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 myȝtest 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.
& wȝ hem smale mys. mo þan a thousand.
þ come to a counsel. for here comune profit.
for a cat of a court. cam whan him likede.
& ouerleep hem liȝtlyche. & laȝte hem atte wille.
& pleide wȝ 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 lopeþ þe lif. or he late us passe.
but myȝt we wȝ any wit. his wil to wȝ-sitte:
we myȝt be lordes a loftie. & 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 briȝt gold. al aboute here neckus.
& colerus of crafty werk. boȝe knyȝtus & squyerus
were þere a belle on here bye. by ihesu as me þenkeþ.
men myȝt wete where þei wente. & here wey rowme.
Riȝt so qd þe ratoun. resoun me schewep.
a belle to bigge of bras. or of briȝt siluer.
& knyt it on a coler. for our~ come profit.
& hange aboute þe cattes hals. heere þan[n]e 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 wraplþe we may be war . & his waye rowme .
alle þe route of ratonus . to þis resoun assentede .
& in his presence appere . whil him pleye liketh .
& 3if he wraplþe we may be war . & his waye rowme .
alle þe route of ratonus . to þis resoun assentede .
<fol. 52r>ac þo þe belle was j bouȝt . & on þe Byrne 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 wynne .
& leete here labour lost . & al here long tyme .
A mows þþ muche gode cowde . as me þo þouȝte .
stroke forþ stornely . & stode before hem alle .
& to þe route of ratonus rehearsed þese wordes .
þowh we hadde culde a cat . 3it schulde þer come a noþer .
to craccce us and al ooure kynde . þowh we crope vndur benches .
forþi 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 costned þe neuer .
& þowh it coste me catel . biknowe J ne wolde .
but suffre & seye nouȝt . & so is þe beste .
til meschef amende hem . þat many men chasteþ .
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 þþ be merye .
dyuyne 3e for J ne dar . by dere god al-myȝt .
& 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 & opere .
as websterus & walkerus . & wynnerus wȝ handes .
as tailours & tannerus . & tiliers þe erthe .
as dikerus & deluerus. þat do here dedes ille.
& dryueþ forth þe deerne dry. w¹ dieur saue dam emme.
cokus & here knaues. criede hote pies hote.
<fol. 52v>gode gees & grys. w¹ go+=we dyne go we.
Tauerners a tast for nau3t. þei tolde þe same.
w¹ 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-cloþed.
cam doun fro þe clif. & callede me fayre.
& seide wille slepest þb. sixst þb nat þis peple.
& how besy þat þei ben. aboute þe mase.
þe most part of þe peple. þb passith on þis erpe.
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. trewphe is þer yynne.
& wolde þe 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 perw⁴. whil þat 3e be here.
wher–fore he heete þe element. to helpe 3ow alle tymes.
& bring forth 3owre byleue. boþe wullen & lynnenn.
in mesur~ bowh it muche were. to make 3ow at ese.
He comaunded of his curtesye. in comune þre þing
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 doöp good. but drynk nat out of tyme.
loo loth in his lif. þurw likerous dryneke.
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. gurlas þat were þrallus
& al he witede þe wyn. þat wikkede dede
þurw wyn & þurw women þer was loth encombred.
drede delitable drynk. boþe day & nyþus
for mesure ys medecyne. þowh þþ muche wylne.
Al is nat good to þe gost. þat þe gut askþ.
ne liflode to þe licam. þat leef is to þe soule.
Leue nat þi licam. for a lier~ him techith.
þþ is þe wrecchede world. þat wolde þe begyle
for þe fend & þi flesch. 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 3our~ 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. wþ 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 3e doon ille.
For riþfullich resoun schuld rewle 3ow alle.
and kynde wit be wardeyn. 3oure welþe to kepe.
& tutour of 3oure tresour. & take 3ow 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 syþt
what may it be to mene. madame J 3ow beseche.
That is þe castel of care. ho so comþ þer ynne.
may banne þþ he bore was. in body or in soule.
þer ynne wonyeþ a wiþt / wrong is his name.
he is fader of falshede. & founded it furst of alle.
Adam & eue wþ enuye. he eggede to ille.
& counsel cursede caym to killen his broþer.
Judas he be-iapede. wþ Jewene siliuur.
& 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>þurw wheche loueday is J-lost . þat leaute myȝt wynne .
