Prouesse es a vertu of prys
þat mas a man hardi & wys
thurgh whilk he may ouercomen thugh grace
alle vices and vertus purchace
seuen degrees has þat vertu
and seuen branches of gret valu
this er þe degrees first to knawe
als þai er set here on rawe
Noblesse of hert in ilk a chance
traystynge sykenes and suffrancemersteds
stedfastnes þat mykel vayle
and lastandnes withouten fayle
hunger and thirst of ryghtwysnes
and ilk an of þise a vertu es
Nobles of hert þer god wille lys
shewed it wel in twa partys
On þat a syde to dispse & fle
þe werld þat nees bot vanite
For seynt austyn says als J gese
þat þis es verray prouesse
wher a mans hert despises here
thyng þat es noght in his power–
that es þe thyng þat hym bihoues mys
and tyne for euer in angre his
wha so has þat vertu ryght
despyses þe werld bathe day & nyght
and alle þe welthe þat þer-ine es
hym thynk it noght bot wrichednes
Nobles on þat other syde
Mas a man bald to abyde
and a grete thyng to vndertake
and to chese hardenes for godes sake
als þe wyse philosofr~ says
 þat noblesse of hert þat god pays
Es a skilful vndertakyng
of an ryght hegh dredful thyng
For he þat es at lyf parfyte
bot he be war he may falle tyte
<fol. 44r>Bot þo vertu þat J bifore tald
Mas a man hardi and bald
to vndirtak with hert boun
þe ryght wai of perfeccioun
and to chese with stable hert
þe lyf þat semes here sharp & smert
Traistyng settes a mans hert fast
and mas it stable and strong to last
For he þat wil vndertake
a gode wai for godis sake
So fast he suld his hert sette
on his purpos þat noght it lette
and of nathyng be abayst
bot sykirly in god ay traist
to fulfille with al his myght
þat þai has bygunnen ryght
Sykernes a mans hert ledes
so þat he na peryl dredes
Ne na wikkenes ne na payne
þat men may here hym ordayne
For þe gift of strenkthe mas hym smert
and gifs hym a noble hert
to vndirtak a gret thyng
withouten any manere faylyng~
after-ward it gifs hym lufe
and wil þat thyng forto proue
and folwe it ay þernyng
and trewly to ende it to bryng
after þat it gifs hym myght
and mas hym syker als a gode knyght
þat he dredes na peril ne Payne
ne 3it þe deth þat es certayne
<fol. 44v>Bot 3ernes angres and to þam tentes
als þe gode knyght dos turmentes
and als þe haly martirs did
þair turmentes þat felle war kyd
Suffrance helps a man in cas
to overcome his mast faes
tho er his flesshe þe werld þe fende
þat nyght and day waytes hym to shende
For suffrance may be ryght tolde
til a man a sheld of golde
þat for godes luf noy dar abyde
þat sheld hym coueris on ilk a syde
so þat na strake of tribulacioun
May sare hurte ne stryke a-doun
For na man may haue entry
Withouten suffrance ne maystry
Ne nan may come to perfecioun
bot he suffre tribulacioun
Stedfastnes es profitable
þat festes þe hert and mas it stable
als a tour þat ground has tan
Opon an hard roche of stan
and als a tre in erthe roted fast
þat na wynd ne stormes may doun cast
so suld a man þat has witte
stedefastly his hert knytte
so þat na chance gode ne ille
It may remwe ne turne his wille
For na man may haue victori
withoten stedfastnes namly
Lastandnes es ay lyke newe
þat vertu comes of hert trewe
<fol. 45r> Thurgh whilk a man shuld ay be boun
to take þe way of perfecioun
and in þat way be ay lastand
and neuer for wele ne wa fayland
vn-til he com to his lyues ende
when he sal out of þis werld wende
Hunger and threst of ryghtwisnes
an herti 3ernyng of gode þat es
For a man suld 3erne day & nyght
to 3elde and do þat es ryght
Bathe to god and to ilk a man
after þat he may do and can
and on hym his luf vouche-saue
þat for hym his awen lyf gaue
and if he be som-tyme myghtles
þat may noght do þat ryght es
Bot puttes his myght in godes wille
þan wil god : þat noght fayles fulfille
