punctuated prose. The text opens with a large, ornate, colored *E* on *Englelond*. The second paragraph opens with a large colored *S* on *Swo*. **Editions:** Morris, pp. 145–46; Kluge, pp. 19–20. **Other MSS:** None.]

### PARAGRAPH 1

*Katenes*. Caithness, Scotland.

*Dewyes-steowe*. This place-name refers to Deastow, today called Berwick-upon-Tweed. Its Gaelic name is *Bearaig a Deas*. Berwick-upon-Tweed is England's northernmost town, located at the mouth of the River Tweed on the east coast.

*syndon*. “(there) are, (there) exist.” This word is one of several third-person plural forms of the verb *ben*; see *MED*, *ben* (v.).

*stol*. “episcopal stool, bishopric.” See *MED*, *stol* (n.), sense 1b, “an episcopal chair; also, an episcopal see or residence.”

*Eadward King*. Saint Edward the Confessor was one of the last Anglo-Saxon kings of England (1042–1088). He appointed his chaplain Heremon as bishop of Ramsbury in 1045.

*Heremon Biscop*. Heremon (or Herman) was bishop of Ramsbury and Sherborne before and after the Norman Conquest. He oversaw the unification and establishment of the episcopate at Salisbury in 1075. He was bishop of Salisbury from 1075 until his death in 1078.

*Bridyport*. The place named here should be Crediton, not Bridport, located in Dorset well to the east of Crediton and Exeter.

*Leofrych Biscop*. Under King Edward the Confessor, Leofric was appointed bishop of Cornwall and Crediton, which were eventually combined and relocated to Exeter, where he was bishop from 1050 until 1072. A bibliophile, he was the donor of the Exeter Book to Exeter Cathedral.

*on Willames daye the yonger kynges*. “In the time of William the Younger,” referring to the reign of William Rufus, 1087–1100 (King William II), who was the son of William the Conqueror, first Norman king of England (1066–1087).

*Johan*. King John, who reigned over England from 1199 to 1216.

*other half thes wateres*. “across the river.” Or perhaps, the phrase means “across the sea, ?Norway.” The historical jurisdictions of the medieval York episcopate are complex. According to Edwin Burton’s “Ancient See of York” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*: “Till the Danish invasion the archbishops of Canterbury occasionally exercised authority, and it was not till the Nor-

man Conquest that the archbishops of York asserted their complete independence. At that time they had jurisdiction over Worcester, Lindsey, and Lincoln, as well as the dioceses in the Northern Isles and Scotland. But the first three sees just mentioned were taken from York in 1072. In 1154 the sees of Man and Orkney were transferred to the Norwegian Archbishop of Drontheim, and in 1188 all the Scottish dioceses except Whithern were released from subjection to York, so that Whithern, Durham, and Carlisle remained to the archbishops as suffragan sees.”

## PARAGRAPH 2

*Lothen.* “Lothian,” a region of southeast Scotland, which includes the city of Edinburgh.

*Brutlaund.* “Britain,” that is, probably Wales as opposed to “England.”

*hundred hida.* “hundred hides” or “hundreds.” A “hundred” is an area that operates its own jurisdictional court system and administration. See *MED*, *hundred* (n.), sense 1, and *hide* (n.(2)), sense 1.

*xxvi. thusend hida and on half hundred.* “twenty-six thousand and a half hundred hides.” The sum of the regional hides listed in this paragraph matches the total given (26,050 hides).

## 28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

*The Eleven Pains of Hell* is the only trilingual item in Jesus 29. It is mainly an English account of the different, gradated pains of hell as recounted by a newly (and inexplicably) resurrected dead sinner who speaks to the Devil — as if *he* were not already the expert! — of what he saw and experienced in hell. The opening and closing lines form a framework in French, making *Eleven Pains* seem to address a French-speaking audience being treated to the novelty of English. It starts off like a debate, or wonder, that will be narrated in French with the combatants (Satan and the dead sinner) conversing in English. But French narration and any sense of debate evaporate when the soul’s account carries on for nearly three hundred lines. The description concludes in English, after the eleventh pain, with a sizeable stint of moralizing (lines 261–80), and then a French explicit: “Ke ces .xi. peynes escryvera; / Bon aventure ly avendra” (Here are written the eleven pains; / Have good fortune by it). It can hardly be said that a French narrator has returned, but the explicit does seem to encase the English poem in French.

But that is not the end of it, for in the Jesus 29 version there is an eight-line English epilogue *after* the French explicit, which asks the reader to pray for Hugh or Hugo (*Hug’*), evidently the scribe of Jesus 29 or an earlier copy. *Hug’* then closes the whole poem with a Latin explicit: “Expliciunt .xj. pene inferni quas vidit beatus Paulus” (Here end the eleven pains of hell that Saint Paul saw). In content but not language, this second explicit matches the French incipit: “Ici comencent les unze peynes de enfern les queus Seynt Pool vist” (Here begin the eleven pains of hell that Saint Paul saw). The vernacularity of *Eleven Pains* seems, therefore, to have a strange level of embeddedness, English within French within Latin, as it was appropriated by different settings that prioritized different languages. A later copy of *Eleven Pains* found in Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86 shares the French/English opening, but not the French/English/Latin close.

As the French incipit and Latin explicit indicate, the poem is a variation of the Vision of Saint Paul, a very popular legend that circulated in many languages. In that tradition, the non-sinner Saint Paul receives

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an eyewitness tour of hell led by Archangel Michael — a circumstance that makes more sense than an account given to Satan by a dead sinner. Robust English specimens of the tradition survive in the Vernon manuscript (Oxford, BodL, MS Eng. poet. A.1) and the Audelay manuscript (Oxford, BodL, MS Douce 302). For the text of Audelay’s poem (ca. 1426) and comment on both works, see Audelay, *Poems and Carols*, ed. Fein, pp. 117–26, 269–73. As far apart as they are in time, several correspondences between *Eleven Pains* and Audelay’s *Vision of Saint Paul* are detectible: in both, the first four pains are burning trees, a hot furnace, a torturous wheel, and a foul river.

A favorite device of the *Eleven Pains* author is to express the incalculable extent of the pains through simile. In describing different circles, the dead sinner claims that the suffering souls number more than bees in a hive, or fish in the sea, or birds in the sky, or snowflakes in winter, or leaves on a tree. In one passage found in Digby 86 but not in Jesus 29, the sinners number more than the drops of wine in France! (See note to lines 219–32.) This particular rhetorical habit does not surface in any other Jesus 29 text. While it doubtless owes something to Latin models, its absence everywhere in the other poems of Jesus 29 suggests that *Eleven Pains* does not share authorship with other poems in the manuscript.

The following chart outlines the Eleven Pains as described in the Jesus/Digby poem. Line numbers are from the 290 lines of the Jesus poem and the 307 lines of the Digby poem.

	<b>Settings and tortures</b>	<b>Jesus 29</b>	<b>Digby 86</b>
Pain 1	Burning trees, hung with souls	33–40	33–40
Pain 2	Hot furnace, souls tossed in	41–66	41–62
Pain 3	Wheel of steel with burning spikes	67–74	63–116
Pain 4	River of tar at different depths	75–118	117–28
Pain 5	Deep swamp, especially for bad women	119–44	129–42
Pain 6	Mutilation by fiends and vultures	145–62	143–62
Pain 7	Bloody, burning stream, hunger and thirst	163–74	163–73
Pain 8	Adders and snakes, disintegrating bones	175–218	174–217
Pain 9	Dungeon with hot pool, souls torn up	219–32	218–43
Pain 10	Pit with seven doors, and hellhounds	233–50	244–61
Pain 11	Iron-walled enclosure, sinners fettered	251–60	262–85

Divisions between Pains are indicated by large initials in both manuscripts. Mostly they agree, but there are slight boundary differences for Pains 1, 3–5, 8–9. Each Pain is typically described as coming “further on,” as if one has embarked on a walking tour (as Saint Paul did). The final three Pains seem to descend deeper and deeper into a narrowing pit. There are a few apparent correspondences with Dante’s *Inferno*; for example, the pit with adders and snakes is like *Inferno*’s *bolgia* for thieves in Cantos 24–25 (ed. and trans. Musa, 1.226–45). What accounts for these is the fact that Dante’s is the later work with inspirations borrowed from the well-disseminated *Vision of Sant Paul*.

In its manuscript context — the sequence of English poems in Jesus 29 — *The Eleven Pains of Hell* stands as the finale of sorts. The real finale for the English poetry is *A Homily on Sooth Love* (art. 26). After it, a few other works, in French verse or Latin prose, appear before *Eleven Pains*, the last English text. In subject matter, however, this text obviously caps the broad sequence (viewed whole) in its own type of moral and devotional logic; it over-delivers on the message about the afterlife, begun piously with Christ’s Resurrection in *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1). After that work, the pains of hell awaiting sinners haunts

the collection, appearing most prominently in *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 223–87, and the parade of hell-bound sinners in *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 91–174. *Eleven Pains* is the endpoint for that thread — a fulsome demonstration of where Adam’s willfully delinquent children (as witnessed in *A Little Sooth Sermon* (art. 16)) will ultimately land.

The Digby version of *Eleven Pains* may be viewed digitally at [https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_4426](https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4426).

