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<Text: Piers Plowman C>

### <Tranche 1>

<fol. 51v><line 5> þe conscience & þe king in to court wente .  
 where houed an hundred . *in hownus* of silk .  
 seriauntes þei semyde . to seruen at þe barre .  
 to plete for penyes . and poundes þe lawe .  
 & nat for loue of oure lord . vnlose here lippus onus .  
 þ/u my3test better mete myst . on maluerne hulles .  
 þan gete a mum of her~ mouþ . til mony hem schewed .  
 þo runne þere a route . of ratonus as it were .  
 & w<sup>t</sup> hem smale mys . mo þan a þousand .  
 þ<sup>t</sup> come to a counsel . for here comune profit .  
 for a cat of a court . cam whan him likede .  
 & ouerleep hem li3tlyche . & lau3te hem atte wille .  
 & pleide w<sup>t</sup> some perelouslich . & put hem þere him likede .  
 & if we grucche of his game . he wil greue us alle .  
 & to his clawes clochen us . & *in* his tampus holde .  
 þat us loþeþ þe lif . or he late us passe .  
 but my3t we w<sup>t</sup> any wit . his wil to w<sup>t</sup>-sitte :  
 we my3t be lordes a lofte . & lyuen as us luste .  
 þo seide a ratoun of renoun . most renable of tunge .  
 I haue I-seie gret sires . *in citees* & *in tounus* .  
 bere byus of bri3t gold . al aboute here neckus .  
 & colerus of crafty werk . boþe kny3tus & squyerus  
 were þere a belle on here bye . by ihesu as me þenkeþ .  
 men my3t wete where þei wente . & here wey rowme .  
 Ri3t so qd þe ratoun . resoun me scheweþ .  
 a belle to bigge of bras . or of bri3t siluer .  
 & knyht it on a coler . for our~ come profit .  
 & hange aboute þe cattes hals . heere þanne we mowe .

wheþer he rist oþer rest . or romeþ to pleye .  
 & 3if him lust for to laike . þanne loke we mowe .  
 & in his *presence* appere . whil him pleye liketh .  
 & 3if he wraþþe we may be war . & his waye rowme .  
 alle þe route of *ratonus* . to þis resoun assentede .  
 <fol. 52r>ac þo þe belle was j bou3t . & on þe bye hangede .  
 þere was no ratoun in al þe route . for al þe reme of fraunce .  
 þat durst haue bounde þe belle . aboute þe cattus necke .  
 ne hangid hit aboute his hals . al yngelond to wyne .  
 & leete here labour lost . & al here long tyme .  
 A mows þ<sup>t</sup> mucche gode cowde . as me þo þou3te .  
 stroke forþ stornely . & stode before hem alle .  
 & to þe route of *ratonus* rehersedede þese wordes .  
 þowh we hadde culde a cat . 3it schulde þer come a noþer .  
 to cracche us and al oure kynde . þowh we crope vndur benches .  
 for-þi J counseil for come *profite* . late þe catte worthe .  
 & be we neuer so bold . þe belle him to schewe .  
 for J herde my sire seye . seuene 3ere J-passid .  
 þere þe cat is but a kitoun . þe court is ful elenge .  
 witnessith hit wel holy writ . ho so can wel rede .  
 <lat></lat>  
 J sey it for me *qd* þe mows . J se so muchel after  
 schal noþer þe cat þe kitoun noþer . by my counseil be greuyd .  
 no carpen of here colerus þat costnede me neuere .  
 & þowh it coste me catel . biknowe J ne wolde .  
 but suffre & seye nou3t . & so is þe beste .  
 til meschef amende hem . þat many men chastep .  
 for many a mannus malt . we mys wolde destruye  
 & þe rowtus of *ratonus* . of rest men a-wake .  
 ner~ þe cat of þe court . & 3ong kittus toward .  
 for hadde 3e rattus al 3oure rede . 3e cowde nat rewle 3ow selue  
 What þis metelus be-meneþ . 3e men þ<sup>t</sup> be merye .  
 dyuyne 3e for J ne dar . by dere god al-my3ty .  
 & 3it mette J more . of mene & of riche .  
 as baronus & burgeis . & bonde men of thropus .  
 al saw j slepyng . as 3e schal here after  
 boþe bakerus & brewerus . bocherus & oþere .  
 as websterus & walkerus . & wyunnerus w<sup>t</sup> handes .  
 as tailours & tannerus . & tiliers þe erthe .