For god sayd noght þus als J wene
blissed be alle þa þat ryghtwis bene
Bot he sayd þus mare curtaysly
als he es ay ful of mercy
Blissed be alle þa mare & les
þat 3ernes to do ay ryghtwysnes
this er cald þe seuen degrees
of prouesse þat man suld ches
þat may hym lede þe ryght way
to þe hegh lif þat lastes ay
Bot seuen branches er þer 3it
þe men calles and haldes thurgh wit
seuen victories þat here auayles
of seuen mar<ill. rest of the word> of batayles
<fol. 45v>thurgh whilk a man may noght mys
Of þe seuen corouns of blys
the first bataile to bigynne
es þe batayle of dedly synne
anothir bataile es panance hard
þe thrid es of his flessh sa fraward
the fierth and þe fyft of þe world er twa
þat an of welthe þat othir of wa
þe sext of wikked men and felle
and þe seuenth of þe fend of helle
Dedly syn es þe first batayle
þat bygynnes a man for to assayle
Agayn þat batayle byhoues hym fyght
or fle it fast wyth alle his myght
Bot he þat flees may noght al lees
for he feghtes wel þat wel flees
For wha so assentes noght til syn
he it ouercomes withouten dyn
Bot wha so es felled in þat stour
May noght ryse withouten socour
he has mar nede with help to mete
þan he þat standes on his fete
Bot god thurgh grace most take his hand
ar he may ryse agayn and stand
and arme hym agayn þat chance
with þe strong armure of penance
þe whilk þe haly gast hym brynges
and þat byhoues be of thre thynges
ane es repentance of hert
anothir es shrift of mouth apert
þe thrid amendes thurgh will fre
he suld be armed with þis thre
<fol. 46r>Repentance of hert es þis
when a man wil knawe his mys
a<iill. 2 words> orwe<?> for þat labour
þat he has wrathþed his creatour
and þe mare þ<?> he has wroght als a+fole
þe mar~ in+herte suld be his doele
For wha so es synful and ille
þi thre maneres beres thurgh skill
Godis thef & thefes fere
Murtherer of his doghter der~
and godis traitour þus men calles
þe synful man þat in syn falles
First godis thief he may be knawen
for he wastes þat es noght his awen
þat god hym tok to kepe & welde
of whilk hym byhoues acounte 3elde
Murtherer he hym-self mas
þat thurgh syn his saule slas
þe whilk god made to his lyknes
þat thurgh grace his doghter es
Godes traitour he es by resoun
for he dos god a gret tresoun
when he 3eldes to þe fend hally
at es godis mast enemy
þe castel of his hert to queme
þe whilk god tok forto 3eme
The secund þing es shrift of mouthe
þat mas a man to god ful couthe
þe whilk has sex condiciouns
als men has herd in sere sermons
first shrift suld be wysly done
and hastly also and sone
<fol. 46v>
Apertely and bisily ay
haly and mekly and of to assay
First suld shrift be mad wysly
for a man suld make him before redy
and of alkyn syn bythynk hym wele
bathe of dedly and of veniele
þat he has wroght als vnbossom
ar þat he byfor þe preest com
3it suld he looke ar he hym shryne
what he es þat sal here his lyue
Jf he be comanded his shrift to here
and to asoyle hym has powere
Shrift suld be doon hastely
for many skylis to telle why
For tarying of shryft in þis lyue
Es perylous for skyles fyue
Ane es for þe condicioun
of syn þat es a confusioun
For syn es als telles þir clerkes
a brynnand fyr þi wastes gode werkes
þat on na wyse slyknyd wil be
withouten teres in shrift priue
anothir es for þe syknes of syn
to whilk shrift es þe medecyn
For he þat sekes noght to be hale
of his hele he gyfes neuer tale
þe thrid skyl es for þe dede
þat waytes a man in ilk a stede
For-why þe dede es so sodayne
þat a man may be certayne
Of þe tyme þat may noght fayle
when þe deth sal hym asayle

<Tranche 2>

<fol. 155r>þan sayde þe mayster til hym sone
so lang tyme has þou lytel done
þan commanded he to bete hym fast
with hard bables whyls þai myght last