[Fols. 198rb–200va. *NIMEV* 3828. *DIMEV* 6112. Foster, *MWME*, 2:452–53, 645–46 [320]. **Quire:** 5. **Meter:** 290 lines, rhyming in couplets, *aa*<sub>3-4</sub>, with some prefatory and closing lines in Anglo-Norman. **Layout:** Short lines written in two columns. Colored capitals (some enlarged) mark divisions of content (indicated in this edition by double spacing), except for three at the end. Lines 261, 282, 284 are not set off with colored initials; the separation of these lines is editorial, and based on shifts in content or language. **Edition from MS Jesus 29:** Morris, pp. 147–55. **One other MS:** Oxford, BodL, MS Digby 86, fols. 132r–134v (Horstmann, ed., “Nachträge zu den Legenden,” pp. 403–06).]

- 27            *wrothere helle*. “destruction, ruin, disaster, harm.” See *MED*, *wrother hele* (phr. & n.), sense 1a.
- 33–40        *Erest, ther beoth bernynde treon . . . in wynter stal*. Pain 1 is a place of burning trees with souls hung upon them; the souls number more than there are bees in hives. A large colored capital opens line 33 in Jesus 29, but not in Digby 86.
- 38            *won*. “woes,” a plural of *wo*. The form is not listed at *MED*, *wo* (n.), but see Morris, p. 305 (glossary, s.v. *Woh*).
- 40            *in wynter stal*. “in winter’s hive.” See *MED*, *winter* (n.), sense 3c, from OE *winter-steall*, “a dwelling (residence, hive, an enclosure, etc.) providing protection, shelter, comfort, etc. during the cold part of the year.”
- 41–66        *Seththen, ther is on ouen . . . never more*. Pain 2 features a huge hot furnace into which demons toss souls. The punished souls number more than all the fish in the sea or birds in the air. The setting also contains the terrors of snow, ice, blood, and snakes. On the hellish combination of extreme heat and extreme cold in hell, compare Pain 6, lines 149–50; and also *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 228–30, and *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 49. A large colored capital opens line 41 in both versions.
- 47            *lyvred blod*. “clotted blood.” See *MED*, *livered* (ppl. adj.), sense 1a.
- 48            *for wod*. “fiercely.” For the phrase, see *MED*, *wode* (n.(3)), sense 2b, the only instance with this definition cited. The phrase usually denotes intensity, frenzy, panic, or madness.
- 56            *fleysse to gal*. “flesh too lascivious.” The definition of *gal* is drawn from the context and provided in Morris’s glossary (p. 256; s.v. *Gal* (adj.)), but the adjective is not cited in the *MED*. Compare *MED*, *gal(e)* (n.(1)), sense 1d, “joy, merriment” — a word occurring in *Love Rune* (art. 19), line 63 (note); and see also the comic coinage *galegale* in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 256 (note).

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- 59            *wondrawen*. “state of misery, wretchedness.” See *MED*, *wandrawe* (n.), where this line is the only cited occurrence.
- 67–74        *A hwel of stele . . . in the snowe*. Pain 3 features a gigantic wheel of steel with burning hot spikes, upon which souls are torn. The souls here number more than every snowflake. A large colored capital opens line 67 (Digby line 63) in both versions.
- 72            *That her arereden unryhte lawe*. This line repeats line 60.
- 75–118      *Further, ther is a water . . . pyne ilesteth o*. Pain 4 features a stinking river of boiling black pitch, where demons strangle the souls. The sinners stand at different depths, according to their crimes. The backbiters are up to their knees; lechers are up to their necks; adulterers are up to their mouths; and so on. For the catalogue of sinners and the display of *contrapasso*, compare *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), lines 91–174 (note). A large colored capital opens line 75 in Jesus 29, but not in Digby 86 (line 73). Jesus Pains 3–4 are combined in the Digby version.
- 85            *Heo hire awarieth al athrep*. “They strangle them in flocks.” See *MED*, *awurien* (v.), where the only citations are this line and three occurrences in *Ancrene Wisse*; and *MED*, *a-þrep* (adv.), “as a horde or gang,” with this line being the only occurrence cited.
- 92            *al fornon*. “again and again.” See *MED*, *forn* (adv.), sense 1a, “henceforth, ahead (in time).”
- 103          *copynere*. “paramours, illicit lovers.” See *MED*, *copenere* (n.); and compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 1342.
- 119–44      *Vurthur, is a ful deop fen . . . tholieth thar such pyn*. Pain 5 features a deep swamp where there are women who transgressed sexually and their wooers, plus (a bit incongruously) usurers. Demons chew their tongues in two, and, for the usurers, they draw out their brains. Women who rejected their illegitimate babies are basted in pitch with adders sucking their breasts. And there are also hellhounds and snakes. A large colored capital opens line 119 (Digby line 117) in both versions.
- 131          *Thenne beoth the wymmen further idon*. This line marks the beginning of Digby Pain 5, headed with a large capital not found in the Jesus version.
- 141          *And furduden heore istreon*. “And destroyed their offspring.” See *MED*, *istreon* (n.), sense 1c. On the special punishment for women who kill unwanted infants, compare Audelay’s *Vision of Saint Paul*, lines 139–44 (Audelay, *Poems and Carols*, ed. Fein, p. 130).
- 145–62      *Vurther, ther beoth wimmen . . . myd such sol*. Pain 6 is a place for those who dispossessed the poor, where demons mutilate souls by splitting them in two and where vultures devour their stomachs. Half the sinners dwell in fire, and half dwell in a frozen marsh; compare note to lines 41–66, above. A large colored capital opens line 145 (Digby line 143) in both versions.

- 145 *Vurther, ther beoth wimmen and wapmen bo.* See *MED*, *wepman* (n.); the collocation *wepmen and wommen* is common. The reversal here advertises how Pain 6 afflicts many female souls.
- 162 *Forthi, hi drayeth myd such sol.* “For that, they are gutted so filthily.” For the verb *drayeth*, see *MED*, *drauen* (v.), sense 1a(g), the torture of being “drawn,” that is, dragged or gutted (compare *dreyeth*, line 146). For *sol*, see *MED*, *soile* (n.(1)), where the usages are later, but compare *soilen* (v.(1)), sense 1a, “to make (something) dirty, soil,” where instances include *Ancrene Wisse*. See also Morris, p. 289 (glossary, s.v. *Sol* = ?filth). The *MED* lists this line under *sol* (n.(4)), “rope,” but the resulting sense is unlikely. The stylistic similarity of this line to line 174 (the end of Pain 7) is notable.
- 163–74 *Vurther, ther is o wateres . . . myd such bal.* Pain 7 features a flaming bloody river, and the sinners there (commandment-breakers) are very hungry and thirsty. A large colored capital opens line 163 (Digby line 163) in both versions.
- 174 *Forthi, hi pleyeth myd such bal.* The similarity of this line to line 162 (the end of Pain 6) is stylistically notable. It is possible that the line also contains a sarcastic pun: “For that, they suffer such bale” and “For that, they play such ball (i.e., a baleful game).”
- 175–218 *Vurther, ther beoth olde men . . . hit moste iseon.* Pain 8 is a place filled with adders and snakes, where bones of sinners (the unshriven) fall apart and then rejoin. The poet interpolates here some moral comment: why didn’t these sinners know, understand, and take proper precautions when they were alive? Their neglect has put them in the same state as nonbelievers. A large colored capital opens line 175 (Digby line 174) in both versions.
- 189 *For heo nolden beon ischriuen.* “For they wouldn’t be shriven.” On the vital importance of confession for salvation, a preacherly imperative throughout the lyrics of Jesus 29, compare *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1), lines 547–52; and see the headnotes to *Poema Morale* and *A Homily on Sooth Love* (arts. 3, 26).
- 207–08 *Ac trichurs and lyeres, and les / That weren her — wo is ham thes!* “But these traitors and liars, who / Were false here — woe to them!” Compare *The Owl and the Nightingale* (art. 2), line 882: “That beoth her, wo is hom thes.”
- 219–32 *In helle is a deop gayhol . . . ever furlore.* The movement seems to head downward from this point on, and maybe all the Pains are to be visualized, as in Dante’s *Inferno*, as a downward progression. Pain 9 features a deep dungeon having a hot pool, where demons tear the souls (those who falsely judged Jesus) with sharp awls. A large colored capital opens line 219 in Jesus 29, but not its equivalent in Digby 86 (Digby line 230). Digby lines 212–29 are unique, and at Digby lines 222–23 the sinners are described as more plentiful than the drops of wine in France.
- 224 *atdareth.* This line is the only attested instance of this verb; see *MED*, *atdaren* (v.), “escape by hiding.”