þe mase for a mene man . þowh he mote euere .
þe lawe is so lordlich . & looth to make ende .
w'oute presentes or pans . heo plesith wel fewe .
trewe burgeys & bonde . to nauȝt scheo bryngeth ofte .
& cast þe commune in care . & in coueȝtise .
Religioȝn heo al-to-renneth . & out of rewe dryueth .
þer nys citee vnȝur sunne . ne so riche reme .
þer heo is alowed & lete by . þat laste schal any while .
withoute werre ober woo . or wikkede lawus .
& customus of coueȝtise . þe comune to destroye
vnȝitynge 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 knyt 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 myȝte .
þe king graunted here grace . wþ a gode wille .
excuse þe 3if þu 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 ȝe wete witturly. in whom þe wrong liggeth .
for þer as gret meschef is . mede may muche helpe .
& þat knowest þu conscience . J cam nat for to chide .
ne to deprauþ þi persone . wþ a proud herte .
for wel þu wost witturly. but if þu wolde gabbe .
þu hast hanged on myn hals . elleue tymes .
& also gripen of my gold . & ȝoue it where þe likede .
whi þou wraththest þe now . wundur me þinketh .
& 3it J may as þy myȝte . menske þe wþ 3iftus .
& meyteþeye þi manhode . more þan þu knowest .
& þu hast famed me foule . before þe kongus ere
for+culð+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 þu 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 down strenkþus .
In contre þere þe kyng cam . þu þi conscience him lettest .
þu he feld nat his foes . þo fortune it wolde .
& as his wirdus were J-pou3t . by wil of god al-my3ty
caitifliche þu þi conscience . counseiledest him to let .
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 þu lieth to him . be þe lond J wunne .
lokeþ aftur lordschepe . or opur large mede .
where-by he mow as a man . for euer leue þer aftur .
& þat is ye kinde of a kyng . þu conquereth on his enemyus .
to helpe hoygeliche al his ost . or ellus for to graunte .
al þat his men may wynne . to do þerwþ 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-corrowned . 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 .
vnkynedly þu þi 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 & eelrus . & al maner lordus .
<fol. 62v>Þurw 3iftis hane 3emen . to reyn & to ryde .
Þe pope & alle prelatus . presentus vn durfonge .
& 3eue mede to men . to meynteyne here lawus .
Seriaunt3 for her~ serwise . mede þei asken.
& take mede of here maistrus . as þei may acorde .
Beggerus & bedemen . craue mede for here preiers .
And wynstrallus for her~ wynstralsye . mede þei asken .
Men þat teche clerkus craueþ here mede.
Preste þat precheþ . & techeth þe lawe .
aske mede & masse pens . & here mete boþe .
Alle kynne crafty men .craue mede for here hyre .
Marchaundise & mede . mote mede go to gederus .
þer is no leode þat leuyth . þi he ne lœueth mede .
& glad for to gripe here . boþe grete & small .
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 .
þi mede is euurmore . a meytyenour 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 hyre . or þei it haue deserued .
And gyloours gyue bifoere . ac gode men atte neende .
whan þe dede is J-do . & þe day endeþe .
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 schulc w'holde :
þe hire of his hyne . til it be oþer morwe .
<lat></lat>
And þer is resoun as a reue . to rewarde trewþe
that bothe lord & laborer~. be lelly j-served.
Þe mede þþ many men takith. for here massus syngyn.
Amen amen Matheu seith. <lat></lat>
Jn marchaundis þer is no mede. J may it wel avowe.
it is a permutaconun. a penny for anoþer.
& þowh þe kynge 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 þþ ei dede. & dewe þerwþ anoþer.
& anon benyme it hem. & nevermore þer aftur
noþer þei nor here heires. be hardy hit to clayme.
of þat þe king or caiser gaf of catel & of renne.
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 riþt mynde.
& suffred him in mysbeleue. J leue he be in helle.
So god giueth no þing. w'outen any glose.
And riþt so soothly. may þe kyng & pope.
boþe geue & graunt eke þere his grace likeþ.
& eftsone haue it aþen. of men þat do riþt ille.
þus is mede & mercede. as two relaciouns.
whiche beþ recte & indirecte. rennynge boþe.
on a sad & on a sikur. semeliche to hem self.