þan came ane oþer þat offfyce bar~
and louted to þe maister þar~
þa mayster when he hym had seene
asked hym wher~ he had bene
þat oþer sayd he cam fro þe see
whar~ he fordone had greet naue
Sunken shyppes and ryuen in sunder
thurgh wyndes blastes & stormes of thu~
and dronked men þat war~ þer-inne
þat war~ combred in dedely synne
þe mayster hym asked þat londe 3elled
how lang he had aboute þat dwelled
þat oþer answerd and sayde sone
In twenti dayes all þat was done
þan bad þe mayster þaim bete hym sar~
For he so long tyme did na mar~
after hym þan came þe thrid
þe mayster how he had sped
and whar~ he was and wheþen he come
& what he did sithen he went fra home
þat oþer answerd als best myght be
and sayde he come fra a Cyte
whar~ he was at a brydeale
and þar~ he wroght mykell bale
he made swilk contek in þat stede
þat many men was þar deede
and 3it þe brydegome þan was slayn
and þer-of he sayde he was ful fayn
<fol. 155v>Þan asked þe mayst er half on heþing
howe long tyme was þat in spedyng
þat oþer answerd and sayde þus þan
þat in ten dayes fra he bygan
þe maister commanded his meyne
þat he suld smertly beted be
and þat nane of þaim suld hym spar~
For he so long tyme did na mar~
þar~ come þe fyrth þat þe last
þat day and nyght had trauayld fast
aboute a man of religioun
to bryng hym in-to his baundon
and þe maister honured hee
þar~ he sat hegh in his see
þe maister hym asked whetheþen he come
and howe long he had been fra home
and all þat tyme what he had done
þat oþer spak and answerd sone
þat he come fra ane hermytage
þar~ he had dwelled for auauntage
Fourty 3eere continualy
to fond a monk with licchery
and he myght hym neuer ar~ wyn
til þat nyght to do þat syn
and he sayde he had so wroght
þat he til þat syn was broght
þan vpstirt þe mayster swythe
For þat deede made hym mast blythe
and in his armes he hym hent
and kissed hym with grete talent
and hyght hym for þat a warisoune
and of his heued he toke þe coroune
<fol. 156r>and on þat oþer he set it
and did hym by hym-seluen syt
and sayde he war~ worthi grete mede
For he did swilk a doghty dede
þe haly man sayde when he had herd
and sene howe þir~ fendes ferd
he thought it was ane hegh thyng
þe state of monk in clene lyfyng
and þerfor he had deuocioun
to bcome man of religyoun
and þat state of monk þan he toke
als it es funden writen in boke
by þis tale . þus . men may se
þat þe fend has ioye so fayne es he
when he may thurgh sleght wyn
a man of religion to dedely syn
and namely vnto licchery
þat wastes bath saule and body
For when a man thurgh deuocioun
Entres in-to religioun
he es als he þat men seese wende
Jn-to þe feld to feght with þe fende
wherfor our~ lord blissed be he
when he of þe fend fanded wald be
he went in til desert at dwell
als es writen in þe godspell
For desert of religoun
Es a feld of temptacioun
Religoun þat goode men suld hald
May by skill desert be cald
For als desert es comonly sene
Jn sharppe stede þar~ na deylces bene
<fol. 156v>and 3it fer fra men desert es
þerfor men clepes it wildernes
Ryght so þe state of religioun
þat falles to þe state of perfeccioun
suld be scharppe and strayte in all thyng
thurgh sharpnes of strayte lifyng
þat es als a thorn hedge to tell
agayn þe wicked bestes of hell
with whilk þe herte es closed aboute
to hald þay wicked bestes oute
It es a wapen stalwarth and lyght
agayn þe enemy for to fyght
thurfh whilk men may hym scomfyte
and do hym fle away tyte
þat es a syker remedy
agayn þe fyr~ of lycchery
For he þat will slekyn wele
þat fyr~ of lycchery ilk adele
he suld slecken with sleght of witt
all þe sparkes þat comes of itt
þat er cleped flesshly delyces
þat brynges forth oft grete vyces
þe whilk þe goode religious man
suld put fra his flessh ay þan