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- 229–32 *An heyh tofore . . . beoth ever furlore.* The names of those in the deepest pit of hell, those who judged Jesus, will never again be uttered, and no saint dares to intercede for them. These lines express the medieval belief in saintly intercession, that is, the notion that holy Christians who led exemplary lives and were canonized as saints now have the posthumous power to respond to prayers directed to them by the living, and thus to petition efficaciously for God’s mercy on their behalf. The poet avers that the sufferers of Pain 9 have no redress in saintly aid, and these sinners — the ones who wickedly judged and condemned Jesus, as recounted in *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (art. 1) — will be forever lost and nameless.
- 233–50 *Vurther, ther his onother put . . . Cristes holy passyun.* Pain 10 features another hot pit, this one having seven doors and filled with hellhounds plus one lion, which seems to be the Devil (line 247). Here the sinners number more than leaves on a branch. No specific sin is named. A large colored capital opens line 233 (Digby line 244) in both versions.
- 251–60 *Therunder, is of iren a wal . . . Godes grome.* Pain 11, the deepest part of hell, features an iron-walled enclosure where sinners are restrained in hot iron fetters. They are named as those who were beheaded (perhaps as traitors), thieves, and excommunicants. A large colored capital opens line 251 (Digby line 262) in both versions. The speech of the revived sinner appears to end at line 260.
- 259 *mansed bi nome.* “excommunicated by name.” The Digby MS reads “acursed bi nome.” It is possible that “bi nome” should be read as the part participle *binome*; see *MED*, *binimen* (v.), senses 3a (“ruined”) and 4 (“seized, beset”).
- 260 *grome.* “anger, rage, hatred, hostility.” See *MED*, *gram(e)* (n.), sense 1a.
- 261 *Ich wile segge eu a soth.* This line does not open with a colored initial, but a transition is indicated by the narrator’s shift from Pain 11 to a concluding exhortation. There is also no transition here in the Digby version (Digby line 274).
- 265–70 *Theyh on hundred . . . a thusend mo!* This statement ends the poet’s inexpressibility topos (his enumerations by simile) with a full-scale hyperbole: even though a hundred men had stayed awake since the birth of Cain, using teeth and tongues of steel (so they would not wear out), speaking always of hell’s pains, still there would be more pains to tell! The hyperbole works somewhat against the premise of a poem about eleven pains precisely. However, concluding with a hyperbole like this is part of the tradition. Compare Audelay’s *Vision of Saint Paul*, lines 318–21: “And hunder men thagh ther were truly / Fro the bekynyng of world ay spekyng, / And uche a hundred tungis had, sothly, / Thai myght not tel the payns in hel duryng” (Even if there were truly a hundred men / From the beginning of the world always speaking, / And each had a hundred tongues, truly, / They might not express the pains being endured in hell) (Audelay, *Poems and Carols*, ed. Fein, p. 124; translation mine). This statement comes immediately after Paul asks Michael to tell him the number of pains, and Michael provides him with a biblical answer: 144,000 pains (Apocalypse 7:4). Compare also *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 143–44, 271–88; *The Saws of Saint Bede* (art. 4), line 38; and *Death* (art. 14), lines 29–30.

- 266 *Kaym*. Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve, hence, the first human conceived naturally. He slew his brother Abel and for that deed was cursed by God (Genesis 4:1–16).
- 274 *Ne helpþ heom wurth o slo*. “not worth a sloe (the fruit of a blackthorn tree),” that is, worthless. Compare *An Orison to Our Lady* (art. 8): “nys wurth a slo” (line 28, emended from MS Cotton Caligula A.ix).
- 275 *Ac bidde we Crist that is us buve*. The Digby version has a large initial at the beginning of this line (Digby line 286).
- 281–82 *Ki ces .xi. peynes . . . ly avendra*. This couplet, a seemingly original explicit, does not open with a colored initial, but a transition is indicated by the shift to French. French verses thus frame the poem (compare lines 1–6). The final lines are likely a scribal addition.
- 283–91 *Hwoso wrot these pynen ellevene . . . Amen*. This passage asks that the scribe (or poet), identified by name as “Hug,” be granted heaven, for he is virtuous (“curteys and hendy,” line 289). The four couplets and Latin explicit seem appended to an original French explicit (lines 281–82). They are not set off with a colored initial, and they do not appear in the Digby version, which closes with four unique lines: “For þilke þat beþ Iboureuē, Iwis / hoe wendeþ into paradis; / So wolle god þat we mote / hounder-fongen heueriche bote” (For those who are obedient, indeed / they enter into paradise; / So may God grant that we may / receive heavenly reward) (Horstmann, ed., “Nachträge zu den Legenden,” p. 405; translation mine). In Digby, what follows next (without break) is a fragment from the lyric *Swete Jesus*. Digby thus presents a different, scribe-composed ending — a soothing prayer after an account of hard pains; see Fein, “The Middle English Poetry of MS Digby 86,” p. 169. Compare the prayers for writers that appear at the end of *The Passion for Jesus Christ* (art. 1), lines 697–702, and *Poema Morale* (art. 3), lines 389–90; and see the discussion of this passage in the General Introduction, pp. 9–10.
- 290 *Thi*. “For that, therefore.” See Morris, p. 295 (glossary, s.v. *Þe*), and compare *Forthi*, line 162. The scribe inserts a punctus after this word.



## TEXTUAL NOTES

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### 1. THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ENGLISH

- incipit      *Ici cumence . . . prologus*. MS: Written in red ink on one line.
- 1              *Ihereth*. MS: Begins with blue capital *I*, two lines high, with red flourishes.
- 19             *ischop*. So Morris. MS: *iscohp*.
- 20a           *Her biginneth Cristes throwynge .i. sa Passyun*. MS: Written in red ink.
- 21             *Levedi*. MS: Begins with blue capital *L*, three lines high, with red flourishes.
- 22             *ycore*. MS, Morris: *ycóre*.
- 24             *neré*. MS, Morris: *nére*.
- 29             *fourty*. So Morris. MS *forurty*.
- 35             *Mid*. So Morris. MS: *M*.
- 42             *yvere*. MS, Morris: *yvére*.
- 71             *Godes*. MS, Morris: *Gódes*.
- 82             *abute*. So MS. Morris: *ab*.
- 84             *lyf-dawe*. MS, Morris: *lyf-daye*.
- 89             *ihere*. MS, Morris: *ihére*.
- 132           *ago*. MS, Morris: *ágo*.
- 232           *nom*. MS: originally written *monye* (illegible in my copy).
- 263           *o*. MS, Morris: *ó*.
- 264           *anon*. MS, Morris: *ánon*.

- 287 *Peter*. MS, Morris: *Péter*.
- 303 *vouse*. MS, Morris: *vóuse*.
- 308 *ileve*. MS, Morris: *iléve*.
- 326 *dawe*. MS, Morris: *daye*.
- 412 *do to*. So MS (*to do*, marked to reverse order), Morris.
- 459 *Gode*. MS, Morris: *góde*.
- 461 *Thes*. So Morris. MS: *Wes* (*p/b* confusion).
- 463 *Louerd*. So Morris. MS: *ouerd*. A space was left for a colored *L*, but it was not inserted.
- 464 *thi*. So MS (*i* written over *o*), Morris.
- 468 *Thar*. So MS (*Ɔat* with *t* corrected to *r*), Morris.
- 481 *myd*. So Morris. MS: *myst*.  
*stefne*. So MS (*t* inserted), Morris.
- 540 *Ne hi ne myhten hyne iseon, so hi weren ofdredde*. Line written at the base of folio, marked /: in the left margin for insertion two lines above.  
*ne<sub>2</sub>*. So MS (word inserted), Morris.
- 552a *Her is hwon Jhesu Crist aros from dethe to lyve*. MS: Written in red ink.
- 553 *Seoththe*. MS: Begins with blue capital *S*, two lines high, with red flourishes.
- 566 *ther*. So MS (*r* inserted), Morris.
- 605 *vet*. MS, Morris: *vét*.
- 687 *nomen*. MS, Morris: *nómen*.
- 701 *cume*. So MS (word inserted), Morris.
2. THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE (C)
- incipit *Incipit altercatio inter filomenam et bubonem*. MS: Written in red ink (and not found in C).
- 1 *Ich*. MS: Begins with blue capital *I*, nine lines high.

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- 6            *among*. So MS (*amng* with  $g_1$  corrected to *o*), Wells, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 10           *alre-wrste*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *alre-wurste*.
- 13           *The*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 19           *gladdur*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *gladder*. Hall: *gladdre*.
- 25           *Tho*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 29           *The*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 30           *bihold*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *biholdeþ*.
- 35           *wle*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *vule*.
- 41           *Theos*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 55           *The*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 57           *wit*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *yit* (*p/y* confusion). Hall: *wiþ*.  
*blete*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *bléte*.
- 74           *ne*. So MS, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *þan*.
- 75           *eyen*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *éyen*.
- 91           *and*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *& and*.
- 93           *brode*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *bróde*.
- 108          *Biheold*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Bihéold*.
- 139          *Theos*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 146          *iswolwe*. So MS (*s* inserted), Wells, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 148          *bysemar*. So MS, Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Hall: *bisemar*.
- 150          *bare*. So MS, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *þe bare*.
- 152          *brihtur*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Hall, Atkins: *brihter*.
- 162          *swikehede*. So MS, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *swikelhede*.
- 163          *swikedom*. So MS, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *swikeldom*.

- 165 *thu*<sub>2</sub>. So MS, Hall. Wells: *þin*. Atkins: omitted. Grattan-Sykes: *þn*.
- 167 *swikedom*. So MS, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *swikeldom*.  
*het*. So MS (a final letter may be cut off), Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *hete*.
- 177 *lete we*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *lete*.
- 187 *Tho*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 199 *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 202 *breme*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *bréme*.
- 203 *wre*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *were*.
- 205 *nuthe*. So MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *nu suþe*.
- 209 *Ne*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *N*.
- 210 *vor*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *for*.
- 215 *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 223 *Thu*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Þu*.
- 224 *ihere*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ihére*.
- 226 *ac that*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *at*.
- 229 *uych*. So MS, Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Hall: *vich*.
- 232 *Hit*. So MS (*t* smudged), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Hall: *hi*.
- 234 *imene*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *iméne*.
- 239 *And*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *An*.  
*wene*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wéne*.
- 253 *Theos*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 269 *strong*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Hall, Atkins: *stronge*.
- 272 *wunne*. So Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *ynne*. Wells: *wune*.
- 284 *chater*. So MS (word written above line for lack of space), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 288        *wende*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wénde*.
- 290        *ilome*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ilóme*.
- 301        *imene*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *iméne*.
- 303        *wrse*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurse*.
- 309        *Yet*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *þet* (*þ/y* confusion). Line begins with blue capital *þ*, two lines high.
- 312        *ihere*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ihére*.
- 321        *singe*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 329        *god*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *gód*.
- 358        *That*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þa*.
- 359        *of*. So MS, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *euer of*.
- 363        *Yet*. MS: Begins with red capital *Y*, two lines high.
- 364        *am*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *an*.
- 368        *gode*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *góde*.
- 371        *mwe*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *muwe*.
- 391        *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital *þ*, two lines high.
- 400        *wrthe*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþe*.
- 404        *That*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *hwat*.
- 406        *That*. So MS (*þat* with *t* inserted), Wells, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.  
*ne*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 407        *nart*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *art*.
- 411        *Hule*. So Hall, Atkins. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *þule*. Line begins with capital red *þ*, two lines high.
- 426        *Teres*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Téres*.

