



<County: Northern>

<Code: L0590>

<MS reference: London, BL Add. 22558>

<Text: Speculum Vitae>

<Tranche 1>

<fol. 43r><line 27>Prouesse es a *vertu* of prys  
þat mas a man hardi & wys  
thurgh whilk he may ouercomen thugh *grace*  
alle vices and vertus *purchase*  
seuen degrees has þat vertu  
and seuen branches of gret valu  
<fol. 43v>this er þe degrees first to knawe  
als þai er set here on rawe  
Noblesse of hert in ilk a chance  
traystyng sykenes and suffrance  
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  
shewes it wel in twa partys  
On þat a syde to dispse & fle  
þe werld þat nees bot vanite  
For seynt austyn says als J gesse  
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 filosofr~ 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  
 Traistying 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 nathying 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 3ernyng  
 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 helpes a man in cas  
 to ouercome 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-down  
 For na man may haue entry  
 Withouten suffrance ne maystry  
 Ne nan may come to *perfeccioun*  
 bot he suffre *tribulacoun*  
 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 *perfeccioun*  
 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 hertly 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 curtaisly  
 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  
 þ<sup>t</sup> 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 flessch 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<ill. 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 hastily 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* bifore redy  
 and of alkyn syn bythynk hym wele  
 bathe of dedly and of veniele  
 þat he has wroght als vnbousom  
 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 taryng 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 þ<sup>t</sup> 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 sekis 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 offyce 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 fordene had greet naue  
 Sunken shyppes and ryuen in sunder  
 thurgh wyndes blastes & stormes of thunder  
 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 kontek in þat stede  
 þat many men was þar~ dede  
 and 3it þe brydegome þan was slayn  
 and þer-of he sayde he was ful fayn  
 <fol. 155v>þan asked þe mayster half on heping  
 howe long tyme was þat in spedying  
 þat oþer answerd and sayde þus þan  
 þat in ten dayes fra he bygan  
 þe maister commanded his meynee  
 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 ferth at þe last  
 þat day and nyght had trauayld fast  
 aboute a man of religioun  
 to bryng hym in-to his baundon  
 and þe maister honoured hee  
 þar~ he sat hegh in his see  
 þe maister hym asked whethen 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 contynuely  
 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 dede 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 thoght it was ane hegh thyng  
 þe state of munk in clene lyfyng  
 and þerfor he had deuocioun  
 to bicomme man of religyon  
 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 delyces 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  
 thurgh 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 flesschly delyces  
 þat brynges forth oft grete vyces  
 þe whilk þe goode religious man  
 suld put fra his flessch ay þan  
 thurgh wakyng fastyng and disciplynes  
 and hard weryng þat þe flessch pynes  
 who so will wynne a cite  
 or a castell whether it be  
 he suld in all þat he may lette  
 þat þai 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 power~  
 to hald it agayn þair~ aduersere  
 Ryght so þe castell of þe body  
 þat es þe strength of þe flessch þer-by  
 May noght thurgh na flesschly delyce  
 be halden long agayn þe spiryte  
 when it es famyst with penaunce  
 thurgh abstynence of sustynaunce  
 also þe state of religioun  
 suld be thurgh 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 smellyng  
 heryng 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  
 <fol. 157v>þis 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 oþer 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  
 wherfor 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 richesnes ne delyces to pruf  
 bute forgettis all þat for godis luf  
 Ryght suld do þe man of religioun  
 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 .<sup>[ho]</sup> 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