as dikerus & deluerus . þat do here dedes ille.  
 & dryueþ forth þe deerne dry . w<sup>t</sup> dieur saue dam emme .  
 cokus & here knaues . criede hote pies hote .  
 <fol. 52v>gode gees & grys . w<sup>t</sup> go+we dyne go we .  
 Tauerners a tast for nau3t . þei tolde þe same .  
 w<sup>t</sup> white wyn of oseye .& of garscoyne .  
 & of þe ryne & rochel wyn . 3e rost to defye .  
 al þis y saw slepyng & seuene sithes more .  
 <lat></lat>  
 What þe mountayne bemeneth . & þe merke dale .  
 and þe feld ful of folk . j schal 3ow fair~ schewe .  
 a louely lady of leore . in lynen J-cloped .  
 cam down fro þe clif . & callede me fayre .  
 & seide wille slepest þ<sup>u</sup> . sixst þ<sup>u</sup> nat þis peple .  
 & how besy þat þei ben . aboute þe mase .  
 þe most part of þe peple . þ<sup>t</sup> passith on þis erþe .  
 of oþer heuene þanne here is . holde þey no tale .  
 haue þei wurschepe in þis world . þei wesche no more .  
 j was a-ferd of here face . þei3 sche fair were .  
 & seide mercy madame . what may þis be to mene .  
 þe tour on þe tuft *qd* sche . trewþe is þer ynne .  
 & wolde þ<sup>t</sup> 3e wrou3te . as his worde techith .  
 For he is fader of feith .& formour of alle .  
 to be feithful to him . he gaf 3ow fyue wittus .  
 for to wurschepe him *perw<sup>t</sup>* . whil þat 3e be here .  
 wher~-fore he heete þe element . to helpe 3ow alle tymes .  
 & bring forth 3owre byleue . boþe wullen & lynnē .  
 in mesur~ þowh it muche were . to make 3ow at ese .  
 He comaunded of his curtesye . *in* comune þre þingus  
 ar non nedeful but þo . & nempne hem J þenke .  
 & rekene hem by rowe . reherse hem where þe lyketh .  
 þe furst of þo is fode . & vesture þe secunde .  
 & drynk þat it dooþ good . but drynk nat out of tyme .  
 loo loth in his lif . þurw likerous drynke .  
 wrou3t wikkedeliche . & whraththede god al-my3ty  
 in drunkenesse on a day . his dou3terus he di3te .  
 & lay by hem boþe . as þe book tellith .  
 In his glotenye he gat . gurlus þat were þrallus  
 & al he witede þe wyn . þat wikkede dede

<lat></lat>

<fol. 53r><lat></lat>

þurw wyn & þurw women þer was loth encombred .  
 drede delitable drynk . boþe day & nyȝtus  
 for mesure ys medecyne . þowh þ<sup>u</sup> mucche wylne .  
 Al is nat good to þe gost . þat þe gut askeþ .  
 ne liflode to þe licam . þat leef is to þe soule .  
 Leue nat þi licam . for a lier~ him techith .  
 þ<sup>t</sup> is þe wrecchede world . þat wolde þe begyle  
 for þe fend & þi flesh . folweth to-gederus .  
 & sickith þi soule . & seith it þe in herte .  
 and wisseþ þe to be war . & what wolde þe deceyue .  
 a madame mercy *qd* J. me likeþ wel ȝour~ wordes .  
 ac þe monye of þis molde . þat men so fast kepe .  
 tellith me now to whom þat tresour befallith .  
 Go to þe gospel *qd* scheo .& se what god saide .  
 whanne þe peple apposed him . w<sup>t</sup> a peny in þe temple .  
 & god askede at hem . hoos was þe cune .  
 cesarus þei seiden . sothli to say .  
 Reddite cesari *qd* god . þat cesar behoueth .  
 Et que sunt di deo . or ellus ȝe doon ille .  
 For riȝtfullich resoun schuld rewle ȝow alle .  
 and kynde wit be wardeyn . ȝoure welþe to kepe .  
 & tutour of ȝoure tresour . & take ȝow at nede .  
 for hubondrye & he . haldith hem to-gedre .  
 þo frayned j here fair~ þo . for him þat here made .  
 þe depe dale and derk . so dredful to syȝt  
 what may it be to mene . madame J ȝow beseche .  
 That is þe castel of care . ho so comeþ þer ynne .  
 may banne þ<sup>t</sup> he bore was . in body or in soule .  
 þer ynne wonyþ a wiȝt / wrong is his name .  
 he is fader of falshede . & founded it furst of alle .  
 Adam & eue w<sup>t</sup> enuye . he eggede to ille .  
 & counseil cursede caym to killen his broþer .  
 Judas he be-iapede . w<sup>t</sup> Jewene siluur .  
 & aftir he henge him hye up on an helderne .  
 He is lettere of loue . & lyeth alle tymes .  
 þat trist in erthly tresour . he betrayeth sonnest .