- 427 *he*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *þe* (*þ/h* confusion).
- 439 *wlite*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ylite* (*p/y* confusion).
- 458 *wyntres*. So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *wintres*.
- 467 *Theos*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 473 *Thu*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 474 *wynter*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *winter*.
- 477 *iknowe*. So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *iknou*.
- 478 *blissi*. So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *blisse*.
- throwe*. So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *þrou*.
- 499 *thet thu wilt teme*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þu wilt teme þet*.
- 505 *wrse*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *worse*.
- hey-sugge*. So MS (*gge* written above line for lack of space), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 513 *Vor*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Vo*.
- 518 *abrode*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *abróde*.
- 534 *Vor*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Vo*.
- 541 *inume*. So MS (in a later hand over erasure), Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *yet inome*. Atkins: *inome*.
- 543 *Nay<sub>1</sub>*. MS: Begins with blue capital *N*, two lines high.
- 546 *to*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *tó*.
- 548 *wrth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþ*.
- 549 *That*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 551 *iyive*. So Atkins. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *iyiue*.
- 554 *speke*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *spéke*.
- 572 *wrth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþ*.
- 573 *furwrthe*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *furwurþe*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 575 *furwrthe*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *furwurþe*.
- 584 *Thu nart*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Þnart*.
- 589 *tharto*<sub>2</sub>. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þart to*.  
*wunst*. So Atkins. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *wenst*.
- 592 *run-huse*. So MS (*n* abbreviated). Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes: *rum hus*.
- 594 *seotle*. So MS, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *þe*.
- 614 *other*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *oþe*.
- 620 *frost*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *hwanne hit*.
- 627 *nest*. Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 636 *mysketh*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *mysdeþ*.
- 642 *miht*. So Atkins. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *mist*.
- 648 *Ac*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *Ac hwat*.
- 649 *We*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þe* (*p/þ* confusion).
- 651 *iyende*. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *iwende*. Atkins: *ihende* (*p/ɜ* confusion).
- 652 *run-hus*. So MS (*n* abbreviated). Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes: *rum hus*.
- 659 *The*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 667 *strong*. So MS, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *swiþe strong*.
- 670 *winne*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þinne* (*p/þ* confusion).
- 679 *hyet*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þ hyet*.
- 682 *a wene*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *á wene*.
- 689 *wit west*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *yit yest* (*p/y* confusion).
- 696 *Ne vynt*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Nvynt*.
- 701 *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.  
*hire howe*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *hit*.

- 703      *towehte*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *towe* (with *hte* added in later hand).
- 707      *Ule*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: . . . *le*.
- 708      *If*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: . . . *f*.
- 709      *sumeretyde*. MS, Wells, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes: *sumetyde*.
- 714      *that*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *þat evre*.
- 721      *Holy*. So MS, Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Hall: *holi*.
- 722      *wrche*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wirche*.
- 726      *bigete*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *bi gethe*.
- 729      *canunes*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *canúnes*.
- 734      *Hwenne the liht of day springeth*. So C, Atkins. MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 746      *Rome*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *róme*.
- 748      *bles*. So MS (in a later hand), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. See Explanatory Note.
- 768      *knyhtes*. So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *knyhte*.
- 769      *wrth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþ*.
- 770      *wrth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþ*.  
*unwrth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *vnwurþ*.
- 782      *hit*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *h*.
- 785      *were*. So C, Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *yere* (*p/y/þ* confusion).
- 793      *wrs*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurs*.
- 799      *anne*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *onne*.
- 802      *other*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ope*.
- 805      *Thu*.<sub>1</sub> So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þe*.
- 812      *fox*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *for*.
- 824      *abak*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ábak*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 826 *creophth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *creoph*.
- 837 *Abid*<sub>1</sub>. MS: Begins with red capital A, two lines high.
- 842 *bisemed*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *bisemep*.  
*biliked*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *bilikep*.
- 846 *wrthe*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurpe*.
- 852 *wndre*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wundre*.
- 853 *thu*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 873 *pulte*. So MS (in a later hand), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 896 *wileth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *willep*.
- 897 *hevene*. So MS (*ne* written above line for lack of space), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 905 *onother*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *an oþer*.
- 906 *Thar*. So MS (*Dat* with *t* corrected to *r*), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 917 *ydel*. So Wells. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *yde*. Atkins: *an ydel*.
- 923 *north*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *nóρθ*.
- 925 *bere*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *bére*.
- 926 *forlere*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *forlete*.
- 932 *deovele*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *deoulene*.
- 933 *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital Þ, two lines high.
- 943 *lothe*. So MS (*lowpe* with *w* cancelled), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 945 *meynth*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *meyuþ*.
- 952 *avergan*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *ouergan*.
- 955 *Ule heo*. So C, Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þe vle*. Line begins with red capital Þ, two lines high.
- 981 *thar*. So MS, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *war*.

- 983 *nother*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *noþe*.
- 999 *este*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *éste*.
- 1000 *weste*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wéste*.
- 1019 *bet*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *be*.  
*stille*. So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *stylle*.
- 1025 *songe*. So Wells, Atkins. MS (last letter cut off), Grattan-Sykes: *song*.
- 1030 *ise*. So Atkins. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *ire*.
- 1043 *The*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 1051 *luve*. So Atkins. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *lyve*.
- 1052 *sunge*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *singe*.
- 1062 *were todrawe*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *todrawe*.
- 1067 *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 1075 *Hwat*. MS: Begins with red capital *H*, three lines high.
- 1080 *molde*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wolde*.
- 1092 *Jhesu*. So Grattan-Sykes. MS: *ihc*. Wells, Atkins: *Jesu*.
- 1099 *wrthsipe*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþsipe*.
- 1100 *wunne*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wunne*.
- 1113 *miht*. C: *mizt*. MS, Wells, Atkins, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *mist* (*s/z* confusion).
- 1156 *rune*. So Wells, Atkins. MS (last letter cut off), Grattan-Sykes: *run*.
- 1158 *wrth*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþ*.
- 1173 *wrthe*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþe*.
- 1175 *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 1177 *ihoded*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ihóded*.
- 1189 *witi*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þin*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 1190 *wot.* So Atkins. MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes: *wod* (first letter is *p* or *þ*).
- 1198 *wot.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wt.*
- 1205 *schipes.* So MS (*i* inserted), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 1208 *lore.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *lóre.*
- 1211 *ilome.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ilóme.*
- 1229 *fleo.* So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *flo.*
- 1234 *he me.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *me.*
- 1244 *Hwanne.* So C (*p* for *w*). MS, Wells, Atkins, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *þanne* (*þ/p* confusion).
- 1246 *thar-rihte.* So MS (*te* written above line for lack of space), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 1260 *harem.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *a tem.*
- 1271 *him beo.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *beo.*
- 1274 *thah.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þat.*
- 1277 *noht.* So MS (*t* inserted), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 1284 *the-solve.* So Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þe soule.* Wells: *þe seolue.*
- 1288 *wrþhsipe.* So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþsipe.*
- 1291 *The.* MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, three lines high.
- 1307 *thu.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 1308 *The wicchecraftē never ne lete.* C: *The wicchecraftē neaver ne lete.* MS, Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 1311 *ihoded.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *ihóded.*
- 1315 *child.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *chid.*
- 1321 *wrecche.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wrcche.*  
*storre.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *storie.*
- 1322 *bihaitest.* So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *behauēst.*