thurfh wakyng fastynge and disciplynes
and hard weryng þat þe flessh pyne
who so will wynne a cite
or a castell whether it be
he suld in all þat he may lette
þat pai þat haldis it suld noght gette
vitayles ne water on nane wyse
and so may he þaim sone enfamyse
<fol. 157r>and þan may þai noght hald lang
þe castell war~ it neuer so strang
For þan haf þai na lenger powr~
to hald it agayn þair~ aduersere
Rygght so þe castell of þe body
þat es þe strength of þe flessh þer~by
May noght thurfh na flesshly delyce
be halden long agayn þe spiryte
when it es famyst with penaunce
thurfh abstynence of sustynaunce
also þe state of religiou
sulde thurfh ryght entencioun
Fer fra þe werld als þe boke telles
als in desert þar~ na man dwelles
so þat he þat þis state kepes wele
þe maners of þe werld suld noght feele
For-whi he þat es in þat state
he es als þise clerkes wele wate
dede als onente þe werld anely
and lyfes in god all-myghty
als says saynt paule in a stede
For als a man þat es dede
bodily thurgh dedis dynt
he all his body wittes tynt
þat es to syght and smelllyng
heryn speche and felyng
Ryght so suld þe religious man
als to þe werld be ded þan
þat he fele na thyng hym withinne
þat suld falle til any synne
bute als dede in þat party
so þat he myght sothfastly
bis word þat es mykel to prayse
whilk þe apostel saynt paule þus sayse
þe werld es vile hynged to me
and J to þe werld þus says he
þat es he held de werld despysable
and hym til it abhomynable
als men doos ane hanged man
þat es a thef or a lordan
Ryght so he held þe werld for vyle
þat es ful of falshed and gyle
als men doos hym þat hanged es
For his trispas and his wickednes
Ryght so he suld thurgh ryght entencioun
þat es in þe state of religioun
þe werld for ay hate and fle
þat es so full of vanite
þat es to say þe coueytys
of þe werld and oper folys
þat he þerof fele na thyng
Nouþer thurgh luf ne thurgh 3ernyng
So þat his conuersacioun be
Jn heuen byfor þe trinyte
als saynt paule of hym self telles
and of þaim þat in þat state dwelles
Oure conuersacioun he says
Es in heuen goddis palays
For all if þe bodi in erthe be ryght
þe herte es hegh in heuen bryght
thurgh hertly 3ernyng and thurgh luf
als men may by skilles pruf
þe gode religious suld na thyng haf
proper in erthe for hym-self to saue
<fol. 158r>bute he suld do his tresore
Jn heuen þat es sykerst þarfore
als sais saynt Joon þe euangelyst
Jf þou will be parfyt in cryst
he says go selle all þat þou has
and gyfe it til pouere þat aboute gaas
þe tresore of a man religious
Es clene pouert þat es precious
If it come of gode wille
and withouten grutchyng loude or stille
als says þe haly man þar by
Jn <lat>vitas patrum</lat> specially
For pouert til þe mone es lyke
thurgh whilk men may bye heuen ryke
werfor god says þus blissed er þai
þat pouere er in gaste nyght and day
For þairs es als falles thurgh ryght
þe kyngdam of heuen bryght
For-sothe who so es pouere in gaast
þat es of will thurgh grace to tast
he sekes noght in þis werld here
Nouþer grete worshepes ne power~
Ne richesses ne delyces to pruf
bute forgettis all þat for godis luf
Ryght suld do þe man of religiou
þat clymbe will on þe hill of perfeccioun
als þe angell sayde þat to loth come
when he went out of sodome
stand noght he sayde ouer neer~ þat stede
þat þou has left thurgh my rede
bute saf þi self in þe hegh montayne
þan may þou be siker and certayne
<fol. 158v>For . [ho] þat es went thurgh deuocioun
Oute of þe werldis conuersacioun
he sall noght negh þe werld hym halde
thurgh 3ernyng þat werldly es calde
bute he suld drawe hym fer away
Fra þe werld in all þat he may
til he be with ryght entencioun
On þe hill of perfeccioun
þar~ suld he tent til his hele souerayne
and noght bihynd hym loke agayne