## <Tranche 2>

<fol. 61v>purw wheche loueday is J-lost . þat leaute my3t wyne .  
 þe mase for a mene man . þowh he mote euere .  
 þe lawe is so lordlich . & looth to make ende .  
 w<sup>t</sup>oute presentes or pans . heo plesith wel fewe .  
 trewe burgeys & bonde . to nau3t scheo bryngeth ofte .  
 & cast þe commune in care . & in coueytise .  
 Religioun heo al-to-renneth . & out of rewle dryueth .  
 þer nys citee vndur sunne . ne so riche reme .  
 þer heo is alowed & lete by . þat laste schal any while .  
 withoute werre oþer woo . or wikkede lawus .  
 & customus of coueytise . þe comune to destroye  
 vnsittyng suffraunce . here sustur & here selue .  
 haue J-maked al-most . but marye þe helpe .  
 þat no lond ne louyeth . & 3it leest þin owne  
 For mede haþ knyht so clerkus . & couetise to-gedere .  
 þat al þe+wit of þe world . wox is in to gile .  
 þus þis lady ledeth þi lond . now lord 3if here sorwe .  
 for pore men dar nat pleyne . ne here pleint schewe .  
 such a maistres is mede . among men of gode .  
 þanne moornede mede . monyng here to þe kyng .  
 to haue space for to speke . spede if scheo my3te .  
 þe king graunted here grace . w<sup>t</sup> a gode wille .  
 excuse þe 3if þ<sup>u</sup> can . J can no more saye .  
 for conscience accuseth þe . to cunge þe for euere .  
 Leue lord *qd* þat lady . leueth him þe worse .  
 whan 3e wete witturly . in whom þe wrong liggeth .  
 for þer as gret meschef is . mede may mucche helpe .  
 & þat knowest þ<sup>u</sup> conscience . J cam nat for to chide .  
 ne to depraue þi persone . w<sup>t</sup> a proud herte .  
 for wel þ<sup>u</sup> wost witturly . but if þ<sup>u</sup> wole gabbe .  
 þ<sup>u</sup> hast hanged on myn hals . elleue tymes .  
 & also gripen of my gold . & 3oue it where þe likede .  
 whi þou wraththest þe now . wundur me þinketh .  
 & 3it J may as j my3te . menske þe w<sup>t</sup> 3iftus .  
 & meyntheyne þi manhode . more þan þ<sup>u</sup> knowest .  
 & þ<sup>u</sup> hast famed me foule . before þe kongus ere  
 for+culd+y neuer no kyng ne counseiled so to done

<fol. 62r>ac J saued my self . sixty þousand lyues .  
 boþe here & elluswhere . in many kynguslondus .  
 Ac þ<sup>u</sup> þi self sothly . ho so it segge durste .  
 haft J had hardy men . þat hadde wil to fi3te .  
 boþe to brenne & to breke . & bete a doun strenkþus.  
 Jn contre þere þe kyng cam . þ<sup>u</sup> conscience him lettest .  
 þ<sup>t</sup> he feld nat his foes . þo fortune it wolde .  
 & as his wirdus were J-þou3t . by wil of god al-my3ty  
 caitifliche þ<sup>u</sup> conscience . counseiledest him to lete .  
 in his enemyus hond . his heritage of fraunce .  
 vnkunyng is it conscience . a kyngdom to selle .  
 þat conquered is by come help . or a ducherye .  
 it may nat be+sold sothly . so many here part aske .  
 of fewe folk þat fau3t þerfore . & folwede kyngus wille .  
 But þe leste lad þ<sup>t</sup> lieth to him . be þe lond J wunne .  
 lokeþ aftur lordschepe . or oþur large mede .  
 where-by he mow as a man . for euer leue þer aftur .  
 & þat is ye kinde of a kyng . þ<sup>t</sup> conquereth on his enemyus .  
 to helpe hoygeliche al his ost . or ellus for to graunte .  
 al þat his men may wynne . to do þerw<sup>t</sup> here beste .  
 For-þi J counseil no kyng . any counseil aske .  
 at conscience 3if he coueite . to wynnen a reme .  
 for schuld neuer conscience . be my constable .  
 were J a kyng J-corowned . by al þis croys qd mede .  
 ne be marchal . ouer my men. þere J most fi3te .  
 Ac hadde mede be his marchal . ouer his men in fraunce .  
 J durst haue leid þerto my lif. & no lasse wedde .  
 he hadde be lord of þat lond . in lengþe & in brede .  
 & also kyng of þat kith . his kyn to haue j-holpe .  
 þe leste brol of his blood . a baronus pere .  
 vnkyndely þ<sup>u</sup> conscience . counceyledest him þanne .  
 to leete so his lordschepe for a litel mede.  
 Hit becometh to a kyng . þat schal kepe a reme .  
 to 3eue men mede . þat mekely him serueth .  
 To alienus to alle men to honour hem wt 3iftus.  
 þanne makith mede him beloued . & for a man J-holde .  
 Emperourus & eerlus. & al maner lordus .  
 <fol. 62v>Þurw 3iftis hane 3emen . to renn & to ryde .  
 Þe pope & alle prelatus . presentus vndurfonge .