- 1330 *the*<sub>1</sub>. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þu*.
- 1341 *were*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wére*.
- 1358 *Ne may*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *Ne ne may*.
- 1369 *gode*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *góde*.
- 1370 *aqolde*. So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *aqolde*.
- 1374 *mysfonge*. So MS (*fonge* written above line for lack of space), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 1380 *atbroyde*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *abroyde*.
- 1381 *unvele*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *unvéle*.
- 1384 *hit is*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *his*.
- 1388 *lustes*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *lust*.
- 1400 *wlonkhede*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wrouehede*.
- 1402 *monne shonde*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *monnes honde*.
- 1405 *thur*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *þurh*.
- 1410 *fleyes*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *fleyses*.
- 1440 *misfonge*. So Wells, Atkins. MS (last letters cut off), Grattan-Sykes: *misfon*.
- 1441 *hit*<sub>2</sub>. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *his*.
- 1447 *the yunglinge*. So C, Wells, Atkins. MS: *e* (*me* with *m* canceled) *wunglinge*. Grattan-Sykes: *me wunglinge*.
- 1451 *lutle*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *lude*.
- 1454 *hote breth*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *heorte bred*.
- 1458 *lutle wile*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *lude wise*.
- 1459 *swike*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *sike*.
- 1460 *That*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *And*.
- iliche*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *ilike*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 1478 *no.* So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *ne*.
- 1481 *wrthful.* So MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *wurþful*.
- 1494 *buve.* So MS (inserted at left margin marked /. for insertion), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 1498 *a reu.* So C. MS: *at þeu*. Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes: *at þen*.
- 1511 *The.* MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 1548 *Thi.* So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *Forþi*.
- 1549 *luve.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 1556 *monne.* So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *manne*.
- 1566 *pine.* So C, Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *wiue*.
- 1586 *houth-sythe.* So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *houhsyþe*.
- 1602 *ho geth.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *howeþ*.
- 1607 *ic.* So MS (word inserted), Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 1610 *tobursteth and tobeteth.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *to burste & to bete*.
- 1619 *thah.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þhah*.
- 1633 *brod.* So C. MS, Wells, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes: *word*.
- 1635 *The.* MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 1638 *heo.* So MS, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *he*.
- wer.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þer* (*þ/p* confusion).
- 1640 *thu.* So MS (word inserted), Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. Wells: *þe*.
- 1641 *Thu<sub>1</sub>.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *þ*.
- 1653 *icwede.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 1662 *forthan.* So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *vor þan*.
- 1667 *Theos.* MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 1681 *bothe.* So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *beo þat*.

- 1685 *That*. So MS (*Pat* with *t* inserted), Wells, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes.
- 1699 *fihltlak*. So MS, Wells, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: *fihltlac*.
- 1705 *non*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *nón*.  
*so*. So MS, Wells, Atkins. Grattan-Sykes: *o*.
- 1711 *The*. MS: Begins with blue capital *P*, two lines high. The error was in the exemplar shared with C for it appears in both copies. See Explanatory Note.
- 1717 *The*. MS: Line does not begin with a colored or enlarged capital. The error was in the exemplar shared with C for it appears in both copies. See Explanatory Note to line 1711.
- 1720 *theih*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 1731 *kinge*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: omitted.
- 1734 *ye*. So C. MS, Wells, Atkins, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *we* (*y/p* confusion).
- 1739 *Ich*. MS: Begins with red capital *I*, one line high.
- 1741 *for*. So MS, Wells, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Atkins: omitted.
- 1743 *ende*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *ende me*.
- 1747 *us*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *eu*.
- 1749 *war*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins. MS, Grattan-Sykes: *par* (*p/p* confusion).
- 1751 *Nuhte ye*. So Wells. MS: *mihte yet* (*lyet* with *l* canceled). Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *mihte yet*. Atkins: *nute ye*.
- 1754 *see*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *sée*.
- 1765 *ilome*. So Wells, Hall, Atkins, Grattan-Sykes. MS: *ilóme*.
- 1769 *Certes*. MS: Begins with red capital *C*, one line high.
- 1780 *thar*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *pat*.
- 1781 *Do*. MS: Begins with blue capital *D*, one line high.
- 1783 *deme*. So Wells, Atkins. MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes: *dome*.
- 1791 *hi*. So MS, Hall, Grattan-Sykes. Wells, Atkins: *heo*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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explicit     *Explicit*. MS: Written in black ink (and not found in C).

### 3. POEMA MORALE

incipit     *Tractatus quidam in anglico*. MS: Written in red ink.

1            *Ich*. MS: Begins with red capital *I*, one line high.

7            *Mest*. MS: Begins with red capital *M*, two lines high.

11          *lome*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *lóme*.

20          *god*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *gód*.

34          *Wis*. So Morris, Morris-*Specimens*. MS: *þis* (*p/p* confusion).

42–43      *Theos riche men . . . to heoveriche*. MS: lines written in reverse order and marked *.b.* and *.a.* in the left margin to correct the order.

48          *ilome*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *ilóme*.

51          *schirreve*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *schirréue*.

63          *eft*. So Morris, Morris-*Specimens*. MS: *ef*.

90          *ilome*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *ilóme*.

97          *Ther*. So Morris, Morris-*Specimens*. MS: *þe*.

105         *heo<sub>1</sub>*. So MS (word inserted), Morris, Morris-*Specimens*.

*biyete*. So MS (*biheyhte* with *heyhte* canceled and *yete* inserted in the right margin), Morris, Morris-*Specimens*.

122         *god*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *gód*.

125         *ilome*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *ilóme*.

134         *ibet*. MS, Morris, Morris-*Specimens*: *ibét*.

146         *thurh*. So MS, Morris (*wurþ?*). Morris-*Specimens*: *wurþ*.

*sovenyhtes*. So MS, Morris-*Specimens*. Morris: *sonenyhtes*.

217–18     *The that doth . . . bernynde glede*. MS: lines written in reverse order and marked *.b.* and *.a.* in the left margin to correct the order.

- 233 *imete*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *iméte*.
- 239 *werc*. So Morris, Morris-Specimens. MS: *were*.
- 241 *Ther is*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *Thet ich*. Morris-Specimens and Morris suggest the emendation.
- 244 *strem*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *strém*.
- 251 *ileven*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *iléuen*.
- 253 *leten*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *léten*.
- 254 *mete*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *méte*.
- 262 *holde*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *hólde*.
- 263 *leten*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *léten*.
- 268 *fordemde*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *fordémde*.
- 274 *hete*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *héte*.
- 289 *lawelese*. So Morris. MS, Morris-Specimens: *lawe leve* (altered by a later hand to *lawe lese*).
- 293 *anythe*. So MS, Morris. Morris-Specimens: *anyþer*.
- 296 *foryeuenesse*. So Morris, Morris-Specimens. MS *yeuenesse*.
- 320 *yonge*. So MS, Morris. Morris-Specimens: *yonger*.
- 323 *ilome*. MS, Morris, Morris-Specimens: *ilóme*.
- 329 *schenche*. So Morris, Morris-Specimens. MS: *senthe* (in a later hand).
- 330 *wole bithenche*. So Morris, Morris-Specimens. MS: *wole biyenthe* (in a later hand).
- 350 *thisse*. So MS (*þare* with *are* canceled, *isse* written above it), Morris, Morris-Specimens.
- 356 *eche*. So MS, Morris. Morris-Specimens: *and eche*.
- 364 *that wuneth hym abute*. So MS (*& reste bute swynke* canceled, correction written below the line), Morris, Morris-Specimens.
- 376 *bec*. So Morris, Morris-Specimens. MS: *bee*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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389 *we nu*. So MS (*nu we*, marked to reverse order), Morris, Morris-*Specimens*.

### 4. THE SAWS OF SAINT BEDE

1 *Theos*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high, with blue flourishes.

62 *come*. MS, Morris: *cóme*.

68 *scryft*. So Morris. MS: *scryf*.

*bete*. MS, Morris: *béte*.

98 *cuthlethe*. So MS (*cuplethe*, *h<sub>1</sub>* inserted), Morris.

129 *ivere*. MS, Morris: *ivére*.

142 *biyete*. MS, Morris: *biyéte*.

176 *neré*. MS, Morris: *nére*.

177 *wende*. MS, Morris: *wénde*.

178 *lere*. MS, Morris: *lére*.

280–82 Meter and sense indicate three lines are missing here, but there is no gap in the MS. Some colored initials are also misplaced, appearing at lines 286, 293, and not at lines 283, 295.

291 *dede*. MS, Morris: *déde*.

299 *wrecchen*. So Morris. MS: *wrcchen*.

307 *He*. So Morris. MS: *e* (colored capital not inserted).

342 *gome*. MS, Morris: *góme*.

343 *Ah*. MS: Lacks colored capital.

348 *ivere*. MS, Morris: *ivére*.

### 5. THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

incipit *Incipit de muliere Samaritana*. MS: Written in red ink.

1 *Tho*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, two lines high.

6 *neyleyhte*. So Morris, Zupitza. MS: *neylehyte*.

- 9            *bilevyngē*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *biléuyngē*.
- 13           *weri wei*. So MS, Morris. Zupitza: *wei weri*.
- 14           *ivere*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *ivére*.
- 15           *stene*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *sténe*.
- 21           *understode*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *vnderstóde*.
- 29           *adun*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *ádun*.
- 33           *were*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *wére*.
- 43           *Jherusaleme*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *iherusaléme*.
- 44           *iqueme*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *iquéme*.
- 51           *imone*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *imóne*.
- 61           *everuychone*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *euervychóne*.
- 67           *To*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *Tó*.
- 74           *bylevede*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *byléuede*.
- 77           *bylevede*. MS, Morris, Zupitza: *byléuede*.

## 6. WEAL

- 1            *Weole*. MS: Begins with red capital *W*, one line high. There is no visual division between the end of art. 5 and the start of art. 6.

## 7. DEATH'S WITHER-CLENCH (C)

- 1            *Mon*. MS: Begins with blue capital *M*, one line high. There is no visual division between the end of art. 6 and the start of art. 7.
- 1–2        *Mon may . . . the wrench*. MS: Written as a long line with medial punctuation.
- 3–4        *Feyr weder . . . his blench*. MS: Written as a long line with medial punctuation.
- 21         *Do*. MS: Lacks colored capital.

8. AN ORISON TO OUR LADY (C)

- 1            *On*. MS: Begins with red capital *O*, two lines high.
- 3            *ther-among*. So Morris. MS: *þer á mong*.
- 19–20      *Hwenne ich schal . . . thu myht*. MS: Written as a long line with medial punctuation.
- 22           *With seorhe and with sore*. So C, fol. 246v. MS: Line omitted.
- 23           *we*. So C, Morris. MS: word omitted.
- 28           *a slo*. So C. MS, Morris: *al so*.
- 29–30      *Ich bidde . . . evermo*. MS: Written as a long line with medial punctuation.
- 32–50      *Wel sore . . . Amen*. So C. MS: Lines lost due to a missing leaf.

9. WILL AND WIT (C)

- 1–4        *Hwenne-so . . . is totore*. So C, fol. 246v (copied as eight half-lines). MS: Poem lost due to a missing leaf.
- 1            *oferstieth*. So C, Morris, Brown, Dickins. Wright: *ofer-stiedh*.
- 2            *hieth*. So C, Morris, Brown, Dickins. Wright: *hiedh*.
- 3            *seorhe*. C, Wright, Morris, Brown, Dickins: *seorze*. The substitution of *h* for *ʒ* reflects the normal spelling found in MS.
- sieth*. So C, Morris, Brown, Dickins. Wright: *siedh*.
- 4            *wrieth*. So C, Morris, Brown, Dickins. Wright: *wriedh*.

10. THE ANNUNCIATION

- 1–7        *Of thine swete wordes . . . Amen*. MS: Opening lost due to a missing leaf. Morris, Saupe: Lines printed (erroneously) as the fragmentary ending to *Song of the Annunciation* (art. 20).
- 4            *Bidde*. MS: Begins with red capital *B*, one line high.

11. THE FIVE JOYS OF OUR LADY SAINT MARY

- incipit     *Her bigynneth the vif blyssen of ure Levedi Seynte Marie*. MS: Written in red ink.
- 1            *Levedy*. MS: Begins with red capital *L*, four lines high.

- 3           *sunnen*. So Morris, Patterson, Brown, Saupe. MS: *sunmen* (first *n* abbreviated).
- 7           *Ivo*. So Patterson, Brown, Saupe. MS, Morris: *ivó*.
- 9           *gled and blithe*. So MS (*blife and gled*, with words marked *.b.* and *.a.* to correct the order), Morris.
- 10          *aros*. So Patterson, Brown, Saupe. MS, Morris: *arós*.
- 28          *imene*. So Patterson, Brown, Saupe. MS, Morris: *iméne*.

## 12. WHEN HOLY CHURCH IS UNDER FOOT

- incipit     *Hwon Holy Chireche is under vote*. MS: Written in red ink.
- 1           *Hwile*. MS: Begins with red capital *H*, four lines high.
- 4           *that*. So Morris, Kaiser. MS: *þar* or *þat* (abbreviation mark is ambiguous).
- 7           *her*. So MS, Morris. Kaiser: *þer*.
- 12          *Cristendome*. So Kaiser. MS, Morris: *crisendóme*.
- 14          *ilome*. So Kaiser. MS, Morris: *ilóme*.
- 27          *Bispes*. So MS, Morris. Kaiser: *Biscopes*.

## 13. DOOMSDAY (C)

- incipit     *Incipit de die iudicii*. MS: Written in red ink.
- 1           *Hwenne*. MS: Begins with red capital *H*, four lines high.
- 9           *beme*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *béme*.
- 17          *spere*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *spére*.
- 20          *bere*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *bére*.
- 29          *ryhtwise*. So Morris. MS, Reichl: *ryhwise*.
- 30          *And the sunfule, so atelyche, stondeth*. MS: To the end of this line a later hand inserts: *on þe lufthonde*.
- 31          *muchel*. So Morris, Reichl. MS: *muches*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- schonde*. So MS (*d* inserted), Morris, Reichl.
- 35 *sete*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *séte*.
- 36 *grete*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *gréte*.
- 37 *yhere*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *yhére*.
- 40 *bere*. So Morris, Reichl. MS: *becen*. After this word a later hand writes: *molde here*.
14. DEATH (C)
- 1 *Ihereth*. MS: Begins with blue capital *I*, one line high. There is no visual division between the end of art. 13 and the start of art. 14.
- 11 *ilome*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *ilóme*.
- 16 *the*. So C, Morris. MS, Reichl: word omitted.
- 21 *agon*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *ágon*.
- 24 *non*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *nón*.
- 33 *Anon*. MS, Morris, Reichl: *Anón*.
- 65 *Selde*. So MS. C: *Yelde*, although the first letter is ambiguous; as Morris notes (pp. 176–77), the forms of capital *Y*, *ƿ* (thorn), and *ƿ* (wynn) can be indistinguishable in C.
- 70 *the*. So C, Morris. MS, Reichl: omitted.
- 121 *as bruthen led*. So C. MS: *as a*; a later hand inserts: *colput dup ant gret*. Morris, Reichl: *as a colput dup ant gret* (as deep and great as a coalpit (translation mine)).

## 15. TEN ABUSES (C)

- 1–14 *Hwan thu sixst . . . theode*. MS: Copied as prose on five lines.
- 1 *Hwan*. MS: Begins with red capital *H*, one line high.
- on*. So C, Morris. MS: *un*.

## 16. A LITTLE SOOTH SERMON (C)

- 1 *Herkneth*. MS: Begins with blue capital *H*, three lines high, with red flourishes.
- 17 *bakbytares*. So MS, Morris, Kaiser. Fein-Children: *bakbytare*.

- 23        *fulleth*. So MS, Morris, Kaiser. Fein-Children: *fullþ*.
- 24        *purse*. So MS (*wurse*, with *w* canceled and *p* inserted), Morris, Kaiser, Fein-Children.
- 33        *come*. So Kaiser, Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *cóme*.
- 36        *Everuych*. So MS (*er* abbreviated), Morris, Kaiser. Fein-Children: *Euerych*.
- 40        *For Wilekyn and Watekyn beoth in hire thouht*. So MS, Morris, Kaiser, Fein-Children. Line omitted in C.
- 45        *bete*. So Kaiser, Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *béte*.
- 46        *threte*. So Kaiser, Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *þréte*.
- 49        *oure*. So Kaiser, Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *óure*.

17. ANTIPHON OF SAINT THOMAS THE MARTYR IN ENGLISH

- incipit     *Incipit antiphona de sancto Thoma martyre in anglico*. MS: Written in red ink on three lines, to the right of lines 1–3.
- 1–10       *Haly Thomas . . . Euouae*. MS: Copied as prose on five lines, opening with red capital *H*, three lines high.

18. ON SERVING CHRIST

- 1        *Hwi*. MS: Begins with blue capital *H*, three lines high, with red flourishes.
- 15        *scheden*. So MS (*schenden*, with *n*<sub>1</sub> canceled), Morris.
- 23        *wedes*. So MS (in a later hand), Morris.
- 46        *derlike*. So Morris. MS: *Derlike* with *D* written over *k*.
- 55        *thouht*. So MS (in a later hand), Morris.
- 64        *holde*. MS: word omitted. Morris: *?wolde*.
- 69        *scarlat non*. So MS (in a later hand), Morris.
- 73        *non*. MS, Morris: *nón*.
- 74        *hire*. So Morris. MS: *hire* with *h* written over *þ*.

19. THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE RUNE

- incipit      *Incipit quidam cantus . . . puelle Deo dicatē.* MS: Written in red ink on two lines.
- 1            *A*<sub>1</sub>. MS: Begins with red capital *A*, two lines high, with blue flourishes.
- 3            *treowest.* So MS (with the first *t* interlined by a later hand), Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*.
- 10          *ro ne rest.* So MS (in a later hand), Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*.
- 13          *away.* So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *áway*.
- 18          *is*<sub>1</sub>. So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. Kaiser: *hit is*.
- 25          *sad.* So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson (suggest *sed* for rhyme), Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Fein-*MLSL*: *sed*.
- 28          *he*<sub>2</sub>. So MS, Morris, Dickins-Wilson, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. Brown, Kaiser: *ne*.
- 34          *and Dideyne, Tristram.* So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Fein-*MLSL*. MS: *& dideyne tristram* (the initial *d* of *dideyne* derives from elision with *and*). Morris, Dunn-Byrnes: *Amadas tristram and dideyne*.
- 35          *wordes.* So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Fein-*MLSL*. Dunn-Byrnes: *worldes*.
- 36          *schef.* So MS, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. Morris: *scheft*.
- 37          *nere.* So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *nére*.
- 38          *heren.* So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Fein-*MLSL*: *here*.
- 39          *here.* So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *hére*.
- 45          *iknowe.* So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Fein-*MLSL*: *ikneowe*.
- 48          *rewe.* So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Fein-*MLSL*: *reowe*.
- 52          *sonde.* So Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS: *schonde*.
- 54          *man.* So MS (in a later hand over an erasure), Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson. Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*.
- 63          *bote.* So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *bôte*.

- gal*. So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *gál*.
- 64 *bihote*. So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *bihóte*.
- 72 *seoly*. So MS, Morris, Brown, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Dickins-Wilson: *sley*. Fein-*MLSL*: *freo*.
- 75 *theoves*. So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Fein-*MLSL*: *theove*.
- reveres*. So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Fein-*MLSL*: *revere*.
- lechurs*. So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes. Fein-*MLSL*: *lechur*.
- 80 *forloren*. So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *forlóren*.
- 84 *than*. So Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS: *that*.
- 85 *stone*. So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *stóne*.
- grace*. So Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS: *pris* (in a later hand).
- 86 *calcydone*. So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *calcy-dóne*.
- tupace*. So Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS: *tupace ywis* (*ywis* in a later hand).
- 88 *Among*. So MS, Morris, Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. Kaiser: *Amon*.
- 95 *he*. So Brown, Dickins-Wilson, Kaiser, Dunn-Byrnes, Fein-*MLSL*. MS, Morris: *hé*.