& 3eue mede to men . to meynteyne here lawus .  
 Seriaunt<sup>3</sup> for her~ *seruise* . mede þei asken .  
 & take mede of here maistrus . as þei may acorde .  
 Beggerus & bedemen . craue mede for here *preiers* .  
 And mynstrallus for her~ mynstralsye . mede þei asken .  
 Men þat teche clerkus craueþ here mede .  
 Prestus þat *precheth* . & techeth þe lawe .  
 aske mede & masse pens . & here mete boþe .  
 Alle kynne crafty men .craue mede for here hyre .  
 Marchaundise & mede . mote nede go to *gederus* .  
 þer is no leode þat leuyth . þ<sup>t</sup> he ne loueth mede .  
 & glad for to gripe here . boþe grete & smale .  
 Now *qd* þe king to conscience . by crist as me semeth .  
 mede is worthi as me þinkeþ . þe maistry to haue .  
 Certes *qd* conscience to þe kyng . clerkus know þe soþe .  
 þ<sup>t</sup> mede is euurmore . a meyteynour of gile .  
 as þe sauter schewith . by such as 3eueþ mede .  
 þat vnlawfulliche leueth . haue ful large hondus .  
 to 3eue men of mede . þe more or þe lasse .  
 ac þer is mede & mercede . & boþe of hem me demyth .  
 a desert for sum dede . deorne oþer ellus .  
 Mede 3eue many men before here doynge .  
 & þat is noþer resoun nor ry3t . nor in no reme lawe .  
 þat any man schal mede take . but he it may deserue  
 or trewly vndurtake . to trauayl for an oþer .  
 & wote neuer witturly .wheþer he lyue so longe .  
 or haue hap to his hele . mede to deserue .  
 J hold him to hardy . or ellus vntrewe .  
 þat *per* manibus is j-payd . or his pay asketh .  
 as harlotus & hoorus . & also false leches .  
 þat asken here huyre . or þei it haue deserued .  
 And gylours gyue bifore . ac gode men atte neende .  
 whan þe dede is J-do . & þe day endede .  
 þat is no mede but mercede . & dette for doynge .  
 & but it be prestliche payd . þe paier~ ys to blame .  
 <fol. 63r>for as þe holy book bit . no body schuld w<sup>th</sup>holde :  
 þe hire of his hyne . til it be oþer morwe .  
 <lat></lat>  
 And þer is resoun as a reue . to rewarde trewþe



þat boþe lord & laborer~ . be lelly j-serued .  
 þe mede þ<sup>t</sup> many men takith . for here massus syngyng .  
 Amen amen Matheu seith .<lat></lat>  
 In marchaundis þer is no mede . J may it wel avowe .  
 it is a *permutaconun* . a peny for anoþer .  
 & þowh þe kyng of curtesy . carser oþer pope .  
 3if lond or lordschepe . or oþer large giftus .  
 to here leel lyge men . loue is þe cause .  
 And 3if þe leel & þe lige . be lithur men aftur .  
 boþe kyng & caiser . & þe crowned pope .  
 may disalowe þ<sup>t</sup> þei dede . & dewe þerw<sup>t</sup> anoþer .  
 & anon benyme it hem . & neuermore þer aftur  
 noþer þei nor here heires . be hardy hit to clayme .  
 of þat þe king or caiser gaf of catel & of rente .  
 For god gaf to salomon . gret grace upon eorþe .  
 boþe ricchesse & resoun . while he+wel leuede .  
 & as sone as god sey . he sewid nat his wille .  
 he reued him of his ricchesse . & of his ri3t mynde .  
 & suffred him in mysbeleue . J leue he be in helle .  
 So god giueth no þing . w<sup>t</sup>outen any glose .  
 And ri3t so soothly . may þe kyng & pope .  
 boþe geue & graunt eke .þere his grace likeþ .  
 & eftsone haue it a3en . of men þat do ri3t ille .  
 þus is mede & mercede . as two relaciouns .  
 wheche beþ recte & indirecte . rennyng boþe .  
 on a sad & on a sikur . semeliche to hem self .