## 20. SONG OF THE ANNUNCIATION

- incipit *Item cantus*. MS: Written in red ink to the right of line 1.
- 1–12 *From heovene . . . that mayde*. MS: Ending lost due to a missing leaf. Morris, Saupe: Lines printed (erroneously) as the fragmentary opening to *The Annunciation* (art. 10).
- 1 *From*. MS: Begins with blue capital *F*, four lines high, with red flourishes.
- 2 *archaunngle*. So MS, with *Gabriel* written above it in a later hand.
- 3–4 *Milde wes . . . ibere*. MS: Written continuously on one line.
- 5–6 *Gabriel hire grette . . . wunyinde*. MS: Written continuously on one line.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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7–8 *Ther schal a childe . . . Marie.* MS: Written continuously on one line.

9–12 *Marie him onswerede . . . that mayde.* MS: Written continuously on one line.

11 *imone.* So Saupe. MS, Morris: *imóne.*

*no.* So Saupe. MS, Morris: *nó.*

### 21. FIRE AND ICE

1 *ys.* So Oliver. MS, Morris: *ýs.*

2 *Bidde.* So Morris, Oliver. MS: *idde*, with a small *b* written in the initial position in a later hand, in an open space intended for a colored initial *B* that was not inserted.

### 22. SIGNS OF DEATH

1–6 *Hwenne thine heou . . . atgeth.* MS: Copied as prose on three lines.

1 *Hwenne.* So Morris, Brown. MS: *wenne.* A space was left for a colored initial *H*, but it was not inserted.

7–12 *Me nymeth the . . . so thu never nere.* MS: Copied as prose on three lines.

7 *Me.* So Morris, Brown. MS: *he.* The letter *h* is written in the initial position (probably by a later hand), in an open space intended for a colored capital that was not inserted.

9 *bere.* So Brown. MS, Morris: *bére.*

11 *ivere.* So Brown. MS, Morris: *ivére.*

### 23. THREE SORROWFUL TIDINGS

1 *Uyche.* So Morris, Brown. MS, Silverstein: *yche.* A space is left for a colored initial *U* or *V*, but it was not inserted. There is little visual division between the end of art. 22 (verse written as prose) and the start of art. 23 (verse written in short and long lines).

3–4 *The on is . . . ich noth hwenne.* MS: Written continuously on one line.

### 24. THE PROVERBS OF ALFRED

incipit *Incipiunt documenta regis Alvredi.* MS: Written in red ink.

1–18 *At Sevorde . . . Englelonde on.* MS: Written as prose on nine lines.

1 *At.* MS: Begins with blue capital *A*, two lines high, with red flourishes.

- Sevorde*. MS: *Seuorde*. Wright-Halliwell: *Sévorde*. Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne: *Seuorde*.
- sete*. So Hall, Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström: *séte*.
- 2 *bok-ilered*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *bok-iléred*.
- 7 *durlyng*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Wright-Halliwell: *derlyng*. Treharne: *durlynge*.
- 8 *Englene lond*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Hall, Borgström, Treharne. Skeat: *Engle-londe*.
- 9 *lere*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *lére*.
- 11 *Hw*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *How*.
- 12 *Englene lond*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *Engle-lond*.
- 13 *And*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *An*.
- 14 *clerek*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *clerk*.
- 19–24 *Thus queth Alvred . . . the King Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on four lines.
- 19 *Thus*. MS: Begins with red capital *P*, one line high.
- 20 *eure*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *éure*.
- 21 *ou*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *óu*.
- 22 *Hw*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *How*.
- wrthsipes*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall. Skeat: *wurþshipes*. Treharne: *Wurþsipes*.
- 25–36 *Mildeliche ich munye . . . wrthie thencheth*. MS: Written as prose on seven lines.
- 25 *Mildeliche*. MS: Begins with red capital *M*, one line high.
- Paragraph break. So MS, Wright-Halliwell. Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne: No paragraph break.
- 27 *adrede*. So Morris, Skeat, Hall, Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Borgström: *adréde*.
- 36 *The*. So Hall. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris: *We*. Skeat: *hwo*. Borgström, Treharne: *Wó*. Morris suggests *Pe* due to a scribe reading *P* as *ƿ*.

- wrthie*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall. Skeat, Treharne: *wurpie*.
- 37–43 *Thus queth Alvred . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on four lines.
- 37 *Thus*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 38 *under*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *ben under*. Borgström: *beo vnder*.
- 40 *wyttes*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *writes*. Borgström: *wrytes*.
- 42 *Hw*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *How*.
- 44–63 *The eorl . . . hit wel fare*. MS: Written as prose on ten lines.
- 44 *The*<sub>1</sub>. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, one line high.
- the*<sub>2</sub>. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *he*.
- 45 *godne*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *gódne*.
- 48 *clerek*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *clerk*.
- 49 *He schulle*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *schulle*.
- demen*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *démen*.
- evelyche*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *evenlyche*.
- 51 *Demen*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall: *démen*. Skeat: *hi schulle démen*.
- 55–63 *Than knyhte . . . hit wel fare*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Borgström, Treharne (no paragraph break). Morris: Space added for a new section. Skeat, Hall: Space added for a new section with line inserted: *Dus queþ Alured*.
- 55 *kenliche*. So MS (*henliche*, *h*<sub>1</sub> corrected to *k*), Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne.
- fone*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *fóne*.
- 57 *Chireche*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *chirche*.
- 64–76 *Thus queth Alvred . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on seven lines.
- 64 *Thus*. MS: Begins with blue capital *Þ*, one line high.

- 67 *lortheu*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Wright-Halliwell: *lorthen*.
- 68 *one*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *on*.
- 73 *wene*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *wéne*.
- 77–85 *Wythute wysdome . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on six lines, without any break between lines 76 and 77. Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne: paragraph break. Wright-Halliwell: no paragraph break.
- 77 *Wythute*. MS: *wythute* (lacks colored capital).
- 82 *frumthe*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *fremde*.  
*iwrche*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall. Skeat, Treharne: *iwurche*.
- 86–92 *Ne scholde never . . . Thus seyth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on four lines.
- 86 *Ne*. MS: Begins with red capital N, one line high.
- 89–90 *thenne he wule, / God after uvele, weole after wowe*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Treharne. Hall: *god after vuele. / weole after wowe. þenne he wule*.
- 91 *Wel is him that hit ischapen is*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *wel him þat ischapen is*.
- 93–102 *Strong hit is . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on six lines.
- 93 *Strong*. MS: Begins with blue capital S, one line high.  
*reowe*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *rowe*.  
*see*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *sée*.
- 95 *the<sub>2</sub>*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *þat*.  
*swo*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *yeorne swo*.
- 103–13 *Mony mon weneth . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on eight lines.
- 103 *Mony*. MS: Begins with red capital M, one line high.
- 104 *the*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *þat*.
- 105 *his*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *he his*.

- lyves. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *lyf*.
- 106 *leten*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *léten*.
- 107 *wrt*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall. Skeat, Treharne: *wurt*.
- vexynde*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *wexynde*.
- 112 *Hwanne*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Treharne. Skeat, Hall: *Hwanne we*.
- 114–21 *Yf thu seolver . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on six lines.
- 114 *Yf*. MS: Begins with red capital Y, one line high.
- 115 *upen*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *vpon*.
- nywrthe*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall. Skeat, Treharne: *ny-wurþe*.
- 116 *istreon*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *istreone*.
- 117 *hit*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Wright-Halliwel: *it*.
- 119 *vouh*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat, Borgström: *veoh*.
- 120 *maythenes*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat, Borgström: *madmes*.
- 122–30 *Ne ilef thu nouht to fele . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on six lines.
- 122 *Ne*. MS: Begins with red capital N, one line high.
- see*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *sée*.
- 124 *gnyde*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Wright-Halliwel: *guyde*.
- 128 *forleseth*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *forleoseþ*.
- 129 *nerē*. So Treharne, Skeat. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall: *nére*.
- 131–40 *Lusteth ye . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on six lines.
- 131 *Lusteth*. MS: Begins with red capital L, one line high.
- me*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *mi*.
- 133 *lere*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *lére*.
- 134 *the*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *he*.

- 139 *wile*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *hwile*.
- 141–56 *If thu havest seorewe . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on eight lines.
- 141 *If*. MS: Begins with blue capital *I*, one line high.
- 142 *hit nouht*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *hit*.
- 144 *lyke*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *þe lyke*.
- 148 *swyhc*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat, Borgström: *swych*.
- 149 *the*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall. Skeat: *hit þe*. Treharne: *he*.
- 157–72 *Ne schaltu nevere . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on eight lines.
- 157 *Ne*. MS: Begins with red capital *N*, one line high.
- 158 *none*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *nóne*.
- 166 *uppen*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *vppon*.
- 173–81 *Ne wurth thu never so wod . . . Thus queth Alfred*. MS: Written as prose on seven lines.
- 173 *Ne*. MS: Begins with blue capital *P*, one line high.
- 174 *evere*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *évere*.
- 175 *thu*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *heo*.
- 179 *word-woth*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall. Skeat, Borgström, Treharne: *word-wod*.
- 182–205 *Idelschipe and overprute . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on twelve lines.
- 182 *Idelschipe*. MS: Begins with red capital *I*, one line high.
- 183 *wolde*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *heo wolde*.
- 187 *aswote*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *a swóte*.
- 195 *toteone*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *toteóne*.
- 204 *uvel*. So Skeat, Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall: *úuel*.
- 206–30 *Nevre thu . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on eleven lines.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 206 *Nevre*. So Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Treharne: *eure* (MS lacks colored capital).
- 208 *arede*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *aréde*.
- 221 *loth*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat, Borgström: *leop*.
- 222 *cuenes*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *scumes*. Hall suggests *cuen us*.
- 224 *That*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Wright-Halliwel: *Thet*.
- 225 *unlede*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Wright-Halliwel: *vulede*.
- 228 *ys*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *nys*.
- 229 *the<sub>2</sub>*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *be*.
- 231–42 *Mony mon weneth . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on seven lines.
- 231 *Mony*. MS: Begins with blue capital *M*, one line high.
- 236 *speche*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Treharne. Hall: *spechen*.
- 238 *singe*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Treharne. Hall: *singen*.
- 243–60 *Thurh sawe . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on ten lines.
- 243 *Thurh*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, one line high.
- 244 *hiselthe*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *iselþe*. Borgström: *his elde*.
- 246 *and unwurth*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat, Borgström: *vnwurþ*.
- 253 *god*. So Treharne. MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall: *gód*.
- 254 *chyreche*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *chyrche*.
- 259 *londe*. So Treharne, Skeat. MS, Morris, Borgström, Hall: *lond le*. Wright-Hall: *lond be*.
- 261–79 *Alle world-ayhte . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on twelve lines.
- 261 *Alle*. MS: Begins with red capital *A*, one line high.
- 273 *wrthie*. So MS, Wright-Halliwel, Morris, Borgström, Hall. Skeat, Treharne: *wurþie*.

- 274 *Salomon*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *Salomon Salomon*.
- 280–96 *Ne gabbe thu . . . Thus queth Alvred*. MS: Written as prose on eight lines.
- 280 *Ne*<sub>1</sub>. MS: Begins with blue capital *N*, one line high.
- 284 *ne bigynne*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Skeat: *bi-gynne*.
- 290 *iscohte*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Hall, Treharne. Skeat, Borgström: *i-schote*.
- 296 *Alvred*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Wright-Halliwell: *Alvered*.
- 297–318 *Wis child is . . . Amen. Expliciunt dicta regis Alvredi*. MS: Written as prose on eleven lines.
- 297 *Wis*. MS: Begins with red capital *W*, one line high.
- 304 *wexende*. So Skeat. MS, Wright-Halliwell, Hall: *werende*. Morris, Borgström, Treharne: *wexynde*.
- 310 *unqueme*. So MS, Wright-Halliwell, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall. Treharne: *unqueme*.
- 317 *arixlye*. So MS, Morris, Skeat, Borgström, Hall, Treharne. Wright-Halliwell: *arulye*.

## 25. AN ORISON TO OUR LORD

- incipit *Tractatus quidam*. MS: Written in red ink.
- 1–2 *Louerd Crist . . . and swete*. MS: Written continuously on one line.
- 1 *Louerd*. MS: Begins with red capital *L*, four lines high.
- 4 *nome*. So Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *nóme*.
- 7–8 *Of the mayde . . . wel icore*. MS: Written continuously on one line.
- 8 *icore*. So Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *icóre*.
- 9 *come*. So Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *cóme*.
- 11 *grete*. So Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *gréte*.
- 13 *wowe*. So Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *wówe*.
- 21 *fast*. So MS, Morris, Fein-Children. A later hand has added *inge* to *fast*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 22        *teonedest*. So MS, Morris, Fein-Children. A later hand has added the phrase *vor to þe us bringe* after this word.
- 23        *donne*. So MS, Morris. Fein-Children: *doune*.
- 27        *harde*. So MS (word written at end of the line, marked / . for insertion), Morris, Fein-Children.
- 31–32     *Buffetes . . . al myd wowe*. MS: Written continuously on one line.
- 37        *tholdest*. So MS (the scribe or a later hand has corrected *woldest* to *þoldest*), Fein-Children. Morris: *þoledest*.
- 51        *tholeburnesse*. So Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *þoleburne and þarto don bothe mayn and myht*.
- 52        *That*. So Morris. MS: *þer* or *þat* (abbreviation mark is ambiguous). Fein-Children: *Ther*.
- 57        *grete*. So Fein-Children. MS, Morris: *gréte*.
- 61–62     *On thine werkes . . . by thine rede*. MS: Written continuously on one line.

### 26. A HOMILY ON SOOTH LOVE

- incipit    *Tractatus quidam*. MS: Written in red ink.
- 1        *Theo*. MS: Begins with red capital *Þ*, two lines high.
- 15        *ende*. MS, Morris: *énde*.
- 20        *paradys*. So MS. Morris: *paradyse*.
- 33        *teo*. MS, Morris: *téo*.
- 34        *we<sub>2</sub>*. So Morris. MS: omitted.
- 40        *carle*. So Morris. MS: *clare*.
- 41        *The*. So Morris. MS: *Ve*.
- 48        *mendinge*. So MS (in a later hand), Morris.
- 49        *We*. So Morris. MS: *Ve*.

### 27. THE SHIRES AND HUNDREDS OF ENGLAND

- incipit    *Her bigynneth the syren and the hundredes of Engelonde*. MS: Written in red ink.

PARAGRAPH 1

*Englelond is . . . bispryche.* MS: Prose section written on twenty-nine lines.

*Englelond.* MS: Begins with red capital *E*, three lines high, with blue flourishes.

*fytene.* MS, Morris, Kluge: *fyténe*.

*stol.* MS, Morris, Kluge: *stól*.

PARAGRAPH 2

*Swo we biforan quethen . . . on half hundred.* Prose section written on twenty-three lines.

*Swo.* MS: Begins with blue capital *S*, two lines high.

*Lothen.* So MS (for *th*, the scribe writes *ð* (eth), a very rare letter-form in Jesus 29), Morris, Kluge.

*other.* So MS (*r* inserted), Morris, Kluge.

*.i . . . .ix.* So MS (scribe inserts a roman numeral above each shire name), Morris, Kluge.

*Devenaschre.* So MS. Morris, Kluge: *Devenaschire*.

*Bedefordschre.* So MS. Morris, Kluge: *Bedefordschire*.

28. THE ELEVEN PAINS OF HELL

incipit     *Ici comencent les unze peynes de enfern les queus Seynt Pool vist.* MS: Written in red ink on two lines.

*vist.* MS: *v*.

1            *Plest.* MS: Begins with red capital *P*, four lines high, with blue flourishes.

7            *Unsely.* MS: Begins with blue capital *V*, one line high.

11          *Dunke.* MS: Begins with red capital *D*, one line high.

17          *Wiltu.* MS: Begins with blue capital *W*, one line high.

22          *a.* MS, Morris: *á*.

30          *go.* MS, Morris: *gó*.

## TEXTUAL NOTES

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- 33 *Erest*. MS: Begins with red capital *E*, one line high.
- 35 *anhon*. MS, Morris: *anhón*.
- 41 *Seththen*. MS: Begins with blue capital *S*, one line high.
- 66 *bote*. MS, Morris: *bóte*.
- 67 *A*. MS: Begins with red capital *A*, one line high.
- 75 *Further*. MS: Begins with blue capital *F*, one line high.
- 84 *hwenne*. So MS (*hhenne*,  $h_2$  corrected to *w*), Morris.
- 119 *Vurther*. MS: Begins with red capital *U*, two lines high.
- 131 *Thenne*. MS: Begins with blue capital *P*, two lines high.
- 145 *Vurther*. MS: Begins with red capital *U*, two lines high.
- 147 *todrawen*. So MS. Morris: *to-drawen* (Morris reads *to-drayen* and emends, but the letter is a *p* (= *w*)).
- 163 *Vurther*. MS: Begins with blue capital *U*, two lines high.
- 165 *thusen*. So MS. Morris: *pusend*.
- 167 *al*. So MS. Morris: reads *al* or *as*, prints *al*.
- 175 *Vurther*. MS: Begins with red capital *V*, one line high.
- 176 *den*. So MS (word written above line for lack of space), Morris.
- 218 *him*. So MS (word inserted), Morris.
- 219 *In*. MS: Begins with red capital *I*, two lines high.
- 233 *Vurther*. MS: Begins with blue capital *F*, one line high.
- 251 *Therunder*. MS: Begins with blue capital *P*, two lines high.
- 253 *beond*. So MS (*o* inserted), Morris.
- 258 *leyen*. MS, Morris: *léyen*.
- 261 *Ich*. MS: No colored capital.

- 269        *o*. MS, Morris: *ó*.
- 271        *is*. So MS (*is be* with *be* canceled), Morris.
- 281–82     *Ki ces . . . avendra*. MS: Written in brown ink.
- 281        *Ki*. MS: No colored capital.
- 283        *Hwoso*. MS: No colored capital.
- explicit    *Expliciunt .xj. pene inferni quas vidit beatus Paulus*. MS: written in brown ink.



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**Bok(e):** art. 5.2; art. 28.263

**Bridport:** See **Bridyport**

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**Britain:** See **Brutlaund**

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**Bukinghamschire:** art. 27.¶2

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**Holy Chir(e)che**

- Christian*: See **Cristen(e)**  
*Christians*: See **Cristes men**  
*Christianity*: See **Cristendom(e)**  
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